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GUWAHATI, SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020

p2 WHO praises China for handling coronavirus pandemic

p7 2 BSF jawans test COVID-19 positive in Tripura

p11 COVID-19 random samples from Dhubri test negative

NEWS Capsule

Kim Jong-un

SEOUL, May 2: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made his first public appearance in 20 days as he celebrated the completion of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang, state media said on Saturday, ending an absence that had triggered global rumours that he may be seriously ill. – AP

Also see page 2

Night curfew

GUWAHATI, May 2: The night curfew in Assam is likely to be promulgated from 6 pm to 6 am from May 4 to strictly enforce the extended nationwide lockdown, instead of 7 pm to 7 am as suggested by the Centre, officials here said today. – Staff Reporter

ASTC service

GUWAHATI, May 2: There will be normal ASTC service in the State from May 4, official sources here today said. However, there will be lesser buses and each bus will carry passengers half the capacity. – Staff Reporter

Negative

GUWAHATI, May 2: All random tests – around 150 in total – carried out in three locations of Dhubri have shown negative result for COVID-19, official sources here today said. – Staff Reporter

Also see page 11

Wine shops

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Assam government has allowed wine shops to open from today in green zones of the State. However, the outlets will have to follow social distancing norms and DCs will notify the timings. – Staff Reporter

COVID-19 tests

GUWAHATI, May 2: Noting the test burden would jump manifold once people return from other states, the State government has decided to rope in private labs for conducting COVID-19 tests in PPP mode. – Staff Reporter

Assistance

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Assam government will provide Rs 2,000 to poor people living outside the State on the 15th of every month till the situation in the country over COVID-19 pandemic normalises. – Staff Reporter

JOCOSERIOUS



I sell only sanitized vegetables!



Migrant workers travel in a crowded bus during the ongoing lockdown, in Gopalganj, Bihar on Saturday. – PTI

Assam to open borders with NE States for stranded people

Helpline opened for those in other States

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: The State government today opened a helpline for stranded people in other States wanting to return and has also decided to allow those in NE States to enter Assam from tomorrow onwards.

However, the State government has made a fervent appeal to all such people residing outside to avoid the massive evacuation arrangement and the elaborate screening and quarantine measures being put in

place, if they can defer their return to the State for some time.

People stranded in other NE States, except Sikkim, can enter the State from tomorrow, but will have to follow the strict screening protocol at the border check-posts.

“After the mandatory screening, medical officers at the gate will take a call on whether to put them in home quarantine facility or admitted to hospital. Night curfew will be imposed in Assam, so all such people will have to travel during day hours. We

are also planning to send ASTC buses to the NE State capitals after a few days,” Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

“No one will be, however, allowed to move out of Assam,” he added.

For those people stranded in other States, the State government has opened a helpline – 7428159966. Those wanting to return will have to give a missed call in the number, following which a link will be sent for filling up an application.

People who have already registered through the oth-

er helpline – 9615471547 – need not register again as they will get the link automatically.

“Once we get the details we will have a data base, after which the evacuation plan will be chalked out. We may send buses to nearby places, but for far-off States, we will have to use trains. We will need time to execute it as it will be a massive exercise. We are not sure how many stranded people we will be able to bring back,” the minister said.

SEE PAGE 6

Govt clarifies on more exemptions after May 3

Liquor outside containment areas: MHA

NEW DELHI, May 2: Barber shops and salons located in green and orange zones will be allowed to open from Monday besides sale of non-essential items by e-commerce platforms during the third phase of the lockdown which will be in force till May 17.

Sale of liquor will be allowed with certain conditions in all zones – green, orange and red – barring containment areas.

These exemptions were given by the Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday, while extending the lockdown for two more weeks.

There are no restrictions on sale of non-essential items by e-commerce platforms in green and orange zones, a Home Ministry spokesperson clarified on Saturday, adding that barber shops and salons are also allowed to open in these areas.

In red zones, the e-com-

merce companies are allowed to sell only essential commodities.

Barber shops and salons are not allowed to open in red zones as these are serv-

ices not goods. Liquor sale is allowed in all zones if it is a standalone shop and not located in markets or malls.

SEE PAGE 6

Delhi has 21 COVID-19 patients from Assam

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 2: The total number of novel coronavirus affected people hailing from Assam has gone up to 21 in the national capital today.

These include 15 personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force who were posted in the same battalion with Barpeta’s Mohammad Ikram Hussain who died of COVID-19 last Tuesday.

Six other persons from Assam who were in the national capital were also detected positive for COVID-19.

Stay at HOME
Stay SAFE

Flypast for corona warriors by IAF today

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Defence Ministry will pay a salute to the corona warriors in style on Sunday.

Defence spokesman Lt Col P Khongsai said between 10 am and 11 am on Sunday, there will be a flypast by Su-30 fighter jets over the Assam State Legislative Assembly. This is, however, subject to weather conditions.

At 10 am, an Mi-17 helicopter from the Guwahati’s IAF base will shower flower petals over the GMCH and at 10:30 am over the MMCH in the city. The chopper will also hover over the medical institutions for sometime while showering flowers.

Besides, there will be a band display at the GMCH at 10 am and the MMCH at 10:30 am.

Similar aerial salute has been organised at other places as well.

Assam people stuck in Delhi want to return home

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 2: At least 1,100 people from Assam, mostly working and studying in the national capital region (NCR) have urged the State government to arrange for their transportation back home.

According to Shristi, an NGO that is helping the people, mostly workers in neighbouring Haryana and students and others, they have already submitted a list of 800 people to the Resident Commissioner of the Assam government. A second list of 300 people is being compiled, an office-bearer of the NGO said.

In a formal communication to the Resident Commissioner, the NGO’s president Prabhat Kumar Baruah and general secretary Gaurab Baruah said that a large number of students, workers and other people from Assam are stuck in Delhi and the NCR region.

“We have collected the data of the persons who want to go back home (amid the lockdown) as per the new guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA),” the letter said.

The NGO called for making arrangement for their transportation back home in coordination with the Assam

government and the Central ministries.

According to sources, they have suggested that the Assam government should arrange a train from Delhi to Assam so that these stranded people can go back home. Students wanted to go back home because all colleges and universities are shut and online classes are being conducted, sources added.

The Railways has since early this week started special trains in close coordination with the MHA and the state governments. The Assam government has already brought home 300 students from Kota, Rajasthan by road.

Media playing proactive role: Sonowal



STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today held an interactive session with the editors and senior journalists of media houses of the State here and sought their views and suggestion regarding overall situation in the State during the COVID-19 emergency, besides the way forward in case of relaxations and exemptions during the extended period of nationwide lockdown.

Calling on the media outlets to exercise restraint while reporting news about administrative machinery engaged in the COVID-19 fight at the frontline without

verification, the Chief Minister said that unauthenticated and unverified news could demotivate and discourage all those who were providing their services to contain the outbreak of the global pandemic in the State. He referred to the news about NSG soldier engaged in his security as infected by COVID-19 reported by certain media houses and said such unverified news could create chaos and panic in the government machinery.

Terming the media as conscience keepers and opinion moulders of the society, Sonowal said media’s conscientious decisions would determine in which direction

the society would move. He also appreciated the role played by media during the lockdown period by disseminating the right information to the people, generating awareness and also by acting as a bridge between the people and the government.

The Chief Minister also referred to the slew of austerity measures taken by the State government to cut down expenditure in the time of economic slowdown and said that guarded approach has been taken to relax certain economic activities to bring the State’s economy back on track post COVID-19.

SEE PAGE 6

WORLD	
Confirmed cases	3,440,538
Cured/Discharged	1,097,509
Death	242,103
INDIA	
Confirmed cases	37,776
Cured/Discharged	10,018
Death	1,223
ASSAM	
Confirmed cases	42
Cured/Discharged	32
Death	1

Data as on Saturday

Sunday
May 3, 2020

The New Age Influencers
Ankita Kakaty

Ramadan in quarantine
Mukhlisa Tasrin

REMEMBRANCE IRRFAN... not yet!
Tarali Sarma

WOMEN PLUS Peace of the Pie
Joyshree Baruah

FICTION Under a rock-II
Kautabh Kashyap

MY SPACE Surviving the lockdown in Morocco
Dr. Paromita Das

THIRD EYE Journey without maps
Indrani Raimeedhi

Plus all our regular features

HSLC results may be delayed

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 2: Declaration of results of the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination, conducted by the Board of Secondary Education Assam (SEBA) will be delayed by at least one month due to the lockdown imposed in the country to fight the spread of COVID-19. The SEBA is also yet to take any decision whether to reduce the syllabus for the next year’s examination due to closure of the schools.

Highly placed sources in the

education department told *The Assam Tribune* that the HSLC examination this year could be completed on time, but declaration of results would be delayed because of the lockdown. Sources said the evaluation of answer scripts was completed before the lockdown, but processing of the results could not be carried out that may delay declaration of the results.

Sources said that last year, the HSLC examination results were declared on May 15 and this year, the SEBA is hopeful of declaring the results by June 15, but it would

SEBA yet to decide on reduction of next year’s syllabus

depend on the ground situation. “With evaluation of the answer scripts finished, one major part of the job is complete, but it will take around 25 days for processing and moreover, some works are done outside the State. Though the SEBA is hopeful of declaring the results by

June 15, it will depend on the situation in other parts of the country,” sources added.

Though vital time of the academic calendar has been lost as the schools are closed, the SEBA has not yet taken any decision on reducing the syllabus for the next year’s HSLC examination. It may be mentioned here that though the government has taken a decision to ease the lockdown norms from May 4, no decision has yet been taken for reopening of the educational institutions.

SEE PAGE 6

Centre’s directive for containment

SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, May 2: With the Bhopal-based National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) confirming the epidemic of African swine fever in Assam, the Centre has issued directives to the State government for containment of the disease on a war-footing. Significantly, this marks the first time that African swine fever has been reported in the country – something that has caught the authorities on the wrong foot. Matters stand worsened because the disease

does not have any vaccine nor is any treatment available.

Given that Assam has a large population of wild boars and they are often found to be intermingling with domestic pigs near their habitats, the dangers stemming from the

containment plan for checking the spread of the disease. He added that the government might also be compelled to go for culling of pigs to contain the outbreak.

“A high-power committee with scientists, farmers’ rep-

African swine fever in Assam

swine fever could be catastrophic for wildlife as well.

Confirming the developments, Agriculture and Veterinary & Animal Husbandry Minister Atul Bora told *The Assam Tribune* that the department is working out a

representatives and departmental officials has been formed to monitor the situation closely and execute the relevant guidelines strictly. We are working on a war-footing, as there is no cure to the disease and the virus spreads

rapidly. Humans can also become carriers of the virus and infect pigs even though it does not cause disease in humans,” he said, adding that the forest department has also been alerted on the situation and asked to monitor the behaviour of wild boars.

Bora added that the veterinary colleges had been instructed to work on the ground and facilitate creation of containment zones as per Centre’s directives. Assam has a domestic pig population of over 21 lakhs.

SEE PAGE 6

Special train carrying nearly 1,200 migrant labourers arrives Patna

PATNA, May 2: The first 'Shramik Special' train to Bihar, carrying 1,187 stranded migrant labourers, reached the Danapur Railway Station here from Rajasthan's Jaipur today afternoon after a 16-hour journey.

The 24-coach train left Jaipur at 10 pm on Friday and reached the Danapur Railway Station around 2 pm, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO), East Central Railway, Hajipur, Rajesh Kumar informed. The train ran point-to-point non-stop, he said.

A medical screening of the passengers was carried out on arrival at the station by 20 medical teams.

"After the medical examination, they will be served food and sent to their respective districts by buses," Patna Divisional Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Agarwal told this news agency.

Around 100 buses have been stationed at the Danapur Railway Station to send these people to their home districts, he said.

The seating arrangement in these bus-

es has been made keeping in mind social-distancing norms. The buses will ply with half of their seating capacity, Agarwal added. This is the first run of a special train to Bihar to bring back migrants stranded during the nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus spread.

Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi had recently estimated the count of migrants from Bihar held up during the lockdown in different parts of the country at around 27 lakh.

These passengers will be quarantined for 21 days at their respective block-level quarantine centres, Agarwal said while making it clear that the train carried only migrant labourers who were working in Rajasthan.

Patna District Magistrate Kumar Ravi, Senior Superintendent of Police Upenendra Sharma and a host of other senior district administration officials were present at the Danapur Railway Station, on the outskirts of the state capital, to keep a close tab on the operation.

Disinfectants were sprayed in and around the railway station before the arrival of the train, Agarwal said.

The migrant workers, who looked relaxed and happy as the train chugged into the station, expressed joy on coming home.

After disembarking the train, the passengers, including a few women and children, were taken to the Danapur Railway School for medical screening, where they were given forms to fill up with their names, mobile phone numbers, addresses, destination places, whether suffering from cough, cold, fever etc.

Circles were drawn to maintain a fair distance between two persons right from the platform to the school premises according to social-distancing norms.

All the passengers were given hand sanitiser at the entrance of the school.

This is the first run of a special train to Bihar after the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) allowed the states to ferry migrants back home in buses. - PTI



A robot placed at the entrance of a hospital checks the temperature of visitors during the nationwide lockdown, in Bengaluru on Saturday. - PTI



ADKJ #DID YOU KNOW ?

Fighting Chance

Cyrus Poonawala founded the Serum Institute of India in 1996. It is the largest producer of vaccine in terms of number of doses produced. It includes vaccines for Polio Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hib, BCG, r-Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps and Rubella.

P.S. It is currently collaborating with Jenner Institute of Oxford University to produce ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine.



apnedeshkojano | contribution@apnedeshkojano.com

Powered by: Priya Communications

'PM must lay out lockdown-exit plan'

NEW DELHI, May 2: The Congress today said Prime Minister Narendra Modi must come forward and address the countrymen to enlighten them on the way ahead in dealing with the coronavirus and the economic situation.

Asking when the lockdown will finally end, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the Prime Minister must also lay out the exit strategy from it and spell out the goalpost in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and economy.

"Will we see another lockdown? When will the lockdown finally end? The Prime Minister must come forward and address 130 crore Indians and enlighten them on the way ahead," he told reporters at a press briefing through video-conferencing.

Accusing the government of not handling the issue of migrant labourers in a humane or compassionate manner, Surjewala urged the Prime Minister and the Centre to ferry the migrant labourers to their home in sanitised trains for free, along with food. - PTI

Modi discusses COVID-19 crisis with Thai PM

NEW DELHI, May 2: As neighbours with deep-rooted historical and cultural links, India and Thailand will work together to deal with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today. Modi said he spoke with "good friend" Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and discussed issues related to the pandemic. "As neighbours with deep-rooted historical and cultural links, India and Thailand will work together to deal with the multifarious challenges posed by this present crisis," the Prime Minister wrote on Twitter. - PTI

Minor police outpost 'incharge' asks people to honour lockdown

BAHRAICH, May 2: Holding a stick in his hand outside a police outpost, a 14-year-old boy is explaining to people that they should not violate the lockdown, avoid moving out of their homes unnecessarily, use a gamcha, handkerchief or mask to cover their face and repeatedly use sanitisers and soaps.

"Remember that lockdown rules are to be followed. If there is any lockdown violation, then I am the police outpost incharge, and I will register a case and send the guilty to jail," Saumya Agarwal says.

A police aspirant, Agarwal is a resident of Mihipurwa.

Impressed by the leadership qualities of the boy, police have made him the "incharge" of an outpost.

When the teenager reiterates *Do Gaj Doori Bahut Zaroori* as said by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, people like his style and take him seriously.

"This is the age of community

policing... We are going ahead with moderate policing and presenting us as a friend," said Superintendent of Police Vipin Mishra.

SHO of Motipur Police Station, JP Shukla said, "When police outpost incharge of Mihipurwa Ajay Tiwari came to know that Saumya was interested in joining the force, he tried an experiment. Saumya was declared as the incharge of Mihipurwa outpost before the public. A police team is sent with Saumya, instead of Ajay Tiwari."

Meanwhile, Tiwari said the experiment has proved successful and people are following the lockdown.

Bahraich MP Akshaibhar Lal praised the concept, and said it will make people understand the importance of lockdown.

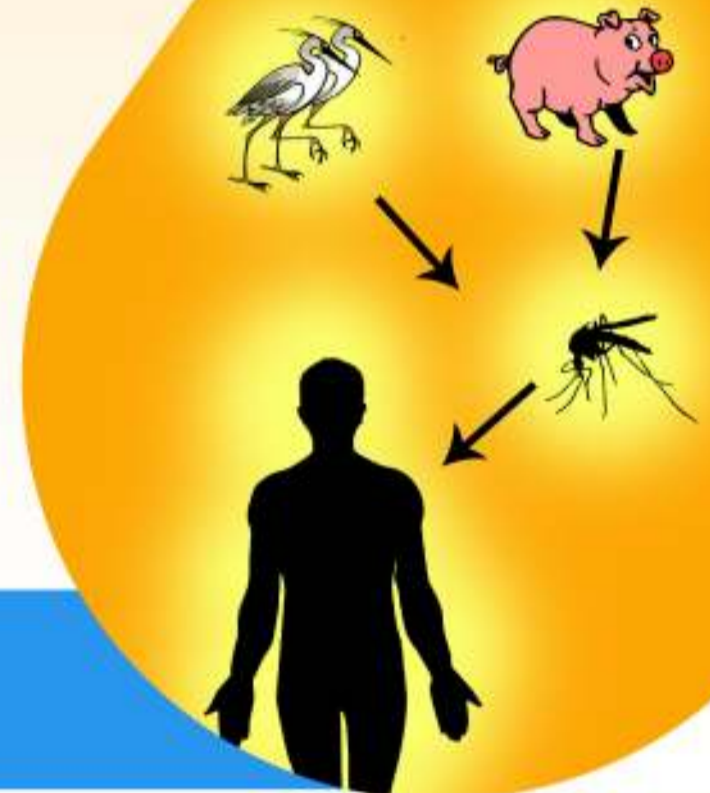
He also praised Saumya, and advised him to look after himself, follow social distancing, but at the same time focus on studies, so that he can realise his dream of joining the police force. - PTI



জাপানীজ এনকেফেলাইটিছ মহৰ দ্বাৰা সংক্ৰমিত এবিধ ৰোগ

যিকোনো জ্বৰ এ.ই.ছ./জাপানীজ এনকেফেলাইটিছ হ'ব পাৰে

শীঘ্ৰে চিকিৎসা প্ৰদান কৰিলে ৰোগীৰ স্বাস্থ্যৰ অধিক অৱনতি
ৰোধ কৰিব পৰা যায়।



এই ৰোগ প্ৰতিৰোধৰ কাৰণে

এই ৰোগৰ লক্ষণসমূহ

- অতিপাত জ্বৰ
- মুৰৰ বিষ
- মানসিক অস্থিৰতা
- ভ্ৰম আৰু সংজ্ঞাহীনতা
- বমি ভাব
- শৰীৰৰ কপনি



শোৰাৰ সময়ত সদায় আঁঠুৰা
ব্যৱহাৰ কৰক



ঘৰৰ ওচৰৰ পৰা গাহৰি আৰু
গাহৰিৰ গড়াল আঁতৰাই ৰাখক



সদায় দীঘল হাতৰ চোলা আৰু দীঘল
পেণ্ট পৰিধান কৰক



সদায় সন্ধ্যা ঘৰৰ বাহিৰে ভিতৰে ধোঁৱা
দিয়াৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰক। ধোঁৱা দিয়াৰ সময়ত
দুৱাৰ খিৰিকি আধাঘন্টা পৰ্য্যন্ত খুলি ৰাখক

জাপানীজ এনকেফেলাইটিছৰ লক্ষণসমূহ দেখিলে ততালিকে ওচৰৰ চিকিৎসালয়লৈ লৈ যাওক
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MESSAGE FORTODAY

Some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen.

— WAYNE HUIZENGA

The Assam Tribune

Another extension

With the Covid-19 infections having crossed the 37,000 mark and climbing, and deaths crossing 1,200 and showing no sign of abatement, that there would be yet another extension of the ‘‘lockdown’’ across the entire country had been a fait accompli. However, the Centre’s decision to extend the lockdown till May 17 has come with some selective relaxations designed to ensure that the economy does not go completely off the rails and the sufferings of stranded workers as well as those who survive on daily earnings are mitigated to some extent. For this purpose the Centre has divided the nation into 130 red zones, 284 orange zones and 319 green zones, a classification whose objective is self-evident and is to be followed by States and Union Territories and revised whenever necessary. Some restrictions, such as ban on air travel, trains and interstate road transport for the general public, as also closure of educational institutions, theatres, malls, hotels and bars will be common to all zones. But there has been a number of significant relaxations in the orange and green zones so that normal trading activities can commence even in urban areas. Special trains have also begun operating to help lakhs of migrant workers stranded for over a month at various urban centres, since transporting them only by bus proved unviable.

In allowing the relaxations the Union Government is taking a calculated risk, for any slip at this stage might undo the positive outcomes effected by the lockdown so far. The onus certainly is on the States to assist the Centre in preventing adverse outcomes, especially those which might result from the mass movement of people from one place to another. As far as the North-East in general and Assam in particular are concerned, the States need to be extraordinarily careful not to relinquish the advantage the region’s relative remoteness has conferred, and allow deterioration in the prevailing situation. Assam being a kind of gateway to this part of the nation, it has an overwhelming responsibility to keep the entire area safe by engaging in stringent monitoring of people who will now be allowed to enter, for these, obviously, might inadvertently prove to be Trojan horses! According to Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma more than 4.30 lakh migrant workers from Assam are still stranded in many other parts of the country due to the nationwide lockdown, and a sizeable segment of these have requested that they be allowed to return to the native State. The Covid-19 situation in the North-East would depend greatly on the mechanism the Assam Government puts in place to monitor and isolate the returnees so that they do not endanger the people of the region.

Kaziranga concerns

The Centre in a recent directive to the State Government had asked it to construct more artificial highlands in Kaziranga National Park – unmindful of the grave damage such unwarranted interventions can trigger to this prime wildlife habitat’s ecology. The park has a number of artificial highlands, the ill-effects of those already palpable and any more worsening of the situation can cause irreparable damage to its wetland-grassland ecosystem. The ideal plan to tackle the annual floods that inundate a major area of the park should be in facilitating unhindered animal movement to the nearby Karbi Anglong hills which provides Kaziranga with a natural forested highland. Floods may seem to be damaging for Kaziranga from the perspective of wildlife casualty but that too is actually a nature’s way of controlling wildlife populations. And more importantly, floods are critical to the long-term well-being of Kaziranga’s habitat as the park’s wetlands and the floodplains get much-needed replenishment during flood-time. Having more artificial highlands inside its floodplain ecosystem will hasten the process of ecological succession and Kaziranga will no longer remain a habitat of rhino, swamp deer, wild buffalo, etc. While siltation from the highlands will damage the wetlands, such artificial interventions will also drastically change the hydrology of the park by hampering the natural cleaning mechanism of the ecosystem.

The dangers stemming from artificial highlands make it abundantly clear that the solution must be sought through natural means. A multi-pronged approach involving grassland management, restoration of wetlands, anti-erosion measures, and most importantly facilitating undisturbed animal movement to the adjoining Karbi Anglong hills through the animal corridors can save Kaziranga’s wildlife and its habitat. Many of the notified animal corridors linking Kaziranga with Karbi Anglong are suffering widespread degradation due to encroachment and growing commercial and industrial activities. These need to be stopped and the corridors reclaimed for wildlife movement.

‘COVID-19 will change way we do business’

Face to Face

Prasanta J Baruah

Sarat Kumar Jain, CMD of the Rs 1200 crore SM Group of Companies is a senior business leader of the State, A former chairman of the Federation of Industries and Commerce of Northeast Region (FINER), he has served as Founder Director (Finance) of International Hospital (now Apollo Hospitals). He is presently the president of Marwari Hospital and a trustee of Guwahati Gaushala.



Day-to-day business has been greatly affected by the lockdown due to spread of coronavirus. What is your assessment of the impact on the business activities in the State ?

The impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 is short term and long term depending upon the nature of various business activities. The worst affected segment in this critical crisis is undoubtedly Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). With almost nil revenue due to standstill operations and fixed overhead cost, the MSMEs are finding it extremely difficult to cope up with such precarious situation.

There is apprehension that a good number of MSMEs in some sectors shall be completely wiped off. Besides, the impact shall also be felt in form of job loss. The cascading effect on the economy shall be really serious having recessionary trend.

What is the estimated loss during the over monthlong lockdown in the State ?

The estimation of loss perhaps cannot be confined to one month only. It shall take few months for the revival of the economic activities subject to the situation not going further beyond control. However,

based on the information available from the various businesses including industries, trade and service sector; the loss can be estimated to the tune of 5000 crore of rupees approximately. Out of this, tea & hotel industries’ loss is estimated to be Rs 1800 crore. Remaining loss is spread over other sectors.

Which sectors of business activity in the State have been most affected ?

The main affected business sectors are like tea industry, tourism, hospitality, logistic, real estate, construction, automobiles, entertainment, retail, steel & building materials, handloom & handicrafts, livestock, MSMEs, etc. Agriculture related business activities have also been affected due to transportation and distribution constraints.

The government is expected to open the lockdown in a phased manner. In your view how should the Govt proceed to ease the lockdown restrictions ?

The government has already initiated steps to open the lockdown in a phased manner. The strategic steps taken by the government to ease the restrictions is praiseworthy. However, looking at the

satisfactory level achieved in containing the virus disease and unaffected rural areas, the government should take faster steps to remove restrictions in rural areas. This will have a positive impact on the economy. Besides, the government should also expedite relaxing lockdown restrictions in urban areas and towns so that business activities could be revived faster.

Is the government discussing with business leaders and trade bodies how the lockdown restrictions can be lifted ?

Government was supposed to have Webinar with trade & industry associations few days back. But as per my understanding, the same could not happen.

The State government as part of its austerity measures has suspended all exemptions, subsidies and incentives to industries alongwith GST reimbursement. Your take on the development?

This is really a bolt from the blue to the industries. Besides, refund of GST amount is also suspended. Industry is already adversely affected by lockdown due to spread of COVID-19. Financials have gone haywire. Industry is very perplexed as

to how to make payment of salaries to its employees and workers since the operations have come to a standstill.

The industry was expecting to get a package of reliefs from the government just to survive in this critical situation. So suspension of all exemptions, incentives and subsidies at this juncture was totally unwarranted as the implications would be very serious.

Besides, suspension of refund of GST is further detrimental as the amount was part of working capital funds. Industry as such was suffering because of delay in refund of GST amount. It shall now aggravate the situation. The financial condition of micro and small industries shall be very badly hit. It will not be possible for them to survive and revive. Lastly, the development of new industries is going to be a big question mark.

Some fiscal measures were announced by RBI to be extended by banks/ FIs to support liquidity of businesses. How will the same help in real sense .

The fiscal measures like moratorium on EMIs and deferment of interest in CC account have been announced by RBI to be extended by banks/ FIs. This will help businesses to some extent. The situation will vary from business to business considering the burden of fixed costs and loss of revenues. It has come to our knowledge that banks are going to charge interest on the deferred amount of interest in the CC account which is a big pain point. RBI is yet to announce further package of fiscal measures to support the li-

quidity in businesses. More the delay, more the harm. **What about stocks in the market ? Is there enough stocks available to meet the demand as inter state movement has been stopped and factories have been closed ?**

Stocks in the market comprises of both essential and non-essential goods. Since the inter-state movement of essential goods was allowed by government well in time, enough stock is available. Industries engaged in the production of essential goods like food items, medical items are running smoothly. As regards non-essential goods, situation has started improving in a gradual manner. It will take time for 100 per cent improvement as transportation of goods from the States having more number of Red Zones is a big challenge.

Will the lockdown experience help us in being self reliant ? Will it give an impetus to production of certain essential items locally in coming days ?

Economy of our State is consumption oriented. However there are good number of industries producing essential items like different types of food products. But other essential non-food industries like healthcare equipments, hygiene products, kitchen essentials and related products shall get impetus to be developed locally.

The business community in Assam has been used to prolonged bandhs earlier. Is this experience helping them now to be resilient to face the present situation ?

Both the experiences are different in nature. During bandhs there used to be temporary disruption of business activities. But now during the present situation, the business activities have come to a grinding halt. Moreover, there is no clear visibility on relaxation of 100 per cent lockdown restrictions since remedy for COVID 19 is yet to be found out.

How do you view the increasing role of digital platform in trade and industry because of COVID-19?

We all believe that constraints always bring opportunities. The indication is quite clear that post COVID-19/ lockdown life is going to be very different as compared to pre COVID-19. Social distancing is now main mantra in all walks of life. The change will be visible, be it office or be it market place. People will like to avoid sitting in close office space, visiting shops for buying, meeting clients and so on. The very fear of getting infected will be big stumbling block and as such social distancing shall have to be maintained as part of safety. Since life has to go on and businesses must run, so here lies the important role of digital platform. It has already started making its inroads. During the lockdown period, business enterprises have started connecting with all types of its stakeholders through various digital tools of the digital technologies. We are frequently hearing about Webinars (seminars through Web) etc.

Reopening schools, colleges

■ Dr Atul Bora

Lockdown can be considered as strategy to slow down the transmission of COVID-19 and thereby saving lives and buying time to fight back with the virus. The schools and colleges are closed in the State and across the country under such a framework.

The prevailing situation is creating a sense of uncertainty and anxiety among the students and the citizens of the state as well as the country. In a linear thinking, the schools and colleges will be reopened only when the prevailing lockdown is lifted completely. Such a public perception in general and among the students and teachers and educational fraternity in particular has serious consequences. A holistic understanding about the uncertainty associated with the pandemic is very critical for collective informed decision making, participation and engagement of all stakeholders. A review on the ongoing pressing efforts throughout the world reveals that COVID-19 vaccine can emerge not earlier than several months from now, if not several years! This implies that an indefinite lockdown and closure of schools and colleges for indefinite period will be disastrous not only to our students’ and children but also will be a serious threat to our overall sustainability. Therefore, such a public understanding is the need of the hour to initiate or to set out a continging exit plan of the COVID-19 crisis, involving carefully specified levels of lockdown with compliance of the expert advisories. As no Government can provide certainty of the complete safety from the COVID-19 without a vaccine in place, a consensus of all stakeholders starting from students, parents, teachers, hostel, school and college administrators including government is the only sustainable option

to confront the COVID-disaster.

With slowing down the spread of virus invoking lockdown as the initial strategy, we now need to focus on re-opening of schools and colleges in a responsible manner. Each of the schools, colleges is to prepare a roadmap to accommodate admissions for coming academic sessions along with minimizing the impact on the careers of this year’s students in the respective classes. We need a roadmap for a new model of schools to function, the modalities of which need to be created by involvement of all stakeholders. The modalities of such framework are to be based on the uncertainty management with principles of precaution and risk management. The schools, colleges and universities have a profound responsibility at this juncture by adopting measures to slow the spread of the virus not only in their campus but also in the society at large.

Each of the schools and colleges should establish a multi-stakeholder committee to plan and deal with the crisis that is triggered by COVID-19. The multi-stakeholder committee should include members from different stakeholders such as students, parents, faculties, principals, representatives from health, education and civil administrators, public representative and other relevant members. The multi-stakeholder committee should frequently meet with various subcommittees formed for the outbreak and make informed decisions as the situation evolves.

Government should play the role of facilitator to the multi-stakeholder committee to adopt all possible measures for the safety and well-being of students and staff members. Wearing of mask, thorough cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, restriction of mass gatherings

and postponing non-critical gatherings and events, conducting zoom meetings, instead of physical meetings etc will be a part of such modalities.

Hostels are to be the homes for the students for outstation students. Hostels should remain open or allowed to function for students and hostel affairs again are to be managed by a multi-stakeholders committee to take care of the health and safety of the students taking COVID-19 into account in letter and spirit. Redefined norms for school and college buses such as number of passengers per trip are to be provided in the context of COVID-19.

Schools and colleges should encourage students and faculty to stay connected through the online or any social media platform and move forward together during this extremely difficult time. Although schools/colleges/universities have attempted to continue various courses and programs from face-to-face to online delivery mode, many students do not have the correct setup such as computer, and high-speed Internet connection at their homes. Again lab tests, practicals etc may not be possible to conduct online. The transition from face-to-face teaching to online delivery has a serious limitation on assessments and evaluation or conducting examinations with students at home.

In view of above discussion, a judicious mixture of face-to-face teaching to online strategies with reopening of schools and colleges with new classroom practices with multiple sections in a class, multiple class-timings, multiple sets of question papers etc are to be adopted to mitigate the COVID-disaster that has the potential to trigger a much bigger disaster, unless initiated with a shared vision by the society at large.

(Writer is Principal, Assam Engineering College)

Voices of the WEEK



Courtesy: THE HINDU

“The situation in Agra city is bad and the number of coronavirus patients is going up everyday.” –PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA, GS, Congress

★★★★

“Everyone who wants to and whose job allows it should be able to work in a home office, even when the corona pandemic is over.” –HUBERTUS HEIL, Labour Minister, Germany.

★★★★

“The chain of transmission of the virus should be broken, strictly for districts falling in the red and orange zones.” – NARENDRA MODI, PM, India

★★★★

“Rahul Gandhi should take tuition from P Chidambaram on the difference between ‘write-off’ and ‘waive off’.” – PRAKASH JAVADEKAR, Union Minister

★★★★

“I never wanted to see distress on his (Rishi Kapoor) smiling Cherubic face But I am certain.... when he went, he must have gone with a gentle smile.” – AMITABH BACHCHAN, Legendary Actor

★★★★

“Saddened by the untimely demise of noted actor Irrfan Khan. A rare talent and a brilliant actor, his diverse roles and remarkable performances will remain etched in our memories. A big loss to the world of cinema...” – RAM NATH KOVIND, President, India

★★★★

“The skill sets and experiences acquired by the returning youths working outside could be utilized to propel Assam towards economic resurgence and opportunities must be created within the state to absorb these youths productively.” – SARBANANDA SONOWAL, CM, Assam

The Assam Tribune From THE PAST

200 COMMUNISTS KILLED BY US, S VIETNAMESE FORCES IN CAMBODIA

SAIGON, May 2: American and South Vietnamese troops striking into Cambodia had killed nearly 200 Vietcong and North Vietnamese and detained 166 suspects in the first 24 hours of the operation, reports Reuter.

The US Command announced today that the estimated 8,000 strong combined task force, making a wide encircling movement around the suspected location of the main Vietcong headquarters in the fish-hook salient of the Cambodian border, had killed 194 guerillas more.

An American armoured column, helicopter-borne US air cavalrymen and South Vietnamese airborne troops struck into the fish-hook, about 168 kms, northeast of Phnom-penh, yesterday in a bid to find and destroy the central office for South Vietnam (COSVN) thought to be buried deep in the jungle. The attack was supported by a massive weight of artillery-82 heavy guns and 148 tactical air strikes were flown on the first day, the largest number in a single day’s operation since the Korean war, military sources said.

conic Eden Gardens was electrifying, a virtual cauldron of excitement right from day one of the third test match as Team India led by Pataudi, the quintessential captain, was fighting back to salvage its battered image having lost the first two tests to West Indies captained by Clive Lloyd back in 1974.

Six of us, undergraduate students, from Assam had occupied our seats long before the match started. On the first day, Viswanath, playing a swash-buckling innings, had executed a brilliant squarecut that went like a bullet to the boundary. Two euphoric youngsters stood up and shouted, ‘‘Guru!! Guru!! What a shot!!’’ When the two

Habits die hard

Different Strokes

Gautam Ganguly

.....
youngsters took their seat, one elderly gentleman said, ‘‘cool down boys!! Rohan Kanhai? naam sunecho? (Heard the name of Rohan Kanhai) I have seen him hitting better delectable square cuts in 1966 or Ian Chappel in 1969 here in Eden!!! Eitou Ekhon Sishu. (Viswanath is a kid!!!) On the second day, seeing Madan-

lal, the Indian medium pacer, charging up to the wicket at a great speed to deliver the ball, one gentleman remarked, ‘‘Aare ei toh dekhchi electric engine er moto jore run kore!!! kintu ball er speed toh budo steam engine er moto slow!!!’’ (This fellow runs as fast as an electric engine but bowls at a speed of an old steam engine’’).

Fifth day of the match had started amidst nail-biting suspense. Any team could emerge victorious! In the midst of ding-dong battle at the end of an over, a dhoti-clad gentleman entered hurriedly and started looking for his seat in the

gallery before the next over started. A visibly irritated young man asked, ‘‘Dada! Paschim Bongo government e chakri koren neki? (Do you work in Bengal government?) The embarrassed gentleman replied, ‘‘yes but why?’’

The youngster shot back, ‘‘Saara jeevon office poucte deri, khelar field eo deri!!!’’ (late life-long, in reaching office. Late in reaching cricket field too).

‘‘Habits die hard’ There was roar of laughter!’


Different Strokes

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

Guwahati through the lens during lockdown on Saturday



Left to right: Artists drawing social distancing awareness messages on a wall; Girls carry their household items in the absence of transportation; People stand in queue in front of Paltan Bazar PS to submit applications to travel to their respective home states, in Guwahati on Saturday. - AT/UB photos



WEATHER GUWAHATI

LOCAL FORECAST:
Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain/thundershower is very likely to occur. Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be 32°C & 22°C respectively on Sunday.

TEMPERATURE:
Max 33.7°C
Min 22.0°C

Sanitizing tunnel installed at city police station

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: As part of its efforts to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus, decontamination and mass sanitizing tunnel gate was installed at the main gate of Hatigaon Police Station here today.

It was inaugurated by Poonam Pegu, Assistant Commissioner of Police, in the presence of Biren Chandra Deka,

officer-in-charge, Hatigaon Police Station.

"To contain the spread of COVID-19 and keep the policemen and others disinfected, Hatigaon Police Station has decided to install the sanitizing tunnel gate. This tunnel will act as a disinfectant entry point at the main entrance of the police station," an official said, adding that the tunnels were spe-

cially designed to protect police from the coronavirus and those who approach the police could also be saved from infection.

"This exercise has been started to make the sanitization process hands-free. Hands are usually washed but with the help of a high-pressure nozzle, a shower of disinfectant spray is sprayed on every visitor and within 10-15 seconds, the individual can be sanitized. This has been done experimentally. It is expected that such a tunnel will help fight the pandemic with greater vigour," he said.

The tunnel has been designed and fabricated by Green Tree Advertising of Guwahati with the support of Ashirwad Pipes.

The police officials are preparing for the post-lockdown situation expecting that people will still follow social distancing to avoid further spread of the disease.



The sanitizing tunnel that was installed at Hatigaon PS on Saturday.

Raids against illicit liquor

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 2: The excise department conducted raids against illicit liquor in Lalmati area of the city on Saturday. During the raids, the department seized 100 litres of illicit liquor and destroyed several illegal sale points.

One held on theft charges

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Jalukbari police last night arrested a person who has been involved in several theft cases in the Jalukbari area.

The person has been identified as Ali Hussain from Boko, a sugarcane juice seller who stayed here in a rented house.

A police source said Ali has been involved in more than nine theft cases reported at the police station during the ongoing lockdown period.

Two arrested

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 2: Baralumukh police last night arrested two persons after *gukha* was recovered from them at Bishnupur here.

The duo have been identified as Sanjiv Singh and Ramesh Jadav. A case has been registered in this regard.

Harijan labourers' body seeks insurance cover for cleaners

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 2: The All Assam Harijan Mazdoor Union on Saturday called for the inclusion of sanitation workers in the insurance scheme announced by the Central government.

The union in a statement said the cleaners, sweepers and other cleaning workers working in various sectors across the State are playing an important role in the government's fight against the pandemic.

These people are very

vulnerable to the pandemic. Even some of the workers working in interior parts of the State do not have self-protection gears, said the statement, adding that these people should be brought under the policy of insurance cover.

Tribune news helps needy woman get Govt aid

CORRESPONDENT

JORABAT, May 2: Following a newsitem published in *The Assam Tribune* on Saturday regarding the hardships being faced by a woman healthcare worker in making both ends meet during the COVID-19 lockdown, the government machinery has stepped in to provide relief to her.

For more than a fortnight now, healthcare worker Manju Ray has been cycling over five kilometers daily along a hilly road to reach her workplace at Jorabat because of the lockdown. She is compelled to work in order to feed her family as her daily wage la-



Manju Ray receiving govt relief. - Photo: Jorabat Correspondent

bourer husband is now out of job due to the lockdown. Being a non-ration card

holder, Manju apparently received no relief from the government amidst the lock-

down. But things took a turn for the better for her after this newspaper published her plight on Saturday.

Upon receiving directions from the higher-ups, a ZPC member called up Manju this afternoon. She was later provided with 20 kilograms of rice from the relief stock meant for non-ration card holders. Manju also received 1 kg *dal* and Rs 100 cash from an individual from Jorabat who had read the news.

Manju has heaved a sigh of relief that Saturday's news helped her get some relief from the government. She has also thanked the government for the relief.

Donations to fight COVID-19 continue to pour in

GUWAHATI, May 2: Assam Engineering Institute (AEI) has contributed an amount of Rs 2,42,600 to PM-CARES Fund to help the Government of India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. AEI principal Akshay Chandra Kalita informed that the teaching staff of the institute have contributed their one-day salary and the non-teaching staff have contributed their half-day salary to the AEI fund that was meant for the PM-CARES Fund, stated a press release issued here today.

On behalf of different social organisations and business establishments, Kamrup Rural Deputy Commissioner Kamal Kr Baishya handed over a cheque for Rs 33,42,182 meant for the Assam Arogya Nidhi, to Health Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma on April 30, said a press release on Saturday.

Voluntary blood donation camp at Kar Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS) and Assam State Blood Transfusion Council (ASBTC) organised a voluntary blood donation camp at the office of the Commissioner of Taxes (Kar Bhavan), Ganeshguri here on Saturday, said a press release.

The camp was inaugurated by Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Pijush Hazarika. Talking to reporters after inaugurating the camp, the minister said because of the COVID-19 lockdown imposed in the entire country, there has been a decline in voluntary blood donation in the State. The Assam State Blood Transfusion Council has taken the initiative to accelerate voluntary blood donation, he said.

Minister Hazarika applauded Anurag Goel, Director of ASBTC & Commissioner of Taxes for taking the initiative and also the officials and staff of the Commissionerate of Taxes for coming



A donor at the voluntary blood donation camp.

forward to donate blood which, he asserted, would be of great help for needy patients in the hospitals.

The minister further said that such drives would continue throughout the State as five mobile blood collection vans have already been

placed at district hospitals across the State and another five would soon be placed in various districts.

Altogether 55 donors were screened at the camp and out of them 35 donors donated blood in the blood mobile bus stationed near the office.

NDRF continues to play its role during lockdown

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: Teams of 1st Battalion NDRF today carried out sanitization drives at Sukreswar Temple, Umananda Temple and Hari Sabha here.

The teams sprayed disinfectants on the temple premises and all the entry and exit points. Although all the religious installations are closed in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus, day-to-day rituals are being observed by limited staff in the temples.

Apart from disinfecting the temple premises with sodium hypochlorite, NDRF medical teams carried out thermal screening of temple priests and distributed masks at Umananda and Sukreswar temples.

Meanwhile, NDRF has distributed food, masks and biscuit packets to more than 2,200 needy people at various places apart from conducting thermal screening at places including Jahajghat, Uzan Bazar, Bargaon, Changsari, Kundung, Hirapara, Dhantala and Bijoy Nagar in Kamrup Metro and Kamrup districts.

Cloth masks distributed

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Young Indians Guwahati Chapter, the youth wing of Confederation of Indian Industry, as part of the chapter's relief initiative in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, handed over 5,000 cloth masks to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) Commissioner Debajyoti Hazarika for the GMC workers here today.

Hamad Berlashker, an official of the organisation, who was present in the event, said Young Indians across all chapters in the country is doing its bit to help the government fight the global pandemic.





OBITUARY

Siba Krishna Phukon

GUWAHATI, May 2: Siba Krishna Phukon, a retired senior grade officer of the State Bank of India, died at his residence in the SBI Officers' Colony at Ambikagiri Nagar here in the early hours of Saturday. He was 88.

He leaves behind his wife, three sons, three daughters-in-law, grandsons and a host of friends and relatives. His death was widely mourned.

E-Initiatives By Education Department Government of Assam To minimise students' learning disruption For COVID-19

Tele Classes of class IX and X on Science and Mathematics are being telecast four days in a week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10.00 a.m to 11.15 a.m. through Doordarshan, Assam.

YouTube channel "Biswa Vidya Assam" has been created for the students of Assam where e-classes for VI to X for Science, Mathematic and English Vocabulary and Grammar are available in Assamese medium.

Radio programme for the students of Primary and Upper Primary Level is being broadcast every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5.45 p.m to 6.00 p.m

E-Learning Platform for students "DIKSHA" app with e-contents developed by teachers and "Biswa Vidya Assam" mobile app initiated by Govt. of Assam are available.

Armed forces to thank corona warriors today

NEW DELHI, May 2: The armed forces have made elaborate arrangements to conduct aerial fly-pasts, light up ships at sea and shower flower petals on several hospitals across the country on Sunday to express gratitude to lakhs of doctors, paramedics, sanitation staff and other frontline workers engaged in fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat on Friday announced that the three services will carry out a series of activities to thank the "corona warriors".

The thanks-giving activities will start with laying of wreaths at the police memorial in Delhi and in several other cities on Sunday morning to honour the police personnel deployed in enforcement of the nationwide lockdown, officials said.

It will be followed by fly-pasts by fighter and transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force, covering a sizeable number of cities and towns across the country between 10 AM to 11 AM, officials said.

"These aircraft will cover major towns starting from Srinagar to Thiruvananthapuram and Dibrugarh to Kutch. Helicopters from the IAF and Indian Navy will fly over hospitals treating coronavi-

rus patients and shower petals as a tribute to the corona warriors," Army spokesperson Col Aman Anand said.

He said some of the aircraft will be flown as low as 500 metres so that people can witness the fly-pasts from the safety of their homes.

Military bands will play "patriotic tunes" outside various civil hospitals treating coronavirus patients to express gratitude to doctors, nurses and paramedics, he said.

Separately, Indian Navy helicopters would shower petals on hospitals treating coronavirus patients at Mumbai, Goa, Kochi and Vizag between 10 AM to 10:30 AM.

Navy officials said the Western Naval Command will illuminate five naval ships from 7:30 PM to 11:59 PM off Gateway of India in Mumbai.

They would display banners like "India Salutes Corona Warriors" and will sound the siren of the ships and fire flares at 7:30 PM at anchorage. Additionally, the Naval air stations at Goa would organise a human chain on the runway to honour the 'corona warriors'.

The Eastern Naval Command will illuminate two ships at anchorage from

7:30 pm to midnight at Visakhapatnam coast.

Anand said Indian Coast Guard ships will be seen at 24 places, including in Porbandar, Okha, Ratnagiri, Dahanu, Murud, Goa, New Mangalore, Kavartti, Karaikal, Chennai, Krishnapatnam, Nizamapatnam, Pudukcherry, Kakinada, Paradip, Sagar Island, Port Blair, Diglipur, Mayabundur, Hut Bay and Campbell Bay.

"The nation stood together and showed resilience in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. On behalf of the armed forces, we want to thank all the corona warriors - doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, police, home guards, delivery boys and media," Gen Rawat said.

So far, the coronavirus has infected 37,336 people in India while it claimed lives of 1,218 people, according to the Union Health Ministry.

Gen Rawat's announcement about the special activities came shortly before the Union Home Ministry said the current spell of the lockdown will be extended by another two weeks from Monday.

The lockdown came into force on March 25 and was to end on April 14. It was first extended till May 3. - PTI



Migrants after boarding a bus to their native places, during the lockdown, in Surat on Saturday. - PTI

ICMR to study COVID-19 strain

NEW DELHI, May 2: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is planning to study whether the novel coronavirus strain in India has undergone mutation while spreading within the country over the last two months.

According to a senior scientist of the country's apex health research body, determining whether or not the SARS-CoV2 strain has changed form will help in ensuring the effectiveness of a potential vaccine.

"The study will also indicate whether it has become more virulent and increased transmission capability."

However, the study can begin once the lockdown is lifted since currently there are difficulties involved in transportation of samples from different states and Union Territories, scientists said. - PTI

Final volume of Prof Shonku's adventures released

NEW DELHI, May 2: On his 99th birth anniversary, fans of legendary film director Satyajit Ray could not have asked for more - his final volume of Professor Shonku's escapades which has been translated into English with a portion by the master himself was launched today.

The Final Adventures of Professor Shonku was released as an e-book by Puffin.

Translated by Indrani Majumdar and a portion by Ray for the first time in English from the original collection of Shonku adventures, the book features stories that are funny, imaginative and exciting, and are perfect for sci-fi and Satyajit Ray fans, young and old alike, the publishers said.

Featuring the ever-popular mad scientist Shonku, *The Final Adventures of Professor Shonku* is a companion volume to the hugely popular *Diary of a Space Traveller and Other Stories*, *The Unicorn Expedition and Other Stories* and *The Mystery of Munroe Island and Other Stories*.

Actor Dhritiman Chatterji, who portrayed the character of Professor Shonku in the Bengali sci-fi drama, has written the introduction to the book.

"In Shonku, we have the finest writing for children anywhere in the world. And why just children, grown-ups are



Fans decorate a banner of film director Satyajit Ray to mark his 99th birth anniversary, during the lockdown in Kolkata on Saturday. - PTI

avid readers too. I have been a lover of crime fiction for the longest time, but even I was not aware of the pulp detective fiction (Satyajit Ray) introduced me to," he says.

Majumdar, the translator of the entire collection, says 2020 marks the appearance of the final and the fourth volume of Professor Shonku containing nine adventures, finally completing all his 38 exploits written in the original Bengali by Ray.

The volume begins with an escapade translated by Ray himself and the concluding and

introspective adventure in this book begins at his cozy house in Giridih, but the action starts to unfold from Jharkhand and takes readers to London and Berlin with a nail-biting finish.

According to Sohini Mitra, Publisher (Children Division), at Penguin India, "With this final volume, we now have the complete oeuvre of stories featuring the madcap Professor Shonku and his extraordinary adventures available for readers young and old."

In this last volume of Professor Shonku's escapades, the

scientist travels around the world once more to face near death situations. Each nerve wracking experience is faithfully recorded in his diary.

The books tell about Shonku being outwitted by his own invention, the Tellus computer; his helplessness when his arch-rival in Rome deliberately misplaces his wonder drug, Miracural; and the thrilling discovery of a three-and-a-half-thousand-year-old sparkling diamond necklace and a papyrus in an ancient tomb in Cairo. - PTI

Govt clarifies on ...

(Contd from page 1)

In liquor shops, customers will have to maintain minimum six feet distance from each other, and also ensure that not more than five persons are present at one time at the shop.

These exemptions will be effective from May 4 when the third phase of the lockdown will begin.

On allowing domestic helps to work in red zones, a home ministry official said resident welfare associations should take a call regarding allowing the movement of outsiders. But health protocols will have to be maintained by domestic helps as well as employers, and the responsibility lies with the person who employs maids in case of any mishap. - PTI

HSLC results ...

(Contd from page 1)

Education department sources pointed out that if the schools remain closed up to May 31, altogether 58 days of the academic calendar would be lost. That loss can be made up by forgoing the summer vacation and other holidays and by taking extra classes. But if the schools do not open on June 1, it may be difficult to complete the course for next year's HSLC examination.

Sources said it would not be possible for one state alone to reduce the syllabus for the class X board examination and a decision in this regard would have to be taken for all states. "A large number of students of Assam go outside for studies after the HSLC examination and if Assam alone reduces the syllabus, such students would face serious problems. That is why, the SEBA can take such a decision only if such an advisory comes from the Centre," sources said.

Media playing proactive ...

(Contd from page 1)

Highlighting the agriculture department's role in providing market linkage to the farmers to sell their produce, Sonowal said directives have been given to the department in this regard. He also highlighted the step to take private players on board this time in managing the requirement of essential items and keeping the prices in control.

He said around 49,500 vehicles carrying essential items and people have moved in the State during the ongoing lockdown under the transport department. He also said repairing works of embankments, which were stopped due to the lockdown, have started.

Welcoming the suggestions such as not to convert schools into relief camps for flood-affected people during the forthcoming rainy season which would result in loss of teaching time for students, closing down rural roads in border districts which people take to sneak into the State from outside, COVID-19 testing of police personnel engaged in the field, social distancing and food supply in slums, regular payment of advertising bills due to the media houses, etc., Sonowal said these would help the government in charting the future plan of action.

Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was also present in the meeting, said

that in comparison to worldwide and nationwide mortality and recovery rate of COVID-19 patients, Assam is in a safer position now. He informed that the State government has already developed a strategy to facilitate movement of people of the State stranded at different places across the country giving preference to students, pilgrims and elderly persons and also for providing sustenance to migrant workers of Assam stuck across the country for next three months. He also informed that presently an amount of Rs 4,900 crore is available in the State exchequer in spite of economic slowdown and State government

has decided to release full salary of government employees for the month of June and continue with regular appointment in government departments. Editors and senior journalists representing 47 media houses of the State took part in today's interactive session and offered their suggestions for formulating revival plan of Assam's economy in the post COVID-19 scenario.

State ministers Atul Bora, Phani Bhushan Choudhury, Rihan Daimary, Siddhartha Bhattacharya, Keshab Mahanta, Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna, DG of Assam Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta and senior officials were also present in the meeting.

Assam ...

(Contd from page 1)

"The details of the arrangements made by the government will be made known to the people over phone by Assam Police who will handle the operation. People having own vehicle can apply for passes at assamtransportrelief@gmail.com. Passes will be mailed to them. However, once such people reach the Assam border, they will have to undergo a screening at Srirampur gate.

"The returnees will be issued passes in one of five centres where elaborate medical screening will be done. The passes will be issued for Kokrajhar SAI Complex, Guwahati's Sarusajai stadium, Tezpur, Jorhat or Silchar. The travelers returning in own vehicles will have to drive non-stop to their nearest centre.

"The returnees will be registered at the centre. We may keep people in free quarantine facility or paid quarantine in hotels for which the government will fix rates.

"Those who will be sent to home quarantine will be stamped. Through an online portal, all DCs will know instantly the details of people returning to their districts for follow-up action," the Health Minister said.

Sarma, however, warned that the corona threat is far from over and until there is a vaccine or cure, everyone will have to be extremely cautious.

The State government had received 6.12 lakh missed calls in the helpline opened for financial assistance for stranded people. Going by the figures, the government estimated that some 20 lakh people of Assam are currently in other States. However, once normal activity begins in the green zones from Monday, many might want to rejoin work and not return.

Centre's ...

(Contd from page 1)

"It is an extremely serious situation, akin to the one induced by the coronavirus. We are identifying all the infected areas so that containment zones can be created to check further spread. We are also activating and strengthening the veterinary labs for effective surveillance," he said.

Bora said that the situation would also impact the livelihoods of lakhs of people engaged with piggyery. "Piggyery has been among the most-preferred enterprises in the State that provide livelihood to thousands of families. They are going to face huge loss in such a situation. But we are confident of checking the spread with timely action," he said. The African Swine Fever, which has mortality rates between 90 per cent to 100 per cent, has so far killed over 2,500 pigs in the districts of Dhemaji, Sivasagar, Biswanath, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Jorhat.

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 22nd April, 2020

S.O. 1333(E).- In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/ two lane with paved shoulder/four lane etc.), maintenance, management and operation of Dolabari to Jamuguri NH in the stretch of land from Km 17.300 (NH 37A) to Connecting Km 182.00(NH 52) (DC Office Tezpur Sonitpur) in the district of SONITPUR in the state of ASSAM, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.

Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section(1) of section 3C of the said Act.

Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, Additional Deputy Commissioner in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.

Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final. The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling Dolabari to Jamuguri in the stretch of land from Km 17.300(NH 37A) to Connecting Km 182.00(NH 52) (DC Office Tezpur Sonitpur) in the district of SONITPUR in the state of ASSAM

State : ASSAM District : SONITPUR

Sr. No.	Survey / Plot Number	Type of Land	Nature of Land	Area (In Local Unit)	Area (In Hectare)
Taluk : Tezpur					
Village : Alisinga Uriamguri					
1	118 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.0640000 (Hectare)	0.0640000
2	113/107	Private	B .Faring	0.0340000 (Hectare)	0.0340000
3	114 /107	Private	Agri. Lahi	0.0210000 (Hectare)	0.0210000
4	116/09	Private	B .Faring	0.3220000 (Hectare)	0.3220000
5	12 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.0640000 (Hectare)	0.0640000
6	124/76	Private	B .Faring	0.0800000 (Hectare)	0.0800000
7	125/55	Private	Bari	0.0540000 (Hectare)	0.0540000
8	126 /Government Land	Government	No Class	0.0650000 (Hectare)	0.0650000
9	13 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.0640000 (Hectare)	0.0640000
10	130/10	Private	Agri .Lahi	0. 1420000 (Hectare)	0.1420000
11	132/01	Private	Bari	0.1500000 (Hectare)	0.1500000
12	133/20	Private	Bari	0.0610000 (Hectare)	0.0610000
13	138 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.0640000 (Hectare)	0.0640000
14	143/45	Private	Bari	0. 1074000 (Hectare)	0.1074000
15	145/48	Private	B. Faring	0.0800000 (Hectare)	0.0800000
16	184/2	Private	B. Faring	0.0500000 (Hectare)	0.0500000
17	188/106	Private	B. Faring	0.0400000 (Hectare)	0.0400000
18	09 / Government Land	Government	No class	0.3750000 (Hectare)	0.3750000
19	140/5	Private	B. Faring	0.1 170000 (Hectare)	0.1170000
20	141/58	Private	Bari	0.2820000 (Hectare)	0.2820000
21	142/35	Private	Bari	0.0810000 (Hectare)	0.0810000
22	17 / Govt./ Land	Government	No Class	0.0980000 (Hectare)	0.0980000
23	181 Govt. Land	Government	No Class	0.2140000 (Hectare)	0.2140000
24	189/6	Private	Bari	0.0270000 (Hectare)	0.0270000
25	190/6	Private	Bari	0.1340000 (Hectare)	0.1340000
Village: Purani Alimur					
1	117/53	Private	Bari	0.0230000 (Hectare)	0.0230000
2	123/57	Private	Bari	0.0040000 (Hectare)	0.0040000
3	124/58	Private	Bari	0.0040000 (Hectare)	0.0040000
4	125/59	Private	Bari	0.0140000 (Hectare)	0.0140000
5	65 / Govt.	Government	No Class	1.3860000 (Hectare)	1.3860000
6	66 / Govt.	Private	No Class	0.7140000 (Hectare)	0.7140000
7	66 / Govt.	Government	No Class	0.0400000 (Hectare)	0.0400000
8	71 / Govt.	Government	B. Faring	0.7220000 (Hectare)	0.7220000
9	79/5	Private	Bhal Bari	0.0180000 (Hectare)	0.0180000
10	88/59	Private	Bari	0.0140000 (Hectare)	0.0140000
11	90/ 14	Private	Bhal Bari	0.0200000 (Hectare)	0.0200000
Village: Sotaichapori					
1	127/64	Private	Bhal Bhari	0.2000000 (Hectare)	0.2000000
2	128 / Government Land	Government	No Class	1.4790000 (Hectare)	1.4790000
3	129 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.7490000 (Hectare)	0.7490000
4	130 / Government Land	Government	No Class	0.6720000 (Hectare)	0.6720000
5	134/101	Private	B. Faring	0.0160000 (Hectare)	0.0160000
6	4/125	Private	Bhal Bhari	0.0210000 (Hectare)	0.0210000
Village: Uriamguri					
1	1/7	Private	Bhal Bari	0.1340000 (Hectare)	0.1340000
2	126 / govt.	Government	No Class	0.6720000 (Hectare)	0.6720000
3	194 / govt	Government	No Class	1.3810000 (Hectare)	1.3810000
4	2/8	Private	Bari	0.0410000 (Hectare)	0.0410000
5	205 / Govt.	Government	Faring	0.0210000 (Hectare)	0.0210000
Total				11.1354	11.1354

[F. No. 1321/3A]
Janasanyog/CF/79/20
RAJESH GUPTA, Dy. Secy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Donation by I-T pensioners

GUWAHATI, May 2: The Income Tax Pensioners' Association, NER, Guwahati, has decided to contribute one day's pension to Assam Arogya Nidhi to fight against the COVID-19 outbreak. An amount of Rs 55,000 received from the association members has been deposited in the Assam Arogya Nidhi bank account, stated a press release.

Rhino carcass found

MORIGAOON, May 2: The carcass of an adult rhino was found at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary on Friday. Forest department officials said that the rhino died a natural death and the horn was found intact. There was no involvement of any poacher. — Correspondent

14,000 from Udalhuri stranded

UDALGURI, May 2: The Udalhuri district administration has received information of more than 14,000 youths, mostly workers and students of Udalhuri district, who are stranded outside Assam, and will provide them financial relief of Rs 2,000 each, said Assistant Commissioner Dimple Baruah. Many youths of Udalhuri district, including more than 3,000 are staying in Karnataka, followed by 1,500 in Tamil Nadu, 800 in Maharashtra, 800 in Kerala and many others in West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. — Correspondent

Leopard caged

JORHAT, May 2: A leopard was trapped in a cage with a goat put as bait by the Forest department at No.2 Bamungaon here late on Friday night. An official said the cage was placed after locals complained about the big cat creating havoc by killing cattle and goats. The leopard was a male, about eight years old. The animal will be released inside a forest in the district or nearby. Last month, another leopard which strayed into a village on the outskirts attacked a man first and then took shelter on a rooftop of a house and later injured a forest personnel and also a central police force jawan. The big cat was later killed by the joint police-forest team in self-defence. — Staff Correspondent

Textbooks distributed

NALBARI, May 2: Activists of the Barbhag branch of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) distributed free textbooks to poor students who have been promoted to HS final year by the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council without holding examinations due to the lockdown. The ABVP activists collected used textbooks from students who cleared HS and distributed them among the needy students. The activists moved from house to house and distributed the textbooks among 33 students of Borshimalua, Kalag, Khudra Dingdingi, Ulabari, Moura and Bhanukusi villages. — Correspondent

Scribes distribute relief

DHEMAJLI, May 2: To relieve the hardship during the ongoing lockdown, mediapersons of Dhakuakhana and Ghilamara distributed relief materials among poor and needy families of Ghilamara and Sonari Chapari area of Dhakuakhana. The group of mediapersons included veteran journalist Purna Kumar Chinte, Amrit Paban Bora, Papu Boruah, Naba Kumar Bharali, Atul Boruah, Damodar Boruah and Arun Chamuah. — ANN Service

Donation by Jatiya Vidyalayas

DOOMDOOMA, May 2: The Tinsukia Zila Jatiya Vidyalaya Samannayarakshi Samity, a coordination committee of Jatiya Vidyalayas of Tinsukia district, contributed Rs 71,500 to Assam Arogya Nidhi through the Assam Jatiya Vidyalaya Education Council. A total of 36 Jatiya Vidyalayas of Tinsukia district contributed. The Pragati Sakha of Marwari Yuva Manch, Doomdooma Branch, also distributed masks, gloves, boots and sweets among sweepers of the Doomdooma Municipal Board on Friday. The NSS unit of Doomdooma College also distributed essential commodities among 30 needy families of Rupai Siding. — Correspondent

25,000 masks distributed

MIRZA, May 2: Former Health Minister Dr Kamala Kalita on Friday distributed 25,000 masks among the public at Chhaygaon in view of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Talking to mediapersons, Kalita said a large section of poor people were not aware about COVID-19 and were not using masks while at home or outside, and hence it was necessary to distribute masks to such people for their safety. — ANN Service

Help for players' families

TIHU, May 2: Sushanta Biswa Sarma, president of the Assam Volleyball Association, under the aegis of the Pub Nalbari Coaching Centre, distributed food materials to 80 poor households of players of the coaching centre who have been affected by the lockdown in Jajabari village of Nalbari district. The relief materials consisted of 5 kg rice, 2 kg dal, potato, mustard oil, salt and onion. — ANN Service

Body found

HAFLONG, May 2: The blood stained body of an LP school teacher — identified as Ramakanta Dey (55) — was found near the Jatinga Railway Bridge at Dittakchera under Harangajao Police Station on Friday evening. Dey was working as a teacher in Lower Michikhur LP School in Dittakchera, and lived alone. Police and GRP were informed about the incident since the body was found near the railway bridge. — Correspondent

Food for cops

GUWAHATI, May 2: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSO) Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, through its Guwahati Samithi, distributed lunch packets to 200 police personnel at various locations in Guwahati on April 30, a press release stated. The food packets were received by ADCP Sarmistha Barua on behalf of Assam Police from the campus of Sadhana Nilyam at Joorkukhuri. Police personnel facilitated the distribution by visiting different deployment spots. On May 1, SSSO distributed cooked food to 400 poor persons in areas near the Guwahati Railway Station. While maintaining social distancing and hygiene, SSSO president Satyen Sarma and Sri Sathya Sai Trust's trustee Dr Gakul Das handed over the food packets to police personnel.

AJIT PATOWARY

Finally, the mystery surrounding the disease that has been perturbing pig farmers of Assam has been solved.

The Bhopal-based National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has declared that all pig tissue samples collected by the state and sent to it have tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus.

ASF is highly harmful for the livestock economy and so far there is no treatment available for this disease. Containment measures are its only plausible solutions till date.

The state had collected seven samples from diseased pigs of Pipalguri village of Dhemaji district, Bor-Tamuli 2 village of Biswanath district, Khelowa, Nitai Pukhuri and Kotori villages of Sivasagar district, Gorchuk area of Kamrup (Metro) district and Bor-mukali village of Jorhat district.

However, the samples sent by Arunachal Pradesh to the NIHSAD were either found to be "insufficient for testing" or "Negative for ASF", said the institute, an Office International Des Epizooties (OIE) (or the World Organisation of Animal Health), Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza.

It has declared the Assam

pig samples as ASF positive after conducting the tests "by real-time PCR and nucleotide sequencing".

According to official sources, the ASF has claimed the

Since 2007, the disease has been reported from several countries of Africa, Asia and Europe, in both domestic as well as wild pigs

lives of 2,594 pigs in 330 villages of Dhemaji, Sivasagar, Biswanath, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Jorhat districts till date. With 1,155 cases of death, Sivasagar district recorded the highest mortality figure till date.

Veterinary experts here

are of the opinion that there is no approved vaccine against ASF, unlike the classical swine fever, which is caused by a different virus. Historically, outbreaks of

Pareesh Chandra Sarma described this disease as an "exotic one" and said that the source of spread of this disease was yet to be determined. However, he said that it started in Jonai area, and then due to the lack of awareness among the people, it spread to five other districts.

Dr Sarma also said that this was not at all a zoonotic disease, and there is no possibility of its spread from animals to humans.

The general practice of throwing the carcasses of diseased pigs into the rivers and rivulets, a little bit of delay in imposing restriction on pig movement and sale of pork, the unscientific method of pig

rearing, etc., have been found to be the factors responsible for the spread of this disease.

As preventive measures, he said, containment zones are to be notified taking an area within the one-km radius of the epicentres of the disease for the purpose and pigs falling within this area are to be culled.

Surveillance zones are also to be notified taking the areas of some plausible distance around such containment zones for the purpose of keen observation and preventive measures to check spread of the disease and finally to control it. Assam also needs to strengthen its State Laboratories for a strong and effective surveillance system, said Dr Sarma.



Police personnel from Kokrajhar distributing food items among 300 people from nine villages in Ultughutu near the Guma Reserve Forest in Gossaigaon area. Most of the villagers here work as labourers and are facing starvation as they have been confined inside their houses due to the lockdown. — Photo: Khanindra Nath Das

Watermelon farmers badly hit by lockdown, natural calamities

ANN SERVICE

SUALKUCHI, May 2: The novel coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdown and indefinite ban on entry and exit of vegetables carriers to prevent the spread of the disease have led to a collective loss of lakhs of rupees for watermelon growers of Silguri in Kamrup district, 42 km from Guwahati.

The recent storms that lashed the region also badly damaged their crops, leading to more financial problems for the farmers.

Silguri is famous for the Dhaireswar Temple built during the reign of Ahom king Siva Singha at the foot-hills of Hatimura Hill, which was named after the elephant on the back of whom Bhagadatta the Asur king rode to fight against Pandava in the Kurukshetra battle. The elephant stopped its

movement there.

Silguri is inhabited by poor farmers and people from the Hira community. The farmers along with a number of educated youths have taken up commercial cultivation of watermelon as a livelihood.

Watermelon is a high-yielding crop and within just 70 days, farmers can harvest a huge quantity of crops. This time, the people of the village cultivated watermelon in more than 300 *bighas* of land. But the recent storm damaged around 50 per cent of the watermelon crops.

Moreover, due to the ongoing lockdown, the farmers have failed to transport their produce to the markets situated at Jail Road in Guwahati and other places.

It may be mentioned here that the Islamic month of Ramzan has excellent potential of high sale of watermelon. But the farmer could not

avail this chance.

Gopal Das, a farmer from Satgharia Chupa, said he cultivated watermelon in five *bighas* investing Rs 70,000 with the aim of harvesting 100 quintals. He said he would have earned around Rs 2 lakh by selling his crops. But the storm damaged half of his produce.

Uttam Kalita and Dhan Kalita of Mahakaltol cultivated watermelon in seven *bighas*. But most of the crop was damaged by the storm. They said they were waiting for the government decision on withdrawal of the ban on transportation of vegetables and other crops.

Many farmers like Mukul Medhi, Pulak Thakuriya, Sailen Kalita, Ashwini Medhi, Sanjib Kalita and others said that they have huge outstanding dues, and could only survive if they are able to sell the produce in the market.

Bodofa remembered

CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, May 2: The 30th death anniversary of the father of the Bodos 'Bodofa' Upendra Nath Brahma was observed on Friday at his burial place Tulungapuri, Dotma in Kokrajhar.

ABSU president Dipen Boro, general secretary, Lorence Islary, UPPL president Promod Boro, former Rajya Sabha MP, UG Brahma among others participated in the programme and paid respect to the Bodofa at his statue maintaining social distance.

Speaking on the occasion, ABSU president Dipen Boro said that the Bodos should follow his ideology, philosophy and principles that brought about a new hope for the neglected and downtrodden communities through total revolution.

It may be mentioned here that Bodofa breathed his last on May 1, 1990 at the age of just 34.

Sonowal urges OIL to support State's rural economy through CSR activities

ANN SERVICE

DULIAJAN, May 2: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has asked the country's second highest profit making public sector crude oil and natural gas exploration and production company Oil India LTD (OIL) to take up more Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes with an objective to boost the rural economy of Assam.

At a meeting held on April 30 evening here, Sonowal with a view to observe the crude oil and natural gas exploration activities of OIL during the lockdown period, met the officials of Duliajan- situated field headquarters top officials. In this regard, a meeting was held at the Assam Gas Company Limited (AGCL) headquarters, Duliajan. After meeting OIL and AGCL officials separately, Sonowal told mediapersons that he has urged the OIL to give stress on the rural economy while shaping and enact-

ing the Corporate Social Responsibility schemes of the company. Sonowal asked the OIL to give preference to agriculture, fisheries, horticulture and other agriculture-related activities while implementing CSR schemes in post-lockdown period.

"Self dependency in the agriculture sector only can save the State's economy. Top economists of the State have suggested to us make proper production, procurement and marketing chains of the agricultural products to attain self reliance in economic sector," he said.

For furthering industrial development, Sonowal asked OIL to increase the production of natural gas in the future.

"For industrial development, PSUs like the AGCL, APCL, BVCL, and NTPC Namrup and the tea industry must run without interruption and for that we need increased gas production from OIL," he stated.

Sonowal had a meeting with the OIL officials led by the Resident Chief Executive of the company Dilip Kumar Das.

After the meeting, the CM met the managing director Gokul Chandra Swargiary and other officers and oversaw the proposed activities and targets of the company in the post-lockdown period. As briefed to the media, to give a relief to the tea sector, Sonowal has ordered the AGCL authorities to waive the Minimum Demand Charge of gas bills to 409 tea gardens of the State. Those 409 tea gardens are AGCL consumers. These tea gardens were compelled to stop tea production due to the national lockdown.

Sarbananda Sonowal stated that the AGCL has chalked out an action plan to speed up piped gas connection to 2 lakh domestic consumers in the next three years. On the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) sector, AGCL will establish 100 CNG stations in Assam in the future, Sonowal added.

To fight the pandemic, the officers and workers of AGCL have donated a sum of Rs 17 lakh which covered their two-day salary to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

A documentary featuring the challenges faced while continuing the rigging and production activities of the company during the national lockdown was released at the venue. Planned and executed by the OIL's public affairs department officers Tridiv Hazarika, Jayant Bormodui and Rinku Borah, the six-minute duration documentary titled *Unlocking Potential* was highly praised by Sonowal.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by AGCL Chairman Bolin Chetia, Duliajan MLA Terash Gowa, Tingkhong MLA Bimal Bora, Lahowal MLA Rituparna Baruah, Dibrugarh DC Pallab Gopal Jha, AGCL Vice Chairman Indra Gogoi and Circle officer of Tengkhahat Minaeva Devi Arambam.

Marginal farmers hit by lockdown in Morigaon district

CORRESPONDENT

MORIGAOON, May 2: Following the release of two COVID-19 affected persons of Morigaon district from the MMC Hospital, Guwahati yesterday, Morigaon district went to 'Orange' zone from 'Red' zone yesterday. According to Dr Arun Nath, Incharge Doctor, COVID-19 surveillance group, Lahorighat, 15 persons in the quarantine at Lahorighat Model Hospital were also released yesterday and no fresh COVID-19 case was reported in the district. If no corona positive case is detected till May 15, the district will go to green zone, said Dr Nath.

However, following the countrywide extension of lockdown upto May 17, the poor and marginal farmers and their families have plunged into untold misery. It is an open secret in the district that there has been no long-term compensation measures for those farming families of the district, either from the government side or from any social organisations. Nearly 88 per cent of the total population of the district depends on agriculture, horticulture, piggery, pisciculture and dairy farming. But, since March 24 onward the continuous lockdown has pushed these marginal farmers into an unprecedented worrisome economic situation.

To further worsen the impact, there is no government procurement policy regarding the exchange of green vegetables and horticulture items. As such, hundreds of tonnes of green vegetables, tomatoes, pumpkins, watermelons are rotting in the fields in four agricultural circles namely Bhurbandha, Mayong,

is on the brink of collapse.

Badan Chandra Saikia: a tribute

How touching and inspiring was the way he taught us! How spontaneous and lucid was the language he used when he dealt with George Bernard Shaw, poems like *To a Skylark* by PB Shelley and *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk* by Robert Southey.

I consider myself fortunate to be his student and still recollect the lively image of his classroom even after two and a half decades.

Badan Chandra Saikia left us on April 23, 2020. A scholar of English language and literature, Saikia was born in 1939 in Kabaichuba village of Sipajhar. A meritorious student, Saikia graduated in physics from Cotton College and later pursued postgraduation in English from Gauhati University. We met him first in the classroom of Sipajhar HS and MP School, from where he retired later in 2001 as principal.

Besides having profound knowledge of English language and literature, he also excelled in Assamese language and literature, and contributed many articles both in English and Assamese.



Saikia was a Vaishnavite *pan-dit*, and became the president of the Srimanta Sankardev Sangha, Darrang Zila Samiti, an apex religious organization of the state. In his leadership, we found a scientific and intellectual quality, which motivated many people.

One of the founders of many educational institutions like Bordoulguri High School, Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Bidyapith, Sipajhar Janata College, and Sipajhar Bed College, Saikia's demise is an irreparable loss for the people of Darrang district. He leaves behind his wife, three sons and daughters-in-law, and a daughter.

On the day of his *adyas-raddha* today, we pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul.

— Dr Mantu Hazarika

Next economic package soon; govt steps up efforts to take inputs from ministries

NEW DELHI, May 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has held a series of meetings with key ministers, including Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and top officials of the government to finalise the second economic package targeted at sectors most affected by the lockdown imposed to check COVID-19 spread.

The meetings involving Shah, Sitharaman and other officials of the key economic ministries are taking place for the last few days and the idea is to get inputs on the impact of the current lockdown on different segments of the economy and identify immediate measures that may be required as a relief and revival strategy, sources privy to the developments said.

As part of this effort, Modi had met Shah, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri on Friday. The meeting was also attended by Cabinet

Secretary Rajeev Gauba and the Principal Secretary to the PM.

Meetings were also held with Commerce and MSME ministries on Thursday. The Prime Minister today had a review meeting with the Agriculture Ministry to deliberate on the issues and reforms related to the farm sector.

With the government permitting various economic activities to start from May 4 by dividing the country into red, orange and green zones, the immediate concern is to support specific sectors through a package, so that businesses regain lost ground and economic activities gradually return back to normal. The government is also looking at giving a boost to the investment climate through a series of reform initiatives.

Sources said that the government may take a phased approach in this regard and the next set of stimulus may

have a clear focus on the concerns of the SME segments which have been hit hard due to the COVID-19 outbreak and resultant nationwide lockdown. Revival of small businesses is a key concern for the government.

The Finance Ministry has suggested to the PMO to set up a dedicated fund for micro, small and medium enterprises that could be used to provide both interest-free loans to identified industries as well as capital support required to bring enterprises back in business after the lockdown. The size of the fund would be large to extend help to a large number of entities.

The MSME fund may also be used to provide interest subvention on loans taken by the sector to reduce their burden and allow some of these labour-intensive segments to operate smoothly.

"The contours of the package are being finalised, and the actual timing of

the announcement is still to be worked out. But it would be done soon," said an official source.

Though the next set of package from the government to fight the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak is expected to be much wider to cover the concerns of the India Inc, particularly the worst-hit travel and tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors, sources said that the government may adopt a phased approach to see that only such measures that immediately benefit a sector during the lockdown are announced first before looking at measures to bring the economy back on track after the lockdown.

While talks with the stakeholders have taken place in different sectors and their needs have been analysed by the Finance Ministry, it is felt that the MSMEs have been hit hard at different levels and need support immediately. — IANS



Hamad Berlashker (3rd-L), Chair, Guwahati Chapter of Young Indians, the youth wing of CII, hands over 5,000 cloth masks for GMC workers to Debajyoti Hazarika, Commissioner, Guwahati Municipal Corporation in the presence Siddhartha Goswami, Joint Commissioner, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, in Guwahati on Saturday. (Report on Page 5)

Enough time will be given for restarting flights: DGCA

NEW DELHI, May 2: While extending the suspension of domestic and international passenger flight services from May 3 to 17, barring cargo operations, the civil aviation regulator today said that sufficient time will be given to airlines for restarting operations.

The decision comes a day after the Centre extended the nationwide lockdown with fewer restrictions than the earlier ones.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that sufficient notice and time will be given to airlines for restarting operations. "Howev-

er, it is reiterated that foreign and domestic airlines shall be suitably informed about the opening of their operations whether international or from India or domestic in due course," the DGCA said in a circular.

The Centre had earlier asked all airlines to refrain from booking tickets till a final decision on flight services is taken.

The DGCA had earlier stopped operations of passenger flights on all domestic and international routes since March 25.

At present, thousands of jobs in the aviation sector are at

risk as the government has again extended the lockdown without giving any fiscal relief to the industry.

On Friday, the Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), which operates and manages the IGI airport here in New Delhi, tweeted: "As per the government mandate, all domestic & international scheduled flights operations will continue to remain suspended till 23.59 hours IST of 17th May 2020."

"These restrictions will not apply to cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA." — IANS

Online retailing of Jeep

NEW DELHI, May 2: Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) India today announced the launch of its online 'touch-free' Jeep retail experience in response to continued movement restrictions and social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Prospective customers can book and own a Jeep online without having to physically visit a showroom, and will enjoy the convenience of a test drive and sanitized vehicle delivery at their doorstep, the company said in a statement.

FCA India President and Managing Director Partha Datta said, "Our commitment is to ensure customers can still continue to access Jeep at their fingertips. To ensure health, safety and convenience, we are making the Jeep retail experience as touch-free as possible."

The online booking is being dovetailed into a 360-degree digital retail architecture that will deliver easy-to-use experience for customers, he added. — PTI

Star Cement rejects reports on price hike

GUWAHATI, May 2: Star Cement, a cement brand of the North-east region, has termed the news reports on price hike by the company amidst the COVID-19 pandemic as false.

The reports appeared in a section of the media.

The Star Cement management firmly states that company has not gone for price increase in recent time, especially after the government introduced certain ease in business activities during the ongoing lockdown, a press release said here.

Star Cement stands firmly with the people of Assam and the rest of the North-east in this difficult time in spite of facing huge difficulties caused by the unprecedented and unexpected coronavirus crisis, it added.

Turn crisis into opportunity, Gadkari tells entrepreneurs

NEW DELHI, May 2: In order to boost the morale of the entrepreneurs who have been suffering due to the lockdown, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has been talking to various stakeholders and telling them not to lose hope. Gadkari has been using social media and other means like video-conferencing to reach out to people, entrepreneurs and industry leaders.

Gadkari is even reaching out to foreign students, seeking their suggestions on how to bring the battered economy back on track. He believes only dialogue can solve problems.

According to a top official of the MSME Ministry, Gadkari makes a point in all meetings that there is a need to convert this crisis into an opportunity. "He tries to instil a sense of hope amidst all the gloom. It has positive impact on the stakeholders as it is coming from none other than a minister," the official said.

He held a talk 'Response to global pandemic — Roadmap for India' with students of Indian origin living in 43 countries including Britain, Canada, Singapore and Australia recently. During the talk he appealed to them to play an active part in the fight against the coronavirus and said that the youth have the ability to take the country forward. He asked them to work on innovative ideas in this direction. He also asked them to take advantage of the situation arising from the world's disillusionment with China.

During a recent meet with representatives of Assocham on reviving the MSME sector, Gadkari said that the Japanese government has recommended a special package for its industry to pull out of China and invest elsewhere. Gadkari termed it a big opportunity for India to take advantage of the situation. "There is a need to forge new partnership to establish joint ventures in India to attract global firms. We need to meet the global demand apart from meeting domestic

demand as many companies now want to get out of China."

Gadkari also emphasised the need to lessen the burden of big cities such as Gurugram, Delhi and Mumbai as economic drivers. He said there is a need to create economic and industrial clusters outside the big cities to drive growth.

Gadkari said currently work on 22 expressways is going on at a fast pace. The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is one of them where there is an opportunity of investment in IT parks, logistics and industrial units.

Gadkari has spoken to representatives of FICCI, Assocham, CREDAI and leaders of other business organisations since the lockdown came into force on March 24.

According to ministry officials, Gadkari has reached out to at least 10,000 industry leaders during the lockdown period and has discussed its economic fallout and how to revive the economy post lockdown. — IANS

State refineries stare at grim future

AJIT PATOWARY

All is not well with the State's oil refineries. The adverse impacts of the economic slowdown due to the COVID-19-related lockdown and the failed negotiation between the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia, is gradually seizing them up.

Petroleum experts have attributed the present grim situation concerning the global petroleum industry to the adverse impacts of a precipitous drop in oil and gas prices triggered by a dampened demand for petroleum products. This is the outcome of the COVID-19-related lockdown and the failed negotiation between the OPEC and Russia, they maintain.

Some retired senior executives of the oil refining sector in Guwahati are of the opinion that if the present condition prevails, refineries of the State will have to face serious uncertainties in matters of continuing with their production. State's refineries are now running below their designed capacities. They are now run-

ning between 60 per cent and 65 per cent of their designed capacities, which is not at all ideal for their economic viability.

Though the LPG demand is almost intact due to the demand of the domestic consumers, the demand for petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel has drastically

Nationwide lockdown

gone low. This has increased the cost of production of the refineries, whereas the prices of the products use to remain more or less the same for the refineries. It is hence feared that there will be a big dent in the profitability of the refining sector.

The former senior executives of the refining sector are also of the opinion that the present situation has also been affecting both the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and the Oil India Ltd (OIL). They are facing the adverse impacts of the unprecedented fall in oil prices.

It needs mention here that the State's refineries have the total designed capacity to produce petroleum products to the tune

of 7 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA). But, since the North-east region has a total capacity to produce 4.25 MMTPA of crude, the refineries of the State need additional crude supply from outside.

Since the commissioning of the Numaligarh Refinery, which has the designed capacity to produce 3 MMTPA, this practice is going on, particularly to feed the refineries in Guwahati and Bongaigaon.

Again, the present demand for petroleum products in the NE region is around 4.5 MMTPA and this has made Assam refineries to sell around two MMTPA of oil products to outside buyers.

According to reports, India's crude oil and natural gas production in 2019-20 dropped by 6.1 per cent and 5.2 per cent respectively compared to 2018-19. In March this year, country's crude oil production dropped by 5.5 per cent while production of its natural gas dropped by 14.38 per cent, over the corresponding period of 2019. These reports are based on the data made public by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell of the Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Apps don face masks to promote healthy practices amid COVID-19

NEW DELHI, May 2: Internet companies like Urban Company, MakeMyTrip, Dunzo, HealthifyMe and Zomato are changing their social media handles and app icons to promote wearing of face masks as a hygiene practice amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

ApnaMask initiative — an effort by StartUpVsCOVID (a start-up community with over 1,000 members) — is promoting homemade masks and aims to drive behavioural change to ensure that people wear masks and stay protected as they step out of their homes.

The #ApnaDeshApnaMask campaign was kicked off by start-up industry stalwarts like Rajan Anandan of Sequoia India, Paytm's Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Alok Mittal (Indifi), Vishal Gondal (GoQii) and others. They were later joined by celebrities like Vidya Balan, Dia Mirza, Juhi Chawla, Divya Khosla Kumar, Juhi Parmar, Deepshika Deshmukh, Sonu Sood, Shama Sikander, Preetika Rao and others.

Within a span of two weeks, the initiative has garnered 100 million outreach across digital platforms, including WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The team working on the campaign also reached out to various organisations to support the initiative, especially as parts of the country get ready to come out of the lockdown which has been extended till May 17.

"Urban Company, MakeMyTrip, Dunzo, HealthifyMe, Zomato, Redbus, Ixigo, MoneyTap, MyUpchaar, Bounce, RazorPay, Medanta, WittyFeed, LBB, Porter, Meesho, Daily Hunt, Img, Paytm Games have changed their social media handles while some are changing the app icons as well," a statement said. These brands are also inviting more companies to join the initiative.

"Given the immense response we have received, we will have more brands joining #ApnaMask in this critical initiative. We believe some of these steps will be helpful in building habit-changing behav-

our towards wearing homemade masks," Poonam Kaul, co-founder of ApnaMask, said.

In a separate statement, Crowdera — an online fundraising platform — said it is offering its premium syndicated fundraising technology solutions for free to companies and NGOs working to help the COVID-19-affected individuals, families and health workers.

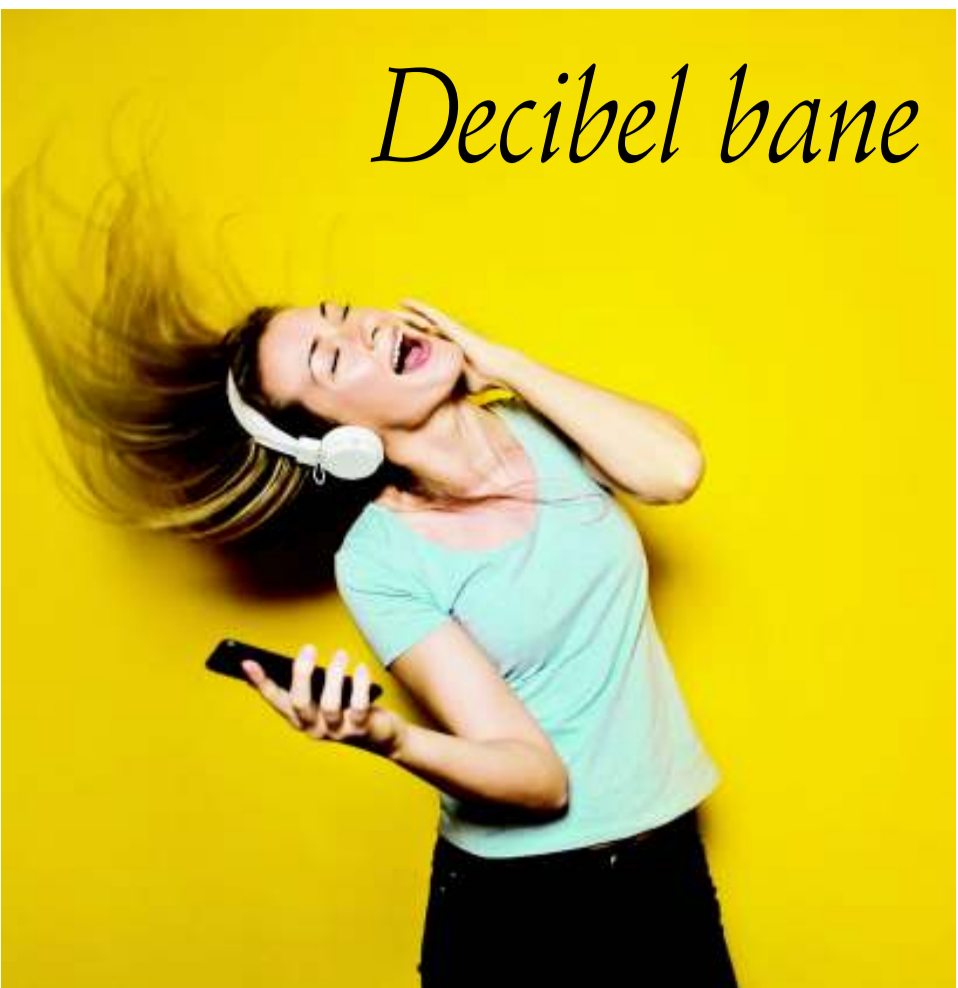
"Crowdera will be extending its support through offering its products and services worth almost \$150,000 (Rs 1 crore) free to organisations aiding the affected... The solution will help corporations and NGOs to quickly syndicate with their own employees, influencers, other foundations, or charity partners to raise funds 10x more than through a regular crowdfunding campaign," it said.

Under this pledge, Crowdera has already extended its support to companies like Rapido, Repos, BYJU'S, SirfTaxi, and Tartl to engage their employees and partners in fundraising for the COVID-affected workforce. — PTI



No. BN.64/2019/						
PRESS NOTICE						
The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Buildings), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bid for the following project under P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam from registered 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	"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/-	12 (twelve) months	Rs. 8,19,156/- for General & Rs. 4,09,578/- for Reserve Categories	E.E. P.W.D., P.C.C. Building Division, Dispur, Guwahati-6	6316/-
Sd/- Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building) Assam Chandmari, Guwahati-3.						
Janasanyog/C/172/20						

No.UWS (T)-1072/2000/Pt-III/					
Corrigendum for e-Procurement Notice 40 OF 2019-20					
It is general information to all the intending, bidders for e-Procurement IFB no. 40 of 2019-20 for the works of "Supply, fitting, fixing, laying, testing & commissioning of clear water pumping main and distribution main of Na-Ali water supply scheme for shifting of pipe lines due to proposed construction of fly over at Na-Ali, Jorhat" which was issued vide letter no. UWS (T)-1072/2000/Pt-III/405/589-595 dated 13-03-2020 for which schedule to be viewed was from 04.03.2020. Due to unavoidable circumstance, new time schedule is as follows.					
Sl.No.	Scheduled	Start Date	Start time	End Date	End time
1	Tender publishing	02/05/2020	16.00 Hrs	-	-
2	Tender download	02/05/2020	16.00 Hrs	09/05/2020	14.00hr
3	Bid submission	04/05/2020	11.00 Hrs	11/05/2020	14.00hr
4	Bid opening,	11/05/2020	15.00 Hrs	-	-
Others conditions will be remain same.					
Sd/- Managing Director Assam Urban Water Supply & Sewerage Board, Guwahati-6					
Janasanyog/CF/77/20					



Decibel bane

Researchers reveal why loud noise is bad for your health

Whether it is loud machinery at work, a busy freeway, a nearby airport or loud music, many people are exposed to high levels of noise, say researchers, adding that exposure to loud noise is not only annoying but also bad for your health.

Large studies have linked noise exposure to various health problems in people.

Now, two new mouse studies provide new insight into how this type of noise exposure can lead to high blood pressure and cancer-related DNA damage.

"Our new data provide additional mechanistic insights into these adverse health effects, especially high blood pressure and potentially cancer development, both leading causes of global death," said study researcher Matthias Oelze from the University Medical Centre of Mainz in Germany.

Published in *The FASEB Journal*, the research found that healthy mice exposed to four days of aircraft noise were more likely to develop high blood pressure.

For mice with pre-established high blood pressure, this noise exposure aggravated

heart damage because of a synergistic increase of oxidative stress and inflammation in the cardiovascular and neuronal systems.

In another study, the researchers observed that the same noise exposure induced oxidative DNA damage in mice. This damage led to a highly mutagenic DNA lesion that was previously associated with the development of cancer in other settings.

They are currently conducting several studies on the health effects of noise, including interactions of pre-established cardiovascular diseases with noise as well as behavioural effects of noise exposure in mice.

"These new findings, together with our other work on noise-associated cardiovascular effects, could lead to a better understanding of how noise influences health," said Oelze.

"This information could help inform policies and regulations that better protect people against diseases related to noise exposure," Oelze noted.

(Source: IANS)

Kids

12:00 Ogy & Cockroaches
14:00 Roll No. 21
15:00 Ogy & Cockroaches
16:00 Roll No. 21

19:00 Ogy & Cockroaches
21:00 Be Cool, Scooby-Do!
22:00 Courage, Cowardly Dog
23:30 Teleshopping

12:30 Super Bheem-Fire...
14:00 Chhota Bheem Chatpat
14:30 Chhota Bheem
15:00 Super Bheem
15:30 Chhota Bheem
16:30 Grizzy & The Lemmings
18:00 Chhota Bheem Chatpat

18:30 Super Bheem...
20:00 Chhota Bheem Chatpat
20:30 Chhota Bheem
21:00 Grizzy & The Lemmings
22:00 Mr. Bean: The Animated
23:00 M.A.D.

Entertainment

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

17:00 Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil...
21:30 Saregamapa Lil Champs

12:00 The King Of Queens
14:00 G.I. Joe: Retaliation
16:00 BattleBots
19:00 Carol's Second Act
19:20 The Unicorn
20:00 SEAL Team
22:00 Love Island UK

11:25 Fear Factor Khatron...
15:40 Khatron Ke Khiladi Jigar
17:20 Naagin Bhagya Ka...
19:00 Vidya

rishtey

12:00 Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham
16:05 Sasural Simar Ka
18:00 Laagi Tujhe Lagan
19:00 Swaragini
20:00 Sasural Simar Ka
22:30 Nishedh
23:10 Sasural Simar Ka

11:00 The Accountant
13:00 Gossip Girl
16:30 Cyril: Viva Magic
17:35 Top Gear
18:15 Duma
20:00 Jeep Bollywood...
20:50 Gossip Girl
21:30 Supernatural
22:10 Ray Donovan
23:05 Withn

12:00 Happu Ki Ultan Paltan
14:00 Laal Ishq
19:00 Raat Ka Khel Saara
21:00 Laal Ishq
23:00 Raat Ka Khel Saara

what a girl wants

11:55 Tezaab
14:45 Moherjo Daro
17:25 Bodyguard
19:55 Hulchul
22:25 Ajabee

11:10 Lake Placid 3
12:45 Rise of the Apes Vinash Ka Aarambh
14:30 Ant-Man and the Wasp
16:30 White House Down
18:55 The Adventurers
20:55 Pete's Dragon
20:50 Antriksha Ka Akraman

12:00 Open Season
12:40 Flashdance
14:20 Old School
16:15 Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous
18:10 Zambaz
18:30 Aeon Flux
21:00 Winter's Tale
22:45 What A Girl Wants

10:50 Kingsman: The Secret Service
13:00 Zootopia
14:40 Mrs Doubtfire
16:40 Mary Poppins Returns
18:50 John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum
20:45 Iron Man
23:00 Predator

11:45 Welcome
14:30 Hatya
17:10 Munna Michael
19:40 Diljale
22:40 Sher E Jigar

10:40 Thugs of America
12:45 Hindi Medium
15:20 Karwaan
17:30 Blackmail
19:55 Piku
22:25 Jeene Nahi Doonga 2

UTV MOVIES

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22:25 Jeene Nahi Doonga 2

Infotainment

12:00 Ultimate Weekends
15:00 Stranger Than Nature
16:00 World's Deadliest
17:00 Hostile Planet

18:00 Wonderfully Weird
19:00 Predator Falls
20:00 Hostile Planet
21:00 Africa's Deadliest
22:00 Night Stalkers
23:00 Wild Hunters

12:00 Modern Dinosaurs
12:40 North America
13:25 The Carnian Hunters
14:10 Masai Mara: The Big Hunt
14:50 Earth: Nature/Our Planet
15:50 India's Wild Tales
16:50 Tasmania: Weird...
17:50 Wildest Africa

18:50 Animal Planet Exclusives
19:50 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
20:50 How Do Animals Do That
21:25 The Lion Kingdom
21:50 Wild Philippines With Nig.
22:50 One Wild Day

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

12:00 Adventure: Snakes in ...
13:00 Adventure: Primal Survivor
14:00 Running Wild With Bear
16:00 Cesar To The Rescue
17:00 Snakes in the City
18:00 Running Wild With Bear
19:00 World's Most Extreme

20:00 Earth Day: 50 Days 50...
21:00 Primal Survivor
22:00 Chain Of Command
23:00 Hidden Gems Of Turkey

11:50 Forged In Fire: Knife/Death
12:50 Car Jackers
13:15 Pawn Stars
13:45 Storage Wars
14:15 Modern Marvels

15:10 OMG! Yeh Mera India
16:10 Forged In Fire: Knife/Death
17:05 Storage Wars
17:30 Shipping Wars
18:05 Magician Impossible
19:00 Leupu & Pitbull
20:00 Modern Marvels
21:00 The Food That Built...
23:00 Find Your Great Britain

Regional

11:00 Assamese news
11:30 Assamese news
12:00 Mid Day Live
13:00 Assamese Feature Film
16:30 Discussion Show (R)
17:30 Guwahati Bishesh
18:00 Guwahati Live
18:30 Breaking @ 8:30
19:00 Assamese Prime Time
20:00 Discussion Show (R)
21:00 Kotha Barta
21:30 Talk Time
22:00 Live at 10
22:30 Noixo Guwahati
23:00 Noixo Batori

07:45 Pratham Xongbad
14:00 B'rollr Headline
16:00 Abellri Khabar
16:30 Superfast Prime Time100
17:00 City18
18:00 Prime Time18
19:00 Dintur Shironam
20:00 Abellri Khabar
21:30 Prasankol
22:00 North East Scan
22:30 Noixo Xironam

15:00 Chah Gachar Maje Maje
15:30 Yuba Darpan
16:00 Abellri Batori
16:05 Tezawini (Epi-65)
16:30 Geetmala
17:00 Nimishote Batori
17:02 Rang Biong
17:30 Rupalai Dhou
18:00 Dharababik
18:30 Batori
18:45 NE News

NEWS LIVE

11:00 ICC Champions Trophy
18:30 IPL Hls
19:00 ICC CT Hls
19:30 ICC Cricket World Cup Hls
20:00 Vivo IPL Hls
21:00 ICC Cricket World Cup Hls
22:00 Vivo IPL Hls
23:00 Football United Special
23:30 Best of ICC CWC Hls

12:00 Best of Serie A
12:30 WWE BlockBusters
15:30 The Olympic: Unforgettable...
16:00 WWE Raw
18:00 WWE BlockBusters
20:00 WWE BlockBusters
23:00 Best of Serie A

STAR MOVIES

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Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Sunday, May 3, 2020:

Insightful, clever and charming, you create a winner of a year. New financial opportunities appear in May, August and December. Make choices and pursue goals on Fridays, your lucky day each week. If single, you postpone the decisive action needed to ensure success in love. If attached, you, who place a lot of demands on your partner, decide to ease up, and romantic bliss ensues. CAPRICORN makes their own decisions.

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ A former physical complaint manifests itself again, mainly due to stress. You are so brave and you've kept it in for so long. But today, find time to take care of yourself. Good news comes your way, in financial form. Tonight: Take it easy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Children are the happy focus of the day. After a few nights of restless sleep, brilliant ideas abound. Fresh personal starts are indicated. Expect to be doing a lot of brainstorming. A creative project will go very well. Tonight: Play more with the children.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Today finds you redecorating your home. Moods are high, and in keeping with your already expansive way, rather overindulgent. There's nothing small or petty about the way you decorate, especially not now. You go all out. Tonight: Celebrate with a wonderful dinner.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You seem to be doing a lot of thinking, talking and local running around. Naturally analytical, you use this period profitably by reexamining plans or ideas and discarding whatever or whomever is no longer valuable. This is particularly advantageous for you writers. Tonight: Early sleep.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You feel like buying, and could go a bit overboard. Luxury items have a very strong appeal. However, today's aspects are not good for large-scale spending, as you will most likely have to return what you purchase. Tonight: Distract yourself with a beloved movie.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Your personal magnetism is high, and you attract the attention of a VIP. But be careful. You get in over your head, and conflict may accompany an immense sex appeal. Do not use others, nor let yourself be used. Tonight: The emphasis continues on you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Take care of yourself mentally or physically since you could find yourself more rundown than usual. Sleep, meditate and think. You begin to find your thoughts deepened and intensified as you dig for answers with vigorous determination. Tonight: Avoid power struggles with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Communication and enthusiasm from others thrill you today. The focus is on friendship and group activities that you follow online. Accept the many invitations that come your way. You feel more popular than you have in some time. Tonight: Flaunt yourself, Scorpio-style.

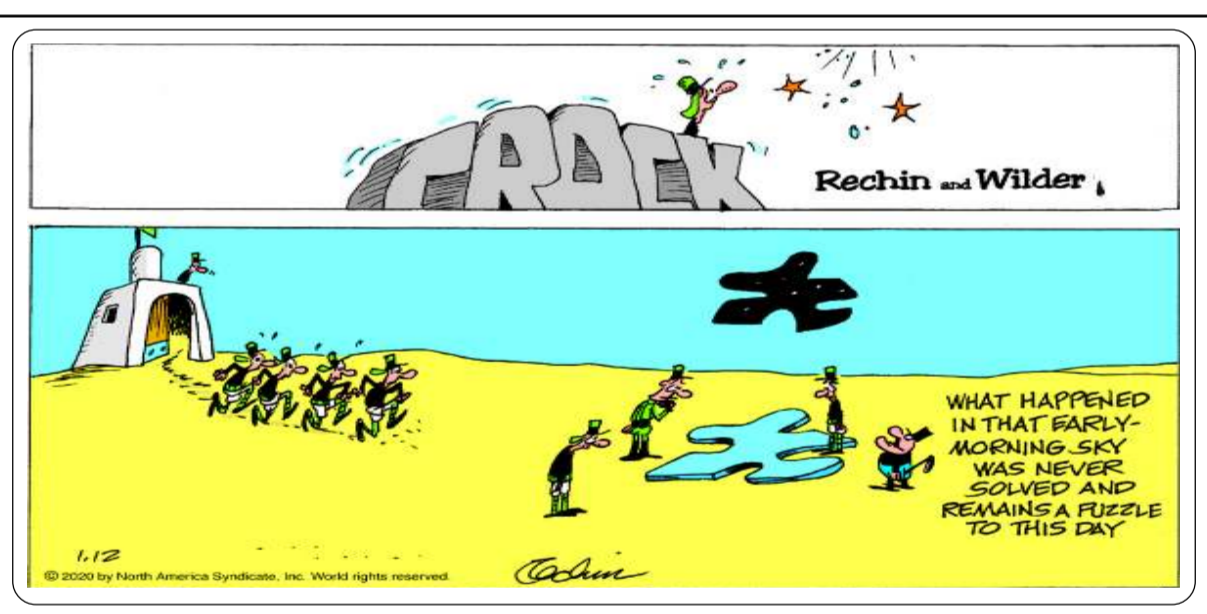
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Today emphasizes fun and good times, particularly with an elderly relative. Make sure you check in and see that everything is all right. Try not to let minor hassles at the workplace upset your equilibrium. Co-workers seem to be in an uproar. Tonight: Take off.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ You seem to have a case of wanderlust today. As you cannot go on a real vacation, take a virtual one. The yearning will also be quenched by browsing through travel books or even just calling a long-distance pal. Tonight: Spend time with a child.

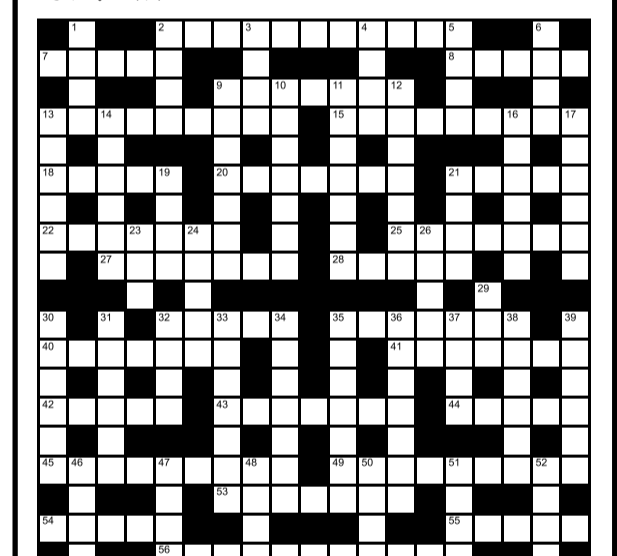
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Joint income improves today, although there may be a few disagreements with your partner along the way. Obtaining loans is favored, but some might feel unduly pressured to make a financial decision. You need to do your best balancing act. Tonight: Play nice.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ A new friendship might be found with a fiery, communicative person. You are likely to share similar outlooks and will learn from each other. Watch out, however, for domestic or romantic discord at home. If attached, your mate is volatile. Tonight: Relax.

Thought for the day
It is much easier to become a father than to be one.
- KENT NERBURN



Tribune SUNDAY CROSSWORD - 1129



Across

2 Done on purpose (11)
7 Protect (5)
8 Legally sound (5)
9 English cheese (7)
13 Holds dear (9)
15 Cheerful consent (9)
18 Helicopter propeller (5)
20 Tremble uncontrollably (7)
21 Woodland deity (5)
22 Computer screen (7)
25 Taught the ropes (7)
27 Buying and selling? (7)
28 Not our (5)
32 Excavated or unearthed? (3,2)
35 Staking or risking (7)
40 Greek storage jar (7)
41 Cattle farms (7)
42 More chilly or colder (5)

43 Explanatory drawing (7)
44 Everyone join in (mus.) (5)
45 Lowest female singing voice (9)
49 All inclusive, none excluded (9)
53 Ballroom dance (7)
54 Deceptive move (5)
55 Radioactive inert gas (5)
56 Of the highest order (11)

Down

1 Great in quantity (4)
2 South Indian snack (7)
3 Italian noble family (4)
4 Double reel (4)
5 Roman 57 (4)
6 Jobs for musicians (9)
9 Ex-P.M. Lal Bahadur ___ (7)
10 Publishing (7)
11 Neptune's fork (7)
12 Give an account (7)

13 Google browser (6)
14 Scope (6)
16 Taking food (6)
17 Long pace (6)
19 Duty-roster (4)
21 Fight (4)
23 Annoy (3)
24 Small (5)
26 Lasso (5)
29 Mandela's org. (3)
30 Lunatic (6)
31 Alternative (6)
32 Austere (4)
33 Tolkien's wizard (7)
34 Self-contradictory proposition (7)
35 Lodger (7)
36 Brass instrument (7)
37 This month, in short (4)
38 Poor quarter (6)
39 Harden, turn into bone (6)
46 Do as directed (4)
47 Sticking places (4)
48 Ripped (4)
50 Unit of electrical potential (4)
51 Time long gone (4)
52 Adverse fate (4)

HEALTH CAPSULES®

by Bron Smith

WHAT IS THE BRAIN MADE OF?

MY HUSBAND'S BRAIN IS 15% WATER AND 25% MUSH.

THE HUMAN BRAIN CONTAINS NO MUSCLE, UNLIKE THE REST OF THE BODY. IT COMPRISES BILLIONS OF NERVE CELLS AND CONTAINS ABOUT 75% WATER. THERE ARE ALSO ABOUT 100,000 MILES OF BLOOD VESSELS THAT CARRY OXYGEN AND NUTRIENTS TO YOUR BRAIN.

Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic nature.

SOLUTION TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD - 1129

50 Volt, 51 Ore, 52 Doom, 53 Cossiff, 54 Obey, 55 Paradox, 56 Boarder, 57 Trumpet, 58 Ghetto, 59 Gadfield, 60 Paradox, 61 Boarder, 62 Maria, 63 Option, 64 Don, 65 24 Ounc, 66 Rialta, 67 ANC, 68 30 Stride, 69 Flora, 70 Spar, 71 K, 72 Chromo, 73 Extent, 74 Eating, 75 Issuing, 76 Tident, 77 Nerrate, 78 Obeo, 79 Lvt, 80 Gigs, 81 Shastri, 82 Down, 83 Much, 84 Ill, 85 3 size, 86 don, 87 Superlative, 88 53 Foxlot, 89 Falm, 90 55 Ra- 91 44 Tull, 92 Contralto, 93 Every- 94 41 Fanche, 92 Icter, 93 Diagram, 94 Dng up, 95 Bething, 96 Amphor, 97 Training, 98 Trading, 99 Monitor, 100 der, 101 Satri, 102 Monitor, 103 15 Headness, 104 Rictor, 105 Stnd- 106 Vaild, 107 Sillion, 108 Christes, 109 2 international, 110 Guard,



Farmers spraying pesticide in a paddy field at Alimur Dangdhara, in Dhakuakhana on Saturday. — UB Photos

3 die after consuming mushroom

ANN SERVICE

SONARI, May 2: Three members of a family, including a 14-year-old girl of Bhogbari village under Sapekhati Police Station died after consuming poisonous mushroom on Friday.

Rikheswar Bora (34), his wife Huwala Bora (32), daughter Himadri (14) and son Debojit (9) consumed wild mushroom on April 28. Rikheswar, his wife and daughter died on Friday at Assam Medical College and Hospital in Dibrugarh, while son Debojit recovered as he consumed the poisonous mushroom in small quantity.

13 under home quarantine in Bajali

ANN SERVICE

PATACHARKUCHI, May 2: As many as 13 persons were kept under home quarantine here in Bajali subdivision from Friday evening.

According to reports, all of them are associated with Kaberi Dairy Society of Nityananda area. They were locally selling milk and milk products, including sweets in Bajali area in a vehicle.

It may be mentioned that the step has been taken by the administration following information of selling their products to one person who is a brother of Rudra Barua, a medical staff of Bongaigaon. Barua is at present under quarantine in Bongaigaon hospital as a coronavirus positive case.

Food packets, masks distributed

ANN SERVICE

PATACHARKUCHI, May 2: Poor and aged artistes related to mobile theatre and other fields were provided mask and packets of relief materials today at their doorstep by senior advocate Giridhar Choudhury. He informed that he distributed relief materials to 25 selected artistes of Bajali subdivision today. It may be mentioned here that the advocate had already distributed relief materials to more than 200 people of the locality.



Vice chairman of AMTRON, Ritu Baron Sarma distributing free face masks among needy people, at Paruya near Tezpur on Friday. — UB Photos

Advocate held, Dibrugarh bar body condemns move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 2: The police have arrested Vijay Pandey, a lawyer of Dibrugarh Bar here in connection with Dibrugarh Police case no. 571/20 u/s 20(ii) (c)/29 NDPS Act pertaining to a drug racket unearthed on March 23 where about 13 kgs of ganja was seized from near Banipur Railway Station.

According to police, the vehicle which was used to carry out the drug deal belonged to lawyer Pandey. Police had arrested alleged peddlers Asif Khan, Ayush Tomar and Arun Sharma on March 23. Police said that the lawyer further went out of his way to take up the bail petition of the accused arrested earlier by side-lining another lawyer after the court order was passed. The lawyer is under judicial custody now.

However, the family members and Dibrugarh Bar Association here told newsmen that the vehicle used in the drug deal was sold away nine months back by Vijay Pandey. They produced the affidavits and documents of sales to claim that the advocate was no more the

owner of the vehicle. They said that only the transfer process of the registration certificate has been delayed. "In spite of being aware of these facts, what compelled the police to arrest him? If the police can arrest anyone at will, we admit that we are insecure now. We are of the opinion that Vijay Pandey has become a victim of the corrupt system as he was vocal against injustice and kept fighting against all sorts of corruptions," said advocate Ajit Borgohain, president, Dibrugarh Bar Association.

Satyabrata Sharma, Secretary, Dibrugarh Bar Association said that the way Vijay Pandey was arrested is unacceptable to the lawyers' fraternity. "We know lawyer Vijay Pandey. Police could have interrogated him even without arresting him. He is not someone who would go on hiding. He has been vocal against all sorts of injustice and corruption. He was still in the court at the time of his arrest. His arrest is unwarranted. Even the hard-core criminals are not arrested the way lawyer Vijay Pandey was arrested," said advocate Sharma.

Task force formed to prevent mysterious pig disease

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, May 2: In the wake of sudden death of pigs due to a mysterious disease in different parts of the State, the Hailakandi district administration has constituted a district-level task force to prevent the disease. An order constituting the committee was issued by Deputy Commissioner Keerthi Jalli on Tuesday.

A 10-member task force headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Health, as chairman would monitor the implementation of the guidelines issued by the State and Central governments to prevent the outbreak of the un-

natural death of pigs in the district.

It will also prepare a district action plan to counter the reported mysterious disease and adopt containment measures accordingly. The District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer, who is the member secretary of the task force, would convene regular meetings in consultation with the chairman to take stock of the situation and to adopt necessary preventive measures to contain the disease.

The veterinary authorities here are on a massive vaccination drive of pigs against classical swine fever in Alagapur, Hailakandi, Lala, Katli-

cheria and other parts of the district. Of the total 2,561 pigs in the district, 482 have been vaccinated. The district received 700 vaccines from the State Veterinary authorities. According to official figures, around 2,000 pigs have died in Dhemaji, North Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar and Jorhat because of the disease.

The Veterinary department is still waiting for the sample results from the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIH-SAD), Bhopal, whether the mysterious disease afflicting the pigs in Assam is that of African Swine Fever.

Fogging ops begin in Hailakandi

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, May 2: Fogging operations have begun in Hailakandi municipal areas in view of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE). Disclosing the information, Chief Medical and Health Officer (Communicable Diseases), Dr Ramesh Chandra Dwivedy said that the fogging operations under the National Vector Borne Disease Control Pro-

gramme would be carried in all the 16 wards under the Hailakandi Municipal Board from May 2 to 19.

Dr Dwivedy urged the residents of Hailakandi municipal areas to keep their doors, windows, ventilators and other air passages of their homes closed and to cover the food commodities during the fogging operation. He said the fogging operations fixed for each ward on a particular day may change due to vagaries of weather.

All COVID-19 random samples from Dhubri dist test negative

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, May 2: In a bid to find out possible coronavirus infected patients in Dhubri district, other than those linked with Nizamuddin and Athgaon religious congregations, random samples for COVID-19 tests were collected on April 26. Fortunately, results of all the samples have turned out to be negative.

A total of 158 samples for COVID-19 tests were collected from Dhubri, Bilasipara and Chapar area from their containment zones. Talking to this corre-

spondent, the Joint Director of Health, Dhubri, Sayed Imdadullah said, "Results of all these random tests have arrived and they have all turned out to be negative."

It was also informed that the Health department collected the samples randomly at civil hospitals and BPHCs located in their respective areas.

It was also informed by the Joint Director that health workers had requested the people from these containment areas to get their samples tested and many people came out voluntarily. He also added that they have picked up vol-

unteers cluster-wise from the containment zones for collecting the samples for COVID-19 testing.

In the district as on Saturday, 5073 persons are in home quarantine and 202 persons are in mass quarantine centres.

It may be informed here that till Saturday as many as 920 samples have been collected for COVID-19 tests, out of which results of 500 tests have arrived. Out of these 500, 495 are COVID-19 negative and 5 are COVID-19 positive, while results for 420 samples are still awaited.

Man kills drug addict son, arrested

CORRESPONDENT

BONGAIGAON, May 2: A person killed his drug addict son after a quarrel near hotel Kanishka in Bongaigaon town on Friday night.

The deceased has been identified as 23-year-old Karnab. He started taking drugs seven years back when he was studying in Class XII at Pathsala in Barpeta district.

His father Puranjay Nath (48) is a small trader who lives near Bongaigaon Police Station in the town. Karnab assaulted him demanding Rs 2 lakh for his expenditure on Friday night and ran away from home.

Puranjay chased his son and killed him with a *khukri* at around 8:30 pm and came back home. Later, some local residents spotted the body and informed the police. Karnab's younger brother came to the spot and identified the body.

Police reached Karnab's house and arrested his father Puranjay after which he confessed to the crime. A murder case has been registered against Puranjay.

"It's a murder case and we have taken him in three-day remand for further interrogation after he was produced before Bongaigaon court today," Bongaigaon Superintendent of Police Singha Ram Mili said.

Food items distributed

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 2: Reaching out to needy people in rural pockets of Assam, the North East Diocesan Social Service Society (NEDSSS), Guwahati distributed food and essential items among 80 families of Mohkhuti, Japrajan in Karbi Anglong on May 1 and May 2. The initiative was supported by Father Varghese Velickakam of the NEDSSS.

From the organization, Paschal Ekka and Avinash Toppo and Lilymaxima Ekka distributed the relief material among the families.

OBITUARY

Dibakar Saikia



CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, May 2: Dibakar Saikia, a retired administrative officer of the State government died on Thursday morning at his residence situated at Rupbon here. He was 77.

Saikia, who had joined the Assam Civil Service (ACS), was later promoted to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and served in various posts of the State government. He retired from service in 2004 and settled at Rupbon here.

He leaves behind his wife and three daughters. His death has been widely mourned in the area.

Surveillance, vaccination needed to check swine fever

CORRESPONDENT

KAZIRANGA, May 2: Concern has been raised in many scientific deliberations over the recovery of many carcasses of pigs near the bank of rivers in some parts of Assam. It has been suspected that the cause of death of so many pigs within a short period of time might have been due to the infection caused by African Swine Fever.

Speaking exclusively to this correspondent, Dr Kunal Sharma, a senior Professor of Veterinary College of Khanapara, Guwahati said that it was very important to keep the surveillance focus on the fringe areas and villages near any Protected Areas

(PA) and other national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the State to check any possible infection of swine fever. He said that if any domestic animal including pigs gets infected with swine fever, then there are chances of transmission of this infection from domestic to wild animals through contact sources.

Dr Sharma suggested that comprehensive vaccination of domestic animals including pigs should be done in fringe areas and other such villages to check any possible infection of swine fever and its transmission to wild animals.

He informed that definitely the government would take a positive step to check infection of swine fever, which is a

virial disease.

Director of Kaziranga National Park cum Tiger Reserve P Shiva Kumar informed that some carcasses of pigs had been recovered in Gohpur side and necessary action had been initiated to protect wild animals of Kaziranga National Park. He informed that necessary measures were being put into place including logistic matters for the monsoons season and subsequent floods in Kaziranga. He said steps had been taken to ensure that corridors of wild animals in and around Kaziranga National Park remain free for smooth movement of wild animals including rhinos during floods in Kaziranga National Park.



People buying fruits from a vendor at Choladhara Tiniali area of AT Road of Jorhat, on Saturday. — Photo: Wasim Rahman

Results of drawing contest on COVID-19 declared

OUR BUREAU

DIBRUGARH, May 2: The results of a State-level drawing competition titled, 'Creative Minds Drawing Competition', organised by Dibrugarh University Research Scholars' Association (DURSA) and United Hands For Social Advancement (UHSA), an NGO based in Sonitpur with an objective to create COVID-19 awareness among the masses and to engage people in some positive task during this lockdown period, were declared today.

The participants had to draw at home, based on the theme 'COVID-19', and submit the same through e-mail or WhatsApp. The last date of submission was April 7. Nakul Neog, general secretary of DURSA, claimed that the organisers received about 629 entries in three different groups (Group A: 226 entries; Group B: 278 entries and Group C: 125 entries). The organizers said they were enthused by the response from the participants.

The results were declared today based on the evaluation received from 17 evaluators from varied areas of work and expertise and the guidelines of the competition.

For Group A (Playschool to Class 3), 1st

position was secured by Louis Boruah of Class 3 of Lakshminath Bezboruah Sishu Bhawan LP School, Sivasagar; 2nd position was secured by Shrijani Baruah, Class 2 of Delhi Public School, Dibrugarh and the 3rd position was bagged by Ali Khan, Class 3 of the same school.

In Group B (Class 4 to 7), 1st position was secured by Saif Ahmed, Class 4 of Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Golaghat; 2nd position went to Miss Violina Boruah, Class 6 of Sivasagar Govt HS and MP School, and 3rd position was achieved by Barbee Boruah, Class 6 of Little Flower HS School, Dibrugarh.

In the senior Group C (Class 8 to 10), Prayashi Deka, Class 8 of Little Flower HS School, Dibrugarh bagged the 1st Position while Antariksha Chetia, Class 9 of BVFC Model HS School, Namrup secured the 2nd Position and 3rd position was secured by Shahid Ridad Hassan, Class 8 of Don Bosco HS School, Dibrugarh.

The organizers also informed that all the winners will be informed personally for prizes and certificates, provided once the regulations of COVID-19 lockdown gets relaxed. The organizers congratulated all the winners and their guardians/teachers for their participation.

Action against illegal fish traders demanded

ANN SERVICE

DULIAJAN, May 2: The All Chutiya Students' Union Duliajan unit has alleged breach of Assam Fisheries Rules, 1953 and Assam Fisheries (Amendment) Rules 2005 in Duliajan area by some opportunistic business vendors.

The Duliajan unit of the stu-

dent body today submitted a memorandum to Dibrugarh District Commissioner requesting close monitoring of the issue. In the memorandum signed by Duliajan unit president Manoj Chutiya, working president Rituraj Bora and general secretary Hemanta Chutiya, the organization claimed violation of the fish-

eries laws as some vendors are openly doing business of local fishes in different parts of Duliajan constituency. "Some opportunistic traders are openly dealing in fishes measuring 7 to 14 centimetres in size without caring for the directive of the administrative machinery," the student body stated in the memorandum.

MLS allows individual workouts

NEW YORK, May 2: Major League Soccer players can begin voluntary individual workouts on team outdoor training fields starting on Wednesday under coronavirus health protocols where government shutdown laws permit, the league announced.

The move marks the first small step toward resuming the 2020 MLS season, which was halted after only two weeks due to the deadly virus outbreak.

A league-wide moratorium on small group and full team training sessions remains in place through May 15.

The MLS move comes after the NBA announced it would allow players to conduct solo workouts at team facilities starting next Friday where allowed under stay-at-home laws. — AFP

SAA arrange online training

GUWAHATI, May 2: During the current lockdown period, Sports Authority of Assam (SAA) is carrying video messages featuring prominent current as well as ex-sportspersons and coaches on how to remain fit while staying at home and what can be done for maintaining and enhancing sports specific skills.

Elite athletes are demonstrating the exercises they have been doing at home. Sportspersons and coaches are also creating awareness about what precautionary measures should be taken to guard against coronavirus.

SAA's coaches are also taking coaching sessions online through Webinars.

The videos can be seen on the YouTube channel, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook page of Sports Authority of Assam. Sportspersons and coaches who have so far appeared include Hima Das (athletics), Hriday Hazarika (shooting), Lovelina Borgohain (boxing), Ankushita Boro (boxing), Jamuna Boro (boxing), Gilbertson Sangma (football), Elvis Ali Hazarika (swimming), Shivangi Sarma (swimming), Tayebun Nesa (athletics) and Nipon Das (athletics coach), stated a release.

Chess coaching of GCA

GUWAHATI, May 2: Guwahati Chess Academy (GCA) is continuing its activities through online chess tournament and coaching during lockdown period.

Students can learn chess without coming to the academy. Guwahati Chess Academy started a new batch for beginners, intermediate and advance players from this month. Coaching will be imparted by Pranab Kumar Nath certified coach by World Chess Federation and All India Chess Federation. Apart from the online classes the Academy also conducting an online chess tournament among chess players.

Serie A teams set to defy govt and return to training

MILAN, May 2: Italy's 20 Serie A clubs have reiterated their unanimous desire to complete the season as the northern Emilia-Romagna region became the first to open the way to training despite government restrictions.

An emergency Lega Serie A assembly via video of the top-flight clubs took place after Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora this week said the chances of restarting were "increasingly narrow".

League president Paolo Dal Pino stated after the meeting

"his openness to a dialogue with the government from a constructive and collaborative perspective, obtaining on this position the full agreement of all the clubs."

Spadafora has warned that the government will call time on the season which has been suspended since March 9 if the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) fails to convince them on its health and safety protocol. An FIGC meeting slated for May 8 could be decisive.

Meanwhile, the Emilia-Romagna region on Friday gave



permission for local clubs, including top-flight sides Bologna, Parma, SPAL and Sassuolo, to resume training in sports centres from May 4 if they wished to do so. Emilia-Romagna regional president Stefano Bonaccini has agreed to allow "professional sportspeople to train individually, in compliance with social distancing rules and without any gatherings in closed-door structures."

Southern giants Napoli are also planning to return to training as their safety proposals have received the backing of

local authorities.

Friday's league meeting also addressed the issue of TV rights, but no resolutions were adopted concerning broadcasters Sky, DAZN and IMG, with a final payment estimated at 340 million euros (\$370 million) for the current season, due to be paid in May.

FIGC president Gabriele Gravina has said that calling time would be "the death of Italian football", predicting losses of over 800 million euros in TV rights, sponsors, ticketing and marketing. — AFP

Premier League re-states commitment to finish season

LONDON, May 2: Premier League clubs have reconfirmed their commitment to finish the 2019/20 season subject to coronavirus restrictions being lifted in Britain despite fears expressed by players.

The English top flight faces an eye-watering estimated loss of around £1 billion (\$1.25 billion) if no more football is played due to the global pandemic.

Playing the 92 remaining games behind closed doors would mitigate that loss, avoiding the need to repay hundreds of millions to broadcasters.

But the Premier League faces huge logistical difficulties in its attempts to return to action, with Britain one of the countries worst-hit by COVID-19 as the number of deaths passed 27,500.

The league and clubs discussed possible steps towards resuming the season at a meeting on Friday.

"The league and clubs are considering the first tenta-

tive moves forward and will only return to training and playing with government guidance, under expert medical advice and after consultation with players and managers," the Premier League said in a statement.

Brighton chief executive Paul Barber said on Thursday that the idea of not playing matches home and away was a "further imperfection" on top of games being behind closed doors.

The British government is due to review a nationwide lockdown on May 7 and Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised on Thursday to provide a "roadmap" towards easing restrictions.

Liverpool are on the brink of their first league title for 30 years with a 25-point lead at the top of the table.

However, the Premier League is keen to avoid potential legal challenges over the awarding of much more tightly contested European places, relegation and promotion if the season cannot be completed.

Paris Saint-Germain were declared Ligue 1 champions on Thursday after French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced sport could not resume before September. — AFP



"The clubs reconfirmed their commitment to finishing the 2019/20 season, maintaining integrity of the competition and welcomed the government's support."

The league reportedly informed clubs that matches will have to be played at up to 10 neutral venues for the season to be completed.

Tokyo Olympics will definitely be held next year: Batra

NEW DELHI, May 2: IOC member and IOA president Narinder Batra on Saturday said that the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics will "definitely" be held next year, amid concerns over staging the mega event before a COVID-19 vaccine is found.

Some eminent scientists and doctors have expressed doubts on the holding of the Tokyo Olympics if a vaccine is not found by then. Even the Japan Medical Association president said it would only be possible for the Olympics to go ahead in July 2021 if the infections were under control, not only in Japan, but globally.

International Olympic Committee's (IOC) coordination commission for the Tokyo Olympics, John Coates of Australia had, however, disagreed with suggestions that a vaccine for COVID-19 is needed to hold the Games.

While addressing the Spe-

cial General Body Meeting of the Athletics Federation of India, which was held online, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief Batra said, "Don't go by what is being said that Olympics may not be held next



year. Tokyo Olympics will definitely be held next year.

"I am keeping in touch with reliable sources, interacting with important fora in world of sport. So, Olympics are happening next year.

"I believe there will be

some treatment (of coronavirus) by September or October this year. We (India) have to plan ourselves thinking that Olympics will be held."

Batra was elected as president of International Hockey Federation (FIH) in November 2016 and became an IOC member in June last year. He has been at the helm of IOA since December 2017.

He said his tenure as FIH chief has been extended till June next year as the elections scheduled to be held in October this year has been postponed to June next year in view of the unprecedented situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Batra also said some 140-odd National Olympic Committees were to hold their elections within two-three months of the original (2020) date of Tokyo Olympics and they have been allowed by the IOC to hold the polls next year. — PTI

US women soccer team's equal pay case ruled out

LOS ANGELES, May 2: A federal judge dismissed the United States women's soccer team's bid for equal pay, rejecting claims the players had been underpaid in a crushing defeat for the reigning world champions.

In a 32-page ruling, Judge Gary Klausner of the US District Court for Central California in Los Angeles tossed the women's claim of pay discrimination, ruling in favour of the United States Soccer Federation.

Klausner did allow the women's case for unfair treatment in areas such as travel, housing and medical support to proceed to trial, set for June 16 in Los Angeles.

But the judge said the equal pay claims — the central plank of the case — had been dismissed because there was evidence the women had turned down an offer to be paid along the lines of the US men's team.

"The history of negotiations between the parties demonstrates that the WNT rejected an offer to be paid under the same pay-to-play structure as the MNT, and the WNT was willing to forgo higher bonuses for benefits, such as greater base compensation and the guarantee of a higher number of contracted players," Klausner wrote.

"Accordingly, plaintiffs cannot now retroactively deem their CBA (collective bargaining agreement) worse than the MNT CBA by reference to what they would have made had they been paid under the MNT's pay-to-play terms structure when they themselves rejected such a structure," he said.

The US women were left stunned by their defeat on the pay issue. The women had been seeking back pay of \$66 million under the Equal Pay Act. — AFP

England tour of SL rescheduled

COLOMBO, May 2: England's Test tour of Sri Lanka, which could not be completed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has been rescheduled to January next year, claims SLC CEO Ashley de Silva.

England had spent around 10 days in Sri Lanka in March and played a warm-up match before the tour was called-off due to the coronavirus outbreak. It was supposed to be a two-Test series as part of the World Test Championship.

"We are in the process of rescheduling the tours that have been postponed. England has been already rescheduled for the month of January next year but the dates have not been finalised," de Silva told Daily News.

"At the same time, we are also looking at exploring the possibility of rescheduling postponed tours and looking

at the windows which are available and alternatives too.

"South Africa is one of the tours which we are looking at rescheduling. We are engaged in discussions with the member countries and see how it can be planned out."

However, England are scheduled to tour India in January for a five-Test series, so, it remains to be seen how the scheduling will work out.

All cricketing activity has come to a halt due to the pandemic, throwing the international calendar haywire.

India too were scheduled to tour Sri Lanka for a limited overs series after the IPL, which has been postponed indefinitely.

"There are also two other tours which are scheduled to take place, with India and Bangladesh due to tour Sri Lanka in June-July and July-August respectively," de Silva added. — PTI

ICA raises Rs 39 lakh; Kapil, Gavaskar join initiative



NEW DELHI, May 2: Greats likes Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev have pledged their support to Indian Cricketers Association's (ICA) initiative to financially help around 30 needy players amid the nationwide lockdown, said its president Ashok Malhotra.

The ICA has so far raised Rs 39 lakh to help former cricketers who are in dire need of funds.

"Big names like Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Gautam Gambhir and Gundappa Viswanath have joined us and that is a major boost to our initiative. A corporate from Gujarat has also offered its support," Malhotra told PTI.

It has been learnt that likes of Gavaskar, Dev and Gambhir have also made financial contributions to the cause. Mohammad Azharuddin had pledged his financial support earlier this week. — PTI

Dhoni always there to help, says Pant



NEW DELHI, May 2: Calling MS Dhoni his mentor, wicket-keeper batsman Rishabh Pant says the World Cup-winning skipper has his own way of helping the younger crop as he never provides a full solution to a problem, encouraging them to look for answers.

Pant, was heir apparent to Dhoni until KL Rahul emerged as a wicket-keeper batsman in the limited overs format, making the southpaw no more a certainty in the playing eleven.

"He (Dhoni) has been like a mentor to me, on and off the field. I can approach him freely with any problem I may be facing, and he will never give me the entire solution for it," Pant said in an Instagram live session with his IPL team Delhi Capitals. "This is so that I don't become entirely dependent on him, he gives me hints only that helps me solve the issue myself. He's also one of my favourite batting partners, though it's not something that happens too often," he said. — PTI

Labuschagne expects packed schedule once cricket resumes

SYDNEY, May 2: Australian run-machine Marcus Labuschagne is gearing up for a packed schedule to make up for the time lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic once cricket resumes.

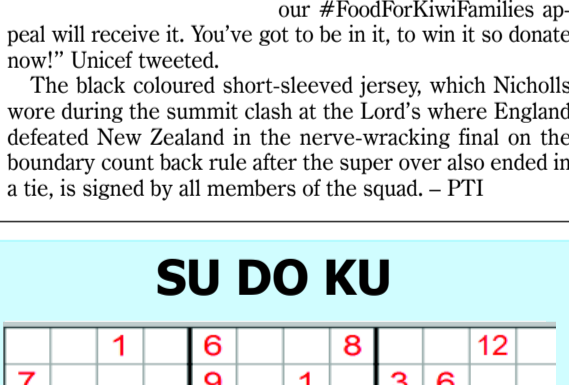
All cricket is on hold right now due to the pandemic sweeping through the globe with several tours and tournaments being either cancelled or postponed.

"There is going to be a lot of tours that will need to be made up," Labuschagne told Australian Associated Press.

"There's going to be a whole heap of cricket in a very short time frame. We'll be making up for missed time, that schedule is just going to be packed."

Australia's ODI series against New Zealand was called off after the first match, while the T20 World Cup is facing an uncertain future. — PTI

NZ batsman Nicholls to donate World Cup final shirt



WELLINGTON, May 2: New Zealand batsman Henry Nicholls has decided to donate the shirt he wore in the World Cup final last year to help the families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nicholls will be donating the jersey to Unicef New Zealand. "NZ Cricketer @HenryNicholls27 Cricket bat and ball has offered up one of his prized 2019 Cricket World Cup jerseys, signed by the whole team! One lucky donor who has supported our #FoodForKiwiFamilies appeal will receive it. You've got to be in it, to win it so donate now!" Unicef tweeted.

The black coloured short-sleeved jersey, which Nicholls wore during the summit clash at the Lord's where England defeated New Zealand in the nerve-wracking final on the boundary count back rule after the super over also ended in a tie, is signed by all members of the squad. — PTI

The current state of Indian cricket is as healthy as it can be, says Ravichandran Ashwin

NEW DELHI, May 2: India's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin doesn't want a post-COVID-19 world that is more conducive for organising T20 leagues at the expense of international cricket.

The fastest Indian to 350 Test wickets, the seasoned spinner said on Saturday he foresees another "purple patch" for him in the traditional format, provided his body holds. He also outrightly rejected the four-day proposal.

"I really do hope that this (pandemic) does not tran-

spire into something where you have more leagues and not much of international cricket because the borders are closed," Ashwin said during a videocast with former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar on ESPNcricinfo.

With the COVID-19 pandemic yet to subside, Ashwin doesn't see cricket resuming anytime soon.

"I think we are still some distance away. In terms of the health of world cricket I think it is going to take longer than what people might assume.

"So, that's an imminent possibility, but I don't know what the further future has in store."

He calls himself a "hardened" T20 cricketer but it is the five-day format in which he has tasted maximum success. And he is far from being done in the game's long form.

"If my body is in great space, I think Test cricket I just have another streak of great purple patch I am looking at."

"I believe I am a hardened professional in T20 cricket, and good at what I do. Whenever I play I will be able to deliver, with the experience that I have got and the courage that I have."

He said the ICC's plans to trim Test cricket by a day doesn't excite him.

"The thought of four-day cricket doesn't really excite me. I am a spinner and if you take a day out, I don't know if it's going to be healthy, you are taking out a very fascinating aspect of the game," Ashwin said.

Asked about Indian cricket, he said, "The current state of Indian cricket is as healthy as it can be. Hope we can pick it up from where we had left once sport resumes."

Ashwin also spoke about his love for operating with the new ball and explained the mechanics involved.

"I like a new ball because of the fizz that I get on it. One of my strengths is to be able

to put revs on the hard ball as it responds better to the pitch.

"But I generally like to use the arm ball in first 2 or 3 overs because when you use the arm ball, it challenges both the edges of the batsman and forces him to go across the line which is rendered risky."

The spin ace who has often been seen with the new ball across formats, added, "The others that I use are the floaters that swing, the one that pitches in and goes out or the other one that lands on the seam and gets to go the other way. So these balls become very effective". — PTI



SU DO KU

		1		6		8		12	
7				9		1		3	6
	3		4		10	7	5		11
	11			1				2	
6		7		11	4		2	9	10
		1	4		9	8	10		11
			12		4	8	10		3
4		8		6	5		2	1	7
			2					3	
2				8	5	9		1	6
		5	8		1	4			7
7				10		12		4	

Solution of last problem

Originating from Japan, 'su do ku' is a mind game and a puzzle that can be solved with proper reasoning and logic. Fill the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3 x 4 box accommodates the digits 1 to 12 without repeating any.

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

2 WOMEN PLUS
JOYSHREE BARUAH takes on the psychology of baking.

3 MY SPACE
DR. PAROMITA DAS writes about surviving lockdown abroad.

4 THIRD EYE
 "Of course we will survive," writes **INDRANI RAIMEDI**.

The Assam Tribune **READING**

Sunday

The New Age Influencers

ANKITA KAKATY profiles five popular influencers from Assam who have taken online content to another level.



The 'influencer' marketing industry in India is one of the most popularly growing mediums of the current age. While content and innovation are one of the primary requisites for any business domain, the rise of New Age Influencers, who are exploring a niche online audience has come a long way, has brought about a major change in the outlook of consumers.

As per *The Economic Times* report of 2019, in terms of internet users, India has now reached a whopping 566 million figure. With the ease of technology and the proliferation of the internet, there has been a huge influx of applications in the digital domain. Add to that the influx of a large number of internet users from the rural parts of India – 251 million to be precise. Thus, leading to a higher demand for content across multiple segments.

The major content creators from around the world on social media platforms like YouTube have the biggest audience base in India, with 8.1 per cent of total viewers. As per E Marketer, India is the second largest market for YouTube and reportedly, has 93 per cent of video watchers from India.

In this context, North-East India, too, has emerged as a hub of creative professionals in the field of online content. Several youngsters are leading the pack of active influencers, and this feature profiles some of the leading online video content creators from Assam.



MEENAKSHI GOGOI

She began her professional journey in the year 2008 with DY365, a news channel. With an extensive experience in the field of television media, she thought of trying her hand at opening a YouTube channel. She became a lifestyle vlogger who presents her

day-to-day schedule, interacting with her viewers. And with over a lakh subscribers now, her idea seems to have worked out well. She has recently joined Instagram as well and already has over 5,000 followers.

Meenakshi believes that as technology has shifted from broadcasts, viz. television and radio, to digital media, everyone now has a platform to share their opinions. Being real has been her only mantra to success. According to her, the biggest challenge has been audience retention. One has to always bring in something productive and new. "Even a piece of paper can be used beautifully to create art," Meenakshi says. She is one of the most popular lifestyle vloggers on YouTube and has earned a Silver Play Button, which is a special plaque that YouTube hands out to those who have 1,00,000 subscribers.



BHUKHAN PATHAK

Bhukhan started his career as a print media journalist and he was also a movie reviewer, freelancing for a number of media houses in Assam. In the year 2016, with the advent of Jio in the telecommunication sector, he forayed into professional YouTube channel through full-time movie reviews.

Bhukhan found out that there is very little information about the Assamese film fraternity on the internet. So he curated the idea of making small videos based on the personal lives of celebrities from the North-East. He is one of the first YouTubers from Assam to have come up with celebrity-based interviews and the concept of "Love Story" conversations to connect with the viewers. His Assamese Mixture channel has 5.58 lakh subscribers, while the Bhukhan Pathak channel has 60,000 subscribers. His Instagram account is followed by over 71,800 people.



DHANASHRI BAISHYA

Before starting her career as a YouTube professional, Dhanashri was working as a journalist in a television channel of Assam. As a TV personality, she would often post short 'behind the scenes' videos.

She had inhibitions about a full-time YouTube career, but as she enjoyed these short video interactions with her viewers, she started her full-fledged channel in October, 2019. And within a span of just two to three months, Dhanashri crossed the requisite benchmark of 1,000 subscribers, and her channel became one of the fastest in Assam to reach the set target.

Dhanashri's vlogs mainly constitute of celebrity interviews, home tours of local artistes, and short entertainment segments with popular faces. She believes that regularity and patience is what makes things productive in the long run. She now has 1.86 lakh subscribers on YouTube, and 6,000 followers on Instagram.



DIMPUR BARUAH

Dimpu was working as an English teacher at a primary school in Nalbari, Assam. But with a latent desire for technology and innovation, he would often browse the internet for the latest trend checks. Then, in 2017, he started his first channel to review the latest gadgets. Later, he realised that most content produced in the region is entertainment-based, with little information on places of tourist interest. And so, he began working on another channel by the name of Dimpu's Vlog to present a detailed view on the places of tourist attraction in Assam.

Dimpu's unique selling proposition (USP) is his humorous way of presentation. He interacts in the southern Assamese dialect (*tholua bhaxa*), which makes his videos quite endearing.

Dimpu posts three to four videos per week. He says that rather than concentrating on being the best, one must strive to deliver the best of his/her creativity in any area of social interest. He now has 6.79 lakh subscribers for Dimpu's Vlog and 6.16 lakh for the Dimpu Baruah channel.

Rabbani believes that the youth connect has helped him try out new tricks and techniques. He also organises meet-ups once in a while to connect with his viewers and interact with them. TikTok is also very popular among youngsters, and Rabbani is a popular face there too. Rabbani has also received sponsored feature requests on applications such as Like, ShareChat, etc., through TikTok. He now has 2.64 lakh subscribers for Buddies and 24.1k for the Rabbani Soyam channel.



RABBANI SOYAM

He is one of the youngest Influencers to start his journey of YouTube in Assam. He started off in 2017 with a channel named Buddies which is an entertainment channel delivering humour-based content and prank videos. Gradually, as the channel gained momentum, he started to experiment with new content-based short films. During the period, Rabbani was soon exposed to the Influencers' market when local merchandise-based brands approach him to advertise their clothing line.

Rabbani believes that the youth connect has helped him try out new tricks and techniques. He also organises meet-ups once in a while to connect with his viewers and interact with them. TikTok is also very popular among youngsters, and Rabbani is a popular face there too. Rabbani has also received sponsored feature requests on applications such as Like, ShareChat, etc., through TikTok. He now has 2.64 lakh subscribers for Buddies and 24.1k for the Rabbani Soyam channel.

ankitakakaty@gmail.com



REMEMBRANCE
 Tarali Sarma

IRRFAN... not yet!

IRRFAN KHAN will be remembered as the Everyman who was a star.

I loved him and begged the universe not to let him slip away. I was mindful of the eternal darkness he would step into eventually, yet I hoped, hopelessly! In 2018, he revealed that he had been diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumour. Since then, for two long years, he had put his dreams on hold. But like me and thousands of others, death perhaps loved him too. Profoundly! Finally, life looked on helplessly as death consumed him. No admirers, no close ones, no relatives and friends, his funeral was only surrounded with stillness. A funeral that was tragically a haunting echo of silence.

Sahabzade Irfan Ali Khan. Screen name Irfan Khan. In 2012, he changed it to Irfan. "I like the sound of the extra R," he had said. Born on January 7, in Jaipur, Rajasthan, to Sayeeda Begum and Yaseen Ali, Irfan's intriguing persona was noticed ever since he joined NSD (National School Of Drama), New Delhi, in 1984. His spark was evident in teleserials like *Bharat Ek Khoj*, *Chandrakanta*, *Chanakya*, *Sara Jahan Hamara*, etc. But his heart was in cinema. A small role as a debut in *Salaam Bombay* in 1989, followed by Shyam Benegal's *Kamla Ki Maut* in 1990, didn't provide him with what he was looking for. In 1995, he married fellow NSD-graduate Sutapa Sikdar and was looking for brighter horizons. It seemed Bollywood had little to offer to an actor of Irfan Khan's calibre. In the '90s, the concept of heroes and superstars expanded all energies into becoming the formula of entertainment and box-office success. Films with mega-budget, monotonous songs and dances were slowly making the audiences weary. And then came Asif Kapadia's British film *The Warrior* in 2001. In all the mayhem, Irfan Khan stepped in like a fresh Spring breeze that the audience had so long waited for. This film marked the rising era for Irfan and, perhaps, also for Hindi cinema as a whole, which was now opening up to realistic stories and actors! The common man saw in him glimpses of his own life. As the Allahbadi local student leader in *Haasil* (2003), as *Maqbool* (2004), Irfan brought a new robustness and a new language to Hindi cinema. In 2005, he landed with his first lead role in *Rog*. He knocked the psyche of the critics and audience alike with his role in *The Namesake* (2006), and *Life in a Metro* (2007), and did hard-hitting tales like *Paan Singh Tomar* (2012, Irfan won the National Award for it) with the same verve as he did a comedy like *Sunday* (2008).

Irfan Khan was the infinite within the finite and possibilities within all uncertainties. His charismatic capabilities overrode every technical rule, creating characters we loved and related to. Irfan was absolutely unfazed by current trends, unintimidated by superstars and he galloped along a lone journey on the rough roads of cinema to create absolute realism. He brought to life Saajan Fernandaz in *The Lunchbox* (2013), Rana in *Piku* (2015), the fun-loving driver Shaukat in *Karwaan* (2018), Ashwin Kumar in *Talvar* (2015), and the endearing Yogendra Kumar in *Qarib Qarib Single* (2017). Can we ever forget these characters? They were masterstrokes of the magician called Irfan. His highest grossing Hindi film was *Hindi Medium* (2017), and his final appearance was in its sequel *Angrezi Medium* (2020). Oscar-winning Danny Boyle, director of *Slumdog Millionaire*, where Irfan plays a policeman said, "Irfan has an instinctive way of finding the moral centre of a character."

He was the same everywhere, yet we didn't find Irfan anywhere, we just met the characters! His big brooding eyes spoke louder than words! Irfan travelled to world cinema and exalted through his roles in Darjeeling Limited, and *A Mighty Heart* (2007), *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012), *Life of Pi* (2012), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Inferno* (2016).

"There is something about pain. It demands to be felt," wrote John Green in his bestseller *The Fault in our Stars*. Why does Irfan Khan's demise feel like a personal loss? A pain we have felt so acutely. We admire celebrities, legends, and we follow, love and respect them. We are thrilled to see them or ask for an autograph! Their stories of struggle and hard work inspire us. Most rags-to-riches stories make us look at them with wonder and amazement. We learn from them and believe that dreams do come true after all! However, most of the time, we cannot relate to the life they live or the characters they portray. Their lives are bigger than life. Not reachable! Not relatable! Unattainable! But Irfan Khan created a grammar of his own. In life and in acting. He was so much the person we meet in our everyday life. Approachable, reachable! He proved that success is not necessarily hereditary. All the characters he portrayed were real, someone we knew. Someone like me and you. We knew him like we know our friends and hence, the unbearable grief at his demise. That's his power. The power of an absolutely realistic form of acting.

Irfan Khan (1967-2020). The curtains have fallen, but the echoes of thunderous applause continue, because we loved him too much and for too long... and sometimes letting go is the hardest thing to do.

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Arabic lunar calendar, is a celebration of the descent of the word of God, the *Quran*, from heaven to Earth. This month is observed worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community. *Ramadan* follows the phases of the moon. This means that the dates of *Ramadan* change every year. It starts when the new crescent moon is first visible in the night sky and ends with the arrival of the next lunar month.

"What is fasting?"
 "How does the fasting of Muslims in *Ramadan* differ from the fasting of other faiths?"

"What do you really gain from fasting?"
 These are a few questions that a number of our non-Muslim friends often ask us; usually out of fascination with this spiritually-uplifting practice of the Islamic faith. Fasting in Arabic is called "Sawm", meaning "to be at rest". Observing *Ramadan* is one of the five pillars of Islam. All adult Muslims, except those who are chronically ill, travelling, elderly, pregnant, breast-feeding, diabetic or menstruating, are expected to fast. Those who can't fast for any reason can offer to feed poor people for each day they miss during *Ramadan*.

Ramadan was a part of the ancient Arab calendar. The naming of *Ramadan* stems from the Arabic root 'ar ramad', meaning 'scorching heat'. Muslims believe that in A.D. 610, the angel Gabriel appeared to Prophet Muhammad and revealed to him the *Quran*. That revelation - *Laylat Al Qadr* or the "Night of Power" - is believed to have occurred



Ramadan in quarantine

MUKHLISA TASRIN writes that the pandemic will bring us closer in ways not explored before.

during *Ramadan*. The *Quran* says that on this special night, angels descend from heaven, most importantly, the archangel Gabriel - bringing peace and divine presence into the world.

During *Ramadan*, the gates of heaven are opened wider than ever. Just as the word of God has come down, the word of supplicants goes up to God, more efficaciously than any other time. During *Ramadan*, the day starts early. Pre-dawn breakfast (*Suhoor*) begins before the first prayer of the day, *Suhoor* keeps them going through the day. During daylight

hours, fasting Muslims cannot eat food or drink anything. In late Spring or early summer, this is particularly difficult as the days can be very long. The evening meal, *Iftaar*, begins once the sunset prayer *Maghrib* is over. Since the Prophet broke his fast with dates and a glass of water, Muslims commemorate the Prophet's practice of breaking the fast.

Ramadan is more than abstinence from food and drink. It is a time for contemplation, devotion, and remembrance of *Allah*, and tending to the welfare of the less fortunate. Fasting develops the real spirit

of social belonging, unity and brotherhood, and of equality before God. It is an exercise in self-control. It is a moment to reflect and work on being better people. Giving donations to charity, known as *Zakat* (one of the five pillars of Islam), is particularly important.

Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of *Ramadan*. Muslims gather in a mosque/open space and offer two units of prayer (*Rakaat*). A sermon is then carried out, where the *Imam* asks for forgiveness, mercy and peace for everyone.

People exchange "Eid Mubarak" greetings. The rest of the day is spent with extended families, enjoying good food and sharing gifts.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting *Ramadan* observances worldwide, closing mosques to curb the further spread of the disease and upending plans for traditional *Suhoor* and *Iftaar* gatherings. But while celebrations might be subdued, the spirit of this centuries-old tradition will remain the same for many, a time for piety and self-reflection. Group events like *Taraweeh* (extra-nightly prayers) will take different forms, including moving online. The mosques will be sad and so will our hearts. Socially, people will be deprived of hosting community gatherings which have been practised for more than 1,000 years. There won't be any *Ramadan bazaars*. We won't be able to visit or host our families and friends, everything will be very difficult. However, that doesn't necessarily mean people can't attain the same level of spiritual fulfilment they ordinarily would. Perhaps, the pandemic will bring us together in new ways we hadn't considered before.

WOMEN PLUS

Joysree Baruah

joys.baruah02@gmail.com

There is an ongoing debate whether during this extra bit of time, made available by the COVID-19 lockdown, one should go on a hyper-productive mode as we might not get this time ever again, or should one take it easy as, obviously, we won't get this time again. With schools closed and many resorting to working from home, it is providing many with some spare time to get their creative juices flowing. One particular activity that has gained major momentum is baking. From baking their first batch of fresh banana bread to whipping up that comfy apple cinnamon pie – people have turned *chef de la patisseries*.

So, what is it about baking that seems to have caught everyone's fancy? The answer lies in the psychology of it all. Baking provides a sense of satisfaction. Creative activities like baking, knitting and gardening contribute to an overall sense of well-being. According to Dr. Mamta Hussain, a Delhi-based senior psychologist, there is a stress-relief that people get from having some kind of an outlet and a way to express themselves. "Baking requires you to focus on following set instructions. This is a great way to practise mindfulness – it makes your brain steer away from the stressors outside the kitchen," she says.

However, sexist stereotypes have often demarcated baking as "women's genre". At the heart of baking for others is the very act of giving. While the process of baking can contribute to an overall sense of well-being, giving heightens that feeling. Baking is something that many women find to be personal and empowering. These attributes traditionally describe a woman, but it would be grossly inappropriate if the

Peace of the Pie

Baking is an art that is only limited by our imagination, but is the art limited only to the womenfolk?

art of baking is limited only to one specific gender. Traditionally (read patriarchally), cooking might be a "female thing to do", with many mothers conditioning their daughters to take up kitchen duties. But the question is, everyone loves to eat, so why can't everyone cook? The answer is more complex than



But the unfortunate duality lies here: the top names for *chef de patisserie* are men! If the business of baking is predominantly for women, yet when we look at the food industry as a whole, women are often absent from the conversation, particularly when it comes to high-end, gastronomic food circles. Frenchmen Pierre Hermé, Cédric Grolet and Dominique Ansel are the top three pastry chefs, with U.S.'s Elizabeth Falkner placed fourth, according to a 2019 report.



"men hunt, women gather". In the 19th century, women were under immense moral pressure to bake good bread. As abhorrent as it may sound, but back then the goodness of a woman was judged by the bread she baked. But we are not in the archaic ages any more. Cooking isn't a threat to manliness, much like it doesn't enhance one's femininity. Same goes with baking.

Debunking everything, women, today, are disrupting systemic sexism by reclaiming the incredibly rich, feminist history of baking – not because women belong in the kitchen, but because women can be anywhere they want. Jini Sonowal, a Guwahati-based home baker, describes how baking has become more than a hobby. After quitting her job in Bengaluru, Sonowal is a devoted full-time baker now. "After three years in an MNC, I finally decided to do what I love most – baking. It is my primary source of income now and I'm planning on expanding my business to other

cities soon."

But the unfortunate duality lies here: the top names for *chef de patisserie* are men! If the business of baking is predominantly for women, yet when we look at the food industry as a whole, women are often absent from the conversation, particularly when it comes to high-end, gastronomic food circles. Frenchmen Pierre Hermé, Cédric Grolet and Dominique Ansel are the top three pastry chefs, with U.S.'s Elizabeth Falkner placed fourth, according to a 2019 report. It's long overdue that the art of baking transcends sexist stereotypes – discontinue reinforcing traditional gender roles. As the psychology of baking itself says, the therapeutic process helps one concentrate and visualise the larger picture – the satisfaction of being happy and making others happy, irrespective of the chef being a man or a woman.

In the movie *Julie & Julia*, Amy Adams' character, stuck in an unlikable job, comforts herself by cooking every recipe in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in one year. She decides to write a blog to motivate herself, and after overcoming initial criticism, she begins to gain a following, and eventual contentment. It simply goes on to show how sharing the product of your hard work altruistically is a feel-good factor – it makes you feel like you've done something good for others, irrespective of one's gender. In this lockdown, we are mindful of what we have and what we eat. And just when there's a sudden urge to have that vanilla cake, you gather all the essentials – flour, sugar, vanilla, and then you realise you have no eggs. Just wrack your brains and find the best alternative – bananas maybe? Or yoghurt? There's no holding back.

MYRIAD HUES

Aadarshini

aadarshini135@gmail.com



The silence and the storm

As we see a rise in cases of domestic violence, it would be prudent to examine Kalpana Sharma's book on this societal scourge.



Violence against women has been at the forefront of gender issues for years and it has again emerged as a major concern at a time when the world is battling the corona pandemic. Several global organisations, including the United Nations, have also expressed concern over the shadow of domestic violence and abuse of women looming large during the lockdown imposed in several countries around the world.

India is no exception where violence against women is a theme that persists and the societal structures that perpetuate and even justify this violence have remained the same over the years. In this context, journalist Kalpana Sharma examines the gamut of issues related to violence against women in her book *The Silence and the Storm: Narratives of Violence Against Women in India*.

The author has set out to discuss the larger political and economic factors in the last three decades that have had an impact on women and then goes on to discuss in detail the forms of violence women experience – sexual assault and rape and the "most heinous, child sexual abuse that is shrouded in a conspiratorial silence".

Sharma argues in her book that violence is not restricted to sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse. She urges the need to look at "violence women experience when developmental policies neglect their needs, or policies are formulated without consulting them".

The central argument in the book is that violence cannot be perceived only as a "physical and sexual attack on a woman. Poor and marginalised women, because of the burden they carry due to the sexual division of labour within the home, suffer other forms of violence arising from developmental policies that overlook their rights and their needs."

She further argues in her book that the lack of access to basic provisions like sanitation is as much a gender issue as sexual assault is, along with the ugly reality of homelessness and urban poverty and "what that extracts from women's lives, is another form of violence on their bodies and selves".

Sharma further asserts that the absence of affordable and accessible healthcare literally kills women and this is a form of permanent violence that is often overlooked.

The book also brings to fore the debate on sexual harassment at the workplace and the campaign through social media as she points out that an important beginning has been made to establish sexual harassment as a form of violence against women. It should, however, move from publicly shaming the harassers to finding solutions for survivors of such harassment.

Sharma also discusses on how earlier taboo subjects like menstruation have undergone a visible change and there are now public campaigns for menstrual hygiene and acknowledgements by policy makers that the "refusal to address the needs of young girls after puberty has resulted in many of them dropping out of school".

She, however, is keen to observe that more open talk about menstruation is only the first step and it "needs to move to the point that women and girls in India feel confident to talk about their bodies, their sexuality and their sexual preferences".

The author asserts that the biggest "stumbling block to women's autonomy and their right to choice, remains the dominant concept of marriage in India". She argues that marital home is the location of a majority of incidents of violence against women.

"...the violence that needs to be addressed is what women face in their homes...and until we challenge dominant notions of marriage, we cannot talk about women's autonomy, their right to choose or to consent," she points out.

Violence that women experience at times of communal and caste conflict has also been dealt by the author who has established that when there is any kind of conflict, everyone pays a price but it is women who are "doubly, if not many more times, burdened because of the roles they are expected to play within the predominantly patriarchal structure that prevails".

The author admits that Indian women have moved in many spheres, broken barriers, claimed their rights, and are speaking out, the larger political and economic trends are not encouraging.

She, however, ends with a note of optimism that for every "depressing violence, there are tales of women and girls who are reclaiming their rights, who are skipping over hurdles, who are laughing, shouting and singing out loud".

– IANS

RELATIONSHIP

Experts have predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic will bring the worst financial challenges that can put a significant strain on romantic relationships and in such times, it's especially important to show your partner some love and support. "Some couples may be better equipped to manage that kind of stress than others," said Ashley LeBaron from the University of Arizona in the U.S.

LeBaron, whose research was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, has studied how financial stress impacts married and unmarried couples from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Her findings, published in the *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, provide insight into what might make some couples more resilient.

In 2018, as a student at the Brigham Young University, LeBaron co-authored a paper in the *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* – that focussed on married couples affected by financial stress during the 2008 recession.

Some couples reported that their relationships grew stronger not just in spite of, but because of, the financial challenges they had endured together.

However, most of the couples were White, middle or upper-class married couples.

A penny for your thoughts?

How couples can manage relationships in financially stressful times.



LeBaron then set out in a more recent study to see if her previous findings would hold true for people for whom financial stress might have higher stakes – unmarried, low-income couples, expecting their first child together.

Most of the couples in the new setting were low-income and Black. All of them had experienced at least one of three

financial stressors in the year prior: the inability to pay rent or a mortgage in full, having their utilities shut off or eviction.

In both of her studies, the researcher zoomed in on the relationships in which partners remained highly committed to one another after financial hardship.

She found that the strongest relationships were those in which partners

remembered to practise "relationship maintenance behaviours", including respecting one another, being there for one another, and showing love and affection for one another.

Receiving financial support from family and friends was associated with higher levels of commitment for the couples in both of her studies.

In her second study, LeBaron measured the success of the unmarried, low-income, expectant couples not only by how committed they reported being to their relationship, but also by how well they reported co-parenting.

Some additional factors emerged as important for the low-income unmarried couples that the researcher didn't see in the married couples. Those factors included having health insurance, having a support network, and having children with no more than one partner.

The findings suggest that there may not be a one-size-fits-all approach to maintaining a strong relationship in times of financial stress. "A big take-home message is the importance of these relationship maintenance behaviours, especially when you are experiencing financial stress," LeBaron said.

Potato and rice pulao



- Ingredients:**
- ▼ Basmati rice 2 cups
 - ▼ Vegetable oil 3 tbsps
 - ▼ Onion (sliced) 1
 - ▼ Bay leaf 1
 - ▼ Cinnamon 1 stick
 - ▼ Cumin seeds 1 tsp
 - ▼ Garlic paste ½ tsp
 - ▼ Ginger paste ½ tsp
 - ▼ Turmeric powder 1 tsp
 - ▼ Tomato (chopped) 1
 - ▼ Potatoes (cubed) 2
 - ▼ Peas (shelled) ½ cup
 - ▼ Pure ghee 1 tbsps
 - ▼ Salt to taste
 - ▼ Boiling water as required

Method:
Wash the rice and soak in cold water for half an hour. Drain and set aside.
Heat the oil in a deep pan. Add the onions and sauté, until light golden brown. Add the bay leaves, cinnamon and the cumin seeds, and sauté until aromatic. Next, add the garlic and the ginger paste, and cook for a few minutes or until translucent. Add the tomatoes, salt and the turmeric powder, and cook until the tomatoes soften. Stir in the rice, the peas and the potatoes and mix well. Pour in enough water to cover the rice by one cm. and bring to a rapid boil.
Cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid. Reduce heat to low, cook until all the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is cooked through. Remove from heat. Gently fluff the rice with a fork. Stir in the pure ghee. Serve hot with yoghurt and a salad.



Sharmin Pasha is a food writer currently based in Dubai, UAE, where she teaches privately-organised cooking lessons on different techniques of cooking. She also hosts an informative page featuring Assamese recipes on Facebook, which was created to showcase the culinary treasures of Assam to the world and to preserve ethnic recipes for generations to come.

Coconut treats

- Ingredients:**
- ▼ Rice flour (fine) 1 cup
 - ▼ Salt a pinch
 - ▼ Baking powder ½ tsp
 - ▼ Coconut (desiccated) 1 cup
 - ▼ Powdered sugar ¾ cup or to taste
 - ▼ Water ¾ cup or as required
 - ▼ Refined oil for frying
 - ▼ Sugar ½ cup
 - ▼ Water ¼ cup
 - ▼ Baking powder ¼ tsp
 - ▼ Sesame seeds 2 tbsps



Method:
Sift the rice flour, baking powder and the salt into a large bowl. Stir in the powdered sugar and the coconut and mix well. Add the water gradually and knead into a firm dough. Set the dough aside for half an hour to rest.
Divide the dough into equal pieces and roll each piece into a smooth ball with no visible seams. Shape each ball into small logs or circles.
Heat the oil in a deep pan. Working in batches, fry the dough pieces until puffed and golden. Remove, using a slotted spoon, and let drain on a paper towel.
Heat the sugar and water in a saucepan over high heat, swirling, until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a simmer, and cook until it reaches one-string consistency. Add the sesame seeds, fried dough pieces and the baking powder, and stir briskly. Remove from the heat and stir continuously until the sugar crystallises.
Transfer to a clean plate and allow them to dry out completely. Serve with tea or coffee.



Under a rock-II

FICTION

Kaustabh Kashyap

kaustabhkashyap21@gmail.com

Before I became homebound, I spent many twilights cycling with Mr. Prasad's docile cows until we reached his thatched cottage – which stands on a hillock. His fidelity to his cattle is like *Bordoisila's* fidelity to Spring. The bovines are equally faithful and obedient, strolling through the evening shadows towards their shelter with little prodding. But I have come to quite dread the dying light.

At night, I find myself fidgety and sleepless, unable to listen to the loud news anymore. Personally, the lockdown has had little effect upon me. It's more than a year since I have been out all by myself. If it wasn't knocking someone over, it was walking straight into muddy pot-holes.

"There's no treatment as of yet. He has to make adjustments as it progresses," my mother's resigned face

had patiently sat through the doctor's diagnosis, alone, with my father gone for good just a couple of months ago. If life's a game of cards, was I even dealt a fair hand, I sometimes wonder. Most of my estranged friends must be back home too, learning or teaching students online, some of them stranded in other parts of the world. Few of them must be like me, no nine-to-five, just plenty of breakdowns. Although I do not think their room is their planet of permanent retirement. I know I am privileged in a way to say that this lockdown has only affected me as shrubs compressed under rocks are affected by shade.

"Little boy, don't make your soul cry. It will stain your white shirt," I think of the milkman's words as I pretend to look through the windows floating in darkness, my only form of correspondence with the outside world. I think of his gentle cows, his desolate cottage, the fall and fall of his bleak fortunes against this inevitable, unprepared shutdown.

Mr. Prasad never asked me why my

cycle wasted away or why on Sundays his grazing cows had no poems to listen to. He would only look up at the windows and fill up the space between us with philosophical one-liners culled out from his life's ordinary diaries. But my friends had a lot of theories. Each one of them wanted an exclusive copyright over my situation or at least an explanation to pity or encourage me out of stupor.

Sometime ago, my mother had taken me to some of her group's weekend meetings. It is called Hope Anonymous, run by people whose unique and unconventional lives brought them together. Paraplegics, acid-attack victims, people with crutches. Some of them have invisible conditions – Asperger's, Lupus or the trauma of rape. Others have cross-conditions: blindness and deafness or dyslexia and cerebral palsy. When I listened to some of them speak, I was startled by their perseverance against adversities, like how certain plants thrive in the most impossible circumstances.

I don't experience my condition like a fixed noun; it's comparable to the weather, a verb – always undergoing unpredictable changes. I can only foresee my day as successfully as an amateur weatherman predicts sunshine or hailstorms.

Early afternoon, my mother asks Mina to shovel up some earth in the backyard. We are planting new seeds in our home-grown garden, which has come really handy with nearby shops closed. We already have lemons, lentils, eggplants, tomatoes, and a few fruits as well. April's been here for almost a week now. My mother hums a Bihu song, while we mix coco peat and river soil together in a large, flat earthenware tub. Our fingers mould and re-mould the mud like shuffling cards over and over again. "That should do it," she says after a few minutes and Mina starts making small drainage holes in ceramic pots. Then my mother's voice grows firm yet comforting. "You'll have to make a fresh start like these plants. Once we get through all of this, you are going to learn to use the cane. And a Braille tutor can be arranged too, whenever necessary."

My mother still watches the TV news at night, but I feel her anxiety receding like low tides. Perhaps it was the gardening or my sister's convincing phone call about keeping safe and sound. My father has been calling too, not as much out of love but out of responsibility. I try to squint and rub my eyes after dinner. My eyes only made blurry shapes and figures and the colours merged like in a surreal collage. But I can still feel the light and the dark. My mind hovers over Mr. Prasad's limp, his free-spirited, gentle nature which disallowed any animosity or anger against his fate. But quite suddenly, my reverie is broken by strong, incoming winds shaking up our house.

Bordoisila.
After it subsides, my mother, sitting on her wheelchair, asks Mina with dreadful concern, "How are the plants?"

"Not as dead as Prasad's cows," she replies with little emotion or regret.

Concluded

Fiction entries should not exceed 1,800 words.



HEALTHWISE

Dr. Chandana Sarma, MD,
Consultant, Internal Medicine & Critical Care,
Health City Hospital, Guwahati.
minkudoc@rediffmail.com

COVID-19 mythbusters

Do not fall for the myths surrounding this dreaded pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our times and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War II. The disease, within a span of four months of its first appearance in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, has become a pandemic and is affecting the global healthcare system in an adverse manner. Let us simplify the complexities surrounding this novel coronavirus and its implications.

SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



FEVER



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



COUGH

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections, ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes the coronavirus disease COVID-19.

What is COVID-19?

It is a disease caused by SARS-Cov2 (SARS Coronavirus 2), a mutated version of the common cold virus, which is ten times more dangerous than the flu virus. The first patients with COVID-19 had links to a live market. This suggested that animals initially transmitted the virus to humans. However, recent patients had no connections with or exposure to the market, confirming human to human transmission.

What are its symptoms?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, a runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. Some people become infected, but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80 per cent) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around one out of every six people who get COVID-19 become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing. These seriously ill patients become hypoxic and require mechanical ventilation.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth, or nose.

Myths and facts:

- Does warm climate or exposure to temperatures higher than 25 degrees C prevent the coronavirus disease?
You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is.
- Can eating garlic help prevent infection of the novel coronavirus?
Garlic is a healthy food. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the novel coronavirus.
- Does the novel coronavirus affect older people, or are younger people also susceptible?
People of all ages can be infected. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable.
- Do pets transmit the virus?
There is a possibility of some animals becoming infected through close contact with infected humans. Further evidence is needed to understand if animals and pets can spread the disease; based on current evidence, human-to-human transmission remains the main driver.
- Do 5G mobile networks spread COVID-19?
Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.
- Does hydroxychloroquine protect us from COVID-19?
Hydroxychloroquine is not to be taken over the counter without a doctor's prescription due to its toxicity.
- When will a vaccine be ready for COVID-19?
Research is happening at breakneck speed. About 80 groups around the world are researching vaccines and some are now entering clinical trials. The University of Oxford researchers are aiming to have a million doses of a vaccine by September, and are starting human trials. It is thought that 60-70 per cent of people are needed to get immune to the virus, in order to stop it spreading easily (known as herd immunity). But that would be billions of people around the world, if the vaccine worked perfectly.

MONEY SMART

Dipankar Jakharia

money.smart@assamtribune.com

Reset your finances

With an impending economic meltdown in these times of corona crisis, better recheck the fundamentals in your personal finance space.



If you are trying to watch a good movie on Netflix but end up wasting more time searching, rather than enjoying one, you are just like me. Another front I have suffered most in is my zeal of enjoying written works of fiction. And I am worried. For the first two to three weeks, I was glued to my laptop, Google-hunting anything trending on COVID-19 – the latest research, results, rumours... all went through my scanner. From research papers to the White House press meets, I went through them all.

When the initial hysteria calmed down by the fourth week, I tried to debar myself from all forms of electronic media, and instead, started with my favourite author. But I couldn't go beyond the third page. I tried with another, but couldn't again. My brain was in a fast-forward mode, refusing to settle in a fictional world. Then my wife, who's a Montessori teacher, dumped all my clothes on the bed and asked me to declutter my wardrobe, which I did. Then she took out hundreds of books from my bookshelf and asked me to rearrange them, and I did. All these took me two days and on the third day, she asked me to begin with my book again. This time I could actually

read my books and went on to finish three of them in a week. All this time, I have been advocating my readers to stay away from the market noises and concentrate on the basics. But during this COVID-19 crisis, I have myself been a victim of over-information and have wasted a lot of energy and peace of mind on something I had very little control over. In whatever situation you may be, prepare-practice-participate, and carry on.

Now, those of you who have time, recheck these fundamentals in your personal finance space, before the COVID-19 crisis makes you a mental-zombie.

- Let me be very blunt. During this crisis, your health and your job both are at risk. Those of you who depend only on employer provided insurance, should start an individual (or family) health insurance as a back-up plan. In case of an econom-

ic meltdown and loss of job, this will come as a silver lining. Secondly, the bread-earner of the family should go for a term insurance that is 200 times of his monthly expenses. The reason he/she should increase his/her term insurance is because the fixed income interest is going south.

- Check how much money you have in your savings account. Keep at least three months' salary, including EMI amount, in your account.

- Check all your financial documents, including your will. Dig out all your financial transactions, even those made decades ago, and streamline them. Digitalise all your documents and write down the account numbers and tell your nominee about them.

- If you have not studied the new income tax regime, this is the perfect time to do so. Check out which will best suit you now or in the future. Upgrade your personal finance knowledge and discuss it with your spouse and children. And don't forget to finish your financial duties before the end of the three-month extension, which will expire on June 30.

MY SPACE

Dr. Paromita Das

paromitadasgu@gmail.com

Surviving the lockdown in Morocco

For the past one year I have been living alone in Morocco, as a visiting professor at the Mohammed V. University of Rabat. It has been a wonderful experience discovering the variegated landscape and culture of the kingdom. Then, on March 2, a tourist tested positive for COVID-19 in Casablanca. On Friday, March 13, the campus was no longer crowded with students. As the number of cases increased, all educational institutions were shut down from the evening of March 16, along with cafés, restaurants, museums, beauty parlours, hammams, etc., I went to the supermarket on a Monday morning to avoid the weekend crowds. Fruits and vegetables were available, but not rice and bread. On the evening of March 19, a state of Emergency was declared (effective from the next day) and people were forbidden to leave their homes. On the morning of March 21, my apartment building concierge gave me a form and explained in French what I needed to do as the form was in Arabic. I submitted

the form and the next day itself, the concierge came and handed me a permit. I could go out to the nearest grocery store, and in case of an emergency to the pharmacy. So I have been in solitary confinement since then as my family is in Guwahati.

On March 30, I stepped out to buy groceries with a face mask and a head scarf. At the Carrefour supermarket, everything was well-organised, everyone maintaining a safe distance. Only ten people were allowed in at a time. Before entering, our hands were sanitised, and we put on disposable gloves. As one shopper came out, another was let in, after being handed a cart wiped with hand sanitiser. Everything was available, except lemons. I returned home and washed everything.

Since that day I have not stepped out of the house. I cannot go out for a walk. I have no balcony, only windows from which I look out at my neighbours across two courtyards, too far away to even talk. I cannot speak Arabic, I only know enough to buy food, use the taxi, etc. I stick

I read novels, watch old detective serials based on stories by Agatha Christie and G.K. Chesterton, listen to Asomiya songs by Bhupen Hazarika and Borgeet. I miss the sights and sounds of Assam. When someone shared the video of ducks flocking to Dighalipukhuri, I felt happy to hear the sound of the *Kuli* in the background. On April 13, listening to Bihu songs, I was overcome by emotion.

to a routine, read *The Assam Tribune* online with my morning cup of tea and prepare for my classes which I take via Zoom. But not all students have a good network, so I prepare study materials for them. It is not easy to live without human contact, especially for a person who is very talkative like I am. I read novels, watch old detective serials based on stories by Agatha Christie and G.K. Chesterton, listen to Asomiya songs by Bhupen Hazarika and Borgeet. I miss the sights and sounds of Assam. When someone shared the video of ducks flocking to Dighalipukhuri, I felt happy to hear the sound of the *Kuli* in the background. On April 13, listening to Bihu songs, I was overcome by emotion. I derive strength from a song written by my grandfather *Geetikavi* Parvati Prasad Barua – *Tor nai je bondhuwa baat, Tor pade pad ase katanu ujuti kata ghat, pratigat*. I remember how he must have struggled with his inner demons after his family members drowned in the Disang River. So, life is not easy, but we shall overcome, as Martin Luther King had said. So whenever I

feel disheartened, I count my blessings. I remind myself that my plight is many times better than that of migrant workers who are struggling to reach home in India. My family is safe and sound. Thanks to technology, I can chat with my near and dear ones. I feel blessed when old friends and acquaintances, some of whom I have met only in a professional capacity, call up to enquire about my well-being. They send me jokes and music to cheer me up.

I have stopped watching the news on television as it is very depressing. I check the news only once at the end of each day. The thought of thousands dying like flies is overwhelming. Being alone gives one a lot of time for introspection. I pray every day, I pray for forgiveness, for the world at large, for how we have destroyed this beautiful planet we live in, and I thank the Almighty for giving us a second chance. For we are slowly but steadily going to win this war against the virus, this, I truly believe, for one lives on hope. And I hope that we, mankind, have learnt our bitter lesson to live in harmony with Nature.

Journey without maps

The good thing in India is that it is doing better than other countries. Self-help books tell us always to dwell on the positives and that's what we should all be doing. Buoyed up by enthusiasm, I remembered the cockroach. Somewhere in my addled head, reposed a factoid – that cockroaches actually outlive nuclear attacks. This fact stayed with me till my middle age and today, in global interest, I am tempted to beg cockroachji for a tell-all interview on survival strategies of all kinds. I rely more on cockroachji than a pink, obese world leader who recently suggested people can have UV rays treated inside them or ingest copious doses of Lizol.

Millions of humans are today thinking about the end of the world. It looks like it won't end with a bang, but a whimper. That's T.S. Eliot. As for yours truly, I never liked sci-fi novels because the ambience was bleak, obliteration was imminent and most of it pretty formulaic. The threat to all of mankind is often posed by diabolical scientists. The first sci-fi book I remember is *The Andromeda Strain* by Michael Crichton. A deadly extraterrestrial microbe is carried to Earth by a meteor. This Andromeda meteor clots human blood, causing death in two minutes. Not on my reading list this year.

Lucifer's Hammer, penned by Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven, about a giant comet hitting the Earth, creating gigantic earthquakes, giant tsunamis and then the beginning of a new Ice Age. A handful of humans bravely struggle to survive.

In Stephen Baxter's *Moonseed*, a space mission enters the earth with a lump of rock, containing a mysterious nano-matter called moonseed, causing the earth to disintegrate.

Ballard's *The Drowned World* is a hydrophobic's worst nightmare. Global warming renders much of the world uninhabitable. As civilisation collapses, humanity is forced into a rethink. This 1962 novel focussed on climate change for the first time.

Surreal as it may sound, a novel predicted the novel coronavirus 60 years ago. Titled *The Eyes of Darkness*, it was penned by Dean Koontz. Other books

THIRD EYE

Indrani Raimedhi

indraniraimedhi470@gmail.com



My favourite author Haruki Murakami says that everybody, deep in their hearts, is waiting for the end of the world to come. It's hard to understand why he said that. Our pilgrim souls may have the foreboding that all this is transient – the trees, the moon, the seashore, love, that all this is too good to be true and one day the carnival will end, the carousel will grind to a halt, the ferris wheel will be still. Someone said, don't wake me up for the end of the world if there are no special effects...

point to this macabre direction. *End of Day: Predictions and Prophecies*, written by Sylvie Brown, also predicted the global spread of coronavirus. The book was first

published in 2008. The illness, it says, will vanish, re-appear ten years later, and then disappear forever.

My favourite author Haruki Murakami says that everybody, deep in their hearts, is waiting for the end of the world to come. It's hard to understand why he said that. Our pilgrim souls may have the foreboding that all this is transient – the trees, the moon, the seashore, love, that all this is too good to be true and one day the carnival will end, the carousel will grind to a halt, the ferris wheel will be still. Someone said, don't wake me up for the end of the world if there are no special effects. Perhaps, that is why we have this thing for disaster movies. You are snug as a bug in your seat, digging into popcorn, as there is mayhem on screen, with not even a scratch on you.

Think of what humanity has been through – war, famine, pestilence, financial crash, nuclear bombing, and somehow, puny humans that we are, we get up, brush ourselves and soldier on... We are unstoppable and will get past this one too. We'll break the chain, flatten the curve, and what it takes.

When you talk of the end of the world, don't make the mistake that it will come in a tearing hurry. One species will vanish, one glacier will melt, one more landfill will grow, microbes will mutate, corporations will hide their dark secrets. Governments will confront each other. And almost as silent as a petal falling, the chaos will begin.

Iris Murdoch, the writer, once wrote these bleak words that we are nothing and it matters not what we will do. This is nihilism at its scariest. The thoughts and deeds of mankind have built a complex web of existence. Great books have been written, there have been wonderful monuments, paintings, machines, cities. The altruism of good men and women have enriched the lives of millions. This cannot be nothing.

Corona or not, we will continue to find meaning in life, we will continue to reach out and this is just one of the many challenges thrown at us. Every life is precious.

Indrani Raimedhi is a columnist, journalist, and writer.

5 THINGS/Today's heroes

"Doctors are the new soldiers of the world."

Supreme Court A.O.R. KAUSHIK CHOUDHURY on the real heroes of this fight against COVID-19.

1 Doctors are the new bravehearts

The doctors are the new soldiers of the world. With their courage and extreme dedication, they have emerged as the lone saviours for humankind. The team of women doctors from Indore showed exemplary courage by going back to the same place, to trace COVID-19 patients, where some locals had pelted stones at them the previous day. Their positive attitude won the hearts of many and in return, they were showered with apologies, even by the locals.

2 Humility is the true character of a hero

Confused with many names, I called a friend to enquire if he can suggest a name from the Assam Police. His immediate response was the DGP, Assam. But he needs no introduction, I said. Then Bhargav Goswami, DSP, Assam Police said, "How can I name one?" He explained how every policeman is working 12-14 hours a day.

It was morning and I presumed he was at his residence. I asked casually, "Where are you?" "In ISBT, Silchar, to streamline the inter-district movement of public," he answered. I had found the hero I was looking for. I could feel his empathy for all, and the pride in his words.

3 Real heroes never retire

Retd. Justice B.K. Sharma is yet to tire of his social responsibilities, even after retirement. He has not only donated a hefty sum of money to the Assam Arogya Nidhi and for needy advocates, but is also looking after poor families during this pandemic and is feeding several street dogs and cats daily. He has proved that retirement is just a word for real heroes.



4 No one should sleep hungry in Guwahati

Street dogs are the worst sufferers due to the lockdown. While these poor souls were struggling hard to find their food, the Street Animal Welfare (SAW) was no less than a superhero for them, who fed hundreds of dogs at various street corners of Guwahati. Dogs being my best friend, their hero became my hero too.

5 Reel life king to real life hero

The list of contributions by Shah Rukh Khan and his team go a really long way, from contributing crores to the central and state governments, to supplying PPE kits and providing food and daily essentials to thousands of families, and giving away his office space as a quarantine facility. Delhi CM thanked him for his help. Khan replied "Don't thank, please order."

(As told to Bidisha Singha)

FORECAST

May 4 – 10, 2020

ARIES (MAR 21 – APR 19) It's a good time to get organised, especially when it comes to those things that encourage nurturing and growth. Planning and shopping for nutritious meals can help you to eat better and save money.

TAURUS (APR 20 – MAY 20) You could find it difficult to focus on mundane activities, preferring to seek ideas, information, and opportunities that can make a radical difference in your life. There will be an opportunity to review a home or family.

GEMINI (MAY 21 – JUN 20) You may find it easier to align with your feelings and talk about them in a way that others can relate to. You could get some intuitive nudges and prompts that encourage you to call someone. If so, following through can lead to some wonderful discoveries.

CANCER (JUN 21 – JUL 22) Your financial zone could find you questioning the cost of a certain friendship or even a club membership you've recently paid for. Are you giving more than you're getting back? If so, it's time to do something about it. A dream could seem to foretell future events.

LEO (JUL 23 – AUG 22) The focus on your sector of goals and ambition is further enhanced. It's an opportunity to promote your skills and abilities, especially those that are unique to you. You're more than equipped to fulfil your plan and live the life of your dreams.

VIRGO (AUG 23 – SEP 22) What do you want to learn next? The possibilities are endless. This is your chance to reach for golden opportunities that may take you out of your comfort zone. Be nice, but be on your guard.

LIBRA (SEPT 23 – OCT 22) If you feel hemmed in and you're growing tired of certain situations and circumstances, know that you don't have to deal with them alone. Getting help from a therapist or counsellor can enable you to dive deep.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 – NOV 21) Your relationships can act as a catalyst for major changes in your life. Reach out and communicate. The more you talk things through, the more you can resolve issues, whether big or small. Don't be afraid to talk about your opinions.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 – DEC 21) While it's good to get organised, the present focus encourages you to do so in a way that allows you more freedom. Find a routine that suits your unique situation. Seek out solutions.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 – JAN 19) This is the time to experiment with ideas and see what interests you. Plus, fate could conspire for you to connect with someone who is really exciting. Could this be the start of something special?

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 – FEB 18) You might be encouraged to have all sorts of conversations, prompting you to reach out to promote healing. However, you could feel a bit angry, and this could result in a desire for constant change.

PISCES (FEB 19 – MAR 20) Do you want to promote your work and get your message out to the world? This is very much the time to do so, whether you want to start a blog, create a website, or launch an online business. Don't be afraid!

MOVIE WATCH

Bidisha Singha

Uncorked

Cast: Courtney B. Vance, Lashun Pollard, Michael Mobley. Director: Prentice Penny.

A father-son drama over career choices and family legacy, *Uncorked* is a sweet little film – a perfect lockdown watch on Netflix. The plot revolves around Elijah, a young Black American hoping to become a master sommelier (wine steward), while his father expects him to take over the family barbecue business. Typically, in American cinema, wine isn't seen as part of the Black experience, so this might come as a fresh take on a 'wine movie', as Elijah flows into his role of a connoisseur with effortless ease.



Ten biggest April movies ever

1. Avengers: Endgame – 2019 (\$427.1 million)
2. Furious 7 – 2015 (\$324.4 million)
3. Avengers: Infinity War – 2018 (\$282.4 million)
4. The Jungle Book – 2016 (\$239.6 million)
5. Captain America: The Winter Soldier – 2014 (\$228.5 million)
6. The Fate of the Furious – 2017 (\$193.3 million)
7. Ice Age: Meltdown – 2006 (\$156.1 million)
8. Clash of the Titans – 2010 (\$149.7 million)
9. A Quiet Place – 2018 (149.4 million)
10. Fast & Furious 4 – 2009 (\$147 million)

Courtesy: Forbes

Extraction

Cast: Chris Hemsworth, Golshifteh Farahani, Rudhraksh Jaiswal. Director: Sam Hargrave.

Released on Netflix recently, *Extraction* is an action potboiler that has had us, Indians, super stoked. Well, there's Chris Hemsworth (aka Thor) in it and then he is spouting Bangla dialogue. Now, how's that for entertainment?

Chris plays a black-market mercenary who enters the filthy crime lanes of Dhaka to extract the kidnapped son of an Indian drug lord. The action sequences are very well-shot, and may well be the highlight of this otherwise mediocre film, even though some critics have panned the excessive violence.



SCREEN SHOTS

Arundhuti Banerjee

arundhuti.b@ians.in

Actress Celina Jaitley is making her comeback with Ram Kamal Mukherjee's digital short film *A Tribute to Rituparno Ghosh: Season's Greetings*. The actress says that though she missed out on a chance to work with the iconic Bengali filmmaker, she feels special, having got a chance to pay him a tribute through the film.

"Once, Rituda called me and wanted to cast me in a project. But he did not know I was pregnant then, and the project didn't work out. I spoke to him last when his father passed away. Little did I know that he would be leaving us so soon. His last words to me were that I must have the babies safely and that he would like me to stay at the Tolly Club whenever we went ahead with a project after the delivery," she says.

Asked if she followed the work of Rituparno Ghosh, she adds: "Rituda calling me for a project was beyond my dreams. Unfortunately, things were not meant to be, until Ram (Kamal Mukherjee) came along with this project. I had goosebumps; it's as if things were working from the beyond. I hope Rituda will be happy and satisfied with our subtle tribute. I always pray that he has finally found the acceptance and place of no judgement."



According to the actress, she was always a fan of the late National award-winning filmmaker, and his 1997 release *Dahan* is one of her favourite films by the filmmaker.

A calling from beyond

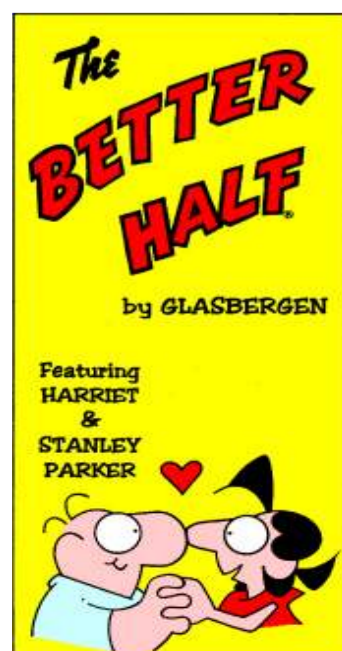
CELINA JAITLEY stages her comeback with a digital short film that pays tribute to the iconic filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh.

"I was in school when *Dahan* released. I remember being mesmerised with the film and Ronita – the character played by Rituparno Sengupta. Little did I know I would play a character named after her in a film which is, unfortunately, a posthumous tribute to the legend," recalls Celina.

The reason she did *Season's Greetings*, she says, is because it was her mother's last wish that she should make a comeback and show people her true worth as an actress. "She never gave up on me. When our director narrated the story, I knew this movie is a calling from beyond – a calling of four very important people in my life who are no more – Rituda, my late parents, and a mother-figure trans person who is no more. I am thankful to Ram for making my mother's wish come true," says the actress.

Season's Greetings, also featuring Shree Ghatak, Lillete Dubey, and Azhar Khan, is streaming on ZEE5.

– IANS



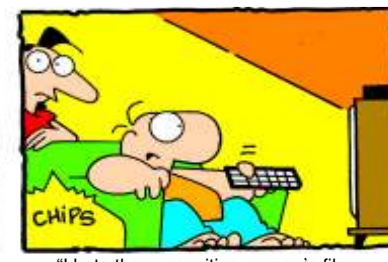
"If there's no juice in prunes, then where does prune juice come from?"



"Joe and I want to get divorced, but we hate lawyers more than we hate each other."



"My friend Patty is having cosmetic surgery. She's getting a thigh transplant from a flamingo."



"I hate these sensitive women's films. But if you play them at fast speed, they almost look violent!"