

p5 Workers, employees, farmers asked to unite

p6 'Assam tops list of states in GST collection'

p8 Boats, tractors, bikes to ferry poll officials to char areas of Nalbari

NEWS Capsule

May forecast

GUWAHATI, May 1: While above-normal temperatures are likely in most parts of the country during May, the Northeast is likely to witness normal to below normal temperatures, the IMD said, adding, normal to above normal rainfall is also likely in the region during the month. - Staff Reporter

Rain alert

GUWAHATI, May 1: Assam is likely to get isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall (in the range of 115.5 mm and 204.4 mm) on May 2, according to the IMD that has sounded an 'orange alert' in both the northeastern states of Assam and Meghalaya. - Staff Reporter

Hoax threat

NEW DELHI, May 1: At least 100 schools in the Delhi-NCR area received bomb threats through emails on Wednesday leading to chaos but "nothing objectionable" was found, officials said. The Ministry of Home Affairs said it appears to be a hoax threat and there's nothing to panic. - PTI

The Assam Tribune
PLANET YOUNG
May 2, 2024

- **A kind deed** by Yugabrata Mahanta
- **Traillblazers** Takshvi Vaghani
- **Ancient wonder** by Orgha Goswami
- **Know your world:** International Harry Potter Day Neelotpal Deka
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JOCOSERIOUS



The crorepati tag indicates that democracy has helped the leaders more than the masses.

Modi govt masking scams with schemes: Priyanka

Assam Chief Minister has 'secret understanding' with Ajmal, alleges Congress leader

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, May 1: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the NDA government at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing it of orchestrating schemes to conceal their scandals.

Addressing a huge rally at Balajan near here in support of Congress candidate for Dhubri Lok Sabha constituency Rakibul Hussain, she said, "Modi makes schemes just to cover the scams and save his friends."

The Congress leader also lambasted the government's handling of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout, alleging that the issuance of electoral bonds to the BJP by the vaccine making company served to veil purported vaccine-related irregularities. "It is now in news that Covid vaccination can make you really sick... the vaccine makers and the BJP knew about it," she said.

Highlighting the secrecy surrounding the beneficiaries of electoral bonds, Gandhi contended that such opacity was to facilitate for corruption. She also contrasted the financial trajectory of the BJP with that of the Congress.

"The Congress was in power for 70 years, yet we could not earn any money, while in just 10 years, the BJP has become the richest party not in the country but in the entire world," she said. "Just imagine how much corruption they have done," she added.

The Congress leader alleged that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has a "secret understanding" with AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal just like the BJP has with AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi in Telangana, both aimed at defeating the grand old party.

"The BJP and AIUDF have taken lo-



cal politics to a different direction. Both parties have a secret understanding. The Assam Chief Minister, in an interview, said that Badruddin wanted him to be the CM from his heart," she said.

"They did the same thing in Telangana by allying with Owaisi so that they could divide Congress votes. Wherever we are strong, Badruddin has put up AIUDF candidates only because he wants the BJP to win," she claimed.

She also questioned whether any developmental work has been done by Ajmal in Dhubri despite being a Lok Sabha member for three terms. "He (Ajmal) is doing only business with you, not service. Wherever he is seeing profit, he is going there," she said.

She also alleged that "mafia raj" prevails in Assam and charged the Chief Minister with being involved in multi-

ple scams in the State. Vadra said there were big allegations against Sarma when he was with the Congress, but he got himself "cleaned" in the "BJP washing machine" after switching sides.

As the Congress leader highlighted the party's focus on creating job opportunities, besides supporting small businesses and ensuring farmers' welfare, she said rising unemployment is a major issue in Assam, but "the Chief Minister and his ministers are concerned only about their own interests."

Raising the issue of women's safety, the Congress leader said that the Prime Minister was silent when the wife of an Army veteran was paraded naked in Manipur and medal-winning sportswomen alleged sexual abuse by a BJP leader.

SEE PAGE 2

Non-Bodo votes may be deciding factor in Kokrajhar

SANJOY RAY

KOKRAJHAR, May 1: In the heart of Bodoland, non-Bodo vote shares could be the deciding factor! As the campaign trail blazes through for the third and final phase of the Lok Sabha elections in the State, the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha constituency braces for a highly-intense showdown between the two heavyweights - the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF).

With incumbent MP Naba Kumar Sarania out of the race for the Lok Sabha, the face-off between UPPL's Joyanta Basumatary and BPF's Kampa Borgoyari has become the focal point of the political trajectory of the BTR, meaning that Kokrajhar, in all likelihood, is set to elect a Bodo MP after ten years.

Sarania had won the last two Lok Sabha elections from the Kokrajhar seat.

Amidst all these, the Congress, too, has emerged as a potential consolidator and is trying to cash in on the non-

With incumbent MP Naba Kumar Sarania out of the race, the face-off will be between UPPL's Joyanta Basumatary and BPF's Kampa Borgoyari.



Kampa Borgoyari



Joyanta Basumatary

Bodo votes, including the Muslim minority, who accounts for nearly 23 per cent of the total electors in the Kokrajhar constituency.

With Sarania throwing his weight behind Binita Deka of Gana Suraksha Party (GSP), this has fuelled the possibility of a division of the non-Bodo votes.

The ST-reserved seat of

Kokrajhar has 14,70,271 electors, including 7,35,270 males and 7,35,001 females. Of these, the Bodo community accounts for nearly 35 per cent votes. Communities like the Koch Rajbanshis, the Bengali Hindus and the Adivasis make for around 58 per cent of the electors.

SEE PAGE 2

Plea in SC seeking probe into possible side effects

Risk factors of Covishield vaccine

NEW DELHI, May 1: A plea was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking the constitution of a medical expert panel under the supervision of a retired apex court judge to examine any possible side effects and risk factors of the Covishield vaccine.

It claimed that UK-headquartered pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has said that its vaccine against Covid-19, which was made under licence in India as Covishield, could cause low platelet counts and formation of blood clots in "very rare" cases.

The application, filed by advocate Vishal

Tiwari, also sought a direction to the Centre to compensate those who are severely disabled or have died because of any side effects of the vaccine administered to them during Covid.

It claimed AstraZeneca has accepted a link between the vaccine and Thrombocytopenia Syndrome, a medical condition characterised by abnormally low levels of platelets and the formation of blood clots.

SEE PAGE 2

Personal attacks mar election campaigns

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 1: The election campaigns this year were marred by personal attacks against candidates and leaders of political parties, while, the declaration of candidatures at the last moment also affected some candidates as they hardly got enough time to campaign in all corners of the constituencies.

When contacted by *The Assam Tribune* to comment on the issues, Congress Working Committee (CWC) member Gaurav Gogoi admitted that political leaders should focus more on the policies of the parties rather than going for personal attacks.

Political leaders should focus more on the policies of the parties rather than going for personal attacks: Gaurav

Gogoi expressed the view that very often, political leaders resort to personal attacks to grab headlines and to divert the attention of the people from the real issues. He alleged that even a person of the stature of Prime Minister had resorted to personal attacks rather than focusing more on his party's policies.

Democracy is about people and the campaigns should focus more on the plans to solve the issues rather than

going for personal attacks against candidates, Gogoi admitted. He said that during his campaigns, he had never resorted to personal attacks and focused on issues like the Congress promise on caste census, defending democracy and the Constitution.

Gogoi said that a section of the media is also responsible for vitiating the atmosphere during the campaigns. "The political leaders speak on the questions asked by the media.

Some media houses often ask personal questions and instigate politicians to speak against their opponents. This also leads to personal attacks. However, I must admit that *The Assam Tribune* never asks such questions," he added.

Replying to a question on the difficulties faced by candidates due to the late declaration of the list of candidates, Gogoi said "I came to know that I would have to contest from Jorhat Parliamentary constituency only around one month ahead of the polls and it is not possible to cover the entire constituency within that time."

SEE PAGE 2

Assam to use satellite imagery to monitor deforestation



File photo

Alarming report of global watchdog moves State government

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, May 1: Rattled by the alarming report of a global watchdog which revealed that Assam lost the highest tree cover in the country in the last 23 years, the Assam government has decided to use a satellite imagery-based app-enabled surveillance system to monitor deforestation in the State.

Following directions of the

Chief Minister, the Forest Department is readying the 'Deforestation Watch Portal' based on a three-day cycle across Assam. Every pixel of tree felling will be captured and reported for reserve forest areas.

The Forest Department claims that of the 3,24,000 hectares of tree cover loss in the State in 23 years, only 98,205 hectares were in "general areas" and of that, 50,009 hectares had been in reserve forests along the inter-state borders.

"The Deforestation Watch Portal is being developed to monitor changes in forests across Assam every three days. It has been accorded priority given the fact that Assam has lost a considerable part of its forest due to rampant deforestation by ele-

ments not under its jurisdiction in reserve forests along inter-state borders with its neighbouring states," a forest official said.

Satellite images will be used by the app to gather minute details, even up to 20 square metres area or less, in all notified forest areas. The monitoring system is currently being operated on a pilot basis and its full-scale operation is expected after the Lok Sabha elections.

The system, which involves setting up control rooms and training forest officials, is funded under its externally-aided AFD project called Assam Project on Forest & Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC) Phase-II.

SEE PAGE 2

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In Loving Memory of

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Yours forever Anuja (Lu), Bro & Alvi
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Chinmoy Choudhury
Born: 22.02.1996
Died: 14.05.2023
You will always be in our hearts. On your 1st Death Anniversary we remember you with great fondness and love.
All family members.
CD/InMemo/P/NP003558/1

PUBLIC NOTICE
By an Affidavit before the Notary Public Guwahati dated 23.4.24 I have declared that "Baby Kalita" and "Dharitri Gogoi" is the one and same person i.e. myself. PN/P/ZP000559/1

This is to clarify by an affidavit before the Notary Public: Kamrup (M) Guwahati, 30.04.2024 that I Smt. Daibaki Rabha daughter of Lt. Nagen Rabha residing in Rly Qr No. DS/15/C, Station Colony Guwahati and Smt. Daibaki Rava is the same person and identity i.e. myself. PN/P/PP004295/1

I, A Padama Mother of Sep Alla Nagarjuna Reddy resident of Namburu, Vill & P.O. Teh-Pedakani, Dist- Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, State, 522508. I hereby changed my name from A Padama to Alla Padma vide affidavit No. 0005487239 Notary Public Kamrup (M) Guwahati dated 30.04.2024. PN/P/ZC015581/1

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Give in writing party will never give quota based on religion: Modi to Cong

BANASKANTHA/NEW DELHI, May 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today challenged the Congress to give a guarantee in writing that it will never give quota based on religion and asserted that as long as he is alive he will not allow anyone to "play the game of reservation". As the quota row escalated with five more phases left in the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress on its part asked Modi to clear his stance on whether he will remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). The seven-phase elections conclude on June 1. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also said the BJP will never do away with reservations for SC/ST/OBC categories nor will it allow the Congress to do so. In his first public address in Gujarat as part of the campaign for third phase of Lok Sabha elections in his home State, Prime Minister Modi said that as long as the BJP and he remain, the reservations granted to SC/ST/OBC and economically weaker sections will be safeguarded and not harmed. "I challenge the shahzada (a reference to Rahul Gandhi) of Congress, as well as Congress party and

its supporters to announce that they will never misuse reservations in the name of religion, nor will they play with the Constitution or give reservations in the name of religion. "Let the Congress and INDI Alliance give a guarantee in writing - because they cannot be trusted - that they will never give reservations in the name of religion. They should also give a second guarantee that they will never touch reservations given to SC, ST, OBC and general category. They will never do so, will never give it in writing," Modi said. "I challenge Congress and its ecosystem to declare they would not give reservation to minorities by altering Constitution." He said in 2024, the Congress and the INDIA bloc have come out with a lie, and are flashing the Constitution to spread fear that it will be changed and reservations given to the SC, ST, OBC and EWS will be

taken away if the NDA comes to power. "A completely fabricated gossip," Modi said, as he accused the Congress of spreading a false narrative. "Congress and its people should listen carefully that this is Modi. As long as Modi is alive, I will never let you play the game of reservations in the name of the Constitution." Modi said the SC, ST, OBC and the poor from the general category have got reservations under the Constitution, with the blessings of Babasaheb Ambedkar, and nobody can take away even a part of it. "Your (Congress) intention is to give reservation to the Muslims in the name of religion," he said. Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Congress manifesto guarantees that it will pass a constitutional amendment to raise the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SC, ST and OBC but alleged that Modi is trying to give it a "communal colour". Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters in Delhi, the former Union minister alleged that the BJP is "talking about '400 paar' to get the right to change the Constitution as the BJP and the RSS are against secularism and social justice". - PTI

INC demands clarity from PM on 50% cap on reservations

INC demands clarity from PM on 50% cap on reservations

Prajwal breaks silence over sexual abuse charges

BENGALURU, May 1: Breaking his silence over the sexual abuse allegations against him, Hassan MP and BJP-JD (S) alliance candidate for Lok Sabha Prajwal Revanna said truth will prevail and sought seven days to appear before the SIT probing the charges, even as the Congress stepped up its attack against the saffron party. "Is being part of Modi's 'political family' a 'guarantee of protection' for 'criminals'?" Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi while the State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urged the PM to take swift action to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal that the Janata Dal (Secular) leader used to travel abroad. With his party under fire over the matter, senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the saffron organisation cannot remain with those who commit atrocities against women. Prajwal and his father HD Revanna, former Karnataka minister, were booked by police on Sunday on charges of sexual harassment and criminal intimidation based on a complaint from a woman, who worked in their household. Prajwal is the grandson of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda and nephew of former Karnataka CM HD Kumaraswamy. Taking to Facebook, Prajwal Revanna posted: "As I am not in Bangalore to attend the inquiry, I have communicated to CID, Bangalore through my advocate. Truth will prevail soon." There was no immediate comment from the Special Investigation Team on Prajwal's request. The MP left the country as soon as the election to his constituency ended and is believed to be in Germany. Nearly 3,000 explicit video clips allegedly involving Prajwal sexually abusing several women have gone viral in Hassan in recent days. -PTI

Representatives of political parties from 10 nations visit India

NEW DELHI, May 1: Representatives of 18 political parties from 10 countries interacted with BJP President JP Nadda here today as they arrived in India on the ruling party's invitation to get a first-hand experience of the Lok Sabha polls. Nadda was joined by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in the interaction. After the meeting, the BJP chief said on X, "Had an engaging discussion on BJP's election campaign strategies and the overall electoral process with representatives of eighteen political parties from ten countries at the BJP HQ." BJP's invitation to experience polls



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and BJP National President JP Nadda during a meeting with representatives of 18 political parties from 10 countries, in New Delhi on Wednesday. - PTI

Noting that the meeting was a part of "Know BJP" initiative, he said this initiative isn't just about sharing the party's achievements but also about inspiring others by showcasing the "contributions and sacrifices" it has made for nation-building. Australia's Liberal Party, Vietnam's Communist Party of Vietnam, Bangladesh's Awami League, Israel's Likud Party, Uganda's National Resistance Movement, Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi, and Russia's United Russia Party are among the political parties whose representatives are visiting India, BJP's foreign affairs department in-charge Vijay Chauthaiwale earlier said. - PTI

Court frames charges against Lawrence Bishnoi, 26 others

CHANDIGARH, May 1: A court in Punjab's Mansa district today framed charges against jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and 26 other accused in connection with the Sidhu Moosewala murder case. Singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, who was popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Punjab's Mansa district on May 29, 2022. The prime accused in the sensational case, Canada-based gangster Satinderjit Singh alias Golden Brar, is yet to be arrested and charges have not been framed against him. "District Sessions Judge HS Grewal framed charges against 27 accused in the Moosewala murder case," said Satinder Pal Singh Mittal, the counsel for the Moosewala's family. Besides, the court also dismissed the discharge applications of accused Lawrence Bishnoi, Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, Jagtar Singh and Charanjit Singh Chetan, the counsel said. The court has fixed the next hearing on May 20. Reacting to the development, Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh said for the first time in the last 24 months, the family is feeling some relief. -PTI

President Murmu pays obeisance at Ram temple

AYODHYA (UP), May 1: President Droupadi Murmu paid obeisance and performed aarti at the Ram temple in Ayodhya today. In a video shared on the President's official X handle, she was seen kneeling down and bowing before the idol amid religious chants and the sound of cymbals and gongs. Before visiting the temple in the evening, Murmu took part in the Sarayu aarti and performed puja at the Hanumangarhi temple here. The President was seen offering a garland of flowers to the Sarayu river as part of the aarti. Earlier in the day, the President was received at the Ayodhya airport by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel. -PTI

Assam to ...

(Contd from page 1) Divisional Forest Officers will have access to areas under their jurisdiction on the app for monitoring, verification and further action. "There will also be a central dashboard where the various dynamic forest data will be displayed and constantly updated. Once operationalized, this system is expected to provide a huge boost to the conservation efforts of Forest Department of Assam," the official added. According to the latest data of watchdog 'Global Forest Watch' - which tracks global forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources - India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover between 2001-23, and the highest loss (3,24,000 hectares) was in Assam.

Personal attacks ...

(Contd from page 1) However, he said that the parties conduct internal surveys on the winning prospects of the candidates from time to time before announcing the candidatures. The candidates must do some groundwork in the constituencies to gain acceptability. When asked whether the declaration of candidatures about one year ahead would be helpful, he said, "One year back I was not aware that the Kailiabor constituency map would be changed through delimitation. One year back, I was not aware that Majuli would be included in the Jorhat constituency."

Modi govt ...

(Contd from page 1) "He talks about women's safety, but what is happening in Karnataka? Thousands of videos emerged of a candidate, who is BJP's partner. The Prime Minister shared the dais with the Karnataka sex scandal accused. Later, he fled from India, but Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah didn't stop him," she alleged. Congress MLA Rakibul Hussain is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Dhubri, a bastion of AIUDF. He is locked in a triangular contest with sitting MP Badruddin Ajmal of AIUDF and BJP-backed AGP candidate Zabeed Islam, a former MLA. (With inputs from PTI)

Non-Bodo ...

(Contd from page 1) Those keeping a close eye on the BTR political tapestry are of the opinion that although the UPPL and the BPF had said that the Bodo, non-Bodo equation is a thing of the past, the non-Bodo vote shares would still be the deciding factor. While UPPL chief Pramod Boro has exuded confidence that their candidate Joyanta Basumatary would come up trumps on the strength of their work done towards attaining sustainable peace and development, the BPF camp is not willing to buy the UPPL chief's narrative of peace and development. "If development works have taken place, why can't the people of the BTR see those? These are mere eyewash. As far as peace is concerned, it was the BPF which was instrumental in bringing an era of peace in the BTR," said Derhasat Basumatary, a senior leader of the BPF, while talking to The Assam Tribune. "The BPF under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary will secure a comfortable win. People of the BTR desperately want Hagrama Mohilary back in the thick of things, which we could feel during the election campaign," he said. "As Naba Sarania is not in the race, the BPF has been greatly benefitted. His supporters want the UPPL out of the BTR administration," he claimed. Congress candidate from the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha constituency, Garjan Moshahary, while dwelling on his chances, said, "Since I do not have the resources like the UPPL or the BPF, I have adopted a slightly different approach. I have concentrated more on areas where we traditionally enjoy a strong support base."

Plea in ...

(Contd from page 1) "After Covid-19, there has been an increase in the cases of death due to heart attack and sudden collapse of persons. There have been several cases of heart attack even in youngsters. Now, after the document filed in UK court by the developer of Covishield, we are compelled to think upon the risk and hazardous consequences of Covishield vaccine which have been administered to the citizens at a large number," the application said. It said the government is required to take immediate steps for the sake of safety and health of citizens and the issue has to be looked upon by the Centre on priority so that in future, no risk may occur regarding the health and life of Indian citizens. The application said AstraZeneca's vaccine formula was licensed to Pune-based vaccine maker Serum Institute of India (SII) and over 175 crore doses of Covishield have been administered in the country. It said a large number of Covishield doses were administered to the citizens on the assurance of the government about its safety. The application said in some countries like the UK, there is a "vaccine damage payment system" for people who get severely disabled due to vaccination. It has sought directions to constitute a medical expert panel comprising experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, headed by its director and supervised by a retired judge of the top court to examine the Covishield vaccine side effects and its risk factors. It has also sought direction from the Centre to establish a "vaccine damage payment system" for citizens who get severely disabled as a result of a vaccination drive during Covid-19. -PTI

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Kunal Ghosh removed as TMC State general secy

KOLKATA, May 1: Hours after Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh shared a stage with a BJP Lok Sabha candidate and praised him, the TMC today removed him from the post of State general secretary for making statements not aligning with the party.

Ghosh, who has been seeking more prominence for next-generation leaders, had expressed his desire to resign as party spokesperson and State general secretary in March.

The party then accepted his resignation as spokesperson but asked him to continue with the other post.

"Kunal Ghosh has been expressing views that don't align with the party... Mr Ghosh was previously relieved from his role as party spokesperson. Now he has been removed from the position of general secretary of the State organisation," the TMC said in a statement.

In the statement signed by TMC Rajya Sabha party leader Derek O'Brien, the party also asked media outlets not to conflate Ghosh's views with those of the party, warning that doing so might invite legal action.

"It is important to clarify that these are his personal opinions... Only statements issued from the AITC (All India Trinamool Congress) headquarters should be considered the official position of the party," it said.

Despite his removal from the post of party spokesperson, he has been holding press conferences regularly from the party headquarters during the ongoing Lok Sabha election campaign.

A senior TMC leader, speaking on the condition of anonymity, described Ghosh's removal as a "calibrated punishment," indicating that his removal as State spokesperson in March was a warning, and this removal as State general secretary is the final action. - PTI

EC revises protocols on storage of SLUs after SC order

NEW DELHI, May 1: The Election Commission has come out with new protocols for handling and storage of symbol loading units (SLUs) following the directions of the Supreme Court which had ordered that the machines should be sealed and secured in a container and stored in a strongroom along with the EVMs at least for 45 days post the declaration of results.

In a statement today, the poll authority said all State Chief Electoral Officers have been directed to create necessary infrastructure and provisions to implement the new protocols for handling and storage of the symbol loading units.

"As mandated by the Supreme Court, the revised protocols are applicable in all cases of completion of the symbol loading process in the VVPATs undertaken on or after May 1, 2024," the commission said.

The top court had on Friday last issued directions to seal and store symbol loading units and also paved the way for verification of micro-

controllers embedded in the electronic voting machines (EVMs) on the request of the candidates who stand second and third in the elections.

The SLU uploads the name and symbol of the candidates contesting on a particular seat on VVPAT or paper trail machines.

So far, the EVMs and VVPAT slips were stored for 45 days post results. In these 45 days following the declaration of an election result, people can file an election petition in the concerned High Court challenging the plea.

Before the Supreme Court order, the SLUs were handed over to local poll officials by the engineers of BEL or ECIL.

A day after the poll, the SLUs were returned to the engineers of the two public sector units who manufacture the ballot unit, the control unit and the VVPAT along with SLUs.

A few years ago, a feature was added which helped the candidates or their representatives see the symbol loading process on a TV monitor. The feature was added to enhance transparency. - PTI



Revised protocols are applicable in all cases of completion of the symbol loading process in the VVPATs undertaken on or after May 1, 2024.

- Poll panel

Accused 'commits suicide' in police custody

MUMBAI, May 1: A 32-year-old man arrested in the case related to the firing outside Bollywood actor Salman Khan's residence here allegedly hanged himself in the police lock-up today, an official said.

Anuj Thapan, the deceased, was accused of supplying weapons to the shooters who opened fire outside Khan's residence in Bandra on April 14 and arrested by the Mumbai crime branch.

He hanged himself with a piece of bedsheet in the toilet of the first-floor lock-up, located in the crime branch's building inside the Police Commissioner's office compound in south Mumbai, the official said.

The incident came to light at 1 pm when a crime branch official noticed that Thapan was in the toilet for a long time. When the door was forced open, he was found hanging from the toilet's window, the official said.

He was rushed to the nearby State-run Gokuldas Tejpal hospital where he was declared dead during treatment, the official said. - PTI

Firing outside Salman Khan's house

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Nobody is scared, decision in next 24-30 hrs: Cong

NEW DELHI, May 1: Amid the mounting suspense over the Amethi and Raebareli Lok Sabha seats, the Congress today asserted that "nobody is scared" and a decision on the matter would be announced in the next 24-30 hours.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said that party's Central Election Committee (CEC) has empowered Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to finalise the candidates for Amethi and Raebareli.

"My expectation is that in the next 24-30 hours, the Congress President will finalise and a decision taken by him will be announced," Ramesh said in response to a question at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here.

"Till that is done, all the information, all so-called office orders are fake," he said.

Asked why there is delay in taking a decision and if the Congress was "scared" in fielding Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, Ramesh said, "There is no delay. Has the BJP announced its candidates in Raebareli? Smriti Irani is a sitting MP. Nobody is

scared, discussions are ongoing, the Congress President has been authorised."

"There is no delay, there is time till May 3," he said.

The State leadership in Uttar Pradesh has already urged the Central Election Committee and the party leadership to field Rahul Gandhi from

Candidates for Amethi, Raebareli LS seats

Amethi and Priyanka from Raebareli.

The CEC members had also supported the view of the Uttar Pradesh Congress during its last meeting on Saturday.

The Amethi seat has been represented by Rahul Gandhi from 2004 and he remained the Member of Parliament from the constituency for three consecutive terms till 2019 when he was defeated by BJP's Smriti Irani.

Rahul Gandhi currently represents the Waya-

nad constituency in Kerala, from where he had contested in the 2019 Lok Sabha election and also this time.

The Amethi and Raebareli constituencies go to polls on May 20 in the fifth round of the seven-phase general elections.

Rahul Gandhi has said earlier that he will follow "whatever order" he gets from his party.

Speculation had been rife that Rahul Gandhi might contest the Lok Sabha polls from Amethi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Raebareli, a seat that was previously held by her mother Sonia Gandhi.

Both seats are considered bastions of the Gandhi family and the local units of the Congress have demanded that the two scions of the family contest from there.

The Congress has forged an alliance with the SP in Uttar Pradesh and is contesting 17 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

The Lok Sabha polls are being held in seven phases starting April 19. The counting of votes will be taken up on June 4. - PTI

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Message for today

Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage.

— DALE CARNEGIE

The Assam Tribune

Causing concern

That, during the course of a \$125 million class action lawsuit in a court in Britain, pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca confirmed for the first time that its COVID-19 vaccine can cause a rare but deadly blood-clotting condition, has understandably caused concern amongst individuals who received this vaccine during the pandemic. It is true that this rare condition, called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome, or TTS, had been well-studied prior to the ongoing litigation, and AstraZeneca had even listed it as a “possible” side effect. In the United Kingdom and other places where this particular vaccine was widely used, we did see a small number of people develop thrombocytopenia, or blood clotting that is initiated by a protein called platelet factor 4. When this had raised questions then, the firm had stated that the development of the blood clots could be due to other factors, like a person’s comorbidities, vascular disease or other secondary considerations, and it was not linked directly to the vaccine itself. But now, confronted with evidence that the TTS side effect was seen in a number of cases post approval of this vaccine back in 2021 and the early part of 2022, AstraZeneca has accepted that its COVID vaccine “can, in very rare cases, cause TTS,” in a legal document presented in a court. The UK, where this lawsuit is ongoing, has about 150 million people who took the COVID-19 vaccine.

The class action suit has cited 51 cases of TTS associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine in the UK. It may be noted that level of clot formation has not been seen in the United States, where a majority of individuals have been vaccinated either with Moderna’s or Pfizer’s mRNA vaccine that is delivered using a lipid nanoparticle formulation, unlike the AstraZeneca vaccine which uses a modified form of what basically is a cold virus, or an adenoviral vector. Despite the linkage now firmly established in a court, experts assert that the number of individuals experiencing the TTS side effect is minimal, and there was no reason for those who had been inoculated with this particular vaccine to be concerned. They also point out that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that there are roughly four cases of the blood clot condition reported per one million administered doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which, like the AstraZeneca, is an “adenovirus” vaccine. Such reassurance is of particular necessity to a country like India where the AstraZeneca vaccine, under the brand name of Covishield, was widely used. Bodies like the National Medical Council, which in its earlier designation as Medical Council of India had recommended the AstraZeneca vaccine, should also reinforce this reassurance. It is also to be hoped that the Indian media cease the hype being aired around the vaccine and instead assist in assuaging concerns.

Vulture fatalities

Recurring mass fatalities of vultures – Nature’s great cleaner which has a very critical role in the ecosystem – have been a disturbing concern in the State. The killings mostly occur due to thoughtless human actions such as poisoning of cattle or goat carcasses or throwing of carcasses on the railway tracks. In the past one month, there have been several such incidents of poisoning of vultures through pesticide-laced carcasses. Regrettably, despite this being the most conspicuous cause of mass vulture fatalities across the State for the past two decades, the situation refuses to ease. This is because the authorities including the Forest department and the Government, besides communities at large, have failed to come up with meaningful and sustained intervention. The plight of the vulture is all the more distressing because the scavenger bird has been well into its path of extinction for the past two decades. Unfortunately, the situation which exemplifies the biggest conservation failure in recent decades has not elicited the kind of response befitting the enormity of the tragedy. There are some particular belts in the State that are notorious for mass poisoning of vultures, but activities from the Forest department and NGOs in terms of awareness generation and sensitization continue to be minimal. Aside from enhancing mass awareness, there is also a need for enforcing the law and punish the offenders. As a long-term measure, children, youth and teachers ought to be the major stakeholders in the community awareness campaign. Protection of breeding and roosting sites of vultures is another imperative for boosting their population.

The frequent mass poisoning of vultures has only heightened the grim reality that vulture populations of three major species in the entire country have dwindled as much as by 97 per cent to 99.9 per cent. Vultures, once ubiquitous across the State’s rural as well as urban landscape till the beginning of the 1990s, made a sudden and drastic disappearance in the following one-and-a-half decade. Indeed, the disappearance of the vulture is regarded as the fastest decline of any bird species ever reported anywhere in the world. Scientists attribute the plummeting number of vultures to the widespread use of Diclofenac, a veterinary drug to cure ailments in cattle. Vultures in India died in huge numbers during this period after consuming dead cattle that had been given the Diclofenac drug, and their population reduced to less than four lakh from a thriving four crore. Three of India’s vulture species of the genus Gyp – the long-billed (*Gyps indicus*) and the slender-billed (*G. tenuirostris*) had crashed by an astounding 97 per cent, while in the white-rumped (*G. bengalensis*) group, the decline was even more catastrophic at 99.9 per cent between 1992 and 2007. The role of vultures in keeping the environment pollution-free hardly needs any reiteration, as these scavengers are largely responsible for disposing of animal carcasses, especially cattle. They have also been equally effective against any human health hazard that can be triggered by rotten carcasses.

One year of Manipur violence

Rough & Tumble

PATRICIA MUKHIM



So many atrocities have been committed on the Kuki-Zo community by the Meiteis and those of us who have expressed empathy with the victims have been called sympathisers of the drug mafia amongst other epithets.

Friday May 3, marks one year of the Manipur violence with no signs of a durable peace emerging. The reasons are not far to seek. Peace is untenable without being foregrounded by justice. And justice is what eludes the Kuki-Zo community, who have been at the receiving end of the conflict. About 40,000 of them are still living in relief camps, over 200 people have died, and worse, the divide between the valley and the hills is complete. The Kuki-Zo people travelling to and from the hill districts of Manipur have to use the Senapati-Kohima-Dimapur road or the dilapidated Aizawl road. It means that the Kuki-Zo people dare not travel to the valley for any of their needs. If there is one recent example of ethnic cleansing then this is it. The Meiteis stick to the Imphal valley; the Kuki-Zo to the hills.

In this entire year there has not been a single peace-building initiative, mainly because even if people were to desire peace there would be many spoilers, too. They include in the main the Arambai Tengol, an armed outfit that has been allowed free rein in the valley. They have been dictating terms to their MLAs to act in certain ways and anyone who has a different opinion is intimidated and has to comply. Since almost all conflicts are rooted in politics and sharing of scarce resources, it is the political class that should have sat across the table and resolved the differences.

In Manipur, the major point of conflict is over one of the scarcest resources – land. Much has been said about how 60% of the population is cooped up in 1/10 of the land areas in the valley while the rest 40% control about 90% of the land mass of Manipur comprising the verdant hills. It is a fact that the forest areas bordering Myanmar have been cleared for poppy cultivation, which has become a livelihood for many in the absence of any other livelihood activities. However, to imagine that

the production of opium, heroin amongst other by-products, happens entirely in the hills and that the Kuki-Zo are the main beneficiaries of this illegal drug trade is a narrative that deceives. The production units are based in the valley and there are powerful forces that rake in the profits, much of which also goes into political funding. In North East India as in other states too, all illegal activities such as extraction of coal using the rat hole mining technique, which was banned by the National Green Tribunal in 2014, continue and the money generated from this trade goes towards political funding.

In Meghalaya for instance, this extractive economy is the mainstay of politics. In recent times, truckloads of smuggled sugar have been transported to Bangladesh via the Garo Hills. Once in a while these trucks are seized, but not all the time. The entire smuggling machinery is well-oiled and police get their share as also the other authorities that are meant to check smuggling.

So many atrocities have been committed on the Kuki-Zo community by the Meiteis and those of us who have expressed empathy with the victims have been called sympathisers of the drug mafia amongst other epithets. While it is a fact that the drug problem has become the bane of nearly every household in Manipur, there are ways of dealing with the issue without turning and labelling the entire population as ‘drug mafia’ or illegal migrants from Myanmar. Let there be a process where illegal entrants to Manipur since the Myanmar crisis are identified and deported. There is a limit to how much resources can be made available to non-citizens, when even the citizens themselves battle for resources.

Recently, Manipur CM Biren Singh claimed that 996 new villages have emerged in the hill districts of Manipur in the past 18 years. If this is borne out by hard data, then it merits some action because every nation zealously guards

its borders. The national resources derived mainly from the taxpayers of this country cannot be shared with people of another nation. Undoubtedly, the issue of illegal influx needs better handling in the manner that Mizoram has done, which is to keep the migrants in camps and ensure that they return once the political climate in Myanmar improves. From conversations with friends from Mizoram, it is learnt that refugees from Myanmar prefer to return to their habitat once the situation improves for that is their hearth and home.

What needs to be questioned today is what are the key political, social, economic and cultural hurdles to peace-building in the NE today? Why is there an absence of a vibrant civil society that would include individuals from different ethnic groups that are invested in peace-building? My long years of observation of the ethnic conflicts in the region tell me that we have not learnt the art of political dialoguing. Groups are good at posturing and representing their respective communities. It’s a case of ‘my way or the highway.’ In most cases it is the insurgent outfits with bases outside the country who have negotiated peace on behalf of the people. These groups survive on extortion and have been known to violate human rights by their arbitrary killings of those who refuse to pay. Can such groups negotiate peace?

One of the key features of the region and perhaps the country is the trust deficit in politicians. People have an inherent distrust of politicians, yet they are the ones who have the responsibility to ensure that the rule of law is enforced at all times. As voters, however, we have failed to hold politicians accountable. How many in Manipur are ready to hold the Manipur CM accountable for the complete failure of law and order in the State – a situation that continues even today? Has he been held accountable for the open loot of weaponry, including several rounds of bullets from the police armoury? How can a government be seen

to be siding with one group in an ethnic warfare? But, that is what politicians in this country will do to remain in power.

Perhaps one of the most cruel fates that has befallen the Kuki-Zo is that the Prime Minister has, in fact, abandoned them leaving them to wallow in their own misfortune. Modi did not say a word about the conflict in Manipur until he was literally dragged to the Parliament, and even then just for a few seconds did he mention Manipur in a long lecture on other nondescript issues. Recently, Modi claimed that he had sent the best bureaucrats and police officials to Manipur to calm the storm. Is this enough or was it a vote-getting ploy?

It must be evident today that the people of the North East can no longer rely on Delhi to sort out their quarrels. There is an urgent need to build social capital across communities. Let’s admit that politics thrives on division; the more divided we are the easier it is to create fear-mongering, just as the current trend is to sow the seeds of Hindu-Muslim ruptures with hate speeches targeted at the Muslim community and slogans like, “Hindu khattr mein hain.” What are the Hindus up against? As citizens we are battling unprecedented inflation, joblessness and the slowing down of the economy, but these are sought to be hidden by creating fear amongst fellow Indians. If we can’t see through this dangerous political engineering, we will suffer the consequences of having to deal with conflicts that again undermine our economy and hold us back from the path of progress. The Kuki-Zo people and the Meiteis need to find common ground to thrash out their issues without playing the blame game. Over-reliance on governments or insurgents is fraught with dangerous consequences. Those in relief camps must be resettled in homes and the Kuki-Zo working in the valley must feel secure to rejoin their posts; so too the Meiteis working in the hills. There’s no alternative to peace!

Clearing the air around AI

MRITYUNJAY CHAKRABORTY

We have always feared what we do not understand, and resented the rise of industrial machines, too. People lost jobs even then, but at the same time, it created new job profiles. Machines made jobs easier and faster.

General views on artificial intelligence (AI) are highly polar; mostly negative about how it will disrupt the job market by replacing people with machines, threaten human existence and how worse things will get. In the other version, backed by the corporate houses, the focus is on how efficient it will be and how it will maximize revenue. This fear of getting replaced by a fairly new technology, compared to our thousands of years old civilization, suggests that we, as a civilization, have failed. If we are afraid that a machine is going to replace us in jobs, then I think we are the ones who have been learning to behave and work like machines.

Popular sci-fi movies, too, fuel the negative talks about AI. The most common reference is ‘Ultron’ in the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies, which turns against its creators and wreaks havoc. Science fiction has always ignited such curiosity and fascination about technological advancements of the future.

Leaving out all complicated terms such as artificial neural networks or CNN (Convolutional Neural Network) or RNN (Recurrent Neural Network), let us find out what AI is. At the lowest level, it is a game of mathematics and data. For instance, when a newborn child sees a dog for the first time it doesn’t know what it is called. After repeated familiarization, the child identifies a dog as a dog. Being told multiple times, showing multiple dogs the child understands that this organism which has

certain features is called a dog! Similarly, AI too has to be trained on a lot of data during its training phase. To test our newborn child’s understanding, we will show it many different creatures and will ask it to identify the dog. Similarly, after training, in the testing phase, the AI is tested on test data. The process of creating AI is complicated and involves a deep knowledge of mathematics. The highest form of AI is the Generative AI; it can generate output on commands, but it too cannot think on its own.

In India, we still have areas where students do not have access to good teachers. Developing a system of delivery with an AI model of a particular teacher, with some fine-tuning and human involvement, for teaching those students can be a great boon. Custom chatbots and AI assistants can solve the problem of doubt clearing in case of a large class and improve efficiency, and learning experience and also save time. In our education system, the same teaching, grading and improvement approach is applied for all the students. AI can solve this. It can easily identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses and also provide personalised roadmaps to follow for improving the weak areas. It can provide career predictions, a roadmap to clear exams and produce mock questions at par with real tests and specialized reports.

AI can improve access to healthcare, and empower patients to take control of their health by providing personalized health advice, answering medical questions, as-

sisting with medication management, etc. It can further be used to diagnose simple medical conditions and prescribe treatment. AI algorithms, which can analyse X-rays, MRIs and CT scan images with remarkable accuracy, can help in the early detection of diseases like cancer, speed up diagnosis and improve treatment outcomes. Future developments may involve even more sophisticated algorithms capable of detecting subtler abnormalities and predicting disease progression. AI may facilitate the discovery of personalized medicine tailored to individual genetic profiles. With the help of AI models, healthcare operations can be optimized to streamline administrative tasks, schedule appointments and manage hospital resources more efficiently. This can reduce costs and enhance the overall quality of care.

AI can improve efficiency in the defence sector, too. For instance, to tackle the problem of aircraft crashes due to faulty quality, AI models can be developed for automatic maintenance that will analyse sensor data to predict equipment failures and allow preventive maintenance. Further, AI can improve flight manoeuvrability, terrain differentiation, etc. Improved Search and Operations, involving AI, can analyze weather patterns, ocean currents and real-time data to optimize search efforts during rescue missions, increasing the chances of saving lives. Autonomous Logistics and Resupply, with unmanned surface vehicles equipped with AI, can handle routine resupply missions. Predictive Maintenance – where an

underlying AI model can analyze sensor data from ships to predict equipment failures – will allow preventive maintenance and improve operational efficiency.

The development of AI can boost the IT job market. In the case of AI, even a minuscule error can cause a catastrophe or collapse systems. The primary concern is the security of the app and the underlying AI model itself. The data quality and AI systems maintenance is a crucial factor, which relies on the success of the AI revolution. People trained in cybersecurity will be needed to test the system vulnerabilities to avoid any significant issues once deployed. Cybersecurity experts will be needed to train organizations to protect against malicious elements that threaten AI systems. Human supervisors will be needed to communicate and work with AI. Job roles such as AI operations engineer, LLM (Large Language Model) operations engineer, machine intelligence operations engineer, etc., are already in demand. Moreover, AI engineers will be the ones who will be creating and optimizing the AI models. AI development will push tech development and production in the hardware industry by creating more job opportunities.

We have always feared what we do not understand, and resented the rise of industrial machines, too. People lost jobs even then, but at the same time, it created new job profiles. Machines made jobs easier and faster. We are in a similar situation now. Not only do we need to change our mindset, but also learn how to adapt!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poll campaigns in Guwahati should focus on civic issues

Sir, – The upcoming electoral battle in the Guwahati parliamentary constituency presents a captivating scenario with two debutant women candidates, Mira Borthakur Goswami of the INC and Biju Kalita Medhi of the BJP, vying for victory. Voters will be eager to see how these candidates will address their concerns regarding some of the city’s pressing issues like artificial floods, traffic congestion and pollution. Guwahati’s political history, enriched by stalwarts like Rohini Kumar Choudhury and Hema Barua, adds weight to this contest. The legacy of strong female representation in this constituency further intensifies the competition. While the BJP endeavours to maintain its hold, the Congress exhibits a determined effort to re-

claim the seat. As voters, we anticipate a spirited campaign focused on addressing the city’s challenges and championing its aspirations. Yours etc, **Shashanka Das**, Guwahati-6.

Overnight beautification

Sir, – The efforts made recently to ensure a seamless roadshow for the Union Home Minister’s poll campaign in Guwahati, amidst a shortage of city buses and overnight city beautification, highlight the challenges faced by ordinary citizens during such times. A glaring example of this is the Bharalumukh railway gate no.9, the appalling condition of which had been subjecting commuters to a jarring, uncomfortable ride for several months, being

repaired overnight to facilitate the roadshow the next day.

While it is commendable that the road was repaired, the timing and circumstances raise questions about the priorities of our government and also the durability of such repairs made overnight. For too long, countless citizens have endured the dangers posed by deplorable road infrastructure, with little or no action taken to address their concerns. It is disheartening to witness swift action only when it aligns with the interests of those in power.

The authorities should ensure regular maintenance and repairs for the citizens and not at an opportune moment for political leaders. Yours etc, **Basundhara Choudhury**.

Lack of respect for elders

Sir, – We often observe that some individuals simply ignore elderly people who

are in need of help. For example, it is disheartening to see a woman standing on a bus holding her child in one hand and a pole in the other, while others do not offer to give up their seats.

Where is our humanity? The death of humanity is evident in today’s society. People have become self-centred and lack empathy towards others. It is important to remember that helping others is ultimately beneficial to oneself. As a society, we must be loyal to each other to create a livable and peaceful environment. It is important to remember that we will all grow old one day. Can we expect others to treat us with the same disregard that we are showing today? Yours etc, **Heramba Nath**, Hindumaizali, Haldha, Kamrup.

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



**WEATHER
GUWAHATI**

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of development of thunder/lightning. Maximum and Minimum temperatures are most likely to be 35°C & 22°C respectively.

TEMPERATURE:
Max 35.2°C
Min 22.2°C

Tributes paid to Bodofa Upendranath Brahma

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 1: The 34th Smriti Divas of Bodofa Upendranath Brahma was observed at the premises of Media Trust, Assam office at Rupnagar today.

Trust president Prasanta Jyoti Baruah lit the lamp in front of the bronze statue of Brahma, while floral tributes were paid by executive trustee Ramani Barman followed by journalists Nazrul Haque, Pradip Chandra Deka and Anup Arandhara, among others.

Barman spoke about the objective of the programme. Baruah briefed the gathering about the life and contribution of Bodofa Upendranath Brahma.

Workers, employees, farmers asked to unite

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 1: International Workers' Day was celebrated as May Day in all parts of the State along with rest of the world, calling for social security and other better working conditions for workers.

Workers and activists across the State participated in rallies organized on the occasion.

In Guwahati, the central May Day programme was held at Panbazar near the Meghdoot Bhawan where organizations like the AITUC, CITU, AICCTU, AIUTUC, HMS, TUCC and JCTU, among others, gathered and saluted the red flag. Retired comrade Robin Goswami hoisted the flag. Goswami, in his speech, criticized the BJP-led Central government. Comrade Laksheswar Bora called upon workers, employees and farmers to unite and defeat BJP in the General Election.

A meeting was also held where AITUC general secretary Ramen Das spoke about the objective of the meeting. Das alleged that the present government is anti-people, anti-worker and anti-farmer. He also talked about the continuous rise in prices of essential items, amendment of labour laws and privatization of different public sectors.

In their appeal to the socie-

ty in general and working class people in particular, the organizations called upon the people to strengthen their unity to fight against the corporate groups and the BJP-led Central government.

May Day celebrations

"The 12 lakh tea workers are working on a daily wage of only Rs 250. About 90 lakh workers are still deprived of social security benefits in the State. There are thousands of employees who have been engaged in different government schemes with a meagre salary. Workers in the construction sector, motor transport sector, weaving industry, private sector nursing homes, schools etc., are still deprived of legal benefits," stated the appeal.

Several unions also hoisted flags and organized meetings at Betkuchi IOC and HPC, Harijan Colony, Ambari, Fancy Bazar and Sonapur on the occasion.

The Assam Tribune Employees Union (ATEU) celebrated the day with an elaborate programme. ATEU president Siba Prasad Deka hoisted the May Day flag at its office premises at 10:30 am. Another flag hoisting was done in the Assam Tribune building campus by the senior-most employee of the organization,



Members of the Assam Tribune Employees' Union celebrating May Day on the Assam Tribune premises on Wednesday. - Photo: Samarendra Sarma

Chandan Chouhan.

In his speech, Chouhan expressed the hope that the organization would reach newer heights in the days to come.

While ATEU general secretary Dugdha Ram Kalita explained the objective of the meeting, president Deka threw light on the history of the workers' movement and its importance in the present day context. He also talked about the challenges faced by the workers and employees.

Speaking on the occasion, senior journalist Indrani Raimedhi talked about the workers working in tea gardens and coal fields. She also talked about artificial intelligence and its impact on the works of journalists. "AI cannot replace the jobs of the journalists," she said.

The NF Railway Workers' Union observed the May Day with a day-long programme.

The Maligaon branch of the union organized a meeting at NF Railway headquarters premises on the occasion. The programme started with flag hoisting and *swahid tarpan* in the morning. The union members distributed May Day badges among the employees.

Secretary Pankaj Kalita explained the purpose of the meeting. After the meeting, the members of the union also took out a procession to mark the day.

The Journalists' Association of Assam (JAA) in association with National Union of Journalists India (NUJI) organized a meeting at its office at Hengrabari on the occasion of May Day.

The association reiterated its demand for introduction of the Protection of Journalists Act in Assam like in other States to ensure prevention of violence against journalists and protection of journalists and their institutions.

The meeting which was chaired by senior journalist Sandeep Sharma resolved that the State government should initiate the process of introduction of such an Act in the Assembly to protect the lives of journalists who have been fighting selflessly for the cause of the State.

In a message, eminent journalist and president of JAA, DN Chakravarty congratulated all media personnel and said that the lives of the journalists who have served selflessly should be protected and all sections of people should extend their help and cooperation to them.

JAA general secretary Dalim Phukan explained the objective of the meeting and highlighted the significance of the day.

Speaking as the chief guest at the meeting, eminent journalist and national vice president of the National Union of Journalists India, Bhupen

Goswami said that the State government should ensure the safety and security of media personnel and journalists in Assam on the lines of Maharashtra.

Senior journalists Niren Chandan Goswami, Chanu Gogoi, Parmananda Deka, Kumar Nripendra Rajbongshi, Imran Hussain and many others also delivered speeches.

On the other hand, today's meeting strongly criticized the Central government and demanded the repeal of the amended labour laws.

Looking into the financial condition of the media houses, the JAA urged the State government to hike the advertisement tariffs as per the orders of the Press Council of India (PCI) and pay the advertisement bills to media houses monthly. The meeting observed that the advertisement tariffs have not been revised by the State government since 2014.

The meeting expressed concern over the anti-social activities of a section of media outlets and urged them to maintain journalistic ethics in all situations and circumstances.

The meeting further resolved to launch a massive membership drive from May 1 to May 31 and hold the general meeting within July this year.

Himanta confident of massive BJP win in Guwahati seat



Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at an election campaign meeting at Sonapur on Wednesday. - Photo: Jorabat Correspondent

CORRESPONDENT

JORABAT, May 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has expressed confidence that the BJP candidate Bijuli Kalita Medhi would secure victory in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections with over five lakh votes. His remarks came during a rally at Sonapur alongside Bijuli Kalita Medhi, amidst a fervent display of support.

Addressing the people, Sarma lauded Kalita's dedication and assured the audience of her capabilities to represent the constituency effectively. He emphasized the need for a strong mandate to further propel Assam's progress under the leadership of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi.

Sarma also highlighted the transformative initiatives undertaken by the Modi government, which have significantly contributed to Assam's development and brought stability to the region. He underscored the importance of unity among various communities and commended Modi's commitment to fostering peace and harmony in the State.

Kalita pledged to prioritize the welfare of the people and work tirelessly to address their concerns. Prominent leaders including Minister Sanjay Mishra, MLAs Atul Bora, as well as BJP functionaries from Sonapur and Dimoria, voiced their unwavering support for Bijuli Kalita Medhi.

Ethnofest at GCU concludes

CORRESPONDENT

AZARA, May 1: The two-day ethnofest and cultural event concluded on April 30 at Girijananda Choudhury University (GCU), Azara.

The objectives of the festival was to preserve and exhibit the diverse culture and traditions of Assam. On the occasion, an inter-college competition on folk dance and traditional food was also organized by the GCU authority. Several competitors took part in both the competitions.

A former student of GCU and Master Chef Nayan Jyoti Saikia and Amitabh Dutta of Chef Culinary school judged the traditional food competition.

JCI Guwahati training prog

GUWAHATI, May 1: JCI Guwahati Pioneer hosted the zone-level CAPP training programme recently, a press release stated.

Sixty five participants from all over the Northeast participated, having the highest registration till date in Zone XXV.

The chairman of the event was JC Dipak Jain, zone director training of Zone XXV. The pilot faculty JC Kumar Zilpella, JCI designer and iconic trainer.

The training was attended by Shubham Agarwala as chief guest, president Zone XXV, Sweta Somani as guest of honour, past zone president, Zone XXV, Zone vice president Meghna Kala, JCI pioneer mentor Amit Jain Patni. Many other dignitaries and leaders of Zone XXV and outside JCI fraternity also graced the event.

Sanyal, who graduated in economics from Shri Ram College of Commerce, New Delhi, before studying at St John's College, Oxford, took a deep dive into ancient history to retrieve priceless nuggets in support of his argument.

The first known empire in Bharatvarsha, he said, was formed by Sudasa, the chieftain of the Bharatas, who became a 'Chakravartin' after defeating a confederacy of ten tribes on the banks of Parushni (Ravi) and then Bheda on the Yamuna.

Assimilation and not imposition, contended Sanyal, was the bedrock of the Indic civilization. This is amply demonstrated by the Bharatas' act of compiling all the existing wisdom of the tribes they defeated into the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are, he added, explicitly a 'samhita' or compilation and do not claim to be the origin. The *Rig Veda*, thus, begins with a chant paying respect to both 'ancient' and 'modern' sages.

The symbol of the Chakravartin (universal monarch) was the spoked wheel, which was the same as the Mauryan

Bharatvarsha, an ancient civilizational nation, not a mere union of States: Sanjeev Sanyal

9th Professor Sarat Mahanta Memorial Lecture

GUWAHATI, May 1: "Bharatvarsha, which is India, is an ancient civilizational nation and not, as is claimed by some, a mere union of states," said Sanjeev Sanyal, member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council while delivering the 9th Professor Sarat Mahanta Memorial Lecture on 'Bharatvarsha - The Origins Of Our Civilizational Identity' at the Royal Global University in Guwahati today.

Sanyal, who has authored several books on Indian history besides six editions of the Economic Survey of India, cited a plethora of ancient texts and historical accounts to effectively demolish what he termed was the "colonial denial of Indian civilizational identity" and that Bharatvarsha, which is India, is an ancient civilizational nation and not, as is claimed by some, a mere union of states, a press release stated.

He quoted Sir John Strachey, the acting Viceroy of India in 1872 who said: "The first and most essential thing to learn about India is that there is not, and never was, an India". Winston Churchill has also said that "India is a geographical term, no more a united nation than the equator".

Marxist historians and a section of the west-leaning elite in India have also been propagating this falsehood for their own vested interests, he said.

The Bharatas, he contended, were people that lived and flourished in the ancient Harappan civilization on the 'land of the seven rivers', or the 'Sapta Sindhu' in the Saraswati and Ghaggar basin. Contrary to popular belief, the original seven rivers were the Saraswati and its tributaries and did not include the rivers of Punjab.

The Saraswati river, on whose banks lived a Vedic tribe by the name of 'Bharata-Trutsu', is also referred to as Bharati and finds mention in the *Rig Veda* seventy two times. The river dried up around 200 BCE (Before Common Era).

In chapter 38 of the Mahabharata's Book IX (*Shalya Parva*), Balaram's 'teertha' is called 'Sapta Saraswati'.

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The symbol of the Chakravartin (universal monarch) was the spoked wheel, which was the same as the Mauryan

'chakra' that finds its place in India's National Flag. This strongly suggests a civilizational continuum, contended Sanyal who was the managing director and global strategist at Deutsche Bank.

An interesting pivot of the Indic civilization, pointed out Sanyal, was that it was based on a 'civilizational contract'. The last hymn of the *Rig Veda* explicitly lays out that all ancient Gods have a place around a common sacred fire.

By not inviting Shiva, Sati's father Daksha violated the *Rig Vedic* contract which led to Sati immolating herself and ending the *yajna*. The parts of Sati's body that got scattered all over the Indian subcontinent, or Bharatvarsha, "symbolically united the sacred landscape of India".

Sanyal contended that the idea of 'Sapta Sindhu' spread in the post-Vedic texts to cover the entire subcontinent. The *Puranas* and the epics suggest a clear knowledge of the subcontinent's civilizational unity. He cited chapters from the *Brahma Purana* that mention the geographical boundaries of 'Bharata' whose people are called 'Bharatis'.

The economist and popular historian also underlined the fact that Tamil iden-

it as al-Hind in their accounts. Al-Beruni's book on India describes the civilizational unity of Bharat despite political divisions and provides clear estimates of distances as measured from Kannauj and a sacred tree in Prayag.

"Our epics also lay out the contours of Bharatvarsha, said Sanyal. Rishi Kashyap is said to have created Kashmir by swallowing the waters of a lake. Prahlad, the Asura prince, is associated with Multani while his grandson, Mahabali, is associated with Kerala. Mahabali was blessed by Vishnu and Onam is celebrated in his name.

Mahabali's son Banasura is associated with Assam and had his capital at Sonipur in modern-day Tezpur. His daughter Usha married Krishna's grandson Anuruddha. "Notice here the four corners of the country that are laid out," Sanyal said.

Shankara, or the Adi Shankaracharya, toured the subcontinent in the 8th century CE and established *mathas* at Puri, Sringeri, Dwarka and Badrinath which approximate the four corners of India.

In Jain, Buddhist and Puranic texts, said Sanyal, Bharat is often referred to

the importance of foreign contributions need not extend to celebrating our own subjugation. "The geographical expanse of our civilization once included other parts of Asia and this civilizational link is proudly acknowledged in countries like Indonesia," he said.

Sanyal then referred to the founders of the modern Indian republic who were conscious that it is the modern manifestation of an ancient civilizational nation. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his famous 'Freedom at Midnight' speech, said: "the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance".

Sanyal's address was supplemented by another very interesting presentation by Nabaarun Barooah who is pursuing his Master's degree at Oxford University.

Barooah traced the untold history of what he termed was Assam's earliest defender - Prithu, the Rai of Kamrup.

After destroying the world-renowned Nalanda University in Bihar, Bakhtiyar Khilji marched into Kamrup in 1206 CE after converting a local chieftain, Ali Mech, with the hope of conquering Ti-

bet. Khilji conquered Lakhnauti (modern-day Bengal), destroyed temples and erected mosques over them and built a capital in his own name around 1203 CE in the area in central Bengal called Gaur. He continued his conquest and sacking of Bengal and laid siege to what is today Nadia around 1204 CE.

But Khilji met his nemesis in Assam. Minhaj-al-Din Siraj-al-Din Muhammad Juzjani, in an account commissioned by Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah in 1260 CE, mentions the defeat of Khilji at the hands of the Rai of Kamrup.

A rock inscription in North Guwahati (*Kanhai Borosi Boga Sil*) dating back to 1206 CE says that in the year 1127 of the Saka era, on the 13th day of the 'month of honey' (Chaitra), upon arriving at Kamarupa the Turks perished.

Barooah, who had worked as an assistant research executive at the Assam Chief Minister's Office, proved that the year 1127 of the Saka era corresponds to the year 1207 of the Common Era.

The name of Prithu (of Kamrup) who defeated Khilji first appeared in colonial-era gazetteers who conducted research in Rangpur and Panchangar in present-day Bangladesh.

Late 18th century Scottish surveyor or Francis Buchanan-Hamilton discovered that Prithu was highly revered by the people of Kamrup. Other historical records also have reference to the "righteous and virtuous reign" of Prithu.

In the decisive Battle of Kamarupa between Khilji and Prithu, the former marched with 10,000 horsemen along the Bagmati river and entered the hills. Prithu's army follows a scorched earth policy to starve Khilji's army. A stone bridge erected by the invaders was destroyed by Prithu's army after which, in a fierce showdown between the two forces, Khilji's starving men fall.

Khilji escaped and hid in a temple and after he returned to his capital, he was killed by Ali Mardan. Barooah also cited other historical sources to prove the heroic defence of Kamrup by Prithu.

He concluded by stating that while Lachit Borpuhukan's heroics are being finally honoured by the nation, Prithu still awaits his due.

Uruka restaurant's Palki makes it to Cambridge Board, London textbook

GUWAHATI, May 1: Guwahati's Uruka Restaurant has been featured in a computer science textbook by the prestigious Cambridge Board, London for schools in India.

The book highlighted the innovative use of technology, specifically the humanoid waitress, *Palki*. Wearing a traditional Assamese dress, the humanoid robot serves as a waitress at the restaurant.

The robot was introduced at the restaurant on August 1 in 2019. - Staff Reporter



'Assam tops list of states in GST collection' Developing e-com hubs may figure in 'new govt' agenda

A CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 1: Assam has witnessed a remarkable 25 per cent growth in gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in April this year in comparison to the previous year.

The GST collection in April this year was Rs 1,895 crore whereas it was Rs 1,513 crore during the same period last year.

The GST collection in Assam is the highest among all other states in India, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday.

"The GST collections hit a record high in April 2024 at Rs 2.10 lakh crore. This represents a significant 12.4 per cent year-on-



year growth, driven by a strong increase in domestic transactions (up 13.4 per cent) and imports (up 8.3 per cent). After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue for April 2024 stands at Rs 1.92 lakh crore, reflecting an impressive 15.5

per cent growth compared to the same period last year," the finance ministry said.

In the month of April 2024, the Central government settled Rs 50,307 crore to CGST and Rs 41,600 crore to SGST from the

IGST collected. This translates to a total revenue of Rs 94,153 crore for CGST and Rs 95,138 crore for SGST for April 2024 after regular settlement, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that with a 25 per cent growth YoY in GST, "I am happy to note that Assam is expanding its role in nation building."

"Seeing the nation's GST collection surpasses Rs 2 lakh crore for the first time is indeed a pivotal moment for our economy. This exceptional reform of the Modi Government supported by all states is yielding rich dividends for the India growth story," said Sarma through X.

Developing e-com hubs may figure in 'new govt' agenda

NEW DELHI, May 1: Developing e-commerce hubs in the country to further promote India's exports through online medium are expected to figure in the Commerce Ministry's 100-day agenda roadmap for the new government, an official said.

The Commerce Ministry's arm DGFT is already working with the RBI and concerned ministries, including the Finance Ministry, on several steps to promote exports through e-commerce medium as huge export opportunities are there in the sector.

The exercise assumes significance as ministries have been asked to prepare a 100-day plan for the new government.

The seven-phase Lok Sabha polls, the world's biggest election exercise, kicked off on April 19 with the counting of votes set to take place on June 4.

The official said that these hubs can help further promote exports through e-commerce mediums.

According to an industry expert, in such hubs, export clearances can be facilitated. Besides, it can also have warehousing facilities, customs clearance, returns processing, labelling, testing and repackaging.

"It will be a kind of bonded zone which will facilitate exports and imports of e-commerce cargo and to a large extent address the problem of re-imports because in e-commerce, about 25 per cent of goods are re-imported. These hubs are also kind of export-oriented units and the private sector will have to come forward for developing these hubs," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) director general Ajay Sahai said.

Last year, the cross-border e-commerce trade was about USD 800 billion and it is estimated to reach USD 2 trillion by 2030.



Recently, director general of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi has said that there is a huge potential to increase exports through e-commerce medium. Last year, the cross-border e-commerce trade was about USD 800 billion and is estimated to reach USD 2 trillion by 2030.

"We need to reorient our policies to facilitate an e-commerce ecosystem and have a larger pie in the e-commerce exports," Sarangi has said, adding that China's e-commerce exports are about USD 350 billion, whereas India's shipments through online medium is only USD 2 billion. A report by economic think tank GTRI, India's e-commerce exports have the potential to reach USD 350 billion by 2030, but banking issues hinder growth and increase operational costs.

India's e-commerce industry is driven primarily by small businesses that export products valued between USD 25 and USD 1,000. The popular items include handicrafts, art, books, ready-made garments, imitation jewellery, home decor, ayurveda products and sports goods. These niche products have found a market due to their unique artisanal values, the report has said.

India has set a target of USD 1 trillion of merchandise exports by 2030 and cross-border e-commerce trade has been identified as a source to meet this aim. - PTI

Maruti Suzuki expects revival of small car segment by 2026-end

NEW DELHI, May 1: Maruti Suzuki India expects a revival of the small car segment in the domestic market by 2026-end or 2027, after suffering from affordability issues and onslaught from SUVs, according to a senior company official.

The small car segment, which had once dominated the Indian total passenger vehicles market, accounts for less than 30 per cent at present.

The company is hopeful that the resurgence seen in the two-wheeler market, which has also witnessed decline since 2018-19, will have a positive impact on small car sales as well.

"The SUV segment's contribution has gone up to 53.6 per cent of total (passenger vehicle) industry as a result of which the contribution of the small (car) segment has gone down a little bit further," Maruti Suzuki India senior executive officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee said in a virtual interaction.



There has been a "steep increase in the prices of hatchbacks" due to a variety of reasons, including regulations related to safety and emissions standards but the "affordability" of small car buyers has not increased to that extent, he added.

"As a result, there has been a drop in the contribution of the hatchback segment but our take is that this hatchback segment will again come back... We expect that, maybe by 2026-end or 2027 we will again be seeing a growth in the hatch segment and this market will revive," Banerjee said.

While affordability remains a "major

challenge" at the moment, he said that the small car segment can take positives from the revival seen in the two-wheeler sales.

"There is a revival in the two-wheeler segment. We have seen in the past that whenever there is a revival in the two-wheeler industry, with a lag it comes to the four-wheelers also. That is why we are very hopeful that we are going to see an upside in the hatch segment," Banerjee added.

He asserted that it is only a matter of time for the small car segment to revive once the affordability part improves.

Bullish on the segment coming back strongly, Banerjee said, "The car penetration in India per 1,000 (person) is only 32. If you see all the mature markets like Japan, the car penetration per 1,000 is 600 and we are moving in that direction. It is expected that by 2030, we will be having a car penetration of 44 cars per thousand." - PTI

Adani Ports secures AAA rating

NEW DELHI, May 1: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) on Wednesday said that it has secured an AAA rating by CARE Ratings.

With this development, the company has become the first large-sized private infrastructure developer to get this recognition, APSEZ said in a statement.

"The rating is largely driven by APSEZ's robust integrated business model, strong industry position, consistent market share growth with healthy profitability, coupled with high liquidity and low leverage," the agency said.

In FY24, APSEZ handled a cargo volume of 419.95 MMT, 24 per cent higher than the previous fiscal.

APSEZ managing director Karan Adani said, "We cherish the recognition to our financial discipline and commitment to deleveraging, diversified asset base as well as customer base and the highest profitability in this sector globally."

APSEZ is a part of the globally diversified Adani Group. - PTI

Tata Motors gets tax demand of nearly Rs 25 cr

NEW DELHI, May 1: Tata Motors Ltd on Wednesday said that it has received a tax demand of nearly Rs 25 crore, including penalty and interest, from authorities on account of short payment of tax and excess availment of credit.

An order was passed on April 30, 2024, by the Sales Tax Officer Class II / AVTO Ward 204, Zone 11, Delhi and it was received on May 1, 2024, by the company confirming demand on account of short payment of tax and excess availment of credit under section 73 of the CGST/SGST Act, 2017, Tata Motors Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

The tax amount is Rs 14,25,68,173 with interest of Rs 9,14,15,704 and penalty of Rs 1,42,56,815.

"Company is reviewing the order and will exercise the right to file appeal," Tata Motors said, adding that there is no material impact on financial and operational activities of the company on account of this order. - PTI

India's power consumption rises 11 pc in April

NEW DELHI, May 1: India's power consumption rose around 11 per cent to 144.25 billion units (BU) in April as compared to the year-ago period, mainly due to increase in temperatures.

In April 2023, the power consumption stood at 130.08 BU, a government data showed. The highest supply in a day (peak power demand) also rose to 224.18 GW in April 2024 as against to 215.88 GW in April 2023.

The power ministry has estimated around 260 GW of peak demand during summer.

Experts said that the increase in power consumption as well as growth in demand was mainly due to increase in temperatures and increased industrial activities in sectors like steel and power. - PTI

Tally expects 30-40 pc revenue growth in FY25

MUMBAI, May 1: Home-grown accounting software firm Tally Solutions looks to expand its footprint in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa and expects revenue growth of 30-40 per cent this financial year, a senior company executive has said.

"Currently, we provide accounting software solutions mostly to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and are growing at 20-30 per cent annually. We expect revenue growth of 30-40 per cent in 2024-25," Tally Solutions managing director Tejas Goenka told PTI.

Further, Goenka said that the company currently has a limited presence in Africa, the Middle East and South-

east Asia and is planning to expand going forward.

"We are present in Kenya, Indonesia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. We think there is a huge potential to expand in these three geographies. We are working on a long-term goal on the expansion and we try to be very aggressive. We aim to win the market with businesses thinking of us as the go-to brand," he said.

The company, which enjoys a 70-80 per cent market share, is continuously working on innovations and expects to maintain the current market share going forward, he said.

"We continuously work on innovations and we custom-

ise according to a particular business requirement. The main challenge we face is pirated software. We expect to convert a lot of the pirated users to licensed users. Plus, there are many new businesses coming up that are automating. So the market pie is growing. So our growth will come from both maintaining the share in the growing market as well as converting the pirated to legal," he added.

The Bengaluru-headquartered company also has a training and skilling vertical, Tally Education and Distribution Services, which has partnered with coaching centres and institutes to train youth to be job-ready. - PTI

Quality concerns could threaten over half of India's spice exports: GTRI

NEW DELHI, May 1: India needs to address the quality issue with regard to its spice exports with urgency and transparency as the ongoing quality concerns could threaten over half of the country's spice shipments, a report said on Wednesday.

Economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that every day new countries are raising concerns about the quality of Indian spices.

This issue demands urgent attention and action to uphold the storied reputation of India's famed spice garden, it said.

"With nearly USD 700 million worth of exports to critical markets at stake, and potential losses soaring to over half of India's total spice exports due to cascading regulatory actions in many countries, the integrity and future of India's spice trade hang in delicate balance," the report said.

"Swift investigations and the publication of findings are essential to re-establish global trust in Indian spices. Erring firms should face immediate repercussions," it added.

Hong Kong and Singapore banned the sale of popular brands - MDH and Everest - after detecting carcinogenic chemical ethylene oxide in their



products. This led to a mandatory recall from shelves.

The primary violations in these incidents include the presence of ethylene oxide, a carcinogen used as a fumigating agent, and salmonella contamination, a common bacterial cause of foodborne illness, the report said.

"This situation could worsen if the European Union, which regularly rejects Indian spice consignments over quality issues, follows suit. An EU-wide rejection could impact an additional USD 2.5 billion, bringing the total potential loss to 58.8 per cent of India's worldwide spice exports," GTRI co-founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Citing certain reports, the GTRI said that the US, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, and now Malé have raised

questions about the quality of spices supplied by leading Indian firms MDH and Everest spices.

With India having exported spices valued at approximately USD 692.5 million to these countries in the fiscal year 2024, the stakes are high, Srivastava said.

Srivastava said that so far the response from Indian authorities has been tepid and formulaic.

Following international criticism, both the Spices Board and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) began routine sampling, yet no definitive statements about spice quality have been issued by these or any other government agencies, he said.

He cautioned that if the quality of products from top

Indian firms is questionable, it casts doubt on the integrity of spices available in the Indian market as well.

The GTRI report suggested that the overall situation calls for a fundamental shift in how India handles food safety - transparency, stringent enforcement, and clear communication are crucial to restoring and maintaining the integrity of its exports and domestic products alike.

In 2023-24, India's spice exports totalled USD 4.25 billion, accounting for a 12 per cent share of the global spice exports.

The major spices exported from India included chilli powder, which topped the list with USD 1.3 billion in exports, followed by cumin at USD 550 million, turmeric at USD 220 million, cardamom at USD 130 million, mixed spices at USD 110 million, and spice oils and oleoresins at USD 1 billion. Other notable exports were asafoetida, saffron, anise, nutmeg, mace, clove, and cinnamon.

The primary markets for Indian spices were China, which imported spices worth USD 928 million, the US at USD 574 million, and Bangladesh at USD 339 million. - PTI

Fortune Hotels targets opening a new hotel every month in FY25



NEW DELHI, May 1: Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group, is planning to open a new hotel every month in the current financial year, the company's managing director Samir MC said on Wednesday.

In an interview to PTI, Samir shared the expansion plans of Fortune Hotels, which has just opened its first international hotel - Fortune Resort & Wellness Spa Bhaktapur - in Nepal.

He described it as a significant milestone in the company's "beyond borders" expansion strategy, envisioning its presence in South Asia and proximal markets.

"Following on the heels of this prestigious opening, we are poised to open at least four to six more hotels in the first half of the fiscal year in unique destinations like Kevadia (Ekta Nagar, Gujarat), Candolim (Goa), Palampur (Himachal Pradesh), and a beach resort

in Chennai amongst others and an equal number in H2 (second half: October-March)," Samir said.

"This pace aligns with our goal of establishing a new hotel almost every month in this fiscal year, marking significant progress towards our expansion targets," he added.

Elaborating on the challenges for India's hospitality sector, Samir said that economic uncertainties, such as fluctuations in exchange rates, geo-political tensions, and global economic downturns, can impact travel demand and consumer spending, posing challenges for hotels in terms of revenue management, occupancy rates, and profitability.

He cited the increasing global travel trends, driven by rising disposable incomes, a desire for unique experiences, and improved accessibility, as "significant opportunities" for the hospitality sector to attract a diverse range of travellers. - PTI

Coal India production rises 7 pc in Apr

NEW DELHI, May 1: State-owned CIL on Wednesday said that its production increased 7.3 per cent to 61.8 million tonnes (MT) in April.

The company had produced 57.6 MT of coal in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a filing to the BSE.

CIL accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal pro-

duction. The company's coal offtake also registered a rise of 3.2 per cent to 64.3 MT last month, over 62.3 MT in the year-ago period.

Coal offtake is the amount of dry fuel supplied from the pitheads.

Of the 61.8 MT of coal produced by CIL last month, a maximum of 16 MT was produced by Mahanadi Coalfields

Ltd (MCL) followed by 14.1 MT by South Eastern Coalfields (SECL) and 11.8 MT by Northern Coalfields Ltd among others.

CIL's production increased 10 per cent to 773.6 MT in FY24 but fell short of its production target of 780 MT for the fiscal. Coal India Ltd's production was 703.2 MT in 2022-23. - PTI

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING) BRO PROJECT DANTAK (BHUTAN) Tender No. HQ 19 BRTF/NIT/07 OF 2024-25		
1. Commander, 19 BRTF invites tender from the eligible contractors for the following works:-		
Particulars of Work	Cost/Time of work	Details of Tender Documents
SUPPLY AND STACKING OF STONE METAL 40MM STONE CHIPS 20 MM STONE CHIPS 12.5 MM AND SAND FOR PMT WORKS BETWEEN KM 0.000 TO KM 61.546 DUMPING LOCATION AT KM 10.000 UNDER PART-'A' AND KM 51.000 PART 'B' ON KHOTAKPA-TSHOBALEY ROAD (AS PER MORT&H PECIFICATIONS) UNDER 64 RCC/19 BRTF PROJECT DANTAK INSIDE BHUTAN (NIT No. 19 BRTF-07/2024-25)	(a) Cost of Tender: Nil (b) Cost of Work: Rs. 141.86 Lakh (c) Earnest Money: Rs. 2,16,860.00 only (d) Period of Completion: 180 days	(a) Availability of tender on Central Public Procurement Portal on or after: 22 Apr 2024 (c) Last date of submission of tender documents: 13 May 2024 (1200 HRS BST) (c) T-Bid opening date: 13 May 2024 (1500 HRS BST)
Tender ID No: 2024_BRO_753846_1		
Note: Full notice of tender any change in above details, tender document (including eligibility criteria) and other details may be obtained from http://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app for any queries, please contact on telephone 009755252228 and Fax 009755252229		
Sd/- (Abhishek Goel) EE (Civ) SW For Accepting Officer		
CBC 10901/11/0002/2425		

Air Quality Index (AQI)		
May 1, 2024 (Average of past 24 hours)		
City/Town	Index Value	Air Quality
Guwahati	116	Moderate
Nalbari	95	Satisfactory
Nagaon	79	Satisfactory
Sivasagar	52	Satisfactory
Silchar	57	Satisfactory



Forecast for NE: 1) Light to moderate rain is very likely to occur at most places over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura and at many places over Assam and Meghalaya. 2) Hot and Humid weather is likely to continue over Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. **Warning:** Thunderstorm and lightning with gusty winds with speed reaching up to 50-60kmph is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm and lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Heavy to Very Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Dibrugarh	Max	Min	Tezpur	Max	Min
	27.4	19.3		30.8	20.6
Silchar	Max	Min	Dhubri	Max	Min
	33.3	22.0		37.1	24.5
Jorhat	Max	Min	N. Lakhimpur	Max	Min
	29.3	18.8		28.6	17.6
Shillong	Max	Min	Kohima	Max	Min
	27.4	17.6		27.9	17.7
Pasighat	Max	Min	Itanagar	Max	Min
	27.0	20.0		26.6	20.4
Imphal	Max	Min	Agartala	Max	Min
	30.7	18.9		38.4	29.3

Duty Meteorological Officer, Regional Meteorological Centre, Guwahati

3 back-to-back petrol bomb attacks rock Meghalaya capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 1: In what has become a routine affair, three more petrol bomb attacks rocked the Meghalaya capital – two taking place in police station premises – today. The Meghalaya Police has so far been clueless about these attacks. It has also not been able to identify the perpetrators of the petrol bomb attacks.

Nobody was injured in the three fresh attacks. According to information available, one petrol bomb was lobbed

TIMELINE OF PETROL BOMB ATTACKS SINCE APRIL 2024	
A police vehicle was damaged at Mawlai Police Station on April 3	
Bomb lobbed at escort vehicle of NEEPCO Director (Personnel) on April 24	
Residence of Deputy CM comes under attack on April 26	
2 vehicles damaged at police reserve in Jowai on April 30	
Three back-to-back attacks in Shillong on April 30 and May 1	

at the Sadar Police Station, considered the biggest and most important police station in the State, located at Police Bazaar (Kyndailad).

Another petrol bomb was hurled at the Rynjah Police Station. The third attack was carried out at the Meghalaya

Government Construction Corporation office at Kench's Trace here.

All these petrol bombs were hurled last night and between 2-3 am today, sources revealed. However, the exact details of the attacks could not be verified

with the police as most officials have been incommunicado in this regard.

Meghalaya DGP LR Bishnoi has not issued any release on the deteriorating law-and-order situation so far. This is the seventh petrol bomb attack on police

stations, government properties and elsewhere in a series since April.

A PTI report from Shillong adds: The Meghalaya Government has directed all department heads to keep their offices and vehicles under safe custody after three fresh arson attempts were reported in Shillong since Tuesday night, officials said.

East Khasi Hills DC SC Sadhu under which the State capital is, said that he is coordinating with the district SP to ensure that vital installations are protected.

Meghalaya DGP directed to submit report to rights panel

Custodial death of gangster in police lock-up

SHILLONG, May 1: The Meghalaya Human Rights Commission today directed the State DGP, LR Bishnoi, to submit a report on the custodial death of gangster Rudra Rabha last month in Ri-Bhoi district, officials said.

"The Commission has issued a notice to DGP Meghalaya to submit a detailed report on the matter (custodial death) as per guidelines on or before May 17," an official told this news agency.

The notice was issued after taking suo moto cognizance of the case in which wanted gang leader Rudra Rabha died by suicide in police custody at the Khanapara Police Station in Ri-Bhoi district last month. Rabha was found hanging in the police lock-up, Ri-Bhoi SP Jagpal Dhanoa had said. – PTI

Sikkim CM greets people on May Day

GANGTOK, May 1: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang today greeted the people of the State on the International Labour Day.

He said the day signifies the dignity of labour and recognises each individual's efforts in societal progress.

"On this propitious occasion of the International Labour Day, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable contributions of our diligent work force. Their tireless dedication builds a brighter future for our State," he said.

Tamang said he was committed to safeguarding the rights and welfare of all workers, besides creating an environment that fosters equality, safety, and prosperity. – PTI



United they stand: Representatives of the Meghalaya Joint Council of Trade Unions and Associations during celebration of the May Day in Shillong on Wednesday. – UB Photos

Tripura MLA prays at Kali temple for rains

AGARTALA, May 1: BJP MLA Antara Deb Sarkar performed rituals at a Kali temple in Sepahijala's Kamalagar today, seeking divine intervention for rains as heatwave conditions scorched Tripura.

The State has been reeling under heatwave-like conditions over the last two weeks with the mercury hovering at 37-38 degrees Celsius.

"We have a tradition of washing the feet of the idol

of Goddess Kali and the surroundings of the temple, seeking divine intervention for rain if there is a prolonged

Heatwave conditions continue to prevail in State

dry spell. As the heatwave has been continuing, we performed the ritual with water collected from a nearby pond

today," Sarkar said. She was joined by hundreds of local women in performing the rituals. "As per the 'sanatan dharma', we must pray to God and nature. Nature might be in danger, which is leading to heatwave conditions. We believe that Goddess Kali will provide relief to the people from this heat," she added.

In view of the heatwave conditions, the Tripura Government has closed all State-run schools. – PTI

MNF forges alliance with Cong to form new Govt at Lai dist council

CORRESPONDENT

AIZAWL, May 1: After a period of political uncertainty, the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) is set for a new government, uniting unlikely partners – the Congress and the Mizo National Front (MNF) – in a bid to establish stability.

Both parties have formed the United Legislature Party (ULP) with C Laluanthanga, the sole Congress member of district council (MDC), being elected as its leader. The ULP formally staked its claim to form the new Government to Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati through the Deputy Com-

- Council has been under Governor's Rule since March 15, 2024
- MNF, Cong form United Legislature Party to rule Council
- Cong MDC set to become CEC

missioner of Lawngtlai district and caretaker of the LADC, Cheemala Siva Gopal Reddy.

With the support of 12 MNF MDCs, Laluanthanga will assume the role of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) role, the top position in the council, under the ULP.

The MNF had secured a resounding victory in the LADC elections held on December 4, 2020, winning 20 out of 25 seats. V Zirsanga

became the CEM following the election. However, turmoil ensued after Zirsanga was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison for misappropriation of funds during his tenure as Executive Member (EM) of Education in the LADC.

Political deadlock ensued when Zirsanga resigned minutes before a special session was convened to consider a no-confidence motion against him. Thirteen MDCs, includ-

ing eight from the ruling MNF, supported the motion. The rebel MDCs formed the Lairam Democratic Alliance (LDA) and urged the Governor to convene a session for a no-confidence vote.

Amidst these developments, one MNF member switched allegiance, perpetuating the political stalemate. With both factions having 12 members each and one MDC resigning to become an MLA, the impasse forced Governor Kambhampati to impose Governor's Rule from March 15, appointing the DC of Lawngtlai district as the caretaker to oversee the council functions on behalf of the Raj Bhavan.

Vehicle emission checking machine launched in Kohima

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, May 1: The Kohima Police has launched the AVL 437 DUO vehicle emission checking machine to check and enforce vehicle emission norms.

The machine, launched by Kohima SP Bharat Laxman Markad, is capable of checking both diesel and petrol variant vehicles, the Kohima Police PRO stated in a release.

Markad also flagged off three traffic patrol motorcycles for enforcement purposes. The machine and the enforcement vehicles are funded under the National Clean Air Programme.

Addressing the programme, the SP stressed the need to curb activities that harm the environment. "Vehicle emission is one of the major causes of environmental pollution in the dis-

trict," he said.

Markad said the police now has the capability to check and enforce vehicle emission norms. He asked the enforcement teams to be dedicated and sincere in carrying out their assigned duties. During the programme, it was announced that random checking of suspected vehicles plying below the emission norms would be carried out.

The release stated that the penalty for driving a vehicle by violating road safety and noise/air pollution standards is an offence under Section 190 (2) of the MV Act punishable for the first offence with imprisonment up to three months and/or fine and disqualification for holding licence for three months, while the second offence is punishable with imprisonment up to six months and/or fine.

Manipur Health Dept statement on COVID-19 vaccine

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, May 1: Any vaccine, including that of COVID-19, may have some side-effects, but most of these are negligible, the Director of Health Services, Manipur, stated in a press release today. The release was issued following reports alleging that the vaccine against COVID-19 has the potential to cause TTS, a rare side-effect associated with blood clotting.

An advisory by the Ministry of Health regarding the Covishield vaccine for COVID-19 was published on May 17, 2021. The WHO has also acknowledged this concern in 2023, the release stated. The incidence of TTS/TTP is reported as 0.61 per million dose/vaccination (6 in one crore dose/vaccination), which is very rare. This very rare incidence of TTS/TTP usually manifests within 20 days of vaccination. No occurrence months after administration of vaccine, has been reported, the release added.

"We urge the people of Manipur not to fall for hearsay and false information," the release added.



Nabbed: Police and security personnel displaying drugs worth more than Rs 2 crore seized from a man arrested in East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya, on Wednesday. – PTI

TB claimed 108 lives in Mizoram in 2023

AIZAWL, May 1: A total of 108 people died of tuberculosis (TB) in Mizoram last year, officials said today. Blood samples of 17,432 people were tested last year, and of them, 2,272 were found suffering from TB, they stated.

Of the 2,272 patients, 164 were diagnosed with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), they said, adding that 86 per cent of the patients were successfully treated, while 108 people died.

Between January and March this year, a total of 595 people have been diagnosed with TB, out of the 3,761 samples tested. Of them, 38 were diagnosed with MDR-TB and 57 people were found suffer-

- THE KILLER DISEASE
- 2,272 patients detected in 2023
- 2,164 treated successfully
- 595 new patients between Jan-March, 2024
- New cases highest in Aizawl at 433 in 2024

ing from both TB and HIV-AIDS, officials said.

Of these patients, six per cent are diabetic, 33 per cent use tobacco, and 16 per cent are alcoholic, they added.

So far this year, the Aizawl district reported the highest number of TB cases at 433, followed by Kolasib district (46) and Lunglei district (34).

West Mizoram's Mamit district recorded the least TB cases at five.

Only 187 people in the State have registered to adopt TB patients or donate for them through the 'Nikshay' platform under the PM TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

The initiative was launched by President Droupadi Murmu in September 2022, aiming to augment community involvement in meeting India's commitment to end TB by 2030. – PTI

Ao Nagas celebrate Moatsu Festival in Kohima

BHADRA GOGOI

DIMAPUR, May 1: The Ao Naga community celebrated its all-important festival, Moatsu, with traditional fervour and gaiety in Kohima today.

Traditional songs and dances were presented by several groups to mark the occasion, which was followed by a feast.

The Adviser to the Nagaland Information and Public Relations Department, Imkong L Imchen, hosted the festival organised by the Mangmetong Senso Telongiem, Kohima.

In his address to the rev-

ellers, Imchen said the Nagas as a tribal society have a lot of rituals and beliefs. But in recent times, these rituals have been reduced to celebration in the form of one or two festivals of each tribe alone.

"It is important to celebrate and exhibit our cultural traits so as to ensure that our unique culture and traditions are not lost to posterity," Imchen stressed.

The Government Adviser pointed out that in a city like Kohima, inhabited by various tribes, the beauty of the Naga society can be witnessed through different tribes showcasing their own unique cul-

It is important to celebrate and exhibit our cultural traits so as to ensure that our unique culture and traditions are not lost to posterity, says Nagaland Govt Adviser Imkong L Imchen



In festive mood: Members of the Ao Naga community performing a traditional dance in Kohima on Wednesday. – Photo: Correspondent

ture and tradition to one another and co-existing in harmony.

"It is the responsibility of

every Naga to exhibit and practise our rich cultural heritage and ensure that it is preserved in the right way for

years to come," he added. Adviser to Law and Justice and Land Revenue TN Manen, speaking on behalf of the

Ao legislators, highlighted the significance of the Moatsu Festival in today's society. He said that festivals are the bedrock of Naga culture and traditions.

Manen added that celebration of festivals is a social necessity and urged all to strive towards unity and lead disciplined lives "just like our ancestors did".

He thanked the Mangmetong Senso Telongiem, Kohima and his colleague, Imchen, for organising and hosting the Moatsu celebrations this year.

Earlier, N Meren, president, Mangmetong Senso Telongiem, Kohima, had declared the festival open.

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Office of Industrial Interactions and Special Initiatives
Call for Assistant Project Engineer purely on contractual basis in the Project No: EEEISPINTE0085xxGT102 for 11 months in the Dept. of EEE, IIT Guwahati. For detailed advertisements may please visit Project Positions in IISII at https://www.iitg.ac.in/iitg_recruitment/
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भारतीय खाद्य निगम
FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA
Regional Office: Assam Region: Patitassan, Guwahati - 781008
Email: agmstgasm.fci@gov.in
No. RO AS-15.0026.015/2023-Storage Division Date: 01-05-2024
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
On behalf of FCI, online tenders are invited under two-bid system for construction of godowns of Food Corporation of India, Preservation, Maintenance and Security Services (PMS) of the existing and newly constructed godowns within the same premises on Build, Maintain and Operate model, at FSO Neelambar under the Asset Monetization Policy of the Government of India. Last day for submission of bid is 21-05-2024. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled on 14-05-2024 at 14:30 Hrs at FCI, RO, Assam. Details of the tender enquiry available in (1) FCI website <https://fci.gov.in> (2) E-procurement portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocureapp>.
Sd/- General Manager (Region)
FCI, RO (Assam), Guwahati

LS polls: More women turn up to vote than men in 54 LACs in State

PRANJAL BHUYAN

GUWAHATI, May 1: Turnout among female voters was higher than that of their male counterparts in as many as 54 out of the total 86 Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC) segments under the 10 Lok Sabha seats of Assam that went to the polls in the first and second phases of the general elections 2024.

Of the five Lok Sabha constituencies where voting took place in the first round on April 19, Kaziranga, Dibrugarh, and Jorhat comprises 10 LACs each, while Sonitpur and Lakhimpur have nine LACs each.

Likewise, among the five parliamentary constituencies where polling was held in the second phase on April 26, Darrang-Udalguri has 11 LACs, Nagaon comprises

eight LACs, and Silchar consists of seven, while both Diphu and Karimganj have six LACs each.

Out of the 10 LAC segments comprising the Kaziranga parliamentary constituency, as many as six reported a higher turnout of female voters and only four witnessed better participation of the male electorate on the polling day.

In the Kaziranga Lok Sabha constituency, the turnout of female voters was higher in the Barhampur, Binnakandi, Hojai, Lumding, Golaghat, and Sarupathar LAC segments.

Of the nine LAC segments under the Sonitpur Lok Sabha seat, as many as eight (Dhekiajuli, Barchalla, Rangapara, Naduar, Biswanath, Behali, Gohpur, and Bihpuria) reported a higher turnout among the female

electorate as compared to their male counterparts on the polling day.

Likewise, in the Lakhimpur Lok Sabha constituency, eight LACs (Rongonadi, Nowboicha, Lakhimpur, Dhakuakhana, Dhemaji, Sisiborgaon, Sadya, and Doom Dooma) out of the total nine also witnessed more enthusiasm among the women voters with a higher percentage of them exercising their franchise in comparison to male electors.

Five LACs (Margherita, Digboi, Makum, Tingkhong, and Naharkatia) out of the total 10 under the Dibrugarh parliamentary constituency, and five LACs (Sonari, Sib-sagar, Nazira, Majuli, and Marian) out of the 10 under the Jorhat Lok Sabha segment also fell in the same category.

There are as many as 11

LAC segments under the Darrang-Udalguri parliamentary constituency and six of those – Tamulpur, Goreswar, Bhergaon, Udalguri, Mazbat, and Tangla – registered higher female voter turnout compared to the polling percentage registered for the male electorate.

Of the six LAC segments in the Diphu Lok Sabha constituency, four (Bokajan, Howraghat, Diphu, and Rongkhang) reported a higher voter turnout among the female electorate as compared to their male counterparts.

Out of the total six LACs under the Karimganj Lok Sabha segment, three (Hailakandi, Karimganj North, and Karimganj South), and out of the seven LACs of Silchar parliamentary area, three (Lakhipur, Sonai, and Dholai) also fig-

ure in the list.

The Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency comprises eight LAC segments. The voter turnout among the females was higher than among males in six of the segments – Laharighat, Morigaon, Dhing, Rupahihat, Samaguri, and Raha.

Overall, taking into account the entire constituency area, the turnout of female voters was higher than that of males in the Kaziranga, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Diphu and Nagaon Lok Sabha seats. In the other four parliamentary constituencies (Dibrugarh, Darrang-Udalguri, Karimganj, and Silchar), the total voter turnout was higher among the male electorate as compared to the females in the first and second phases of the ongoing general elections.



ACMS members taking out a procession on the occasion of May Day in North Lakhimpur on Wednesday. – Photo: Farhana Ahmed

Suklabaidya urges people to follow road safety rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, May 1: To create awareness among the masses on road safety, State Transport Minister Parimal Suklabaidya took part in a motorcycle rally here on Tuesday evening.

Participating in the rally, Suklabaidya, along with the members of Kaidi Free Soul Bike Riders Group, passed through the streets of Silchar, urging people to

follow the traffic rules.

The minister also created awareness among the people about wearing helmets while riding two-wheelers, avoiding speeding and drink-driving, and wearing seatbelts.

Sharing his thoughts after completion of the rally at the DSA Stadium complex, Suklabaidya said, "Last year, I took an initiative to reach out to the people of all the 126 Legisla-

tive Assembly constituencies of the State with the road safety messages to minimise the rate of road accidents. The response was impressive. Further, I had requested the NGOs and other organisations to continue with the awareness activities and I am happy to be a part of such an initiative here today. I hope that people will note the points and ensure safety of all road users."

Workshop on environment education ends

CORRESPONDENT

TEZPUR, May 1: A two-day workshop on environment education, organised by the Eco Club and the Environment and Climate Cell of Lokanayak Omeo Kumar Das (LOKD) College, concluded on Tuesday.

The programme, sponsored by Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, started with a plantation drive inaugurated by the president of the governing body of the college, Dr Jogendra Saikia, and resource person Rajeev Gupta, scientist, DRL Tezpur on Monday.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr Jogendra Saikia by lighting the ceremonial lamp. In his inaugural speech, Dr Saikia highlighted the importance of collective responsibility towards the environment.

This was followed by felicitation of the guests and welcome address by the principal, Dr Sukdev Adhikari, who spoke on the need to create awareness on environmental issues. The inaugural session was conducted by Santana Borah, assistant professor, Department of Botany.

In the first technical session, Rajeev Gupta made a powerpoint presentation on vermicompost and its importance in everyday life.

Dr Premada Kalita, coordinator of Eco Club, gave a brief introduction to the guests. Dr Seema Sarkar, HoD, Department of Botany; Pabitra Barman, HoD, Department of Geography, spoke on varied aspects of environment.

OBITUARY

Jagat Ch Gogoi



CORRESPONDENT

SIVASAGAR, May 1: Former DSP of Assam Police Jagat Chandra Gogoi, a resident of Habiram Road here, died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in Dibrugarh on the intervening night of April 29 and 30. He was 68.

He was also a poet, social worker, and a winner of Mr Assam title.

He has two poetry collections – *Nibir Subash* and *Boi Jai Alakananda* – to his name. He was honoured with Michael Madhusudan Award by Bangiya Sahitya Samaj in 2002.

Various organisations of Sivasagar have mourned his demise. Gogoi leaves behind his wife, two sons, and a host of relatives.

Boats, tractors, bikes to ferry poll officials to char areas of Nalbari

CORRESPONDENT

NALBARI, May 1: The Nalbari district administration has taken special initiatives to transport polling officials and materials to 51 polling booths situated in char areas along the Brahmaputra river under the Mukalmua revenue circle.

Special arrangements have been made to ferry officials and polling materials to the booths located at interior areas for the smooth conduct of the election.

The district administration has hired a number of mechanised boats, tractors and motorcycles to carry the polling materials and personnel to these booths.

A total of 204 polling officials and 102 security personnel will be deployed in the char areas on election duty, and they will leave for their respective locations on May 5. The other polling personnel of the district will leave

the Guwakuchi Moktab LP School under Nalbari LAC has the lowest number of voters in the district at 200, including 100 male and 100 female voters.

The booth at Barkulhati LP School has more female voters than male voters. The booth has 111 female voters against 106 male voters.

On the other hand, the polling booth at Lachima High School (right wing) has the highest number of voters in the district at 1,399, including 736 male and 663 female.

District electoral officer Varnali Deka, who is also the district commissioner, has taken special initiatives to increase the voter turnout this election. Sources further stated that

for their respective destinations on May 6, a day ahead of the polling date.

According to the official sources, the district has 6,20,901 voters, including 2,19,642 in Barksheetri LAC, 1,97,328 in Nalbari LAC, and 2,03,931 in Tihu LAC.

Sources further stated that



Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal addressing a public meeting in support of the UPPL candidate for Kokrajhar Lok Sabha seat, Joyanta Basumatary, at Thamna in Baksa district on Tuesday. – Photo: ANN Service, Jalah

Tinsukia DC inspects erosion-hit areas of Dhola, Hatighuli

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, May 1: Tinsukia district commissioner Swapneel Paul on Tuesday visited the erosion-affected areas of Dhola and Hatighuli under the Doomdooma revenue circle of the district.

The erosion caused by the Brahmaputra river in the district has taken a serious turn

over the last few days.

The district commissioner, accompanied by additional district commissioner Leena Pawe, who is in charge of the District Disaster Management Authority, circle officer of Doomdooma revenue circle Nabajyoti Saharia, and officers of Water Resource department, inspected the affected areas and interacted

with the locals.

During the interaction, Paul assured the public that the erosion prevention work will start soon. He also directed the officials of the Water Resource department to prepare a plan for the long-term solution of the erosion problem in the area. The locals expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the DC.

Slow pace of flyover construction irks Tezpur denizens

SHAMBHU BORO

TEZPUR, May 1: Local residents and commuters are facing a harrowing time for the past couple of years due to the slow pace of construction of a flyover at Porua-Mission Chariali here.

The construction of the flyover was sanctioned to ease traffic congestion in the area, which is considered as the gateway to the historic Tezpur city. Once completed, the flyover will give much-needed respite to the commuters from heavy traffic jams.

The construction work on the stretch from Mission Chariali to Porua Chariali is

progressing at a snail's pace for reasons best known to the authorities concerned.

The dusty condition at the project site has created health hazards for the denizens in the area and the huge potholes on the stretch of the road pose serious threat to the commuters.

Expressing serious concern over non-completion of even 50 per cent of the work as yet, a section of the local residents have urged the State government to take immediate steps for early completion of the project.

The locals have also demanded that the construction company should at least tem-



porarily repair the road from Mission Chariali to Porua area until the flyover is completed. However, instead of taking initiative to expedite the work in the greater interest of the masses, some of the company officials have alleg-

Rail traffic to Barak Valley remain disrupted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, May 1: The rail connectivity to the Barak Valley remained disrupted due to the derailment of a train in the Lumding division, causing immense inconvenience to the people.

Moreover, travelling by road through the hilly terrain of Meghalaya has also become a risky affair due to the bad road condition and rain-triggered landslides.

The NF Railway on Tuesday issued a communique stating that as many as eight trains, including the Guwahati-Silchar Express, have been cancelled. Moreover, a couple of trains have also been rescheduled.

Passengers travelling by road said that there have been massive potholes at multiple locations between Malidahar and Sonapur in Meghalaya. They said that there was massive traffic congestion near Umkiang in Meghalaya on Monday night, which eased at 6 am on Tuesday, causing hardships to the commuters.

Meanwhile, a surge in airfares has added to the woes of the people travelling out of the Barak Valley.

Awareness prog on rights of women TE workers organised in Jorhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 1: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Jorhat, on Tuesday organised an awareness programme on the rights of women tea garden workers and maintenance of health and hygiene.

The programme, held at Cinnamara Tea Estate here, was held to commemorate May Day, which is observed worldwide on May 1 every year.

Addressing the women

workers at the pluckers weighing point of the tea garden, DLSA (Jorhat) secretary-cum-judicial officer Devoyoti Bhuyan elaborated the protection and benefits provided to the women workers under different laws and schemes, a DLSA official informed.

He also spoke about the free legal aid services provided by the DLSA to needy people seeking justice at different levels.

In her address, Dr Malita Rajkonwar, senior medical of-

ficer of Bagchung PHC, sensitized the women workers about prenatal and postpartum healthcare and urged everyone to maintain proper hygiene to avert any outbreak of diseases in the tea estate.

The meeting was also attended by Asit Baran Choudhury, manager of Cinnamara Tea Estate, who also spoke on the occasion.

Drinking water facility inaugurated: The district and sessions judge, Jorhat, P Das, who is also the chair-

man of DLSA, Jorhat, recently inaugurated a pure drinking water system installed at the Children Home, Jorhat. The drinking water system was donated by Manthan Ladies Club, Jorhat.

Speaking on the occasion, Das urged everyone to be sensitive about child rights and their protection, while applauding the gesture of Manthan Ladies Club. He observed that such initiatives provide an opportunity to work together for the children in need of care and protection.

Water-level measuring scales installed in KNP

CORRESPONDENT

KAZIRANGA, May 1: The Central Water Commission has installed seven water-level measuring scales in the Brahmaputra in Kaziranga.

The scales will help the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve authorities in determining the actual water level of the river during the rainy season and accordingly take appropriate steps for better management of the park.

Four of the scales have been installed in Dhanshirimukh and the remaining three in the Burapahar range of the na-

tional park. A training programme was conducted in this connection on Tuesday.

Utam Saikia, a wildlife conservationist, said that with the installation of seven new water level-measuring scales, the forest authority will be able to know the actual rise in the water level during floods, which will help them assess possible flooding in different locations of that national park.

"This will enable the forest authorities to take appropriate preventive and damage control measures for the safety of wild animals beforehand," he said.

May Day observed across State

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 1: On the occasion of May Day today, the members of several organizations of banks, insurance, civic body, construction workers, Anganwadi centres and BSNL took out a procession from the CITU office here across the town.

Holding flags, banners and placards the members of various trade unions, shouted slogans for protection of their rights and against "anti-labour policies" of the BJP-led government, rising unemployment and steep hike in prices of essential commodities.

Later, an open meeting near the CITU office was held which was addressed by Promode Mahanta, a leading union leader. Mahanta, while stating about significance of the day, flayed the "anti-worker and anti-farmer policies" of the government.

He urged the workers of various fields to unitedly raise their voices against the said government policies and fight for their legitimate rights. Jamini Borboruah, another union leader, in his address, expressed concern about sharp increase in prices of medicines in recent times.

Chiranjit Chaliha, Robin Dutta and Dibyendu Das of CITU were among the leaders who attended the meeting.

Doomdooma Correspondent adds: The Panitola Branch of Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) and Assam Chah Karmachari Sangha (ACKS) in collaboration with several other organisations and public observed the May Day centrally at Karam Bhawan of Panitola Tea Estate today. The programme got underway



Members of joint council of trade unions taking out a procession on the occasion of May Day at Tezpur in Sonitpur district on Wednesday.—UB Photos

with the hoisting of ACMS and ACKS flags by the presidents of the Panitola branch of the respective organisations followed by *swahid tarpan*. Later, various cultural and sports events were held among the workers.

Later, on the day the open session was held with the Panitola Branch ACMS president Ganesh Tanti in the chair. Addressing the gathering, senior journalist and writer Amulya Khataniar urged all the trade unions to remain united to solve the problems of the labourers and to work for the development of the nation.

The meeting was also addressed by ACMS leader and former MLA of Chabua Raju Sahu.

AITUC Tinsukia District Council also celebrated the May Day. The flag was hoisted by Jaleswar Ram at Tinsukia and Sukurmoni Urang at Bahadur Tea Estate. In the meetings held at both the places hundreds of workers were present. Addressing the gatherings Ranjan Chowdhury, secretary of AITUC Assam State Committee strongly criticised the anti-workers' policy of the Modi government and appealed for a united movement

to solve the problems of the workers. The day was also celebrated at Doomdooma by CITU and Hindustan Lever PPF Workers' Union.

Gauripur Correspondent adds: The May Day was observed today at Khoraghat under Bilasipara subdivision. Hundreds of labourers of the Khoraghat Forest Range division and the labourers of sand syndicate assembled in the market area to take part in the programme. Kismat Ali, the president of the union hoisted the flag. Dayal Paul, a leading activist of the area and a scribe performed *swahid tarpan*.

A meeting was also organised and the leaders explained the importance of International Labour Day and took oath to work together for the welfare of the workers and to unite them to fight injustice meted out to them by the employers. The May Day was also observed at Raniganj and Sapatgram.

Sivasagar Correspondent adds: Indian Patriotic Federation Socialist and Samajwadi Janswaraj Party (SJP) observed the May Day today in Dhali Tin Ali which was inaugurated by journalist Syed Mustakur Rahman by lighting a ceremonial lamp. *Smriti tarpan* was performed by reporter Irshad Ahmed. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, distinguished journalist Bhoirab Munda spoke on the history of the long and heroic struggle for justice of the working class. Pranjal Rajguru, chief convener, SJP, spoke on the objectives.

Sadou Asom Nirman Shramik Santha in association with AITUC observed the day in CPI office, Station Chariali today. A procession of the workers was taken out in the morning. The meeting, presided over by Reba Konwar, was addressed by CPI State secretary Kanak Gogoi and veteran CPI leader Dharma Baruah who severely criticised the government policies.

Demow: Under the patronage of Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha and Assam Chah Karmachari Sangha Moran Branch in association with local tea garden labourers- employees observed the International Labour Day in Demow Kaliapani Playground today. Different programmes were organized on the occasion. A cultural procession was also taken out here.

Chief Electoral Officer reviews poll preparations

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 1: Ahead of third phase of Lok Sabha elections, Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Goel today visited Kamrup election district which falls under Gauhati and Barpeta Lok Sabha constituencies to review poll preparedness in the district.

In a meeting convened at the conference hall of the integrated DC Office, Kamrup, CEO Goel discussed and reviewed key election management aspects with Kamrup District Commissioner and District Election Officer Keerthi Jalli, Superintendent of Police Ranjan Bhuyan, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad Orpah Baglary, District Development Commissioner Susanta Kumar Dutta, Additional District Commissioner (Election) Kamal Baruah and other officers responsible for different election cells.

During the meeting, Goel emphasized vigilance, proactive handling of complaints, and precautionary measures if, in case, there is delay in closing of polls in any polling station. Issues such as strong room management, webcasting, GPS systems, and EVM management were also discussed to ensure smooth operations for the upcoming poll on May 7. Later, Goel inspected strong room and EVM commissioning arrangements, as well as distribution counters for poll day.

After the review meeting, Goel unveiled voter awareness videos and launched a website called "Polling station at your fingertips" aimed at improving voter convenience and participation as part of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative of Kamrup Election District. The website provides step-by-step guidance for voters to find their polling station with details of distance, approximate time to reach, weather conditions, and advance view of the polling station through uploaded videos.

The CEO applauded the pioneering initiative taken by the Kamrup Election District to provide trial voting experience using virtual reality technology.

The meeting was also attended by Additional District Commissioners Nitya Binod Warie, Chandana Baruah and Election Officer Manas Jyoti Bora.

Kokrajhar Cancer Centre observes foundation day



CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, May 1: The Kokrajhar Cancer Centre observed its second foundation day with a special focus on breast cancer awareness and early detection.

The event was held in the Centre's premises in Kokrajhar, and was attended by prominent local health officials and community leaders. Kabita Deka, ADC, Kokrajhar attended the programme as the chief guest, Dr JB Roy, Joint Director of Health Services of BTC, Dr Deepayan Paul, Chief Medical Officer of NTPC, DPMU NHM, Dr Wassim Akhtar Bari, DHM, ACCF, Kokrajhar COP Team and representatives from various NGOs such as Gorkha Mahila Mancha, Purbasha (Kokrajhar Mahila Samiti), Marwari Yuva Mancha, Lions Club, as well as ASHA workers, and medical professionals from Kokrajhar Medical College and Kokrajhar Civil Hospital also attended the programme.

The programme commenced with the ceremonial lighting of lamps by the guests, followed by a welcome address by Dr Nishant Lohia, consultant radiation oncologist at Kokrajhar Cancer Centre. Dr Lohia also presented a power point showcasing the centre's achievements in cancer care. He emphasized the centre's campaign on early detection of breast cancer through self-examinations, clinical examinations, and mammography.

ed the programme.

The centre also launched a free breast cancer screening programme with mammography for women above 30 years.

Both the ADC and the Joint Director spoke about the importance of cancer awareness and screening. They commended the ACCF and Kokrajhar Cancer Centre for providing essential services locally, which previously required patients to travel to other cities, often causing delays in treatment.

Chief Minister holds election rally in Kokrajhar

CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, May 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended an election rally at Dotma High School field in Kokrajhar today in support of BJP-UPPL-AGP alliance NDA candidate for Kokrajhar Lok Sabha constituency Jayanta Basumatary.

Addressing the mammoth gathering, CM urged the people to vote in favour of UPPL-BJP-AGP alliance NDA candidate Jayanta Basumatary.

At the same time Sarma claimed that UPPL candidate Jayanta Basumatary will certainly win from the Kokrajhar LS seat this time as the people of BTR have witnessed peace, progress and development in the region under the bold leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Elaborating on the ongoing welfare schemes initiated by the BJP-led governments at



the Centre and the State, he promised that his government will create around 50,000 new jobs for the unemployed youths beside free admission to all class 10 pass students etc.

"During the BJP regime, the Boro people have been benefited with a slew of schemes undertaken by the State government, and more schemes are on the cards for the people," he said.

He also strongly criticized BPF and Congress and said there would be no use in voting for Hagrama Mohilary's BPF party.

BTR Chief Promod Boro, Cabinet Ministers UG Brahma, Ashok Singhal, Ranjeet Kumar Dass, MLA Lawrence Islay among others also attended the rally.

Cong, BJP gear up campaign for Dhubri seat

CORRESPONDENT

GAURIPUR, May 1: The political parties have intensified campaign for the Dhubri Lok Sabha seat with a series of roadshows and rallies to garner support from the voters.

The Dhubri Lok Sabha seat has 11 assembly segments with over 26 lakh voters and they will decide the fate of 13 candidates in the ensuing election to be held on May 7. The candidates have been campaigning to win the support of the voters.

Maulana Badaruddin Ajmal of AIUDD and present MP has been holding a series of rallies in the minority dominated areas. Similarly, Rakibul Hussain of Congress has been campaigning round the clock in the constituency. The BJP AGP and UPPL candidate Zabeed Islam has been trying to woo the voters with meetings and rallies. Zabeed Islam, son of former Minister Jahirul Islam, has a strong base in several assembly segments and he is also a strong contender.

UN Brahma remembered

CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, May 1: The 34th death anniversary of Bodo Upendra Nath Brahma was observed here at Kokrajhar.

The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) centrally observed the anniversary at Thulangapuri, Dotma in Kokrajhar.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended the programme and paid homage to UN Brahma. He recalled the contribution of UN Brahma for the development of the Boro language, culture, and traditions.

State Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimari, ministers UG Brahma, Ashok Singhal, BTR chief Pramod Boro, MLA Lawrence Islay, BPF leader Pramila Rani Brahma and other leaders also attended the programme.

The day-long programme started with hoisting of flag by ABSU president Dipen Boro, followed by floral tribute and all religious prayer etc. Speaking on the occasion, Daimari called upon all to follow the principles and ideology of Bodo UN Brahma.

Meanwhile, the death anniversary was also observed by the officers and staff of the BTC Secretariat at its premises.

Ganja seized

CORRESPONDENT

UDALGURI, May 1: Acting on a tip off, the Mazbat police in association with the Orang police in Udalguri district seized 774 kilograms of contraband ganja today at Bongaon village near Balisuti river bank bordering Arunachal Pradesh under the Mazbat police station. However, the smugglers managed to flee under the cover of darkness. The operation was led by Sanjay Dubey, officer in-charge of Mazbat police station. Further investigation is on.

Basanta Utsav

CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, May 1: As part of Rongali Bihu celebration, 'Srishti', a pioneer cultural organisation of the small town is going to organise 'Basanta Utsav 2024' at Nagaon Nehrubali field on May 4.

Local MLA and the president of 'Srishti' Rupak Sarma informed that a series of programmes have been lined up in this connection.

The organization will felicitate three youths who have brought laurels to the district in various fields. They are Bhaswat Saikia, Pori Borkakoti and Devashree Kashyap. Besides, like the previous years, the organization will also present its prestigious 'Kolongporia Award 2024' to Bihuram Saikia, an artiste of Satriya and Shankari art and culture, Sarma said.

KVK undertakes seed certification of paddy in Dibrugarh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 1: In an effort to give access to quality seed of Sali paddy to the local farming community, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra located at Kordoibam here successfully completed certification of seed of Sali paddy with the variety 'Numoli' at a farmer's field in Tengakhat area.

As a last programme of seed certification the bagging and tagging was done under the technical guidance of Assistant Seed Certification Officer of Assam Seed and Organic Cer-

tification Agency, Assam, Dikshita Pallabi Das yesterday. The seed certification of farmers is a step towards making the quality seed available to the farmers in quantity and at affordability rate. Entire seed production programme was under the guidance of the Senior Scientist and Head of KVK, Dibrugarh, Dr Diganta Sarmah and supervised by Chayanika Thakuria, a specialist in Agronomy in association with other subject specialists of the Kendra, stated Dr Hemchandra Saikia, specialist in Agricultural Economics.

It needs to be mentioned here that under this seed production programme quality seed was given in time for the cultivation of five hectare area under Tegakhat development block of the district covering eleven progressive farmers. Technical guidance and regular monitoring and advisories were given to the farmers by experts from KVK and Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency Assam. Nabin Sonowal, one of the farmers reportedly harvested about 4200 kg to 4500 kg of the 'Numoli' variety per hectare, which he

said, is much better than their local paddy variety.

The KVK authorities here said that the programme was duly supported by Directorate of Extension Education Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat and ATARI (Agricultural Technology Application and Research Institute), ICAR, Guwahati office.

Saikia said that through the initiative of seed production programme the purpose is to boost agricultural production and income as quality seed has the potential to enhance the productivity and income in crop production activities.



AGP president Atul Bora and working president Keshab Mahanta during an election rally at Kawaimari under Barpeta Lok Sabha constituency on Wednesday.—UB Photos

CINEMA PROGRAMME	
<p>GALLERIA CINEMA HUB, G.S. Road, Guwahati is showing From 26th April onwards following timings:</p> <p>At 11.00 am, 3.40 pm & 6.15 pm RUSLAAN (H) At 1.30 pm & 9.00 pm GHOSTBUSTERS FROZEN EMPIRE 2D (H)</p> <p>For Online Booking Please Visit Book my Show Paytm.</p> <p>Regular price: Silver- Rs. 130/-, Gold- Rs. 170/-, Platinum- Rs. 200/- & Business- Rs. 220/- Moring price: Silver- Rs. 99/-, Gold- Rs. 149/-, Platinum- Rs. 169/- & Business- Rs. 199/-</p>	<p>GALLERIA CINEMA Dibrugarh, Junction Mall From 26th April 2024 to 02nd May 2024</p> <p>Screen-1 At 10.00 am & 5.30 pm GHOSTBUSTERS : FROZEN EMPIRE (E) At 3.15 pm GHOSTBUSTERS : FROZEN EMPIRE (H) At 12.15 pm BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN- 3D At 8.00 pm : MAIDAAN Screen-2 At 10.30 am, 12.55 pm, 6.00 pm & 8.30 pm : RUSLAAN At 3.20 pm : RAZAKAR Tele Booking Timings 9.00 am to 8.00 pm. Tele Booking No. 8876565001/ 8876565002 (Terms & conditions apply) Ticket Rates: Regular Show: Rs. 150/-, Rs. 200/-, Rs. 350/-, Rs. 500/-, 1000/- New Movie Rates Rs. 180/-, Rs. 240/-, Rs. 360/-, Rs. 500/-, Rs. 1000/- Ticket Rates 3D Movies: Rs. 200/-, Rs. 260/-, Rs. 380/-, Rs. 520/-, Rs. 1040/- Website: www.bookmyshow.com</p>
<p>GALLERIA CINEMA Tinsukia, ATC Mall, GNB Road From 26th April to 02nd May, 2024</p> <p>Screen-1 At 10.10 am, 3.10 pm GHOSTBUSTERS FROZEN- 2D (H) At 12.15 pm BADE MIYA CHOTE MIYA- 3D (H) At 5.20 pm GHOSTBUSTERS FROZEN- 2D (E) At 7.30 pm MAIDAAN (H) Screen-2 At 10.00 am, 12.30 pm, 3.00 pm, 5.35 pm & 8.10 pm RUSLAAN-2D (H) Tele Booking timings: 9 am to 8.30 pm. Tele Booking No. 8876565005/ 8876565006 (Terms & conditions apply) Moring Tickets Price (Before 10.00 am) Rs. 130/-, Rs. 220/-, Rs. 280/-, Rs. 450/- Regular Tickets price Rs. 170/-, Rs. 240/-, Rs. 300/-, Rs. 500/- 3D Tickets Price : Rs. 200/-, Rs. 280/-, Rs. 320/-, Rs. 520/-</p>	<p>ANURADHA CINEPLEX Multiplex Ambience From 26.04.24 to 02.05.24 At 11.00 am & 5.00 pm RUSLAAN (HINDI) 2D Cast: Aayush Sharma, Jaggaathi Babu, Sushri Mishraa etc. At 2.00 pm GHOSTBUSTERS : FROZEN EMPIRE (HINDI) 2D Cast: Paul Rudd, McKenna Grace, Carrie Coon etc. At 8.15 pm GHOSTBUSTERS : FROZEN EMPIRE (ENG) 2D Cast: Paul Rudd, McKenna Grace, Carrie Coon etc. Booking Nos. 882277555 (954544738, 7086252926) Online Booking: www.anuradhacineplex.in, www.bookmyshow.com</p>

Workers, activists across Asia, Europe hold May Day rallies

SEOUL, May 1: Workers, activists and others in Asian capitals and European cities took to the streets on Wednesday to mark May Day with protests over rising prices and government labour policies and calls for greater labour rights.

May Day, which falls on May 1, is observed in many countries to celebrate workers' rights. May Day events have also given many an opportunity to air general economic grievances or political demands.

Police in Istanbul detained dozens of people who tried to reach the central Taksim Square in defiance of a government ban

on marking Labour Day at the landmark location.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has long declared Taksim off-limits for rallies and demonstrations on security grounds, but some political parties and trade unions have vowed to march to the square, which holds symbolic value for labour unions.

In 1977, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a May Day celebration at Taksim, causing a stampede and killing 34 people.

On Wednesday, police erected barricades and sealed off all routes leading to the central Istanbul square. Public transport in the



area was also restricted. Only a small group of trade union representatives was permitted to enter the square to lay a wreath at a monument in memory of victims of the 1977 incident.

Riot police apprehended some 30 members of the left-wing People's Liberation Party who tried to break through the barriers.

In Indonesia, workers voiced anger at a new law they said violates their rights and hurts their welfare, and demanded protections for migrant workers abroad and a minimum wage raise.

About 50,000 workers from Jakarta's satellite cities of Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi

were expected to join May Day marches in the capital, said Said Iqbal, the president of the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions.

They gathered amid a tight police presence near the National Monument park, waving the colourful flags of labour groups and chanting slogans against the Job Creation Law and loosened outsourcing rules during a march to Jakarta's main sports stadium, Gelora Bung Karno.

"With the enactment of this law, our future is uncertain because many problems arise in wages, severance pay and the contract system," said Isbandi Anggono, a protester. — AP

Boy held in school attack in England; 3 hurt

LONDON, May 1: A 17-year-old boy has been arrested following reports of three people being injured at a school in Sheffield, northern England, on Wednesday.

South Yorkshire Police said it was called to the Birley Community College and officers remain at the site. Minor injuries have been reported from the school premises.

"Officers are at the scene after responding to reports of an incident involving a sharp object at the school on Birley Lane at around 8.50 am. Two adults were checked over at the scene after suffering minor injuries," South Yorkshire Police said in a statement.

"A child was also checked over after being assaulted," the police said.

The 17-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and remains in police custody.

Police said its officers will remain at the scene throughout the day to provide assurances to those in the school and the local community. — PTI

Blinken urges Israel and Hamas to move ahead with truce deal



TEL AVIV (Israel), May 1: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was meeting with Israeli leaders on Wednesday in his push for a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, saying "the time is now" for an agreement that would free hostages and bring a pause in the nearly seven months of war in Gaza. He said Hamas would bear the blame for any failure to get a deal off the ground.

Blinken is on his seventh visit to the region since the war erupted in October in his bid to secure what's been an elusive deal between Israel and Hamas that could avert an Israeli incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering.

The current round of talks appears to be serious, but the sides remain far apart on one key issue — whether the war should end as part of an emerging deal.

"We are determined to get a ceasefire that brings the hostages home and to get it now, and the only reason that wouldn't be achieved is because of Hamas," Blinken told Israel's ceremonial President Isaac

Herzog at a meeting in Tel Aviv.

"There is a proposal on the table, and as we've said, no delays, no excuses. The time is now," he said.

Blinken said the deal would also allow much needed food, medicine and water to get into Gaza, where the war has sparked a humanitarian crisis and displaced much of the territory's population. After meeting with Herzog and also with families of Americans held by Hamas at his hotel, Blinken briefly greeted several dozen demonstrators calling for an immediate hostage release deal on the sidewalk outside.

Chanting "SOS, USA, only you can save the day" and "In Blinken we trust, bring them home to us," the protesters urged him to make their case to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Blinken will meet Netanyahu and his War Cabinet later on Wednesday.

Blinken told the families that there was a very strong proposal on the table and that Hamas needs to say yes to it. "That is our determination, and we will not rest, we will not stop until you're reunited with your loved ones," he said.

His comments came on the last leg of his regional visit, with previous stops in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, where he urged Hamas to accept the latest proposal, calling it "extraordinarily generous" on Israel's part. — AP

“ Hamas would bear the blame for any failure to get a deal off the ground

Iran files charges over BBC report on teen girl 'killed by security forces' in 2022 protests



JERUSALEM, May 1: Iranian prosecutors filed criminal charges on Wednesday targeting activists and journalists following a BBC report that alleged security forces had "sexually assaulted and killed" a 16-year-old girl during protests over the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022.

Nika Shakarami's death also sparked widespread outrage at the time.

Amini died after being detained by police over allegedly not wearing her

mandatory hijab, or headscarf, to their liking. UN investigators have said Iran is responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

In Shakarami's case, authorities said she died after falling from a tall building, something immediately disputed by her mother, who said her daughter had been beaten.

The BBC report published on Monday — relying on what it described as a report written for Iran's paramilitary

Revolutionary Guard — said Shakarami was detained by undercover security forces who molested her, then killed her with batons and electronic stun guns after she struggled against the assault.

Iran's Mizan news agency, run by the country's judiciary, said on Wednesday that the BBC story was "a fake, incorrect and full-of-mistakes report," without addressing any of the alleged errors it contained.

It was the government's first acknowledgment of the BBC report and it said "journalists and activists" have been summoned over the issue.

"The Tehran Prosecutor's Office filed a criminal case against these people," Mizan said, with charges including "spreading lies" and "propaganda against the system." The first charge can carry a year-and-a-half in prison and dozens of lashes, while the second can involve up to a year's imprisonment. — AP

Police clear pro-Palestinian protesters from Columbia varsity

Clashes break out at UCLA

NEW YORK, May 1: Duelling groups of protesters clashed on Wednesday at the University of California, Los Angeles, grappling in fist-fights and shoving, kicking and using sticks to beat one another. Hours early on, police carrying riot shields burst into a building at Columbia University that pro-Palestinian protesters took over and broke up a demonstration that had paralysed the school while inspiring others.

After a couple hours of one-and-off scuffles between pro-Palestinian and pro-Is-

raeli demonstrators at UCLA, police wearing helmets and face shields arrived, formed lines and began to slowly corral some of the protesters. That appeared to quell the violence. Police have swept through campuses across the US over the last two weeks in response to protests calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies that support the war in Gaza.

There have been confrontations and more than 1,000 arrests. In rarer instances, university officials

and protest leaders struck agreements to restrict the disruption to campus life and upcoming commencement ceremonies.

The clashes at UCLA took place around a tent encampment built by pro-Palestinian protesters, who erected barricades and plywood for protection — while counter-protesters tried to pull them down. People threw chairs and at one point a group piled on a person who lay on the ground, kicking and beating them with sticks until others pulled them out of the scum.

It was not clear how many people might be injured. — AP



Israeli soldiers are seen at a staging ground near the border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel on Wednesday. — AP/PTI

China's advanced 3rd aircraft carrier begins sea trials amid South China Sea tensions

BEIJING, May 1: China's third aircraft carrier, the *Fujian*, the most advanced homemade warship, began its maiden sea trials on Wednesday as Beijing ramped up its naval power amid increasing tensions with the US in the disputed South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

The ship left Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard on Wednesday morning for the sea trials, primarily to test the reliability and stability of the aircraft carrier's propulsion and electrical systems, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Since its launch in June 2022, the *Fujian* has completed its mooring trials, outfitting work and equipment adjustments. It has met the technical requirements for sea trials.

Ahead of the trials, China has imposed maritime traffic controls around the mouth of the Yangtze river where the Jiangnan shipyard ship is lo-



ated for "military activities". The traffic controls would last till May 9, the report said.

According to the previous official media reports, China plans to have five to six aircraft carriers by 2035 for strategic deployment in the disputed South China Sea, where Beijing seeks to assert its claims over most of

the vast area, the Taiwan Strait which separates the Chinese mainland and Taiwan and the Indian Ocean where Beijing is increasing its power projection.

Elaborating on China's strategy in acquiring aircraft carriers, Senior Col (rtd) Zhou Bo, who spent four decades with the People's Liber-

ation Army (PLA), said China sees their importance for possible war far from home.

"I cannot speculate on how many carriers China will need. But I can tell you that aircraft carriers are primarily not for coastal fights. They are for a possible war far from home," Bo, who is a senior fellow with the Centre for International

Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University, told the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* in a recent interview.

"People may say that one day, when China has to retreat from peaceful means to resolve the Taiwan issue, we could use aircraft carriers," he said.

"Of course they are useful, but they are more useful in our power projection in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, or Atlantic Ocean — anywhere far from our waters — because they are platforms for the ships and aircraft that make us powerful," he said.

Currently, the Chinese navy is involved in a stand-off with the US-backed Philippines naval ships in the South China Sea.

The Philippines is trying to assert its claim over the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea which is strongly resisted by China. — PTI

24 killed in highway collapse in China

BEIJING, May 1: At least 24 people were killed when a section of a highway collapsed early on Wednesday, the start of a five-day long Labour Day holiday, in China's rain hit Guangdong province.

The cave-in occurred at around 2 am in Dabu County of Guangdong's northern Meizhou City. Nearly 18 metres of the mountainous highway crumbled into the forested slope below, trapping 20 vehicles and 54 passengers in all, the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported, quoting a local government statement.

The official statement said 30 victims had been sent to hospital, while around 500 public security, emergency response, firefighting, health and sanitation and other workers were taking part in the rescue work.

The condition of the hospitalised patients was "not life-threatening at the moment", the statement said,

but did not specify the level of their injuries.

The reason for the collapse has yet to be declared and the matter is under investigation.

Nearly 18 metres of the mountainous highway crumbled into the forested slope below.

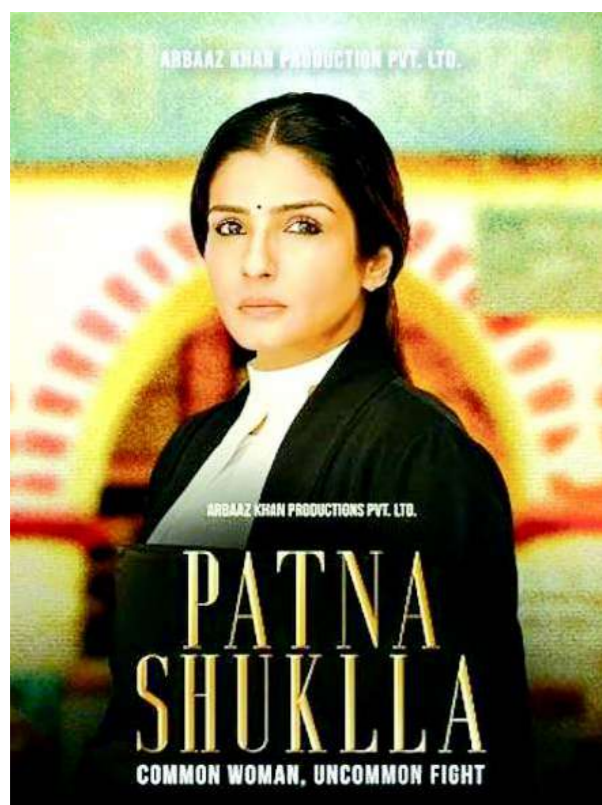


tion, the *Post* reported.

The accident occurred as China began a five-day break for Labour Day, one of the four major holiday and travel periods for the country when highways are toll-free and see heavy traffic.

Footage and pictures shared by local news outlets showed flames and smoke rising from the collapsed section, while charred cars were visible on the gouged-out slope. The stricken highway links Guangdong to southwestern Fujian province. — PTI

Contributing to society



Raveena Tandon feels actors need to highlight important issues through their work

it's always there in the back pages, which you just skip through and don't pay attention to. It got me thinking that this is so relevant and this is something that needs to be spoken about because this is a scam that is stealing students' lives and future at the beginning."

The need to highlight the issue also felt important as both Tandon and Khan are parents.

"Arbaaz and my children, they both are students of the same age and this is something we strongly believe in. It is a conversation that needs to be brought on the table. We keep championing the cause of a young, strong and educated India but who is dealing with these people who are doing these scams? I feel we need to build a certain infrastructure which kind of helps these students who have nowhere to go," she added.

In her career of over 30 years, Tandon has explored many facets of a working woman and Tanvi Shukla is another such character that navigates motherhood and her professional life.

Patna Shuklla is the third project for Tandon in the OTT space after the series Aranyaka and the most recent Karma Calling.

The actor believes that the medium has "relaxed" a lot of filmmakers as they don't have the box office pressure.

Tandon will next be seen in comedy movie Welcome to the Jungle, also starring Akshay Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, Suniel Shetty, Arshad Warsi, Tusshar Kapoor, Shreyas Talpade and Paresh Rawal.

(Source: PTI)

Actor Raveena Tandon believes artistes can return the love and adulation they receive from the people by highlighting important issues in the society through their work. The actor, who recently starred in the movie Patna Shuklla, based on the topic of roll number scam, said that she tries to take up subjects that she hopes would at least start a conversation.

"We all have done commercial hits in our lives but I have always believed that society has given us everything - name, fame and status - and at some point in our lives, we should contribute to society and this is the medium that we know the best," Tandon said in an interview.

"Using this medium, if I can create a certain amount of awareness or deliver a message that at least brings the conversation to the table, then I would be like, 'Ok, I have done little bit of my contribution'. That's why once or twice a year, I pick up that one topic which I believe will make a difference or something that we need to talk about," she said.

Patna Shuklla features Tandon as Tanvi Shukla, a small-time lawyer who gets drawn into the fight for justice against a widespread roll number scam affecting numerous students.

The courtroom drama, also starring Anushka Kaushik, Manav Vij, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Jatin Goswami and the late Satish Kaushik, has garnered good reviews.

Tandon (51) said that the script felt relevant to her and she instantly agreed when Arbaaz Khan, who has produced the movie, offered her the role.

"When this script came to me, I didn't know that the roll number scam like this existed. It was never in the headlines,

Entertainment TV schedule grid including channels like ZeeTV, Colors, StarPlus, and Zcafe.

Movies section featuring ROMEDY NOW, MINX MOVIES, and @flix.

Sports section listing various cricket matches and events like IPL 2024 and T20 matches.

Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

Happy Birthday for Thursday, May 2, 2024: You are courteous, helpful, sensitive and caring. You are also an independent thinker who is fiercely honest.

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) At this time, your chart has a strong emphasis on money, cash flow and financial dealings.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You're high-viz for several reasons right now in your chart. This means you should be aware that people notice you and are aware of what you're doing.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) This is a poor day to ask for permission or approval from authority figures, teachers, parents or bosses.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Avoid important financial decisions, especially about shared property, taxes, debt and inheritances today because of the Moon Alert.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) This is a lazy day. Enjoy yourself. You might make a great impression on bosses and VIPs.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You might feel restless today. You want a change of scenery. You have an urge to shake things up a little.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Be patient with partners and close friends right now. Mars is opposite your sign for the next month.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Take it easy today. You might want to reserve your energy for tomorrow, which is a productive day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Although your focus is on work and productivity right now, this is a good day to relax.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Give yourself permission to play hooky today. Take a long lunch. Take off of work if you can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Home and family are your priority right now. In fact, many of you are involved in DIY projects and home repairs.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) This is a busy, fast-paced week. However, today is a good time to relax or to take things at a slower pace.

Thought for the day

The fairest thing in nature, a flower, still has its roots in earth and manure.

-DH LAWRENCE

LOCKHORNS comic strip panel with characters Keller, Tarigo, Beelzebub, and McGrath.

THE PHANTOM comic strip panel by Lee Falk.

BLONDIE comic strip panel.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE comic strip panel.

LOCKHORNS comic strip panel.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE comic strip panel.

LOCKHORNS comic strip panel.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE comic strip panel.

Tribune CROSSWORD - 7975

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-31.

Across and Down clues for the crossword puzzle.

SOLUTION TO TRIBUNE CROSSWORD - 7975

GRAFFITI and JUMBLED WORDS sections.

Punjab Kings beat Chennai Super Kings by 7 wickets

CHENNAI, May 1: A 64-run partnership between Jonny Bairstow and Rilee Rossouw for the second wicket laid the foundation for Punjab Kings' seven-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

Bairstow struck a 30-ball 46 and Rossouw hit 43 off 23 deliveries, following which Shashank Singh (25 not out) and Sam Curran (26 not out) were involved in an unbroken 50-run stand, which took the team past CSK's total of 162/7 with 13 balls to spare.

Earlier, Rituraj Gaikwad braved a sluggish Chepauk pitch and accurate Punjab Kings spinners to make a solid fifty.

Once they were asked to bat first, skipper Gaikwad (62, 48; 5x4, 2x6) and his opening partner Ajinkya Rahane (29, 24b) added 61 runs for the opening wicket but they consumed 49 balls for it.

There were flashes of intent too in their alliance, though. Gaikwad played a fine upper cut off Arshdeep Singh for a boundary over the slips and Rahane creamed three fours in a row off Sam Curran, including a lovely cover drive.

But they were too far and fell in between to make a real impact. The slide of CSK began once PBKS brought their spinners on immediately after the powerplay that yielded 55 for no loss.

Rahane tried to slog sweep

Harpreet Brar but his skier ended in the hands of Rilee Rossouw in the deep.

But the left-arm spinner inflicted a bigger blow in the next delivery, trapping Shivam Dube, who was named in India's T20 World Cup squad, leg before for a first-ball duck.

Dube, promoted to No. 3 to counter spin, failed to connect an almighty heave off a fuller ball on the middle-stump by Brar, and he had to walk back despite seeking help from DRS. In the next over, leg-spinner Rahul Chahar got rid of Ravindra Jadeja, who was deceived by a delivery that turned into him a whisker to beat his prod.

It was a total shutdown for CSK in that phase between sixth and 10th over, losing three wickets for just 16 runs.

For a team that generally bosses the middle passage between the seventh and 15th over at a run-rate of 10.6, the CSK was a shadow of their marauding self, managing just 47 runs in that period against PBKS.

Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 162 for 7 in 20 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 29, Rituraj Gaikwad 62, Sameer Rizvi 21; Harpreet Brar 2/17, Rahul Chahar 2/16). **Punjab Kings 163 for 3 in 17.5 overs** (Jonny Bairstow 46, Rilee Rossouw 43, Shashank Singh 25 not out, Sam Curran 26 not out). - PTI



Rituraj Gaikwad in action against PBKS.

62 runs (48 balls)	5 Fours	2 Sixes	129.17 Strike Rate
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POINTS TABLE

P	TEAM	NR	RR	Pts
1	RR	0.694	16	
2	KKR	1.096	12	
3	LSG	0.094	12	
4	CSK	0.810	10	
5	SRH	0.075	10	
6	DC	-0.442	10	
7	GT	-1.113	8	
8	PBKS	-0.187	6	
9	MI	-0.272	6	
10	RCB	-0.415	6	

*Updated till 9 PM of May 1

V Kohli 500 runs

J Bumrah 14 wkts

Highest 4s
48 R Gaikwad

Highest 6s
28 H Klaasen

Best Bowling
10 11R 2W 5.50Ave T Stubbs

*Updated till 9 PM of May 1

MATCH PREVIEW

SRH seek perfect chase against Rajasthan Royals

Weather
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 16%
Wind Gusts: 2 Km/h

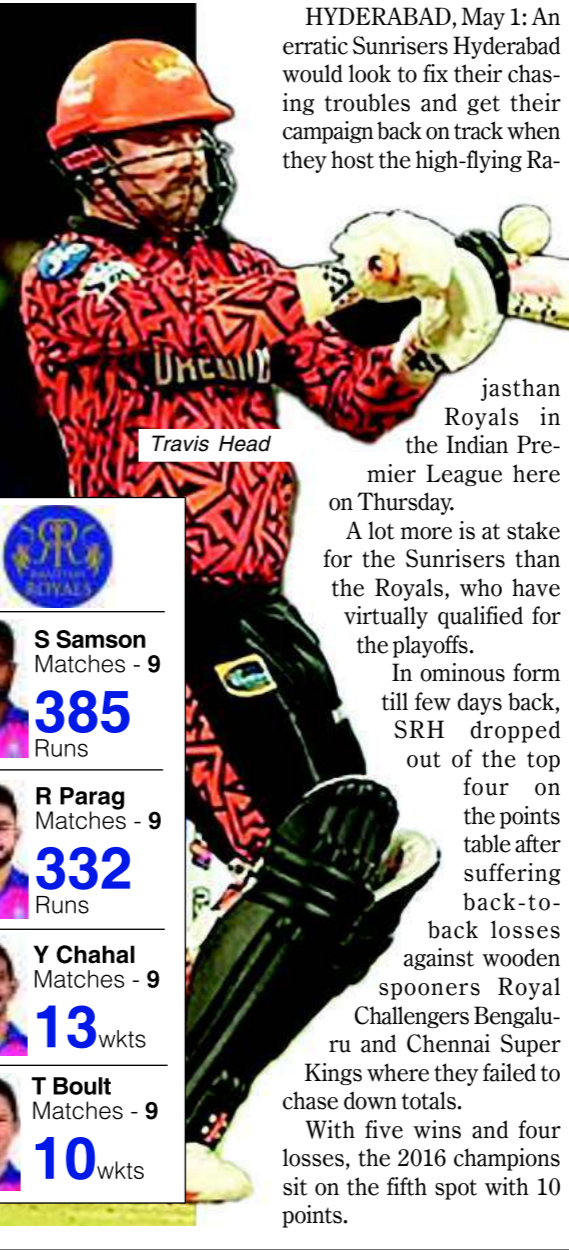
Venue: Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad
Match starts: 7.30 pm

Recent Form
Matches played recently

SRH	L	L	W	W	W
RR	W	W	W	W	L

Head to Head
Since 2008

SRH	Won - 09
RR	Won - 09
No Result	0



HYDERABAD, May 1: An erratic Sunrisers Hyderabad would look to fix their chasing troubles and get their campaign back on track when they host the high-flying Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League here on Thursday.

A lot more is at stake for the Sunrisers than the Royals, who have virtually qualified for the playoffs.

In ominous form till few days back, SRH dropped out of the top four on the points table after suffering back-to-back losses against wooden spooners Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings where they failed to chase down totals.

With five wins and four losses, the 2016 champions sit on the fifth spot with 10 points.

The Pat Cummins-led side's top and middle-order batters have failed collectively while chasing, forcing head coach Daniel Vettori to admit that the idea of going all out with the bat in the second innings might not be the right thing to do.

SRH have breached the 250-run mark thrice this season but all while batting first. In contrast, they haven't managed to chase a total in excess of 200 even once.

"We have been successful setting totals and now we have to look at how well we are in chasing," head coach Vettori had conceded after the loss to RCB.

"We're pretty well-suited to chasing, but it hasn't really come off yet. So yeah, it is something (we need) to work on," skipper Cummins had said after the loss to CSK.

SRH are too dependent on the explosive starts provided by Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma. And, while the duo gets going it's great but when they flop, SRH would want to do a better job at re-building their innings. It's also about time Aiden Markram steps up and justifies his spot in the playing XI, having had an underwhelming season thus far. - PTI

Cricket: Icon Trophy (U-14) Ankurjyoti Club beat Assam Cricket Academy

GUWAHATI, May 1: Ankurjyoti Club registered victory against Assam Cricket Academy by virtue of their first innings lead in their two-day match of the 1st Icon Invitational Trophy (Under-14) in memory of the Late Jadav Dutta in Jagiroad on Wednesday.

Resuming at an overnight total of 47 for 4 in 29 overs, Assam Cricket Academy batters managed 115 before being bundled out in 66.5 overs. Siddhartha Das scored 31 off 140 deliveries while Saurav Kashyap chipped in with 22 off 32 balls. Sameer Mahato, Vivaan Choudhary and Kushal Thakur picked up three wickets each for Ankurjyoti

Club. Earlier, Ankurjyoti boys had posted 134 before being all out in 60.2 overs in their first innings.

Coming into bat in their second innings, Ankurjyoti were all out for 73 in 50.2 overs. Bhavyamanyu Baruah top scored for his side with 28 off 43 deliveries. Siddhartha Das scalped four wickets conceding 26 runs in his 22 overs which also included 13 maiden overs while Saurav Kashyap picked up three wickets for 16 runs in 18 overs. Saurav Kashyap of Assam Cricket Academy was adjudged the man of the match for his splendid all-round display. - Sports Reporter

Assam Premier League Championship City Cricket Club, Club Triranga win

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 1: City Cricket Club of Guwahati and Club Triranga of Barpeta registered victories in their respective final round league matches of the 6th Assam Premier Club Championship (APCC) at the Judges' Field here today.

In the opening match, City Cricket Club defeated Super Touch Club of Tezpur by 49 runs. Winning the toss, Super Touch Club decided to bowl first. City Cricket Club went on to score 147 for 7 in their stipulated 20 overs. Rahul Hazarika top scored with 54 runs off 40 deliveries (4x8,

6x1) while Hrishikesh Tamuli contributed a well made 41 runs off 48 balls (4x3, 6x1). Rohan Hazarika chipped in with 21 runs off 13 balls (4x3, 6x1). For Super Touch Club, Rabi Chetri bagged three wickets while Rahul Singh picked up two wickets.

Chasing the target, Super Touch Club were bundled out for a paltry 98 runs in 15.5 overs. Siddharth Sarmah top scored with 25 runs off 20 balls (4x3, 6x1) while Jugen Das contributed 16 runs off 22 balls (6x1). For City CC, Mayukh Hazarika, Sanjib Barman and Romario Sharma took two wickets each while Dharani Rabha, Vedant

Pandey and Ganesh Basfore scalped a wicket each. Rahul Hazarika of City CC was adjudged the man of the match.

Club Triranga got the better of Rangia Cricket Association by 38 runs in the second match of the day. Electing to bat, Club Triranga managed a total of 157 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs. Kabir Hassan Deshmukh smashed 62 runs off 49 balls (4x5, 6x3) while Bishal Saha contributed 31 runs off 33 balls (4x4). Skipper Denish Das chipped in with 23 runs off 15 balls (4x3, 6x1). For Rangia CA, Parvez Aziz claimed four wickets while Neelabh Sarma and Imtaz Hussain picked up a

wicket each.

In reply, Rangia CA could only manage 119 for 9 in their stipulated 20 overs. Parvez Aziz top scored with 32 runs off 22 balls (4x2, 6x2) while Md Habibullah contributed 30 runs off 34 balls (4x3, 6x1). For Club Triranga, Bishal Roy was the pick of the bowlers with a haul of three wickets conceding 19 runs in 4 overs while Hridip Deka took two wickets giving away 17 runs in 3 overs. Himanshu Saraswat, Pritish Roy and Sanjib Pathak scalped a wicket each. Kabir Hassan Deshmukh of Club Triranga was adjudged the man of the match.

Australia unveil T20 WC squad

MELBOURNE, May 1: All-rounder Mitchell Marsh was formally announced full-time captain while veteran Steve Smith and young Jake Fraser-McGurk were left out of the preliminary 15-member T20 World Cup squad announced by Australia on Wednesday.

It is the first time in a decade that Smith, a former captain and one of Australia's finest batters of the generation, has been excluded from a World Cup squad.

The 34-year-old had hoped to open in the marquee tournament but the selectors decided to go with Travis Head, David Warner and Marsh at the top. The lack of an IPL contract didn't help Smith's case either.

Moreover, Smith is not as prolific as some of the best T20 batters in the world though he is among the finest in the Test and ODI formats. He has scored 1094 runs from 67 T20I matches at an average of 24.86 and a strike rate of 125.45.

Uncapped 22-year-old Fraser-McGurk, who made a strong case for himself courtesy his recent sensational run in the ongoing IPL where he has scored 247 runs in five matches for the Delhi Capitals at an astounding strike rate of

237.50, was also snubbed.

The selectors chose all-rounder Cameron Green and Josh Inglis instead. Green offers support for the injury-prone Marsh and Marcus Stoinis, while Inglis serves as the backup wicketkeeper.

"Steve Smith, Matt Short, Jason Behrendorff, Aaron Hardie, Spencer Johnson and Xavier Bartlett were all part of long conversations, along with several others, including Jake Fraser-McGurk who is yet to play T20 International cricket but continues to impress and is developing rapidly.

"Being constrained to a squad of 15 for World Cups is always a challenge given the different scenarios and options we'd like to cover," selection chair George Bailey said.

After serving as the interim captain of the T20I squad for the past year, 32-year-old Marsh has officially been named full-time skipper in the shortest format.

The Squad: Mitchell Marsh (C), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa. - PTI

Asian junior tennis tourney in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, May 1: The All Assam Tennis Association (AATA) will host an Asian Junior Tennis Tournament for Boys and Girls Under-14 years at its own complex in Chachal here from May 6 to 11.

In this international event, players from China, Korea, Thailand and host India have confirmed their participation till now. The Asian Tennis Federation has appointed Somnath Manna of West Bengal as the referee and Ankush Dutta as the director of the tournament. Around 70 players are expected to take part in the tournament. This was stated in an AATA press release.

GSA B Division Cricket League Navarang, Chandmari register victories

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 1: Navarang Club and Chandmari Sports Club won their respective league matches of the Rashmibala Tamuli Guwahati Sports Association (GSA) B Division Cricket League at the Nehru Stadium here today.

In the first match, Navarang Club outclassed West Zone Cricket Club by 86 runs while in the second match of the day, Chandmari Sports Club got the better of Maharana Athletic Club by 38 runs.

Brief scores: Navarang Club 150 for 7 in 20 overs (Jagjit Singh 65, Mriganka Jyoti Sarma 43; Dipankar

Mazumdar 3/22, Subham Roy 2/21, Bhaskardeep Choudhury 1/17). **West Zone Cricket Club 64 all out in 19 overs** (Keshab Gogoi 18; Bastab Hazarika 3/12, Debojit Mahanta 2/2, Navajyoti Deka 2/5). **MoM:** Debojit Mahanta of Navarang Club.

Chandmari Sports Club 121 for 7 in 20 overs (Ka-

makhya Mazumdar 46, Chinmoyee Das 23; Pranjit Das 3/11, Imdad Hussain 1/14, Darpandra Bhuyan 1/15). **Maharana AC 83 all out in 13.5 overs** (Nipumoni Kumar 23, Saurav Nath 13, Pranjit Das 12; Ratul Dey 4/15, Manash Sarma 3/22, Tridip Deka 1/5). **MoM:** Kamakhya Mazumdar of Chandmari SC.

Champions League semifinal Vinicius Junior leads Real Madrid to 2-2 draw

MUNICH, May 1: Vinicius Junior scored twice for Real Madrid to draw 2-2 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Bayern dominated but Madrid survived, and the contest is still wide open ahead of the return leg in Madrid on May 8.

With the focus on England stars Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham, as well as Toni Kroos' return to his former team, Vinicius emerged as the decisive figure on a night when his bright green boots were often a blur.

The Brazil forward opened the scoring against the run of play in the 24th minute and equalised with a coolly taken penalty in the 83rd after Leroy Sane and Kane had scored for Bayern.



"I think it's a good result," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who led Bayern to the Bundesliga title in 2017. "It gives us faith and confidence for the second leg. It's completely open."

Kane's goal, another penalty, was the England forward's 43rd goal in 43 games for Bayern this season.

"It felt like the goals were scored when the other team was better," Kroos said. "We're pretty sure that we'll advance at home."

Bayern had appealed to fans to wear red to the game

and the visitors must have felt they were playing in a red cauldron as they were greeted by deafening whistles from the majority of the 75,000 in the stadium.

Fans in the "Sudkurve" paid respect to deceased club great Franz Beckenbauer with a huge red-and-white choreography before kickoff. A giant banner sent a message to the players as they were warming up: "To honour the Kaiser Franz, give everything to reach the final!"

The winners of the two-leg semifinal will play either Borussia Dortmund or Paris Saint-Germain in the final in London on June 1.

"Real Madrid does this to teams, so we should not be too disappointed," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said. "I think we will be able to create chances

in the Bernabeu. This is one of the most difficult places to win, yes, but it's a challenge. That's the beauty of it."

Bayern totally dominated the opening stages on Tuesday. Sane had an effort saved by Andriy Lunin in the first minute and the hosts went on to miss a slew of chances.

"We didn't have enough intensity, especially in the first half," Ancelotti said.

Nearly 20 minutes elapsed before Madrid enjoyed a period with the ball.

Then Kroos spotted Vinicius' run and played a perfect through ball for the Brazilian to sweep the visitors' first real chance past Manuel Neuer in the Bayern goal.

Bayern lost its early zest as the visitors saw more of the ball. Tuchel gesticulated wildly at his players to push

forward, then threw his arms up in exasperation.

Kane went closest with a free kick before the break, awarded for a foul by Nacho on Jamal Musiala, who gingerly rubbed his bandaged left leg. The Germany forward had only just recovered from a knee problem.

Sane equalised in the 53rd when he ran at the Madrid defence and cut inside Ferland Mendy before firing a fierce strike just inside the near post.

Kane made it 2-1 four minutes later with a penalty awarded after Lucas Vazquez bundled over Musiala.

But it wasn't the last penalty as Kim Min-jae - who was beaten on Vinicius' first goal - brought down Rodrygo. Vinicius duly equalised from the spot. - AP

SU DO KU

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

Solution of last problem

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

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

WHYWHAT?

Who was Oliver Wendell Holmes?

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) was an American writer and physician. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Holmes was educated at Harvard College and in 1836, he received a medical degree from Harvard Medical School and began to practise medicine in Boston, Massachusetts. From 1847 to 1882 he taught at Harvard Medical School. Holmes's essay *The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever* (1843) advanced the use of aseptic techniques in obstetrics and surgery.

Holmes was one of the so-called Boston Brahmins, a circle of intellectually and socially cultivated Bostonians. His fame as a writer of light, witty verse and as a raconteur was purely local until 1857, when he began writing a series of papers, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, for *The Atlantic Monthly*. These essays, published in book form in 1858, achieved immediate popularity for their lively expression of ideas.

His first novel, *Elsie Venner* (1861), achieved some measure of success. In this depiction of the New England character, Holmes attacked the stern Calvinistic dogmas of earlier days. Many of Holmes's poems became well known, including *Old Ironsides* (1830), *The Chambered Nautilus*, and *The Deacon's Masterpiece*; or, *The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay* (both 1858).



Believe It or Not!



My viewpoint

Should children know about politics?

Understanding the science behind politics is important. The electoral process through which we select our leaders in a democratic country is a big exercise. For this reason, we need to have a fair knowledge about our Constitution, our rights and duties. Our Social Science course covers Civics, which gives us a fair idea about the Central Government, State Government, and the role of the judiciary. Even in the State Government, we need to know the role of the Legislative Assembly, Municipal Corporation, about Gram Panchayats and their functioning so we can become able citizens who help in nation-building.



Medhavini Talukdar, Class-VIII, Delhi Public School, Guwahati.

Yes, of course. Politics is now the burning topic, especially as the General Elections are underway. I hear my mother talk about politics and politicians with people in her circle. I take note by watching news too. I like leaders who are very active and those who work for the people of India. As I grow up, I plan to read more about politics and get a good overview of the political parties working in India and their agenda.



Savar Sharma, Class-II, Maharishi Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School, Silpukhuri, Guwahati.

In my opinion, children should be encouraged to learn about politics. First of all, as we are the future voters, it is absolutely necessary for us to be aware of the current scenario in the country. We should also be encouraged to have our say. Without basic knowledge, we cannot be responsible voters in the future. Besides, it is necessary for us to be aware of our surroundings and basic rights, which is possible through proper knowledge of the political scenario in the country.



Niharika Sarma, Class-IX, Maharishi Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School, Silpukhuri, Guwahati.

We, the children of the nation, are the future voters, as well as leaders of tomorrow. So we should be well aware of the current affairs of the country and the political world around us, which is only possible through political discussions. Also, if we are encouraged and taught about the political system in an interesting way by conducting proper seminars, debates and unbiased discussions, it can be useful in the long run. Therefore, I support the view that says, "Yes, children should know and learn about politics" but in an engaging way.



Maitreyi Das, Class-IX, Delhi Public School, Tezpur.

PLANET YOUNG

A kind deed

"Don't worry, Sir. We'll definitely ensure that the poor little child finds her family once again."

We must thank you for bringing her to us; otherwise — who knows what might have happened to her. It feels so good to see that humanity and empathy still exist today amidst all the selfishness that's prevailing in the world. I assure you that we will definitely do all that we can to find her family. Until we find her family, we'll keep the child at a nearby government state home. We will also do the required publicity through the local daily newspaper and social media to get her family back," said the police constable to the man who had just taken a missing girl he found shivering on the streets, to the police to help her find her family. Hearing those words, the man felt assured that the girl would find her family.

After a few days, the man received a call from the police saying, "Just because of your kindness,



the girl's parents got her back. We found her parents yesterday and handed her over to them. And when we told them that a kind



CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK

Yugabrata Mahanta, Class-VIII, Sarala Birla Gyan Jyoti, Amingaon, North Guwahati.

man brought her to us so that we could help her get back to you, they asked us to convey their deep gratitude to you."

Hearing those priceless words, a smile appeared on the man's face. Contentment swept over him. The man, who was once very poor, had lost his only son — the only person after his dead wife whom he called his family — amidst a crowd, only to never find him again. He knew what it meant to a family to get back their child.

Knowing that a girl was reunited with her family just because he had informed the police on time, the man was content but somewhere deep within his heart, his contentment had a tinge of grief for not being able to find his son on time...

If you are an animal lover who enjoys watching Nature flicks, there's a new documentary on Disney+ Hotstar which is a must watch. DisneyNature's latest documentary, *Tiger*, follows the extraordinary journey of Ambar, a beautiful tigress, and her four cubs who must learn to navigate the perils of growing up in a jungle that is not so kind to little tigers. With some exceptional camera footage, this film offers a rare look at the life of India's tigers.



TRAILBLAZERS

Takshvi Vaghani

Takshvi Vaghani is a six-year-old Indian skating prodigy who has recently set a new world record in lowest limbo skating over a 25-metre stretch and entered the Guinness Book of World Records.

This particular sport requires the person to skate beneath a horizontal pole. Vaghani achieved this extraordinary feat by maintaining a height of just 16 centimetres above the ground, showcasing her exceptional flexibility and balance.

The video of Vaghani's record-breaking performance, shared by Guinness World Records (GWR) on Instagram with the caption, "Lowest limbo skating over 25 metres, 16 centimetres (6.29 inches) by Takshvi Vaghani," quickly gained popularity, garnering 1.5 million views and several comments, lauding her achievement. Her feat surpassed the previous Guinness World Record of "lowest limbo skating over 25 m" held by Manasvi Vishal from Pune, who had skated 25 metres at a height of 16.5 centimetres.

Prior to this, Vaghani had entered the *India Book of Records 2023* by performing the lowest level limbo roller skating for a distance of 50 metres in 17 seconds by swiftly passing under 11 bars at the age of five, as confirmed by 'India Book of Records' on October 10, 2023.

Born on February 6, 2018, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Vaghani's remarkable accomplishment at such a tender age is a testament to her exceptional talent and rigorous training. She has reminded us that age is not a hurdle to success and with hard work and determination, even the hardest of challenges can be conquered.

— Maithilee Bhuyan

Environment Day Contest

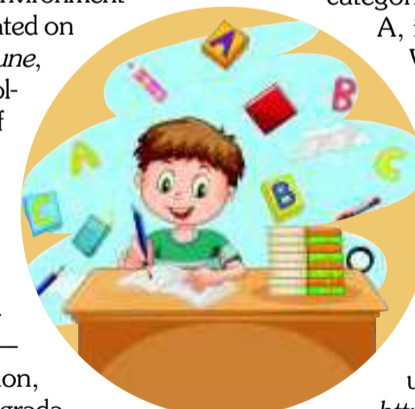
On the occasion of World Environment Day 2024, to be celebrated on June 5, *The Assam Tribune*, in association with the Pollution Control Board of Assam, is organising an online drawing and essay competition for school and college students.

The global theme for this year's World Environment Day pertains to the issues related to land pollution. Earth's lands are degrading — driven by unsustainable consumption, agriculture and pollution. Land degradation negatively affects 3.2 billion people worldwide. This World Environment Day, the focus is on how to restore land, avoid pollutants, and revive water sources.

The 2024 World Environment Day campaign #GenerationRestoration calls for global solutions to address land restoration, desertification and drought resilience.

The drawing and essay competition will be organised in three different

categories. The first category — Category A, is for students from Class-I to Class-V; the second category — Category B, is for students from Class-VI to Class-X and the third category — Category C, is for students from Higher Secondary to Graduation Final Semester.



Interested participants can submit their entries for both drawing and essay competitions online before or on May 19, 2024, by filling up the registration form available at <https://rb.gy/536iuv> or by scanning the QR code below.



Dear Ishani Aunty,
I lose my temper quite often. I have lost several of my friends this way. What should I do?

— Kiran

Dear Kiran,
Anger doesn't solve any problem. Ask yourself why you get angry. Is there some underlying cause? There are many anger management techniques you can get on the internet. Best of luck towards becoming a calmer self!



Dear Ishani Aunty,
I have a boil in my leg and I pricked it with a pin to let out the pus. This has made it worse. Please help.

— Ravish

Dear Ravish,
That was a silly thing to do. Tell your parents and visit a doctor. He will give you medicines to tackle the infection.

Dear Ishani Aunty,
Nowadays, I have totally lost interest in studies. My books bore me. What should I do?

— Arshiya

Dear Arshiya,
I understand you. However, you have no option but to realise your goals through studying. You have to enjoy your work. You can study along with a friend. That will certainly help. Remember, one day you will reap the rewards of your hard work.

Dear Ishani Aunty,
I study in an English-medium school and am not confident about speaking and writing in Assamese. What can I do?

— Ankita

Dear Ankita,
You need to be proficient in speaking, reading and writing in your mother tongue. So, do work on your fluency in Assamese. You could start by reading Assamese storybooks and folk tales. You also need to be proficient in Hindi.

JUNIOR WORD FIND

FOLKLORE, MYTHS

Solution: 13 letters

The words below can all be found in the puzzle. They may be spelled horizontally, vertically, backwards, forwards or diagonally. Be careful, some letters are used more than once. When you find a word, circle each letter. When all the words on the list have been found, the letters left over will spell the solution. Have fun!

D	B	A	N	S	H	E	E	R	L
R	A	T	S	U	A	F	U	L	I
E	O	H	O	L	D	B	O	R	A
T	R	B	A	O	I	C	L	O	R
A	L	E	I	L	H	D	L	B	G
L	S	T	A	N	A	O	E	R	Y
E	R	C	E	D	H	G	T	O	L
R	X	S	O	N	G	O	R	Y	O
E	S	I	X	I	N	E	O	I	H
D	O	N	J	U	A	N	S	D	S

- Banshee
- Don Juan
- Excalibur
- Faust
- Holy Grail
- Loch Ness
- Nix
- Read
- Relate
- Rob Roy
- Robin Hood
- Sir Galahad
- Song
- Tell



Solution: "Old, old stories"

PIC SPEAK



Let's read something new!

Unmana Das, Class-X, Little Flower School, Guwahati.

NEXT WEEK'S PICTURE



Send your entries to:
planet_young@assamtribune.com / planetyoung23@gmail.com

JOKES

Q: "Why was the sky not happy on clear days?"
Ans: "It had the blues!"



Q: "Why did the rain go to art school?"
Ans: "It wanted to learn how to make perfect 'watercolours'!"



Q: "How can you wrap up a cloud?"
Ans: "With a rainbow!"



Q: "How do hurricanes see?"
Ans: "With one eye!"

Plotting the stars

Astronomy is the study of the stars, planets, and other objects in the universe. For centuries, astronomers have strived to learn more about our universe. Through observation and careful measurements using scientific tools like the telescope, we now know that the sun is the centre of our solar system. An accurate measurement of star distance is a science developed over the centuries by astronomers like Tycho Brahe (1546-1601). Centuries ago, sailors calculated time at night by observing the movements of star clusters near the fixed Pole Star. Watches aboard ships were timed from the position of these constellations in the sky.



International Harry Potter Day

Today is a significant day for all Potterheads!

Penned by the British author J.K. Rowling, the *Harry Potter* series chronicles the lives of young wizard Harry Potter and his friends — Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, the students of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The story of these series of novels deals with Harry Potter's conflict with the dark wizard, Lord Voldemort, who wants to do everything to become immortal by overthrowing the Ministry of Magic, the wizard controlling body, and also gain control of all wizards and non-magical people, the Muggles. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was the first of the series which was published on June 26, 1997, and achieved immense popularity. The series attracted young readers extensively, making them the bestselling book series in history. The most exciting part of the seven-part book series is the Battle of Hogwarts which took place within the castle and on the grounds of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This Battle took place in the early hours



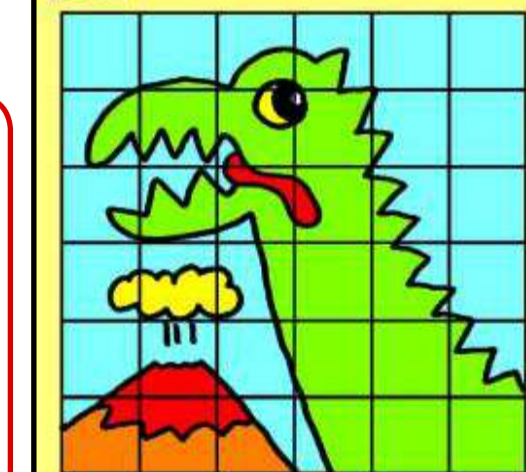
of May 2nd, 1998, which is why this day is celebrated as International Harry Potter Day. The battle started when the dark wizard — Lord Voldemort, got to know that his arch nemesis, Harry, had surreptitiously entered the castle with an intention to locate and destroy Ravenclaw's Diadem, one of his final Horcruxes. Voldemort then ordered every single Death Eater and dark creature that had ever pledged loyalty to him to launch a massive

attack on the school. Dumbledore's Army in the school informed the Order of the Phoenix and their other allies within the British Ministry of Magic about Voldemort's plan. This led to a large-scale battle. The defenders of Hogwarts were led by Harry Potter, Kingsley Shacklebolt and Minerva McGonagall. Many Death Eaters were killed or captured and Voldemort himself died in the battle and it was a decisive victory for the Order and Dumbledore's Army. But it was the most devastating part of the book series, as the casualties included some much-loved characters — Remus Lupin, Nymphadora Tonks, Severus Snape, Fred Weasley, Colin Creevey, Lavender Brown. The Battle of Hogwarts, though fictitious, was such an important chapter of the Harry Potter series and for a generation of Potter lovers who grew up on this tome, that in 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron declared this day as an official holiday in the U.K. to commemorate the significance of J.K. Rowling's work.

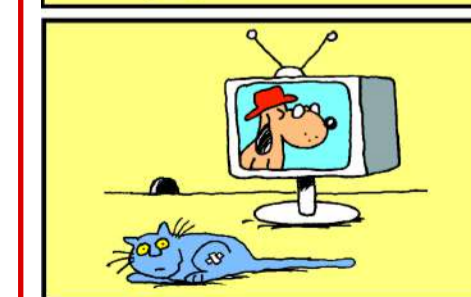
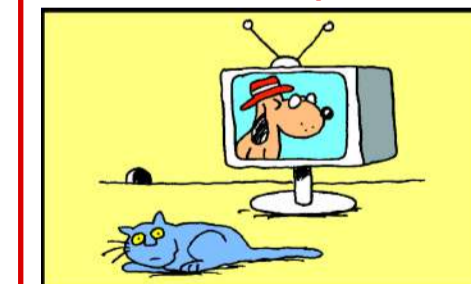
Diggity Dog's Kid Stuff

LET'S DRAW!

Many artists use grids to help them draw. Simply copy the drawing in each square onto the blank squares... then colour it in!



SPOT THE ERRORS



1: Bandage added to the cat's leg, 2: Mouse-hole has moved, 3: Band on dog's hat is missing, 4: Extra set of whiskers added to the cat, 5: Cat's tail is longer.



Nature strikes back!

Dear Bhaity, Bhonti,
We must never take our planet for granted. After rains and flooding in Dubai, it seems the world is changing in alarming ways. This angry planet is out to teach us a lesson for meddling with Nature. The worrying thing is — will we be able to contain Nature's fury? Give it a thought, won't you?
With love, as always,

Kakaidou



BOOK NOOK

Compiled by: Maithilee Bhuyan

Kabuliwallah

By Rabindranath Tagore

Since Nobel Prize-winning author Tagore's birthday (May 7) is drawing near, let's embark on a fun-filled journey to the lively streets of Calcutta through one of his best-loved children's stories. Translated from the Bengali by Arunava Sinha, this classic tale brings to life the heartwarming story of Mini and the Kabuliwallah. Mini, a curious five-year old, fills her father's world with questions and laughter. Enter Rahmat, the Kabuliwallah, a stranger from Afghanistan hawking dry fruits from door to door. When he arrives at Mini's house, Rahmat is captivated by her as she reminds him of his own daughter. Thus, a beautiful bond of friendship develops between the two — just like the unbreakable bond that exists between fathers and daughters.

Kabuliwallah proves that friendships can blossom in the most unexpected places, leaving an indelible imprint on the heart.



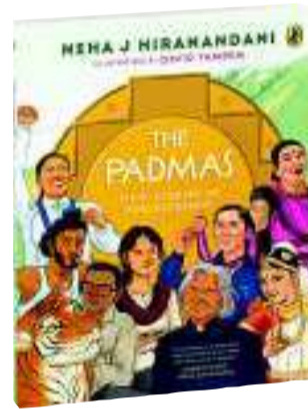
The Padmas

Fifty Stories of Perseverance

By Neha J. Hiranandani

This book throws a spotlight on the lives of 50 remarkable individuals who have been honoured with the prestigious Padma Awards — one of India's highest civilian honours which recognise the achievements of people who have fought to make a difference in the world. This book features short, illustrated biographies of 50 such incredible people — artists, scientists, freedom fighters, social workers, sports stars and many others from different walks of life.

Celebrating 70 years of the Padma Awards, *The Padmas: Fifty Stories of Perseverance* is an unforgettable exploration of human triumph and it will surely inspire young readers.



KNOW YOUR WORDSMITH

Sanjana Kapur

Sanjana Kapur is an author and editor with over 15 years of experience in children's publishing. She is currently the Associate Editor and Online Project Manager at Amar Chitra Katha. She enjoys interacting with children, having conducted various workshops, quizzes, and storytelling sessions in different schools across India and is always on the lookout for new stories to tell. Kapur loves discovering new places and the stories behind them. She has contributed to collections and authored several comic books and picture books for Amar Chitra Katha. She has also written several books for children, including the award-winning *Who Stole Bhaiya's Smile?*

Some of her other popular books for children include:

- ▶ *Tumku Helps Out*
- ▶ *Ruckus on the Road*
- ▶ *Mum in a Mess*



Quiz

Kabir Aditya Kashyap,
Class-VIII, Maharishi Vidya
Mandir-IV, Barsajai, Guwahati.

1 What was Rabindranath Tagore's pen name?

4 Where was Rabindranath Tagore born?

2

When was Santiniketan founded?

5

When did Rabindranath Tagore return his knighthood?

3 Which work of Rabindranath Tagore earned him the Nobel Prize?

1. Bhanusingha,
2. 1901,
3. *Gitanjali*,
4. Calcutta (now Kolkata),
5. 1919.

ANSWERS



Ancient wonder

Orgha Goswami, Class-IX,
Birla High School, Mukundapur,
Kolkata.

A few weeks ago, we visited the glorious Elephanta Caves situated on an island off the coast of Mumbai. A 45-minute trip by boat from the Gateway of India took us to the island. Soon we docked on the harbour of the island and boarded a toy train that dropped us close to the entrance of the caves. Since the caves are perched on a small hillock, we had to climb quite a few steps before reaching our final destination.

The top of the hill was more beautiful than I had imagined it to be. There was a magnificent view of the sea, a mixture of blue and green. Without wasting any time, I hurried towards the caves. Inside, there's a big courtyard-like space and there are statues of Lord Shiva on the sides. These caves are also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Elephanta was known by various other names such as Gharapuri and Sripuri. However, when the Portuguese captured the fort, an elephant made of stone was built at the entrance, leading to the island being called Elephanta.

In the main cave, the first carving depicts Shiva as Nataraja. The story behind this carving is that there was once an arrogant group of sages who believed that they were better than the *devas* (gods), so to teach them a lesson Shiva took the form of a *yogi*. The sages were awestruck by the *yogi* and, therefore, unable to concentrate on their prayers. When they realised this, they cursed the *yogi* without knowing that it was Lord Shiva. First, a tiger leapt out of a holy fire but Shiva defeated it and wore its skin, then a snake appeared, which Shiva picked and wore around His neck. At last an evil dwarf was summoned by the sages, but Shiva defeated him, as-

sumed His true form, and danced over the body of the evil dwarf. Therefore, Shiva is depicted as Nataraja in this cave.

The second carving shows Lord Shiva killing the demon Andhaka who was the son of a sage but also a demon. He asked Lord Brahma for a boon of incredible power and when that boon was given, he started harassing the *devas* who went to Shiva for help. Shiva struck arrows at the demon, but with every drop of blood that fell from the demon's body, another demon was created. Seeing that, Shiva requested help from Lord Vishnu who sent His *Sudarshan Chakra* and cut off the heads of all the demons that had been created. Shiva then killed Andhaka and made sure that no drop of blood fell on the ground.

The third carving shows Shiva as a *lingam*. Once, Brahma and Vishnu were arguing about who is more superior. Shiva heard this and suddenly — out of nowhere, a *lingam* appeared. The *lingam* had no beginning or end, which proved that Lord Shiva is the most superior of the Holy Trinity.

One of the last carvings shows Shiva with His third eye. It is said that one day, Parvati, Shiva's wife, covered both His eyes in a playful manner, which caused all the three realms to be covered in darkness. To stop the universe from being covered in darkness, Shiva opened his third eye, located on His forehead, and saved the universe from destruction.

Besides the caves dedicated to Shiva, there are also numerous Buddhist caves, in close proximity to the Hindu ones.

After visiting the Elephanta Caves, I was left fascinated by their beauty and I also gained knowledge. I hope I can visit these wonderful caves again.

QUOTE of the week

A rose is a rose is a rose

The meaning of 'A rose is a rose is a rose' is most often attributed to the notion that when all is said and done, a thing is what it is.

The line is from Gertrude Stein's poem, *Sacred Emily*, written in 1913 and published in 1922 in *Geography and Plays*. The verbatim line is actually, 'Rose is a rose is a rose'.

When asked what she meant by the line, Stein said that in the time of Homer or of Chaucer, "the poet could use the name of the thing and the thing was really there". As memory took it over, the thing lost its identity, and she was trying to recover that — "I think in that line the rose is red for the first



time in English poetry for a hundred years."

PICTURE CROSSWORD

SOLUTION
Across: 1. Lipstick, 2. Teaspoon, 3. Papaya, 4. Ship, 5. Crane, 6. Camera, 7. Geyser, 8. King, 9. Lettuce, 10. Book, 11. Door, 12. Turtle.
Down: 1. Lipstick, 2. Teaspoon, 3. Papaya, 4. Ship, 5. Crane, 6. Camera, 7. Geyser, 8. King, 9. Lettuce, 10. Book, 11. Door, 12. Turtle.

wordwatch

Pick the words closest in meaning.

1 **Contempt**
a) Skepticism
b) Anger
c) Judgement
d) Scorn

2 **Melodramatic**
a) Musical
b) Evil
c) Comic
d) Overly theatrical

3 **Renaissance**
a) Information
b) Fluency
c) Deterioration
d) Rebirth

4 **Innuendo**
a) Secrecy
b) Unpleasant insinuation
c) Funny remark
d) Quiet explanation

5 **Meagre**
a) Shoddy
b) Superficial
c) Inadequate
d) Willful

- Answers:
1. (d) Scorn,
2. (d) Overly theatrical,
3. (d) Rebirth,
4. (b) Unpleasant insinuation,
5. (c) Inadequate.



Aadrija Kashyap, Class-II,
Don Bosco School, Guwahati



Hiyamoni Das, Class-IV,
Banasthali Academy, Gotanagar, Guwahati



Kusumita Nath, Class-VI,
South Point School, Guwahati



Koel Sarkar, Class-VIII,
St. Vivekananda English Academy, Guwahati



Dishita Bora, Class-VIII,
Tezpur Gurukul School, Tezpur



Rumaitha Ahmad,
Class-VI, Holy Child
School, Guwahati.



Naqaash Nahar Sabah, Class-II,
Little Flower School, Guwahati



Bristi Bhattacharyya, Class-VII,
Don Bosco School, Guwahati

Sketch of the week

Poem of the week

Loving oneself

Dark or fair, healthy or skinny,
Tall or short, you are pretty!

You are a blessing sent from above,
Adore the fact and fall in love.

Don't compare yourself with others,
Neither your qualities nor your features.

You are unique, you are different,
No two people are the same and that's magnificent!

Love yourself, close your eyes,
Hug yourself, you are nice.



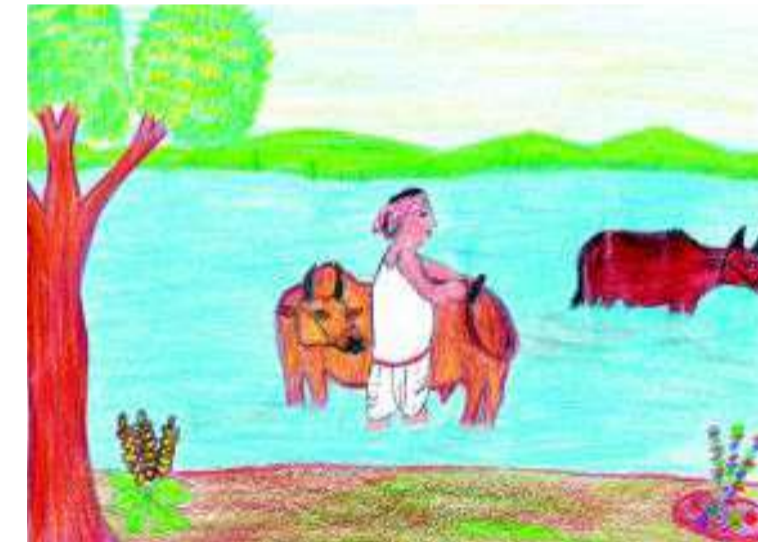
Maanya Patwary,
Class-VII, Sanskriti the
Gurukul, Guwahati.



A necessary evil

Plastic — a necessary evil!
Plastic is important in our daily life,
But it is very harmful for us,
For the environment,
For the animals.
Why plastic bags?
When we have paper bags!
Eating chips and chocolates
And throwing the wrappers here and there,
We are the ones who pollute the air.
We are the ones who pollute the water.
We should reduce the use of plastics
And live by the mantra —
Recycling, reusing, and reducing.
Yes, though plastic is useful,
It is very dangerous for us.

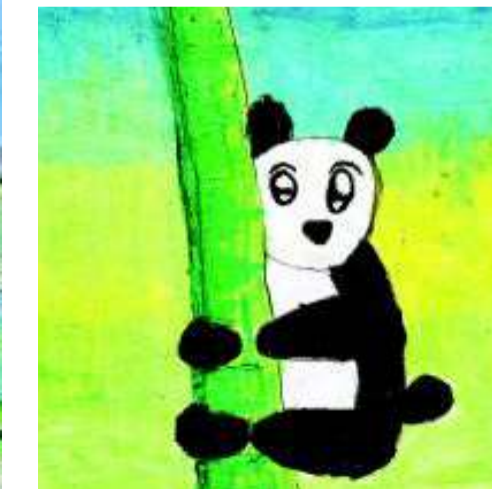
Priyanshi Gohain, Class-VII,
St. Mary's Hr. Sec. School, Guwahati.



Srijan Prayas Bora, Class-II,
Don Bosco H.S. School, Tezpur



Nibedarshinee S. Neelotpal, Class-II,
Don Bosco School, Guwahati



Hitarthi Medhi, Class-IV,
Maharishi Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School,
Silpukhuri, Guwahati



Aayan Bhowmic, Class-III,
Kendriya Vidyalaya, Narangi, Guwahati



Akash Protim Borah, Class-IX,
Maharishi Vidya Mandir, Jorhat

Saving the pup

It was a bright Sunday morning and a girl named Ira decided to go for a ride towards the jungle on her pink bicycle. Her mum packed some sandwiches and fruits for her to eat.

On her way to the jungle, she saw two naughty boys disturbing a cute puppy. They were pulling the puppy's tail. She wanted to help the puppy but she was alone.

She called out to the boys, "Hello! I have some sandwiches and fruits with me, do you want to share a meal?"

The boys became very happy and wanted to enjoy her tiffin full of fruits and sandwiches. Ira gave her tiffin to them and when they started enjoying their meal, she took the puppy, put it into her bicycle basket, and rode fast towards home.

Finally, she could save the puppy and they became friends.

Ira Bhattacharjee, Class-I,
Don Bosco School, Guwahati.