

WEATHER GUWAHATI

LOCAL FORECAST:
Partly cloudy sky. Fog/mist in the morning. Maximum and Minimum temperatures will be around 29°C & 13°C respectively on Sunday.

TEMPERATURE:
Max 29.5°C
Min 14.5°C

Women crusaders against maternal health rights abuse

SANJOY RAY

GUWAHATI, Dec 6 – In a State where health rights is somewhat an alien subject, some 40-odd women, mostly from the tea garden community, are acting as ambassadors of maternal health rights of the deprived population of Assam.

In spite of all odds faced in the form of socio-economic exclusion, these special bunch of crusaders are spearheading the campaign against every maternal health rights violation in 16 tea gardens located in Sonitpur district of Assam. Heartening is the fact that these tea garden women have now come out of their shell and made mobile technology their most potent weapon to fight maternal mortality especially in areas where quality health care is yet to make a distinct impact.

They are now armed with a SMS-based technology in-



troduced under a project called 'EndMMNow' (End Maternal Mortality Now) rolled out by Nazdeek and Pajhra, both NGOs, to report on maternal health violations

at different level and that too within a few seconds.

Be it the case of undue payment or health facility conditions, the volunteers report on all kinds of health rights

violation, thereby setting accountability on the part of those at the helm.

The project is at present executed in Dhakiajuli and Balipara blocks of Sonitpur district

by Nazdeek and Pajhra, and mostly caters to the tea garden community, which over the years has recorded the highest maternal mortality cases in India.

Assam as a State too has the dubious distinction of having the highest maternal mortality rate in India.

The NGOs – Nazdeek and Pajhra – are combining community training, technology and legal intervention to increase accountability in the delivery of maternal health services in tea gardens of Assam through the women volunteers.

"All these volunteers have been provided cell phones. They are also given a specific code for an area. Once they come across any kind of violation in any health institutions in their area of concern, they just report to us. We then follow up and verify the issue and depending on the gravity of the problem, we do whatever is required," said Barnabas Kindo of Pajhra while talking to *The Assam Tribune*.

The local administration is also in the know about the novel intervention and providing support, Kindo said.

He said besides the area code, they also use certain numbers to indicate the nature of problem. Like for any kind of maternal health rights violation, the volunteers need to type '00' and likewise. There are other code texts to indicate an emergency case.

"The results are already showing. Health workers have become much more conscious because they know that any lapse on their part would be reported to the higher ups,"

he pointed out.

"Further, based on the first-hand information provided by these women, we are compiling a detailed data which could be used for advocacy and litigation to demand better health services in tea gardens of Assam and fight maternal and infant mortality rate," Kindo said.

The final report would help the policy makers to initiate targeted intervention.

Eva Rani, one such volunteer of Balipara Block while sharing her experience said, "I cover Ghoramari area mostly. Earlier, 108 ambulances were reluctant to come to our place to cover the maternal cases as it is in an interior area, but now after things were reported, the services have improved."

She said people are now slowly becoming aware of their rights.

Inspections on KFC premises conducted

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Dec 6 – The Food and Safety wing of the State Health and Family Welfare department today conducted inspections on the premises of popular fast food chain restaurant KFC located in Lachit Nagar and Christianbasti areas.

A team led by Senior Food Safety Officer Tarun Das and Food Safety Officer Samiran Baruah collected four samples of spices, prepared chicken and rice during the inspection and sent them for analysis in the State Public Health Laboratory, Bamuni-maidam.

There were allegations that sub-standard food with artificial colour were served to the customers. A similar case was detected in New Delhi, the officials said.

As per the Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006, if any restaurant or food joint is found serving unsafe food, the owner might face imprisonment up to five years along with fine. In case of sub-standard food, the amount of fine may go up to Rs 5 lakh, said Samiran Baruah while talking to this reporter.

Baruah said that more such restaurant would be inspected in the next few weeks.

Of late, the Food and Safety branch has been conducting a series of inspections.

Essay contest for school students on cleanliness

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Dec 6 – Extending support to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Girijananda Chowdhury Institute of Management and Technology (GIMT) has distributed dustbins among 15 selected schools of Guwahati.

According to the authorities of the educational institute, a campaign of the magnitude envisioned by the Prime Minister requires societal mobilisation and active participation from all sections of the society. "Educational institutions, especially the institutes of higher learning can play a major catalytic role in achieving this laudable goal," said a faculty of the institute.

GIMT is also organising a State-level essay competition as a part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on the theme: 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan – Role of Students.'

Cash prizes will be distributed to the winners. The first prize winner will get Rs 30,000, the second prize winner will get Rs 20,000 and the third prize winner will get Rs 10,000. All participants will be awarded with a certificate of participation.

The schools/ junior colleg-

es of the winners will be felicitated. The best essay will be published in the forthcoming issue of *GIMTECH*, the annual GIMT magazine.

The competition is open to the students of class IX to Class XII. The essay can be written in English or Assamese with maximum limit of 1,200 words. Entries should be submitted in neat and legible handwriting, written on one side of the paper and each entry should contain a title page with the theme, name of the participant, class, name and address of the school/college and contact number on it along with a recent passport

size colour photograph.

Each entry also needs to be forwarded by the head of the institute of the participant. The last date for receipt of entries is December 15 this year. Entries should be submitted by post to the institute in a closed envelope with 'State level Essay Competition' written on it. The result will be declared on January 25, 2015 on the GIMT website and in *The Assam Tribune*.

On the other hand, the National Science Day is going to be celebrated by the institute on February 28, 2015 at the college campus. On this occasion,

two competitions viz., poster presentation on the theme 'Use of waste material' and quiz competition will be organised among the school students of Guwahati from class VIII to XI. Apart from this, a popular talk will be held on the same day where resources persons from reputed institute/university will be invited.

The institute has also decided to conduct a mock test for the benefit of the candidates who are aspiring to appear in the engineering entrance examination viz., JEE (Main) in 2015. The mock test will be conducted according to JEE

(Main) guidelines tentatively on March 22, 2015.

"Students who appear in this mock test will be benefitted in the sense of exposure and practice which will help them to secure high scores in JEE(Main) 2015," said Prof S K Dutta, Principal of the institute.

The mock test will be offline in nature. Students from science streams appearing in the 12th standard examination in 2015 are eligible for appearing in this mock test. The syllabus and test pattern will be same as that of JEE (Main) 2015. It will be a three-hour test. Each correct answer will result four marks while each wrong answer will result in the deduction of one mark.

The entire question paper will be objective type of multiple choices. Calculators and mobile phones will not be allowed inside the exam hall.

Students are required to register their names through online in the institute's website by March 8, 2015. Students are required to pay Rs 100 in cash which is refundable after announcement of the result.

In the first phase, the test will be held in Guwahati city at three venues – Shrimanta Shankar Academy, Panbazar, Shrimanta Shankar Academy, Dispur and Girijananda Chowdhury Institute of Management and Technology GIMT, Azara.



A meet on the occasion of BR Ambedkar's death anniversary, in Guwahati on Saturday. – AT

KMSS stages demos

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Dec 6 – The members of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) today staged demonstrations at various places of the State in protest against the moves to stop supply of ration to the tea garden workers and hand over Assam land to Bangladesh.

According to a press release of the Samiti, its mem-

bers staged demonstrations at Nagaon, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Morigaon, Guwahati etc. Its members demanded immediate repeal of the Indo-Bangla Land Border Agreement and continuation of the supply of ration at concessional rates to the TE workers. They also submitted memorandums to the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister on these two issues.

Book on traditional jewellery released

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Dec 6 – The Guwahati Press Club today witnessed the release of *Asomiya Gohana Gathuri Buranji*, a book by a young artisan and Assamese jewellery designer from Ranthali (Nagaon district), Utpal Bania.

The book, illustrating the 2,000-year-old history of Assamese jewellery, was released by actor Indra Bania and senior journalist Zarir Hussain.

The chief guests on the occasion were actress Minu Bania, Chetana Das and director/actor Enu Borah.

Releasing his second literary venture, Utpal Bania said that let alone foreigners and people from other parts of India, even a very few Assamese people living outside the State know about the traditional jewellery of Assam despite its significance in Assam's history and heritage.

"Coming from Ranthali, a

place of immense historical importance, I have always felt worried that a 2,000-year-old tradition like this, if continued to be ignored, will be forgotten completely one day."

Bania had earlier launched his first book *The History of Traditional Assamese Ornaments* in May this year.

Although Ranthali has been manufacturing traditional Assamese jewellery since ages, it has not been able to grab the desired spotlight.



KMSS members staging a demonstration in protest against the moves to stop supply of ration to tea garden workers and hand over Assam's land to Bangladesh, in Guwahati on Saturday. – AT photo

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NB : Retired Judicial Officer / Lawyer with minimum 10 yrs of professional experience can also apply as visiting faculty.

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Poorvottar Natya Samaroh

6:30 PM daily

DEC. 2014 Pragjyoti Cultural Complex, Machkhowa, Guwahati

08 MON	MOHE PIYA	Director: Waman Kendre Duration: 1.30 hrs Language: Hindi Group: Rangpeeth, Mumbai, Maharashtra.
09 TUE	SIDHI DAR SIDHI URF TUKKE PE TUKKA	Director: Bansi Kaul Duration: 1.30 hrs Language: Hindi Group: Rang Vidushak, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
10 WED	JAMLEELA	Director: Arjun Deo Charan Duration: 1.35 hrs Language: Hindi Group: Rammat, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
11 THU	CHITRAPATA	Director: B. Jayashree Duration: 1.40 hrs Language: Kannada Group: Spandana, Bangalore, Karnataka.
12 FRI	ODEIPUS	Director: Kallol Bhattacharya Duration: 1.30 hrs Language: Bengali Group: Ebong Amra, West Bengal.

Festival Enquiries: Jyoti N. Nath- 09864044545

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