

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

A 1923 story on a three day soccer event in eastern Assam's Sivasagar has become the reason for celebrating the centenary of sports journalism in the State. Asamiya, a weekly magazine published by Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, a native of Rajasthan, had carried a descriptive story on a series of football matches between the Sibsagar (earlier spelling) Town Club and Sibsagar High School in the issue of July 1, 1923.

Over 1,100 Indian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were awarded UN medals, honouring them for their exceptional service in the strife torn East African country.

The latest U.K. Million Women Study on cellular telephone use and the risk of brain tumours published online on March 29, 2021 in Journal of the National Institute of Cancer confirms the accumulating evidence that cellular telephone use under usual conditions does not increase brain tumour incidence. The topic has added interest now because phone companies plan to launch 5G technologies soon.

Climate change will result in thousands of new viruses spread among animal species by 2070 and that is likely to increase the risk of emerging infectious diseases jumping from animals to humans, according to a new study. This is especially true for Africa and Asia, continents that have been hotspots for deadly disease spread from humans to animals or vice versa over the last several decades, including the flu, HIV, ebola and COVID19. Researchers, who published their findings on April 28 in the journal Nature, used a model to examine how over 3,000 mammal species might migrate and share viruses over the next 50 years if the world warms by 2°C, which recent research shows is possible. They found that cross species virus spread will happen over 4,000 times among mammals alone.

Plant scientists are turning to strategies adapted from the gene-editing tool CRISPR-Cas9 to improve the yield, robustness and consumer appeal of commercial cereals, fruit and vegetables. Sweeter strawberries are a nice start, but the same capabilities are being harnessed to generate crops with greater disease resistance and higher nutritional

RAJAMALA ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

1.The survival rate of newly born Nilgiri tahrs (up to one year) is found to be the highest at Rajamala in the Eravikulam National Park (ENP) than in other isolated natural habitats such as Silent Valley, Pothady, Munnar, etc.

2.Rajamala is among the finest Hill Stations in Idukki, Kerala. Rajamala hills houses the Eravikulam National Park. The Eravikulam National Park is situated in the Kannan Devan Hills of the southern Western Ghats with an area of 97 sq. km.

3.**The Eravikulam National Park has the highest density and largest surviving population of Nilgiri tahr, the endangered mountain goat.**

4.The park is built mainly with the aim of conserving Nilgiri tahr. Every twelve years, this place will be carpeted with blue due to the mass flowering of Neelakurinji flowers.

NILGIRI TAHR

1.The Nilgiri tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) is the only mountain ungulate in southern India amongst the 12 species present in India. The Nilgiri tahr is a congener of the Himalayan tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), found in Kashmir and Bhutan and the Arabian tahr (*Arabitragus jayakari*), found in Oman and United Arab Emirates.

2.It is also the state animal of Tamil Nadu. It is an endemic species of the Western Ghats. The Nilgiri tahr, which used to be found along the entire stretch of Western Ghats, is presently found only in small fragmented pockets. Existing populations are under severe stress due to habitat loss and hunting.

BATTERY PASSPORT

1.German-funded consortium of 11 carmakers and battery producers, including BMW, Umicore and BASF, are aiming to develop a "battery passport" that traces the content and carbon footprint of batteries in Europe.

2.**The Battery Passport is a digital representation of a battery that conveys information about all applicable ESG and lifecycle requirements based on a comprehensive definition of a sustainable battery.** Each Battery Passport will be a digital twin of its physical battery enabled by the digital Battery Passport platform. [The Battery Passport platform offers a global solution for securely sharing information and data.

3.This platform aims to go beyond enabling the performance management of just one battery to that of all batteries across the full industry value chain.] Batteries could carry a QR code linking to an online database where EV owners, businesses or regulators could access information on the battery's composition.

4.This digital tool should also make it easier to recycle raw materials inside batteries, which would cut dependence on foreign suppliers which control the vast majority of resources, like lithium and nickel, essential for battery production.

EXTREME POVERTY DIPPED IN INDIA

1.World Bank The World Bank has reported that extreme poverty in India dropped to 10.2% in 2019 from as much as 22.5% in 2011 and the pace of reduction in rural India has been more dramatic than in urban areas.

2.During the 2011-2019 period, the poverty level in rural and urban areas declined by 14.7 and 7.9% points, respectively. While it eased to 11.6% in rural areas in 2019, the urban poverty level stood at 6.3%. Extreme poverty has been measured in terms of the number of people living on less than \$1.90 a day (roughly Rs 145).

3.Interestingly, **urban poverty inched up by 2% points in the demonetisation year of 2016 and rural poverty rose by 10 basis points in 2019.** According to the World Bank paper, there has been a slight moderation in consumption inequality since 2011, but by a margin smaller than what is reported in the unreleased 2017 NSS report. Real incomes for farmers with the smallest landholdings have risen by 10% in annualised terms during the 2013-2019 period.

content.

One of the ways that COVID-19 vaccines were developed at lightning speed was by allowing human studies to begin before all standard animal tests had been concluded. Sophisticated alternatives were used to assess the safety of vaccines and the quality of each batch. This approach could produce better medical products faster and cheaper.

The sheer “defiance” of governments towards judicial pronouncements, their inclination to pass off the responsibility of decision making to courts and the legislature’s ambiguity, lack of foresight and public consultation before making laws have led to docket explosion, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana said here on Saturday. These have forced the judiciary to dabble in policy to render justice to the common man, he said at a joint conference of Chief Justices and Chief Ministers attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The CJI pointed to how courts had to deal with the “new problem” of “contempt petitions” triggered by the “deliberate inaction” of governments that chose to ignore judgments and orders. “The contempt petitions are a new category of burden on the courts, which is a direct result of the defiance by the governments,” he said.

April temperatures over northwest and central India were the highest since 1900, and May too is likely to see above normal temperatures over north and west India. The rest of the country is unlikely to see levels touched in March and April, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Vedanta is in talks with banks to raise debt of \$2.5 billion \$3 billion to bolster its semiconductor and display manufacturing plans as it races to become the country’s first chipmaker, a senior company official told.

As large parts of India and Pakistan experience scorching temperatures, the UN’s specialised agency on weather has said while it is premature to attribute the extreme heat in the two countries solely to climate change, it is consistent with a changing climate, with heatwaves starting earlier than in the past.

Chief Ministers of various States on Saturday assured Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana that security at court complexes, including District Courts, would be

MENTHOL CIGARETTES

1.The US Food and Drug Administration has issued a proposal to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars. Menthol cigarettes are flavored with menthol, which triggers the cold-sensitive nerves in the skin. Menthol has a cooling and anesthetic (or pain killing) effect which decreases the cough reflex and can soothe the dry throat feeling that many smokers have. As a result, menthol smokers may inhale more deeply, hold the smoke in the lungs longer, and get more exposure to the dangerous chemicals in cigarette smoke.

2.Menthol cigarettes cause diseases including cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory diseases and multiple adverse reproductive outcomes. Menthol products accounted for approximately one-fifth of the United States cigarette market in 2006. About 85% of African Americans smokers prefer menthol cigarettes in comparison to 29% of white smokers.

3.Prevent children from smoking- The proposed rules would help prevent children from becoming the next generation of smokers and help adult smokers quit. Health equity- The proposed rules are an important step to advance health equity by significantly reducing tobacco-related health disparities. Health effects- Menthol also interacts with nicotine in the brain to enhance nicotine’s addictive effects, while making it more difficult for people to quit smoking.

4.How would a similar ban play out in India? India has 26.7 crore tobacco users aged 15 and above, as per the last available Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS 2016-17). Tobacco regulation laws in India are covered under Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003, or COTPA, It restricts the advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products, It prohibits smoking in public places and sale to and by minors It also prohibits the sale of tobacco products within a radius of 100 yards of educational institutions and requires mandatory depiction of specified pictorial health warnings on all tobacco product packs.

KALIMEDU FIRE TRAGEDY

1.The tragedy at Kalimedu in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu claimed the lives of 11 persons and left 17 injured after a small chariot touched a live wire of the high tension category and caught fire.

2.Questions need to be probed by the authorities-Whether the organisers, who have been holding the festival for over 90 years, had permission from the local officials? Why there had to be a procession during the early hours? Whether such an event could take place without the knowledge or the approval of the local authorities? Why power supply from the overhead HT line was not switched off?

3.Inference from the tragedy-Lack of coordination- It is obvious that the coordination among the electricity, highways, local administration and revenue departments, which ought to have been there for such an event was absent. No accounts of realtime situations- The height of the road was raised since the time of the last procession, but evidently the organisers did not account for this.

4.Role of authorities- Though the institution which had organised the festival is said to be outside the purview of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, the authorities can still be proactive in sensitising organisers about safety.

5.To reduce such events in the future-Strict enforcement of law-The scope for such events occurring can be reduced drastically if the authorities strictly enforced existing guidelines. Need for joint efforts-It is only through collective efforts that tragedies such as the one in Kalimedu can be prevented. Fire precautions- Create awareness on electrical fire precautions based on the guidelines of Ministry of Home Affairs.

ADIGRAMS

1.The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) had recently organised a workshop in Jharkhand on ADIGRAMS (Adivasi Grants Management System).

2.ADIGRAMS Portal will provide a central database for Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the State Tribal Development/Welfare Department to access, interact and analyse up-to-date scheme wise Physical and financial information and progress.

improved on the lines of a two-tier security system followed in Jammu and Kashmir but there was no consensus on setting up a National Judicial Infrastructure Authority (NJIA) to decide on judicial infrastructure.

3. The portal will enable the officials/stakeholders at Central, State, District, Block and village level to access, monitor and measure performance in a real-time basis and take decisions accordingly.