



The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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Don't reduce the debate to 'Modi is...'

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England penalty fiasco won't happen again, says unhappy ...



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Police registers 22 cases

Guwahati, June 7 : In its continued fight against drug peddlers, Assam Police registered 22 cases, arrested 49 persons and seized more than 2 kg of brown sugar from different parts of the state in the last 24 hours. Confirming this, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is also in charge of the home department, in a tweet said Assam Police also seized 14.31 kg of ganja and 1,17,138 narcotic tablets. Assam Police also seized 21 bottles of Codeine-based cough syrup; 252 grams of opium and cash amount of Rs 4,33,270 on June 5, the chief minister said in a tweet. "Fight Against Drugs @ assampolice's action against narcotics on June 5 results in: Cases Registered 22; arrests 49; Seizures: Brown Sugar 2.062 kgs; Ganja 14.313 kgs; Tablets 1,17,138; Codeine based Cough Syrup 21 bottles; Opium 252 grams; Cash Rs 4,33,270," chief minister Sarma tweeted.

Vaccine shortage

Guwahati, June 7: The Darrang district in Assam is reeling under a shortage of Covid-19 vaccines that has hampered the special vaccination drive being conducted for the elderly. The Darrang district administration launched the special vaccination drive on June 4 to administer the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to elderly persons in the district. Health personnel were to make door-to-door visits to administer the vaccine to the elderly. Despite a long list of beneficiaries submitted by the district social welfare department, the immunization drive had to be stopped midway. "During the first day of the special Covid-19 vaccination, the first dose was administered to 10 distinguished senior citizens of Mangaldai," said additional deputy commissioner Sanjib Borah, who is in charge of the vaccinations.

Accident at Margherita

Margherita, June 7 : A Veterinary Field Assistant (VFA) was killed and another was seriously injured in a bike accident that took place at Ketetong Babu Pathar under Margherita police station in Tinsukia district on Sunday afternoon. The road mishap occurred when two bikes coming from opposite direction collided head-on, said eyewitnesses in which a VFA was killed and another bike rider was injured. The deceased has been identified as Raju Kalita, a Veterinary Field Assistant and resident of Ketetong Nakong Pathar in Margherita. According to sources, Kalita, who was seriously injured in the mishap, succumbed to his injuries on the spot. In the incident, Sunil Soy, a resident of Khamon Pathar area, was also seriously injured. He was immediately taken to the hospital. The body of the deceased was sent to conduct post-mortem.

Cancel Assam Board Exams

Students Campaign For Scrapping Matric, HS Exams



Ranjit Barthakur takes over as Mission Smile chairman

Guwahati, June 7 : Noted entrepreneur Ranjit Barthakur has taken over as the chairman of Mission

Smile. Barthakur is also the co-chairman of Smile Asia, a cleft initiative with a global reach. Mission Smile, earlier known as Operation Smile India, is a medical charitable trust dedicated to providing free life-changing cleft care and surgery for children and young adults born with cleft lip, cleft palate and other facial deformities in India. "Mission Smile has created a unique public-private partnership with the Assam government and National Health Mission," Contd...Page 6



Smile for a tenure of five years. He has succeeded Deepak Atal, who succumbed to Covid-19 infection.

Guwahati, June 7 : Thousands of Assam board students on Sunday started a campaign on the microblogging site Twitter, demanding cancellation of HSLC or Class 10 board exam conducted by the Board of Secondary Education Assam (SEBA) and HS or Class 12 board exam under the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC). Stating that the Central Board

of Secondary Education (CBSE) and many state boards have cancelled this year's exams amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, students, student bodies of Assam have asked the state government to take similar decisions. "Students are the future of our state, our country. If they fall prey to the deadly virus #COVID19, and lose their lives, how can we develop our

state? Our state has no future without the students. Cancel SEBA/AHSEC exams immediately!" NSUI Assam tweeted with #Cancel Assam Board Exams. "The delay in the decision-making process is also causing mental distress to the students, who are facing health issues along with their parents due to #COVID19. Cancel AHSEC/SEBA exams immediately" Contd...Page 6

CM visits riverine areas in Siphajhar and takes stock of eviction drive

State Govt. committed to protect Assam's land and identity: CM



Guwahati, June 7 : Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today visited

Gorukhuti in Sipajhar, Darrang to inspect the riverine areas that were en-

croached by illegal settlers near Dholpur Shiva Mandir. After reaching Gorukhuti, he travelled in a country boat and visited the Shiva temple situated atop a hill. He offered prayers at the temple and interacted with the management committee. It is to be mentioned, a total 120 bigha land out of Shiva Mandir's 180 bigha area were encroached by illegal occupants and these lands have Contd...Page 6

NEEPCO issues clarification over release of excess waters from Ranganadi dam

Guwahati, June 7 : The North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. (NEEPCO) on Sunday issued a clarification over various apprehensions about the release of excess waters from its Ranganadi Hydroelectric plant in Arunachal Pradesh. NEEPCO in its clarification said: "Ranganadi Hydroelectric Plant is a run-off-the-river plant with a very little storage. Up to a certain inflow due to rainfall in the upper reaches of the Ranganadi plant, the reservoir can absorb the water." "However, whenever there is

very heavy rainfall in the upper reaches, the excess water beyond the capacity of the storage capacity is passed through the gates," said the



clarification, issued by H. Bharali, head of corporate affairs & corporate communications, NEEPCO. The water coming through the gate is only due to heavy rainfall which cannot be retained and there is no contribution of the Ranganadi plant in this regard, it said. Also read: Assam: High alert sounded in Lakhimpur as NEEPCO releases excess waters from Ranganadi dam. On the contrary, the plant reduces flood quantum of the river by diverting 160 cumecs of water to adjacent Contd...Page 6

Uttarakhand has lowest child sex ratio at birth in India: Niti Aayog data

New Delhi, June 7 : Uttarakhand is the worst-performing state in the country in terms of child sex ratio at birth, according to the Niti

Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index 2020-21 released recently. As per the Niti Aayog SDG data, the hill

state's child sex ratio is 840 as compared to the national average of 899. Chhattisgarh has emerged as the best performer in this category where the male-to-female ratio at birth stands at 958 - much above the national average. Kerala is placed second with a sex ratio of 957, as per the NITI Aayog data. States like Punjab and Haryana have also made significant progress in this category. While Haryana recorded birth of 843 females per 1000 males, the number has reached 890 in Punjab. According to the third edition of the Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21, released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Kerala has re-

tained the top rank with a score of 75 while Bihar has been adjudged as the worst performing state with a total score of 52. As per the Niti Aayog figures, both Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu took the second spot with a score of 74 while Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam were the worst-performing states in this year's India index with scores of 52, 56 and 57 respectively. Chandigarh too maintained its top spot among the UTs with a score of 79. Mizoram, Haryana, and Uttarakhand are the top gainers in 2020-21 in terms of improvement in score from 2019, with an increase of 12, 10 and 8 points, respectively. "The country's Contd...Page 6



Majuli may not get Unesco's world heritage site tag

Jorhat, June 7 : Majuli, the world's largest river island, may not get Unesco's world heritage site tag this year as well with the government yet to submit the required dossier to Unesco. The last date for submission of the same is June 20. According to TOI report The people of Majuli recently

organised a public meeting at Kamalabari and formed a nine-member committee to take up the matter with the government. The committee met chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and local MLA Sarbananda Sonowal (also the former chief minister) during their recent visit to the island and Contd...Page 6



Eminent journalist Promod Tiwari joined as editor of 'The Assam Rising'



Guwahati, 7 June: Eminent journalist Promod Tiwari joined as editor of popular English daily 'The Assam Rising'. Tiwari has contributed to the field of journalism since 2006. He worked as senior sub-editor at Dainik Purvodaya, managing editor Contd...Page 6

Confident that Mehul Choksi would be handed over to India soon, say govt sources

New Delhi, June 7 : Amid ongoing efforts to bring back Mehul Choksi, the sources on Monday said that the government is confident that the fugitive diamond diamantaire would be deported back to the country to face trial in the multi-crore PNB loan fraud scam. Sources further said that the government's legal team is closely following the developments related to Mehul Choksi in Dominica. As per available data, between January 2018 to July 2019, a total of 148 Indian



nationals were deported from the UK. These people were deported on the

grounds of their illegal entry into the UK. In addition to the above, the UK immigration authorities and the Home Office has taken Emergency Travel Document from the High Commission of India (HCI) for more than 1574 additional Indian nationals, who will be deported on the grounds of their illegal entry as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions are normalized. The government sources said that the deportation data with effect from July 2020 till date is awaited at Contd...Page 6

Delhi sees huge traffic jams as national capital begins process of COVID-19 unlock

New Delhi, June 7 : Delhi on Monday (June 7, 2021) started unlocking further that also resulted in causing huge traffic jams in several areas of the national capital. Earlier in

the day, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal warned against laxity and urged people to take all precautions to prevent COVID-19 infection. Kejriwal also pointed out that unlocking was necessary to bring the economy back on track. "Many activities are resuming in Delhi from today. But take all the necessary precautions to prevent coronavirus infection - wear a mask, maintain social distancing and keep washing your hands, do not lax at all. One has to stay safe from the virus and also bring the economy back on track at the same time," he tweeted in Hindi. The Delhi government has allowed the reopening of markets, malls and standalone shops. They Contd...Page 6



Thunderstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya

Guwahati, June 7 : The southwest monsoon hit the eight north-eastern states including Sikkim and most parts of sub-Himalayan West Bengal on Sunday. Light to moderate rain occurred at most places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura and light rain occurred at a few places over Nagaland with very heavy rain at isolated places over Meghalaya and Tripura during the last 24 hours. According to TOI report IMD's weather forecast says thun-

derstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura for the next 24 hours. The Met office also warned of heavy rain at isolated places over the six states during the period. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya on Tuesday. For the next two days, the Met office has predicted heavy rain at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya. normally,

monsoon covers most parts of the northeast by June 5. However, in the past 10 years, barring 2017 and

2018, monsoon arrived in the region on June 6 and afterwards. "The southwest Contd...Page 6



Folk artist Gouri Kanta Deka passes away

SIPAJHAR, June 07 : Prominent performing folk artist of Seo Sapari performing art form Gouri Kanta Deka of Debananda village in Darrang district passed away in COVID 19 at Mangaldai Civil Hospital. He 73 and left behind his wife, two sons and three daughters. He was loved and respected by people of the locality due to his amiable behaviour and religious outlook. His death is widely mourned in the entire locality. The Debananda Satra public library, Debananda Vishnu Temple Management Committee have expressed their condolences to the bereaved family.

Round Table India inaugurates 8 classroom school block



Guwahati 6 June: NGO named Round Table India a part of Round Table International organization inaugurated the newly built eight classroom block at Sankardev Sishu Bidya Niketan at Raha, Nagaon District on 04.06.2021. These classrooms were built under the Freedom Through Education (FTE) a National Project of the

NGO under which more than 8000 classrooms have been built so far impacting 7.9 million children across India. The classroom project was initiated by one of the local wings of the NGO namely Guwahati Metro Round Table which will benefit around 900 children from the underprivileged families of the locality. The Project was inaugurated by Nitin Agarwal Area Chairman in presence of Round Table International President D.K.Singh, Round Table India Vice President Moriya Phillip, the principal of the school and other members of the NGO in a ceremony which was conducted virtually over an online platform to cope with compliance of the government norms during the covid 19 pandemic situation."

'Economia' released at Biswanath College

Biswanath Chari, June 7: The newsletter 'Economia' brought out by the Economics department of Biswanath College was inaugurated by Dr Chinta Mani Sharma, Principal of the college in a virtual meet organised by the department. Dr Sharma lauded the positive initiative of Dr. Karabi Gogoi, Associate Professor & Head of the department and faculty members and students. The newsletter contains valuable topics written by teachers and students and has beautifully showcased all the activities and achievements of the department. The first issue of the newsletter has been brought out with a tribute to legendary and gifted writer and journalist Homen Borgohain.

Several NGOs' took out Plantation Drive in Hojai District



Hojai, June 7: Along with the rest of the world, World Environment Day was observed in Hojai district too. Several NGOs, individuals, Government and non government establishments planted hundreds of saplings. Marwari Samellan Hojai Unit planted twenty saplings at the campus of Gandhi Vidyapith High School and at the premises of Laxminarayan Temple

in Hojai on Saturday. Talking to this correspondent, Pradip Sureka, President and Ramesh Mundra, General Secretary said, "Environment Protection is the need of the hour and everyone should be accountable for environmental protection and conservation." They urged each individual to take an initiative to plant atleast a sapling within a year.

The volunteers of Geetaashram Trust along with Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Durga Vahini and Bajrang Dal planted 100 saplings at Bihutoli field, Gowshala and Ashananda. The authorities of Sankardevnagar Junior College, KMK memorial college opted for virtual plantation drive thereby encouraged the student to recycle papers clothes which can help the environment in nature. On the otherhand the teachers in the school took active participation by inspiring the student to observe this day with the help of several environmental related activities. The principal and vice Principal of the institution involved themselves in the plantation drive and planted a number of saplings around the school campus. Fatima welfare Foundation, Daboka took an initiative of planting 3,000 saplings. The volunteers of All Assam Minority Student Union, Nilbagan Unit planted hundreds of saplings. District Legal Service Authority, Hojai also planted saplings.

Grand online launch of Vyapar Sancharak of BNI Brahmaputra

Guwahati, June 07 : BNI Brahmaputra launched its project 'Vyapar Sancharak' in its grand online launch ceremony attended by many people across the region. BNI Brahmaputra is one of the chapters of BNI Guwahati helping members exchange business amongst themselves. BNI is a US concept business networking organization started in Guwahati in 2018 and it already has 7 chapters in Guwahati. BNI Brahmaputra's project 'Vyapar Sancharak' aims to support its chapter members to grow their business by promoting it online in social platforms in the form of video. This activity will help members gain visibility and hence business opportunities. The meeting was presided by its leadership team comprising of President-Vivek Choudhary, VP-Mukesh Agarwal, Secretary-Treasurer-Isha Agarwal and Lead Visitor Host-Nilesh Agarwal. The grand online launch was graced by Shivani Gupta, Executive Director of Ludhiana, Sidarth Garodia, Executive Director of BNI Guwahati, Regional Members and Leadership Team of all other chapters of BNI Guwahati. BNI Brahmaputra has 80+ successful business owners from Guwahati who meet every week on Wednesday morning and help each other grow business with the help of referrals and business through networking. BNI Brahmaputra wishes all its members good luck for this initiative and thanks its coordinators Gaurav Agarwal, Nitesh Jain & Sweta Himatsingha for executing it so well.

Saplings were planted at Dipila



SIPAJHAR, June 07: A good number of valuable saplings were planted at Dipila under Patharighat revenue circle in Darrang district as part of the celebration of World Environment Day under the auspices of Novodaya Academy, Dipila. The saplings were planted by Sekher Majumdar, Advisor cum Chief organiser, Unity we the blood donors and Pranab Saha, prominent

blood donors and proprietor of Jyan Jyoti Book Stall, Mangaldai. Arup Kalita, leading social activist and former state executive member of the All Assam Students Union (AASU), Binoy Barua, PRO, Novodaya Academy, Dhiraj Kumar Kalita, Principal, Novodaya Academy and a good number of prominent social activists were presented on the occasion.

Guwahati-Based Author Nilutpal Gohain's Historical Fiction Novel

'The Legend of Lachit Borphukan' All Set For A Nationwide Release and A Visual Adaptation

Guwahati, June 7 : Guwahati-based Author Nilutpal Gohain recently announced the upcoming launch of his latest novel 'The Legend of Lachit Borphukan', a historical fiction based on the life of the celebrated Assamese Commander & General of the Ahom Kingdom. Published by Locksley Hall Publishing, and represented by 'The Book Bakers', one of India's leading literary agencies, Nilutpal Gohain's war saga narrates the inspiring tale of the Lachit Borphukan in a way that has never been done before. The book is set to be released across online book stores on the 15th of June 2021 and will be an eye-opener to the story of India's historical unsung hero. Lachit Borphukan was a com-

mander and Borphukan in the Ahom kingdom, known for his leadership in the 1671 Battle of Saraighat that defeated attempts by Mughal forces to take over the Ahom kingdom. It was his heroism and strategic war skills that sent the Mughal army headed by Ram Singh of Ajmer back. For centuries, the name of the legendary general has become synonymous with the courage of Assam. Author Nilutpal Gohain's book 'The Legend of Lachit Borphukan' chronicles the life of the Ahom general from his childhood, his rise in ranks in the army and finally being appointed as the Generalissimo who dared to attack the Mughals in their own territories. The book also recounts the events that led to the clash of



the two mighty forces and covers in detail the war at Alaboi and the final triumph of the Ahoms at the battle of Saraighat and much more. Speaking on his soon-to-be-launched book, author Nilutpal Gohain stated - "Having lived in Guwahati all my life, I have always been fascinated by Assamese history. Unfortunately, not much has been told of Ahom's Lachit Borphukan greatness across India. I saw this as an opportunity and instantly decided to work on my draft. The book carries a deep, rich history of Guwahati, and Assam as a whole, and is sure to capture the hearts and minds of the Assamese people." Although the book is set to release in mid-June, it has already caught the attention of readers and literary circles. Just recently, Almighty Motion Picture, a production house based in Mumbai acquired the Visual Adaptation Rights of the upcoming historical fiction. Discussions for the on-screen adaptation of the book are currently in progress. Speaking on this, Prabhleen Kaur, noted Producer of Almighty Motion Picture, stated that

"The story of Lachit Borphukan is a very inspiring one and needs to be known for the generations to come." Suhail Mathur, co-founder of 'The Book Bakers' Literary Agency (thebookbakers@gmail.com) stated - "As a literary agency, it is our duty and responsibility to make our youth aware of our legends and heroes through the medium of literature. I got inspired by the subject when I came to Assam for a literature festival and saw a towering statue in the middle of the Brahmaputra. Fortunately, Nilutpal shared our vision and has come up with a beautiful book that not only every Assamese but every Indian can be proud of. We are glad we could get him great publishing as well as a visual adaptation deal." The book has been heaped with praises from leading stalwarts from the Indian film industry such as the President, Indian Film & Television Director's Association, Filmmaker Ashoke Pandit, who has hailed the book as an edge-of-the-seat thriller. Senior Producers of several Bollywood blockbusters, Sunil Bohra (Gangs Of Wasseypur), Sailesh R Singh (Tanu Weds Manu), Himanshu Mehra (Tandav), an eminent director of Fukrey & Fukrey Returns, Mrighdeep Singh Lamba, have also endorsed the book with their valuable comments. Noted Historian from Assam, Dr. Rajen Saikia, called the book a remarkable read. Through this book, Author Nilutpal Gohain aims to educate the people of Assam on the story of India's unsung hero and showcase the depth of beauty of Assamese history.

A new environment-friendly body formed

Biswanath Chari, June 7: 'Kaziranga-the Holy Nature', an eco-friendly society was formed in a meeting held at Panpur Ghat on Saturday with Biswa Hazarika in the chair. The new environment-friendly body was formed in collaboration with Kanyaka, Holy Foundation Society and Upatyaka. The eco-friendly organization was formed as per guidance of Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika, stated Moti Kumar Newar, CEO of Kanyaka Bahumukhi Krishi Paam. He further added that the new

body will work for the security and wellbeing of KNP. The northern part of KNP that extends from Tezpur to Gamiri remains in a neglected state. Kaziranga, the holy nature will work for the promotion of KNP and to attract the attention of tourists and visitors. Further, it will create awareness regarding safeguard and protection of wildlife and nature in the neighbouring areas of KNP here. The programme was also attended by forest officer Debajit Saikia along with others.

Flood caused by major rivers inundates many areas in Lakhimpur district

North Lakhimpur, June 7: Incessant rain and release of dam water from NEEPCO has led to an increase in the water level of Ranganadi river in North Lakhimpur since the last two weeks. NEEPCO released the water through several gates which had the river in spate in its downstream areas in Lakhimpur district. The river also swept away several bamboo bridges connecting both the banks near North Lakhimpur. Flood have inundated other parts of Lakhimpur district also as continuous rain has been lashing the area in the last two weeks. In Nowboicha, several villages got flooded by the overflowing water of Singra river. Th Singra river inundated Gosanibari, Chengeljan, No.1

Gelahati and No.2 Gelahati and other villages under Nowboicha Revenue Circle and as a result of it, the villagers are marooned. The flooded Dikrong river also inundated many riverside areas under Bihpuria constituency in Lakhimpur district. The Lakhimpur District Unit of ASSU warned the NEEPCO authority not to release water at any time without notification and demanded to provide compensation to the flood-affected people of Nowboicha. On the other hand, the affected people of Nowboicha alleged that the local MLA Bharat Narah has turned a deaf ear to their miserable condition. They also alleged that the district administration too provide no any sufficient relief to them.

Mega green drive to be launched in Guwahati

Guwahati, June 7 : The Environment and Forest department is taking up a mega plantation drive to make Guwahati, the gateway to the North-east, verdant. Minister for Environment and Forest, Parimal Suklabaidya in a meeting with senior forest officials at Aranya Bhawan on Thursday, asked them to prepare a comprehensive plan for greening Guwahati which will help reduce pollution. As part of the 'green initiative' to restore the eco system, the plantation of saplings would begin from Panjabari's Aranya Bhawan to Borjhar's Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport.

Suklabaidya asked the forest officials to plant flower bearing tree saplings that would add to the beauty of the capital city. "Plantation has to be taken up to increase the overall green cover and to make the city green and beautiful. He asked the officials to contribute to the green cause and to approach corporates and agencies for CSR funding. Suklabaidya also urged the officials and employees to plant at least two saplings every month. The Minister asked the officials to make a proper survey of the entire stretch to identify the places where new trees can be transplanted and tree saplings planted. Proper protec-

tion of the saplings with tree guard to protect from cows and other animals was also discussed thereabout. The Minister also directed the officials to come up with innovative projects to extend the green cover to the barren lands. It may be mentioned that 10,353 hectare brought under plantation in the past five years. State's forest cover has increased by 221.51 sq.km since 2017. 24 sahitia manishi upabans have come up in 24 districts with around 1,000 plant species each. The department has set an ambitious targeted plantation in 12,500 hectare by 2024 through public participation.

Ex national basketball player Mujahid Ahmed Saikia dies of post COVID complications

NAGAON, June 7: Ex national basketball player, senior sports organizer and coach, Mujahid Ahmed

Saikia breathed his last at Guwahati Medical College Hospital on Saturday night. He was 62. Saikia along with his wife was tested positive for COVID 19 a couple of weeks back and admitted to Nagaon BP Civil Hospital. But due to rapid deterioration of his health condition, he was later shifted to Guwahati Medical College Hospital (GMCH).

Subsequently, he as well as his wife was tested negative. But on Saturday night, he breathed his last for post COVID complications at GMCH itself when he was undergoing treatment in the college hospital.

He served as general secretary to Assam Basketball Association as well as secretary of basketball branch under Nagaon sports association till his death. Besides, he also served as president of Nagaon basketball club till his death. His earthly remainings was brought to his residence situated at Nagaon MD Road near Saikia Masjid in the town on Sunday last. Various organizations including Nagaon sports association, Nagaon Press Club, district unit of AAJU, Working Journalists' Union, dignitaries of the district like local MLA Rupak Sarma, former Congress MLA Dr Durlav Chamma, former minister Rokibul Hussain, Girindra Kr Boruah and former union minister for state railway, Rajen Gohain condoled his demise and paid tribute to him.

Bright Student, Professional Singer from Golaghat Sets an Example for the Youth

Golaghat, Jun7: A bright student from Golaghat who is also a professional singer has set an example for the youth. Chayanika Sabhapandit, a resident of Jibon Tamuli Path near Paanch Ali in Golaghat is currently pursuing MA in Assamese at Cotton College State University, Guwahati. Chayanika Sabhapandit is also a popular name in the cultural field in the state as she had performed in many shows. But now due to the ongoing Covid pandemic situation she and her family has faced financial crisis. Living in a rented house it has become difficult for Chayanika and her family to fulfill their daily needs. So Chayanika instead of seeking financial help from others has come up with an idea to do vegetable business. She went to the Wholesale Vegetable Market in Golaghat Town every morning and buy vegetables. Then she sells them to the people in her locality. Thus she is helping her parents and running her family and also continuing her study as well as her practice of singing. Such effort of Chayanika has set an example for the youth and people have appreciated her.





Examinees wait outside an exam site at a high school in Guiyang City, southwest China's Guizhou Province.

Shackled skeleton identified as rare evidence of slavery in Roman Britain

Paris, June 07 : His ankles secured with heavy, locked iron fetters, the enslaved man appears to have been thrown in a ditch - a final act of indignity in death. Now the discovery of the shackled male skeleton by workers in Rutland - thought to have been aged in his late 20s or early 30s - has been identified as rare and important evidence of slavery in Roman Britain and "an internationally significant find". It was also desperately grim, said Chris Chinnock, one of the archaeologists working on the project, but was important because it "forces us to ask questions that we wouldn't ordinarily ask". Builders came across the bones when they were constructing a conservatory at a house in Great Casterton. Police were called and subsequent radiocarbon dating showed the remains were from between AD226 to AD427. Archaeologists from the Museum of London



Archaeology (Mola) were called in and have been researching the skeleton, with their findings published on Monday in the journal *Britannia*. No one doubts that slavery existed during the Roman occupation of Britain but discovering direct archaeological evidence is another matter. Most of what is known comes from inscriptions. "To have the opportunity to study the body of a person who quite probably was a slave is really important," said Michael Marshall, a finds specialist at Mola. The Great Casterton discovery is the first of its type in Britain, described by researchers as the clearest case of a burial of an enslaved individual found in the UK. "This burial is exceptionally unusual," said Marshall. Precisely who the man was will never be known but a number of informed guesses can be made. "It could be the dead person was somebody who had earned the ire of other people," said Marshall. "Equally it could be that the people who buried him were tyrannical and awful. We can't really understand the moral dimensions." The team have been examining a number of theories including that the shackles might have been added after the man died to demean him or brand him as a criminal in the afterlife. The few skeletons found with shackles in other countries are normally the victims of natural disasters and have not been buried. That is not the case in Great Casterton, say archaeologists. The burial position is an awkward one, said Chinnock, with the skeleton slightly on his right side and his left side and arm elevated on a slope. There is a Roman cemetery just 60 metres away, suggesting a conscious decision not to bury him properly. The likely explanation is that he has been thrown in a ditch and covered over. Chinnock, an expert in ancient bones, said the man appeared to be between 26 and 35 and had led a physically demanding life. A bony spur on an upper leg bone may have been caused by a fall or blow or be the result of a life filled with excessive physical activity. The injury had healed by the time he died and the cause of his death remains unknown. The Mola team say the identity of the man will never be known but "the various pieces of evidence present the most convincing case for the remains of a Roman slave yet to be found in Britain". A number of questions remain around the Great Casterton man but it was clear, Marshall said, that it was "extraordinary" evidence of mistreatment.

Pakistan train crash: dozens killed as express services collide



Ghotki, June 07 : Two express trains have collided in southern Pakistan, killing at least 30 passengers, authorities have said, as rescuers and villagers worked to pull the dead and injured from the wreckage. Up to 25 passengers were still trapped in the wreckage of the Millat Express

collision took place before dawn on Monday. Two express trains collided in southern Pakistan killing dozens of passengers. Tufail confirmed the death toll as 30 and said the toll was expected to rise. According to railway officials, about 1,100 passengers were on board the two trains. The

train and authorities were trying to arrange heavy machinery to rescue those people who were calling for help, said Umar Tufail, a police chief in Ghotki district in Sindh province, where the

Millat Express derailed and the Sir Syed Express train hit it soon afterward, said Usman Abdullah, a district police officer. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the derailment and the subsequent collision. "Right now the challenge for us is to quickly rescue those passengers who are still trapped in the wreckage," he said. Mobile phone footage shown on television from the site showed mangled wreckage, with several green Pakistan railway carriages lying on their side. TV footage showed ambulances transporting injured passengers to hospitals. According to Pakistani TV stations, heavy

machinery had not reached the scene about four hours after the crash. Officials at Pakistan railways said they could not comment immediately because they were trying to handle an emergency. Some of the injured passengers were listed in critical condition. Malik Aslam, a local villager, told Pakistan's Geo News TV that about 100 people were injured and he counted at least 30 bodies of passengers during the rescue and recovery work. Train accidents are common in Pakistan, where successive governments have paid little attention to improving the poorly maintained signal system and ageing tracks.

Biden to affirm "special relationship" at G7 meeting with Johnson

Washington, June 07 : Joe Biden has issued a statement pledging to affirm his "special relationship" with Britain when he meets Boris Johnson at this week's G7 summit in the UK and discuss matters including the impasse in Northern Ireland. In an article for the Washington Post published on Sunday before his first foreign travel trip as president, Biden wrote: "In the United Kingdom, after meeting with prime minister Boris Johnson to affirm the special relationship between our nations, I will participate in the G7 summit." This group of leading democracies and economies has not met in person in two years due to the coronavirus. Ending this pandemic, improving health security for all nations and driving a robust, inclusive global economic recovery will be our top priorities. Biden added that he will use his time during the summit to realise "America's renewed

commitment to our allies and partners", and "rally the world's democracies" against the most significant threats of the world, including the pandemic and climate change. The US president is also reportedly expected to speak to Johnson about disagreements over the Brexit deal, expressing support for its Northern Ireland protocol, which has met fierce opposition from unionists and loyalists who say it separates the region from the rest of the UK. The Times reported that Biden is expected to tell Johnson that the US sees the protocol as a crucial part of maintaining long-term peace in Northern Ireland and, in particular, the Good Friday agreement, for which the US is a guarantor. The paper cited sources saying that Biden is expected to warn the prime minister that a potential trade deal between the US and the UK will be damaged if the



situation is not resolved, while also telling leaders in Brussels that he expects the EU to be more "flexible" and less "bureaucratic". Biden, who is of Irish descent, reaffirmed his support for the Good Friday agreement in March after tensions over the protocol led to violent rioting. The protocol was initially set up to prevent a hard land border in Ireland by effectively keeping Northern Ireland inside the single market.

Centre vs states, rules vs convention- who really controls IAS officers

New Delhi, June 07 : The unprecedented nature of the tussle between the Centre and the West Bengal government over the state's former chief secretary, Alapan Bandyopadhyay, has triggered a nationwide debate on the politicisation of the civil services. Both the Centre and the state government have claimed to have more powers over the posting and deputation of the 1987-batch IAS officer. This has led to questions over the separation of powers between the central and the state governments, both of which are served by officers of the three All India Services (AIS). The examination of powers of the state and the central governments across nine parameters - deciding the number of officers to be recruited, recruitment, appointment, cadre allocation, training, transfers and postings, empanelment and central deputation, extensions, and disciplinary proceedings - reveals that in at least eight, the Centre enjoys a preponderance of power over officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Forest Service (IFS). However, at the same time, experts told ThePrint that while a plain reading of the rules gives the central government overriding powers over the civil services, convention has often ensured a collaborative and consultative approach between the Centre and states in the spirit of federalism, and a significant degree of de facto powers to the states. The IAS and the IPS were created after Independence - the Indian Forest Service joined the two in 1966 - under Article 312 of the Constitution in order to create a pool of administrators and law enforcers common to the Union and states. The idea behind having this common pool of officers, all of whom are governed by the All India Services Act, 1951, was that it would strengthen the unitary character of the Indian federation. "The Centre enjoys a preponderance of powers when it comes to the AIS officers," said former secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) Satyanand Mishra. "The larger scheme behind having an AIS was that India is a

highly diverse country, and, therefore, it would be important to bind it together through a common, centrally-recruited pool of officers," he added. "It was believed that it is necessary that key executive functions in any state are performed by members of this centrally recruited pool." It is in this spirit, he added, that a state cadre does not have more than one-third of officers who are originally from that state. "This was done to ensure that people have fewer connections, vested interests and regional affiliations while executing

Examination (CSE). Finally, the officers recruited by the UPSC are appointed by the President of India, thereby making the Government of India (GoI) their appointing authority. Several of the powers of the Centre over AIS officers flow from the fact that it is their appointing authority. The selected officers are subsequently assigned their state cadres by the Centre. While the Centre does this by factoring in the states' requirement, the officers' preference, their rank in the exam, etc, the final decision remains with

liability to serve both under the state and under the Centre." Therefore, once officers are recruited and trained by the Centre, they are sent to their state cadres. While the Modi government has instituted the practice of appointing newly recruited officers as assistant secretaries in different ministries in the Government of India before they go to states, it is at the state level that the career of an AIS officer really starts at the district level. It is here that states have complete authority over who to post in which district, who to elevate to the state

which the Centre can pick officers for vacant posts. To work for the central government at the level of joint secretary and above, it is imperative for an officer to first be empanelled by the Centre. The process, often criticised for its lack of transparency, allows only a minority of IAS officers to be made eligible for senior postings at the Centre. "The Centre empanels an officer after 16 years of service. But by doing so, it basically takes away the incentive of all the non-empanelled officers to work with the national interest in mind," a recently retired IAS officer said. "For all the officers left behind, loyalty to the state government becomes the sole determinant for their career progression." Bandyopadhyay, for example, was not empanelled by the Centre, the officer said. After empanelment comes the actual process of central deputation. According to AIS Rules, 1951, a cadre officer can be made available for central deputation through a consultative process that involves the state, the Centre and the officer concerned. While all three have a say, in case of a dispute between the Centre and the state, the former's will prevails. If states can win the loyalty of officers through the threat of adverse postings and transfers, the central government can do so with the allure of post-retirement postings. The power of extending the services of IAS officers rests exclusively with the Centre. Even if a chief secretary appointed in a state is to get an extension, permission has to be granted by the central government to the state government, as happened in the case of Bandyopadhyay (who got an extension in May). It is for this reason that while the Centre often extends the services of the officers it wishes to retain after their retirement, the states instead end up appointing them in the CM's Office as advisers out of the ambit of the AIS Rules. Again, a case in point is Bandyopadhyay, who was appointed as the Chief Minister's adviser after he retired (he didn't take the extension). Since the political harassment of AIS officers for not toeing the line is widely prevalent, the rules to initiate disciplinary proceedings against them are very carefully crafted.



Examinees wait outside an exam site at a high school in Guiyang City, southwest China's Guizhou Province.

THE ASSAM RISING

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Xi's aggressive policies

Is it too late to halt the slide towards all-out confrontation between China and the western democracies? An apparently conciliatory speech last week by Xi Jinping led some observers to suggest China's president may want to mend fences. But a change of tone in Beijing will not cut much ice in Washington unless Xi's aggressive policies change, too. Since coming to power in 2012, Xi has overseen a marked shift towards authoritarianism at home and increased "assertiveness" - a polite word for bullying - abroad. He has established the type of personal, almost cultish dominance over the Chinese Communist party not seen since the days of Mao Zedong. So when Xi talks, as he did last week, about the need for arrogant CCP spokespeople and the country's antagonistic "wolf warrior" diplomats to present a more "lovable" and "humble" image of China to the world, he is really critiquing himself and his own management style. Yet Xi has never had to woo ordinary voters. He has purged all serious rivals. He lauds uniformity and exhibits a hatred of "difference", as cruelly manifested in Xinjiang. He rules by fear, political cunning and brute force. Love has nothing to do with it. Looked at another way, Xi's speech would not have been out of place at a Militant tendency meeting circa 1976 or, for that matter, in the old Soviet politburo. Like hard-left politicians and neo-Marxists everywhere, Xi believes it's not his policies that are at fault but a failure to explain and communicate them effectively. China must expand its "circle of friends", he said. "Propaganda organisations" (meaning state media) must make clear to all that the CCP wanted "nothing but the Chinese people's happiness and good fortune". Does he really believe people will swallow such tosh? Coming from a man dedicated to supplanting the US as global hegemon, his words suggest startling naivety about the world beyond China or else a shocking cynicism. Extensive state-directed, under-the-radar schemes to "tell China's story" and expand its influence are in any case already in train, according to the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington. "Over the past decade, the CCP has overseen a dramatic expansion of efforts to shape media content around the world," it said, even as the CCP stifles critical independent coverage. Using propaganda, disinformation and censorship, "Beijing has insinuated its content ... into foreign media markets in many subtle ways, for example, through content-sharing agreements ... Hundreds of millions of news consumers around the world routinely view, read, or listen to information created or influenced by the CCP, often without knowing its origins." Xi's image-messaging and media manipulation went a drastic step further last week as Beijing suppressed coverage of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre anniversary. Hong Kong media were told not to mention it. An annual vigil for victims was banned amid yet more arrests. The record of the CCP's historical culpability over Tiananmen was wiped. Yet today's crushing of Hong Kong's freedoms is a very public crime that Xi cannot airbrush away. Lovable it ain't. Blatant and loveless, too, is the siege of Taiwan, where Chinese military forces regularly launch high-profile, provocative territorial incursions. Like a latter-day emperor, Xi sees reunification as the crowning achievement of his reign. The west's shameful failure to defend Hong Kong emboldens him, and fears grow that he may soon resort to force. Taiwan could yet become America's Falklands. All around China's borders, from India and South Korea to Malaysia, the Philippines and Australia, a grim story of intimidation, impunity and aggression is unfolding, as opposed to the confected, made-in-Beijing narrative of neighbourly co-existence. The list of western grievances with Xi's China, often spilling over into undisguised anger, grows longer almost by the day. The problem now - assuming Xi really is having second thoughts - is that it may already be too late. A tipping point has been reached. Tolerance for Chinese boorishness is all but exhausted. Xi may not be able to alter course even if he wants to. For almost a decade, he has unleashed wave after wave of what analyst Sulmaan Wasif Khan calls "belligerent, defensive nationalism" - political, economic and military. China, he wrote, "has poisoned itself through its own rhetoric ... As the US discovered in the Donald Trump years, one cannot stoke nationalistic fires without their eventually blazing beyond control." A reckoning is due. US president Joe Biden has stuck to his predecessor's tough line, and is steadily reinforcing it. This coming weekend's G7 summit will back him up. The Quad - an alliance of the US, Japan, India and Australia - is reviving. Defence spending is rising, on both sides.

Vamsee Juluri

To understand seven years of the Narendra Modi government and its unique approach to communication, we should begin with a different anniversary. A few days from now, it will be two years since a shocking act of vandalism took place in a small island in the Tungabhadra near Hampi: the desecration of Nava Brindavan, the sacred Tulsi-plant bearing shrine of the 15th century Dvaita philosopher Sri Vyasa Tirtha. Unlike many commercialised pilgrimage sites, the Nava Brindavan island is little known outside the Dvaita tradition. For violence to enter a place like this was brutal, a violation not only of cultural sanctity, but of nature too. What makes this site important is not just the monuments, but the fact that the whole valley, with its hills and boulders, still remains as it did for hundreds of years, a sacred geography undisturbed by "development". Greed got here too. The second point of disbelief around this incident, and one that takes us to the issue of communication in the age of Prime Minister Modi, is the way a particular reaction spread on Twitter. Despite the gravity of this desecration, within hours, a cheerful, self-congratulatory tone was on display: Would the rebuilding have happened if "Pappu" been Prime Minister instead of Modi? Could the "new, confident, Hindu" have rebuilt the Brindavan without the inspiration of Modi? Some might say the positive tone averted needless communalism. Yet, a divisive angle was not absent either. Look at us, the tweets went, we don't protest or riot when our sacred sites are violated, unlike... (those people). This sort of boastfulness is now a regular feature of the Hindu response system on social media. Most recently, it was in evidence again when a Charlie Hebdo cartoon mocked Hindu gods over the Covid-19 tragedy in India (We don't behead! We're Hindus!). I share this story because this is one example of what the "on the ground" communication of the movement that has brought Prime Minister Modi to power, and keeps him there, looks like. A few weeks ago, I wrote a sharp criticism in ThePrint of Prime Minister Modi's approach to communication in the face of a severe national calamity. Since then, the prime minister has expressed grief, but has also assured his followers that "the country has given a befitting reply to those who conspire against it," a reference perhaps to the "toolkit" circus. Whatever the truth might be, the deeper question I wish to explore here is the polarisation that has left India divided between two alternate conceptions of reality. Each side seems deeply invested in believing what it wants to, that "Modi is a fascist" or that "Modi is a Messiah." I disagreed with the fascism accusation prevalent in academia and Western media in 2014, and I also disagree with the savior cult that dominates social media. I say this not to sit on the fence but to ask that what we



need is a better critique of propaganda and power than what we have had till now; a critique of both, global corporations like Twitter and Facebook and Netflix, as well as the power of populist political figures and their powerful machines. We need a critique, perhaps, from Left and Right, and not just of them. I think that we are polarised today, at least in part, because social media (and some legacy media too) have got us wedded to our worst beliefs about our opponents. We are now "always on," seeing and being seen on social media, communicating not for connection, but for image. We write less to share, more to perform. The "gotcha" moment (as it is called in America), or the "befitting reply" (as it is called in India), seems to be the only communication goal of leaders today. We are in a race to extreme isolation and social fragmentation. Every word, every tweet, seems to be one-way, a label or accusation, rather than an invitation to consider. We brand each other as "Right wing" or "Left wing" (and I have to dust off one such awkward label I got last month: how on earth does a columnist for a paper with "Wall Street" in its name get away calling a Hind Swaraj-advocating professor a "Hindu Right" intellectual!). We smear each other as "bhakts" or "anti-nationals." We call upon friends and family members to perform denunciations. We boast of locking up our elders because they voted wrongly. We are, to put it mildly, being played by the very things we can't stop playing with (the documentary The Social Dilemma is a good, if not perfect, critique for the times). I fear that if we don't make an effort to see others as something bigger than either props or rivals to our image on our phones, we will soon forget how to relate with each other. And the language of politics we use at the moment, sadly, is stuck in this polarising, performative mode too. When criticism is virulent and seems motivated by bigotry and bias rather than truth, people eventually reach a point where they will never believe their perceived rivals, a "boy who cried wolf" dilemma as it were. When the ruling party makes a spectacle of harassing two young women by turning communication memos into a nation-breaking bogey called a "toolkit" (Disha Ravi and Saumya Verma), it will fail to make a case morally when it has to prosecute someone or something far more serious. And conversely, when critics of the ruling party protest crimes against women with images that violate reason

and sanctity by depicting Hindu deities and symbols in violently sexualised forms, they come across not as principled opponents but as bigoted Hinduphobes. Polarisation is one part of the problem today. What may be even worse is the catastrophic consequences of a government accustomed to one-way, top-down communication eliminating the role of expertise in guiding public affairs. As early as March 2020, professor of public health Rama Baru wrote in Hindustan Times that a nodal communication agency was essential during a pandemic. One year later, it appears that not only do we still lack that sort of specialised communication arm in an emergency, but we also have a subversion of the very idea of communication by the government itself. A key indicator is the hefty 97-page document published in The Wire earlier this year entitled Report of the Group of Ministers on Government Communication. The presence of some respected journalists there notwithstanding, the meetings read like a scene out of the Dilbert cartoons, full of wishful lists and magical numbers: "We should track 50 negative and 50 positive influencers" (Irani, p. 9); "We need to identify 10 big narratives and then how to work on how to take the messages to the common people" (Jaishankar, p. 11); "Around 75% of media persons are impressed by the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi" (unknown, p. 15); "Narrative is fueled by around 20-30 people" (Javadekar, p. 10). And of course, the only qualitative idea that the ruling party seems to have for global messaging: "The right-wing parties of other countries need to be roped in so that some common ground can be found" (Thakur, p. 14). Like its many "Soft Power" and "Vishwa Guru" initiatives, this government seems out of its depth in the real world, putting on a show of doing instead of actually doing, and at best piling on to a failing "RW" bandwagon no matter how distasteful its record in the West has been. The truth is that doing takes knowing, and knowing takes, well, listening. Unfortunately, Sita Ram Goel seems to have got this one right too. As he wrote in Time for Stock Taking: Whither Sangh Parivar, "The Sangh Parivar never touches anything which does not originate from within it." It is one thing to be a social service organisation and be that way. It's quite another to be ruling a whole nation in a highly interconnected world with the same attitude. I return in conclusion to the Nava Brindavan incident. It is not

surprising, perhaps, that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a ruling party tried to put a cheerful spin on it instead of a negative one (as was the case with the temple desecrations in Andhra Pradesh earlier this year where a different party governs). But the question remains. Does the ruling party have a story beyond mere reactive spin? If so, what is that story? How does India under the BJP see people, cultures, the land, nature, history? From 2014 to 2015, when some pracharaks were kind enough to reach out and present me with books about their history and worldview, I came to believe that critics were misinformed in seeing the Sangh's goal as being a far-right Hindu religious State. Their books were hardly about Hinduism as we knew it; gods, culture, aesthetics, none of it figured. At best, this was self-help and management for the people, emphasising service and national pride as a method of personal transformation ("man-making"). Their larger political vision, at least in principle, was Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism, a post-Independence sequel to Gandhi's Hind Swaraj. Unfortunately, we have seen little of Deendayal Upadhyaya besides his name these last few years. The Modi government's attitude to communication instead seems to have, as its guiding aesthetic, a peculiar form of dehumanisation, embodying a cold, objectifying view that reduces human beings to numbers and targets. It does not see people as who they are, but only as either followers, enemies, or future converts. Whether it's called "vikas" or "Hindutva" it still doesn't augur well. India seems to be ruled by a technocracy that supporters think is morality and its opponents think is religion. The BJP has done well so far running with the hares and hunting with the hounds on the question of Hinduism, but eventually, the questions must be answered. What does Hindutva mean to it, an indigenous vision of decolonisation or mere copy-cat Right-wing nationalism? How does the BJP expect to address the disappointments of Hindus fighting off the State's destructive intrusions into sacred spaces from Kerala to the Himalayas? Does it intend to ever win the trust of opponents when it keeps throwing them to the Twitter-hounds? For now, the BJP seems to have settled on presenting itself as "RW" rather than "Hindu" (possibly because it mistakenly sees the former as more respectable in the eyes of the world), and its critics still seem stuck on the belief that a criticism of the BJP is best made not for its "RW"-isms but simply for its "Hindu" associations. These are the limits to our political discourse, and to our ability to see across the "befitting reply" divides of social media. Given these realities, we are probably stuck for a while with charges of "Hinduphobia" from one side and "Hindu fascism" from the other, unless a third space of conversation opens up somehow. I imagine Hampi, with its Tulu-Telugu-Kannada (and other) voices, and its Dvaita-Advaita-Jaina philosophers, its richness of art and life, and hope that a future where we are all who we are is still possible.

'Knocked door down, will enter drawing room now' -Police & tribal leaders clash over anti-Naxal camp

The Silger village in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district has become a point of serious clash between the administration and tribal leaders, with the police asserting its right to set up a joint security forces camp in the area even as locals continue to protest it. The battle comes after the Chhattisgarh Police established a joint camp - comprising the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), District Reserve Guard and CoBRA personnel - in the village on 11 May. The strength of the camp is estimated at roughly 130. The locals started protesting against it almost immediately, calling it illegal. On 17 May, four protesters were killed in a police firing incident at the site. While tribal leaders said the dead were locals and called for a high court justice-led probe, the police said they were Maoists. Now, officials heading the anti-Naxal operations in Bastar region told ThePrint that the protests are stage-managed by the Maoists as Silger is a strategically crucial location for the administration to take the Maoists head-on, with the village serving as a gateway to barge into

core Naxal areas. "It's like now we have knocked down their door. Next time we will be entering into their drawing room," said Sundarraj P., the Bastar Inspector General who heads the anti-Maoist operations in the region. "The security forces camp at Silger is a big jolt for extortion activities of the Naxals in their south-Bastar stronghold. They will do all to prevent our march into their hideouts. Present protest is part of the same design. It's stage-managed by the Maoists," the officer said. However, tribal leaders said the joint camp of security forces, which involves majority CRPF personnel, was illegal and raised overnight. They questioned the government on setting up a police camp in the middle of a lockdown. They also denied that the villagers killed last month were Maoists, calling for a higher probe into the incident. According to security officials, Silger and its nearby forest covers have always been Maoist strongholds, where the government had not reached so far. This is also the same belt where the Maoists ambushed a police patrolling party on 3 April and

killed 22 security personnel. The Jonaguda village, where the incident took place, is barely 5 km from Silger. Officials said many security camps have come up in the Bastar region in the last couple of years, but Silger is important. Speaking about the protests, the Bastar IG said most of the participants are from villages far away from Silger. "Banners and posters raised by them have exactly the same scripts as that of state-summent leaflets issued by the ultras on 19 May," he said. Sundarraj claimed that Silger locals support the security forces "as they know the benefits the village will get from the camps that often act as the lone source of basic services like opening of PDS shops, roads, electricity and drinking water in these remote areas". The official also claimed that none of the "injured" persons on 17 May in the firing between Naxals and police were from Silger. He stressed that the police was compelled to retaliate after some of the 3,000 members from frontal Maoist organisations present there opened

fire at the camp, taking cover of the villagers. "There is no question of going back on the camp. It's a known fact that Maoists are behind the ongoing agitation at Silger. Even villagers know this well but they are under tremendous pressure as Naxals have threatened them to charge Rs 11,000 fine if they do not join the protest. However all efforts are on to resolve the issue. It will be over soon," said Bijpur Superintendent of Police Kamlochan Kashyap. The senior police officials are hopeful that protestors will retreat soon. Tribal leaders and activists, however, argued that the land where the camp has been set up is occupied illegally as permission wasn't taken from the village panchayat, which is mandatory under Schedule five of the Constitution of India. "It's mandatory to obtain permission from gram sabha for any developmental works in scheduled areas but the Silger camp was set up in the dead of night, around 3 am, on 12 May, without informing the villagers let alone seek-

ing their consent through a gram sabha or otherwise," said noted tribal rights activist Bela Bhatia. "The people of Silger got to know about the camp later in the day from residents of a neighbouring village who came there for the weekly market," Bhatia added. However, SP Kashyap denied this allegation. "The camp was not set up overnight as is being made out. It was part of the government's action plan to counter Naxal menace in the region as they have become a challenge to the national sovereignty let alone Chhattisgarh," he said. "All the needed legal and constitutional obligations were fulfilled before Silger Village camp became operational," said Kashyap. Leaders call for probe into police firing, officials say ready to face it. Bhatia, who was among the first to reach the firing site after the 17 May incident, said four persons died out of which three men (Uika Pandu, Ursa Bhima and Kawasi Wagu) died on the spot while a pregnant woman succumbed to the injuries at her home. "She sustained serious injuries in the stampede result-

ing from police firing. Government must order a probe by at least a sitting high court judge and scrap or suspend the police camp at Silger," said Bhatia. An SDM rank official is currently investigating the incident. All India Adivasi Mahasabha president and former MLA Manish Kunjam said he personally met the families of killed tribals, and claimed that there was no firing from protestors. "Those killed in police firing were innocent tribals. We demand action against erring policemen who were killed and an investigation by a retired HC judge. Ongoing magisterial probe is mere a legal tradition and will not yield anything," said Kunjam. The Bhupesh Baghel government has constituted a fact finding panel of Congress legislators too. Officials said they will welcome every decision of the government and are ready to face all probes. "Security forces have nothing to hide. We have maintained from the beginning that those killed in firing were Maoists. All facts and details will be provided to the fact finding team or probe committee duly constituted under the law," said Sundarraj.

Deadly 'Romeos' helicopters coming to India! Indian Navy to get first MH-60Rs



Mumbai, June 07 : The first three out of 24 MH-60R Seahawks are expected to be delivered next month. Sources have confirmed to Financial Express Online that "Dates are in the process of being confirmed for delivering the helicopters to the Indian Mission in the US. After which they will be sent to India." The pilots and ground crew from the Indian Navy are already in the US undergoing training. They will return with the new MH-60Rs. S Jaishankar, EAM, S Jaishankar to travel to Kuwait later in the week. The Indian Army must plan for a long term deployment as well as capabilities and capacities to respond to immediate situations in the region. Infrastructure to protect man and machine should be the priority as well as ensure turnover of troops to keep the morale high and fighting fit. Galwan clash - A year later, the focus should be on the Depsang Plains, says expert. For the balance of the helicopters, the delivery will be as per the timeline stated in the contract inked between the governments of India and US. The 24 helicopters are coming through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route and are for approximately USD 2.6 billion. These helicopters are going to help the Indian Navy play a critical role in the

Indian Ocean Region (IOR). According to the contract, the package includes spare parts, air-to-ground weapons support and training of pilots and ground crew. The training is already going on as reported earlier. Due to the global shut down in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of training had been delayed. And once the world started opening gradually, the team left for the US to be trained. In 2020, the deal got the stamp of approval by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) last year in February before the former US President Donald Trump's arrival in New Delhi. The talks for these helicopters were spearheaded by Dr Vivek Lall, who was then the Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at Lockheed Martin. He has been credited to have played a very significant role in the military trade between US and India. In an earlier interaction with Financial Express Online, Dr Lall had said about these helicopters that, "These helicopters will provide a vital capability for the Indian Navy in the Indo-Pacific region." According to officers, the Indian Navy is going to receive the fourth-generation MH-60Rs 'Romeos' helicopters. These helicopters are going to be loaded with torpedoes and missiles and these missiles are going to be used in anti-submarine roles. The delivery of these helicopters will be completed in five years from the time the deal was inked. MH-60Rs 'Romeo' helicopters when combined with the already being operated Boeing's P-8-I by the Indian Navy will help submarine hunting grow stronger when combined with these helicopters.

Vi Business Strengthens its Security Portfolio, Unveils Vi Next Generation Cloud Firewall Solutions for Enterprises

Guwahati, June 7 : With accelerated growth in digital, work from home, workloads migrating to cloud, has led to a strong need of reliable security solutions for day-to-day functioning of enterprises. Sensing the criticality to secure the business risks of its customers, Vi Business, the enterprise arm of Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL), has strengthened its security portfolio with the launch of Vi Cloud Firewall, a cloud-deployed security solution for enterprises. Continuing its collaborative strategy, Vi Business has partnered with leading security technology provider FirstWave Cloud Technology to introduce Vi Cloud Firewall for the modern business needs. FirstWave Cloud Technology has helped design innovative multi-tenant and dedicated Vi Cloud Firewalls engineered for Vi's OpenStack RedHat cloud environment and managed using FirstWave's Cloud Content Security Platform (CCSP). The Firewall solution is powered by Palo Alto Networks VM-Series Virtual Next-Generation Firewall (NGFW) technology, one of the market leaders. Vi Cloud Firewall comes with next generation firewall features like gateway anti-virus, DDoS protection, secure VPN, data loss prevention, content filtering, real-time intelligence, amongst others. This cost-effective, flexible and network-based solution involves zero capex, zero touch and eliminates the need of any on-premise infrastructure for enterprises to set up and run. It is a one-stop single solution that provides faster turnaround with scalability options, without infrastructure upgrade, completely managed services with no dependence on internal IT teams. Introducing the security solution, Abhijit Kishore, Chief Enterprise Business Officer, Vodafone

Idea Limited, said, "As enterprises accelerate digital adoption and respond to the dynamic environment, they are also looking to build scalable IT and Security capabilities. Migrating to cloud applications and protection against possible security threats is amongst the top priorities for large and small businesses alike. Vi Cloud Firewall is a flexible subscription-based solution offering ease of business operations, connectivity and security for businesses across domains. With the launch of Vi Cloud Firewall, Vi Business has taken another significant step towards providing comprehensive and integrated connectivity and security solutions to our enterprise customers." Commenting on the partnership, Neil Pollock, CEO, FirstWave Cloud Technology, said "FirstWave is delighted to partner with Vi Business to launch the innovative Vi Next Generation Cloud Firewall that is integral to Vi Business secure internet portfolio. Teams from both Vi Business and FirstWave Cloud have worked tirelessly over the last several months to bring this innovation to Vi Business customers. Businesses in India can now take advantage of Vi's SaaS-based cybersecurity services, starting with cloud firewalls and in the future Email and Web security, delivered via Vi's incredible network and using FirstWave's CCSP platform. The FirstWave team is excited and committed to support Vi Business in this journey." With Vi Cloud Firewall, enterprises and businesses across BFSI, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Retail, Travel, Logistics, Real Estate, NBFC, Education etc. can benefit from the best security practices maintained by accredited security professionals and 24x7 monitoring and measurement.

Aviva India Launches Aviva Life Shield Premium



India, June 07 : Aviva Life Insurance, India's most trusted private insurance company, today announced the launch of Aviva Life Shield Premium, a Non-Linked Non-Participating Individual Pure Risk Life Insurance Plan. It is a comprehensive term life insurance plan that can be personalized as per the needs of every individual and his family to ensure that one enjoys the protection of a term life cover on their own terms. Towards this goal, Aviva has

launched the campaign #OnYourTerms and the product has been designed to enable customers to choose and customize options around the sum assured, premium payment term and frequency, claim payout methods, among others. Mr. Vinit Kapahi, Head, Marketing Function, Aviva Life Insurance said "Our single-minded focus on delivering a comprehensive and differentiated proposition suite is rooted in our vision to work towards our long-term strategy. We understand customer demands and our teams have been working to launch new and more relevant products to ensure that our customers' future is secured. Aviva Life Shield Premium plan can be personalized as per the financial needs and provides protection to the loved ones. We are confident that this product will ca-

ter to the increasing demand for Term Life Insurance but will also ensure that more customers choose to enjoy the benefits of insurance by insuring themselves." Vinit further added "At Aviva, we have always kept the customer at the centre of every endeavour and are continually driven by our purpose of With You Today, For a Better Tomorrow. This is a promise that each one of us lives through every day at work to ensure good customer outcomes at every step of the way." Aviva Life Shield Premium comes with policy term up to 62 years and provides customers optional payment term of Regular, Limited and Single Premium payment term and Annual, semi-annual or monthly Premium payment frequency. This product allows customers to balance their financial portfolio with multiple payout methods ranging from lump sum, income and 50:50. Another advantage is that customers get an additional protection against Accidental Death and Permanent Total Disability due to an accident.

Idea Exchange: Bust in private equity space imminent. Everybody's valuation is inflated, says Nikhil Kamath, co-founder, Zerodha & True Beacon

Mumbai, June 07 : Nikhil Kamath, co-founder, Zerodha & True Beacon, asserts nobody can predict market trends, says bias behind low trading participation in India, believes cryptocurrencies will see a fightback from authorities, and says the govt appears to have been surprisingly ill-prepared for the second Covid wave. The session was moderated by Principal Correspondent Aashish Aryan. Would you credit the Internet which brought a large number of small retail investors online for the success of platforms such as Zerodha? Internet trading existed before we (Zerodha) came about. Back in the day, we used platforms such as Sharekhan and ICICI Direct. So we did not really create Internet trading in India. We kind of made it cheaper and more efficient and transparent. The ecosystem of broking, stock market, equity market has been the flavour of the season and we have been talking about it a lot more in the last one year. But you have to remember that it is a very, very small ecosystem. Only about 1.5% or 2% of the population of our country has direct or indirect access to financial markets. Now, that number in the West, say in America, stands at 60-70%. So even though the ecosystem is growing exponentially, and a lot more people are joining it, the base is extremely small. Even if you were to talk in terms of revenue, and in terms of the total number of brokers and companies which cater to this industry, it is a very nominal number. The EBP programme aims to address environmental concerns, reduce oil import bill and provide remunerative income to farmers. World Environment Day 2021: Target to blend 20% ethanol in petrol advanced, says PM Modi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 20% ethanol-blending in petrol, damaged food grains, ethanol procurement, ethanol procurement, Climate Change Performance Index India advances 20% ethanol-blending in petrol to 2025: PM. Is a general lack of trust among retail investors the reason for this small base? One of the things we suffer from is hindsight bias. Unlike countries in the West, where investing is considered to be a good thing to do, in India, if somebody's kid says that he is a full-time trader, people draw an association with gambling and betting and stuff like that. So, traditionally, it has not been a good career path. We are trying very hard to wash away that image of the broking and trading community in India. Stock markets have come down from their 52-week all-time peak levels recently. Where do the markets stand right now? The one thing we always tell people is nobody, absolutely nobody knows what will happen in the markets tomorrow. Everybody who is on TV, everybody who is going out there and making wild claims... If any of that were true, that person would be better off sitting at home and buying it himself. So, to call the market with any degree of certainty, especially the future of the market,

is impossible. Do you think the rise in bond yields in the US and India will affect the markets? I think it should. Before you go to yields, I think you have to understand the meaning of currency in a small manner. Back in the day in America, currency was backed by something... They had the gold standard. For every dollar note you took to the Federal Reserve in America, they would give you an equivalent amount of gold. Then they moved from that to the Bretton Woods system, where they said they will not exactly show you how much gold they have but every

think about supply-demand economics. So much supply for currency with no backing should weaken the currency? It's a much more complicated story than that... The reason that the dollar maintains an artificial level of stability is because people like us, in India, China, all of us who export a lot of services and goods to America, we benefit disproportionately from having our rupee artificially devalued or artificially depreciate... The problem is a lot more stark for China. They export a lot of goods to America and get paid in US dollars. Now they do not carry

bias... I personally am not too fond of any political party in the country, and I can draw enough criticism and critique on every single one of them... Of all the regulatory institutions in India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) somehow stand out as outliers. I have been dealing with them personally for maybe 15 years now. There is not an iota of corruption... They operate at a level which is far superior than most other facets of our government and government bodies. I think they do an incredibly good job when it comes to regulation. The regulation, in fact, I think has helped us ward away from many of the international crises we have seen in our time, like the banking crisis in 2008, which affected the West. I think we didn't get hit so badly because of the good job of the regulators... When it comes to regulation, and how well regulated we are, I think, we are not on a par but far superior than the rest. It helps market participants like us, other FinTech companies, brokers and everybody else involved. They are not as erratic as the government; they don't say one thing today and change it tomorrow and again change it day after tomorrow. Why is Zerodha not going public? Are disclosures that public firms have to give an issue? Disclosures are not an issue at all. In fact, we do more, if not as many, disclosures as public companies do right now. Our entire premise has been that we are more transparent than everybody else... From the beginning, we have run a very lean model, wherein we have never taken on debt - we have not taken on a single bank loan or external investor in the last 11 years, even though we have had many opportunities to do so. The reason we work is we do not think like an organisation, we think as investors, and what we can build for the investor communities from the lens of what would have been useful for us. For example, we have a mutual fund selling platform called Coin. Traditionally, whenever you bought a mutual fund, you paid your distributor 1-2%. Often you did not even realise that you were paying this fee. When we started Coin many years ago, we said that we will wipe out this distributor and we will not charge any fee whatsoever. That 1-2% does not sound like a lot, but when you pay 1-2% in fees for 20 years, that is half your principal. Now, when we did this with Coin, we also said we will keep it absolutely free. Coin has probably sold ~20-30,000 crore worth of mutual funds till date and we have had zero revenue coming from that.



other country's currency across the world will maintain a peg to the dollar. The dollar in turn will have a peg with the gold... I think it used to be \$1 with some number of ounces, I can't remember. Then, Bretton Woods went away. When Richard Nixon was in power, and America had two issues on both ends - they were fighting a war in Vietnam and trying to send somebody to space... this was around 1971, and they really needed money. They said if we have to back whatever we have with some semblance of gold in our Federal Reserve, we won't have the money required to spend on these expeditions and events. So Nixon said that we will take our country off the gold standard, and that it will be a free trading market. He said that our currency's value will be based on supply and demand and how people traded internationally. Ever since then, America has been unscrupulously printing money without anything backing it. In the '90s, they were printing - by printing, I mean printing out of thin air - as much as half a trillion dollars a year. In the early 2000s, they were printing something like a trillion dollars a year. Last year has been a severe outlier where in one year alone, they have printed four or five trillion dollars a year. Now, one has to

the dollar back into China, because that would appreciate their own currency. They buy US debt with the money so they don't have to take it back onshore to China. That, and many other countries behaving like that, has created the dollar that we have today. It's artificially inflated. It works for many, many key stakeholders and the dollar retains the value that it has today. All this being said, what they have created by printing excessive money is debt. And last year they were already struggling to service that debt, and were in turn printing more currency to pay that debt... I personally think that someday the chickens will come home to roost... I don't know if you guys remember this, but George Soros, a very popular fund manager, went after the pound. Till then, nobody thought the British pound could be challenged. But he actually did break its back and he was able to significantly benefit from a large correction in the pound. Something like that will happen to the dollar. Increasing yields will reduce the time before something like this could happen. A company like Zerodha works in a highly regulated market like stock investment. What has your experience been like? So I am saying this, without being jaded or with any kind of

IDEMIA collaborates with ClimateSeed to invest in carbon project in India to offer truly sustainable payment cards

First project in this joint initiative with ClimateSeed will be in the "Khasi Hills community Carbon project"

Shillong, June 07 : IDEMIA, the global leader in Augmented Identity, has teamed up with leading global social initiative ClimateSeed to support its CO2 emissions offset project in India, to offer GREENPAY cards to its Indian and its global customers. IDEMIA is the preferred partner for India's leading public, private sector, MNC banks & Fintechs. It has its credit one of the largest corporate adoptions of biometric security for access and attendance for all of India's top 20 banking organizations. ClimateSeed, a leading social initiative launched by BNP Paribas in collaboration with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus will help IDEMIA in offsetting and compensating the residual footprint with investment in various sustainability projects. These projects are not only doing the environment good, but also contributing to several of the other 16 United Nations' sustainable development goals. With GREENPAY, IDEMIA is taking an end-to-end sustainability approach to the entire payment card lifecycle - from

chip module to card body, to digital customer onboarding, to card personalization & fulfillment, to transport, to recycling once expired. GREENPAY aims to minimize the carbon footprint of payment cards by reducing and recycling at every step of this life cycle. These efforts are dramatically decreasing the footprint and for the residual footprint. IDEMIA's first project in this joint initiative with ClimateSeed will be in the "Khasi Hills community Carbon project", employing 5,000-plus people, conserving existing and regenerating degraded forests in Meghalaya, north-eastern India. The young, regenerating forests are absorbing carbon at an annual rate of 1.75 tC/ha. Amanda Goubault, IDEMIA Executive VP Financial Institutions, said: "We are proud to be living up to our climate change pledges. We believe we should take real-life steps to help preserve the environment. Thanks to our ClimateSeed partnership, we are doing our bit to achieving a zero carbon economy and to championing sustainable development." Arnaud Despontin, IDEMIA VP

Corporate Social Responsibility, said: "This project is a major step towards the achievement of our CSR goals to uphold and step up our support for local communities - specifically the underprivileged - while advocating more effective environmental conservation. IDEMIA staff selected the following four key priorities in a company-wide survey: Climate action, no poverty, clean water, sanitation and quality education. This venture furthers three out of the four goals, namely climate action, quality education and reducing poverty." Amit Kakatkar, Regional Director- Financial Institutions, India, said: "From reducing the carbon footprint of the card to implementing eco-designed packaging, and replacing paper with digital services, everyone in the payment ecosystem has a part to play to ensure that we deliver to our consumers a payment tool with the lowest possible carbon footprint. There is only one planet Earth, we all have a responsibility to protect it. Our Banking and Fintech partners in India are excited to adopt Green payment initiatives."

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Cancel Assam Board Exams

otherwise activists of @NSUIAssam will be on streets to protest," tweeted NSUI National General Secretary Anushesh Sharma."This is not the Time to hold offline exams. Even if they are of shorter time period the risk is same. Please go for other methods, we don't want to waste our academic year. Those who are unhappy with the results can be given a chance later," reads a tweet."The students of other boards have already started preparing for entrance examinations but we AHSEC and SEBA students are still stuck in boards exam phase," said a student."Many state boards have cancelled the HS examination than why our EM @ranojpegu is so determined to conduct our examination. Why Sir? Respected @narendramodi sir said that cancellation of exam is taken considering the health of students," Barbie Buragohain tweeted."CBSE, ICSE exams are cancelled. Wake up ahsec ! It's time to step forward and cancel the 12th board exam," Krishtina Lahkar said.The Assam government is yet to make announcements for HSLC and HS final exams. Earlier, Education Minister Dr Ranaj Pegu had said that the government will take decisions regarding HSLC and HS exams very soon."We have taken the opinions of all the stakeholders. The process of taking opinion has been completed," the minister had said.According to PTI, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said a decision on holding the Class 12 exams will be taken after the CBSE announces modalities for marking the student.

Eminent journalist Promod Tiwari

at Pratah Khabar and editor at Nishpaksh Samachar. Completing graduation from Guwahati commerce college he did master's degree from Guwahati University and LLB from government law college, Guwahati. Today Tiwari has taken the charge of editor of 'The Assam Rising', Sankar Gohain, the editor of Dainandini Barta greets and welcomes Tiwari for his new responsibility.

CM visits riverine areas

been freed by police and district administration. Later talking to the newsmen, the Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of the police and district administration to evict the squatters and he called on the remaining encroachers to wilfully vacate the lands. Saying that all steps would be taken to preserve and protect the historic Shiva Temple, he assured the management committee of setting up a Manikut, build a guest house and boundary walls of the temple. He called on all sections of people, cutting across religious beliefs, to join hands with the government in making the temple a place of tourist attraction, while preserving its sanctity. The Chief Minister reiterated the state government's commitment to make the lands of satras and temples in the state encroachment free and said the state government would take all steps to protect Assam's land, identity, culture, language and heritage from aggressors and illegal migrants. He also informed that the temple management committee would be entitled to decide how to utilize its land and earn revenue. Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Sipahjar MLA Paramananda Rajbangshi and former MLA Gurujyoti Das along with district administration officials accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

Ranjit Barthakur takes over

Tata Trusts towards creating 'Cleft Free' Assam & North East India," said a press statement. Assam is very close to becoming the first 'Cleft Free' state in India, it said. Mission Smile, in its Guwahati Comprehensive Cleft Care Centre at the Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital, has contributed over 20,000 cleft surgeries in the last 10 years, the statement said.Barthakur is an entrepreneur with a special interest in improving health, education and preserving culture and environment across the Eastern Himalayas.He is the founder and president of the Balipara Foundation, an organization focused on Eastern Himalayas.He has worked towards achieving ecological neutrality and building knowledge on the region, the statement said.Ranjit Barthakur remained as an advisor to the Assam chief minister from 2002 to 2015 for strategy, action planning, project formulation, investment initiation and image building exercise.He is the chief architect of the vision behind NaturenomicsTM, which has been developed in collaboration with Globally Managed Services (GMS).Through NaturenomicsTM, Ranjit Barthakur and his team at the Balipara Foundation have developed Rural Futures, a vision for enhancing community-based conservation and social mobility through natural capital regeneration, the statement added.He also served as the chairman of an Indian Premier League (IPL) team.

Confident that Mehul Choksi

the moment.In a related development, the fugitive diamondaire has disclosed the names of his alleged abductors to the Antiguan police. In an affidavit filed before the Dominica High Court, Choksi claimed that he is a "law-abiding citizen" and that he had left India only to seek medical treatment in the United States.He told the Dominica High Court that the Indian authorities can "interview" him anytime as part of an investigation that is underway against him.Meanwhile, Antigua police have commenced an investigation into the possible abduction of Mehul Choksi from Antigua on May 23, 2021, according to Antigua News Room. Prime Minister Gaston Browne said that Choksi's lawyers wrote to the Police Commissioner providing the names of the people who allegedly abducted him.Browne said that the police and the government are taking the allegations seriously, according to the Antigua News Room.Choksi, accused in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank scam, got interim relief from immediate repatriation to India by the Dominican court which adjourned the matter of his detention on Thursday. As the next date of hearing is yet to be fixed, the court proceedings are likely to take time.According to local media reports, his team of lawyers connived with the opposition leaders to pressure the judiciary, which rather than questioning Choksi's illegal entry from Antigua to Dominica, believed his lawyers' version that he was abducted.Reports about Choksi's plan to escape to Cuba have also come to the fore. It may be recalled that Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi are accused in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank loan fraud case. Choksi fled the country and was granted citizenship of Antigua and Barbuda in January 2018. He is involved in a legal battle to prevent his extradition to India. Choksi had gone missing from Antigua on May 23 after going out for dinner and was soon caught in Dominica. He was charged with illegal entry by the police in Dominica after he allegedly escaped from Antigua and Barbuda in a possible attempt to evade extradition to India.

NEEPCO issues clarification over

Pare basin, NEEPCO claimed.NEEPCO claimed that "even in the absence of the Ranganadi plant, the same amount of water, if not more, would have flown in the river and reaches the downstream plains of Assam".The Ranganadi River has many tributaries; many of them are in the downstream of the dam.So, all the water flows through the river and reaches Assam, it said."There is an incorrect perception that the flood in Lakhimpur is because of release of water from Ranganadi dam. Flood in Lakhimpur is not a new phenomenon and is happening much before the construction of this plant. It is purely due to heavy rainfall in the upper reaches of Lakhimpur only," NEEPCO asserted.Heavy rainfall in upper catchment has resulted in huge inflow in all the rivers of greater Lakhimpur area in recent days.On June 5, 2021, due to flash flood in the upstream reaches of Ranganadi, in a span of one hour, the water inflow at Ranganadi increased from 91 cumecs at 1 pm to 420 cumecs at 2 pm, it said."After utilizing the full handling capacity of the reservoir, the remaining water was released into the river as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and observing full safety protocols and downstream warnings," NEEPCO claimed."The district administration was alerted instantly. Flood warning and alert system devised through the North East Space Application Station (NESAC), ISRO, Government of India is in use at the plant," NEEPCO official Bharali further said.On Saturday, the rising waters of Ranganadi river swept away a bridge at Gobarisali.Lakhimpur MP Pradan Baruah also expressed concern over the release of water from the Ranganadi dam.Baruah requested Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to raise the issue with the Union power ministry."Huge water discharge by @NEEPCOlimited post heavy rains endangers Lakhimpur/catchment area of flooding. Ranganadi, tributaries flowing to brim. Proactive action by NEEPCO, armed with weather forecast, was needed. Requested Hon @himantabiswa for asap resolution with @MinOfPower," he had tweeted.

Majuli may not get Unesco's

requested them to take necessary steps to expedite the matter. The committee has also sent a letter to the government seeking a status report on the initiatives taken to prepare the dossier, which is like a conclusive documentary of the island. "Besides raising our demands before the chief minister and the local MLA, we sent a letter to the government seeking a status report on the matter. But we are yet to receive any response from the government in this regard so far," said Jagat Hazarika, a social worker and convener of the committee on Sunday.Hazarika, a former secretary of Majuli Suraksha Samannaya Mancha, an organisation formed for protection and development of the river island, said: "The Government of India will have to submit the dossier by June 20. Sadly, nothing has been done in case of Majuli so far. Although the demand to make Majuli a world heritage site has been made since 2000 and nomination dossiers were submitted to the Unesco in 2006, 2012 and 2014. Majuli will be deprived of getting the global recognition once again due to lapse on part of the government."Majuli was shortlisted in the world heritage site tentative list at the world heritage committee session at Suzhou in China in 2004. Subsequently, a comprehensive dossier was submitted in 2006 followed by additional information in 2008.In 2011, the Centre proposed the name of Majuli for its inclusion in the 'cultural landscape' category of Unesco world heritage site. The government along with the Archaeological Survey of India had also appointed a conservation architect as the man to prepare the nomination dossier for the proposal which was submitted to Unesco in February 2012. In 2017, the culture ministry decided to send the proposal for Majuli's inclusion to Unesco. Earlier, the government had also formed Majuli cultural landscape management authority in 2006.Majuli is located in the middle of the Brahmaputra river. In 2016 it was declared as a district of Assam and became the first island district in the country. According to official records, Majuli originally spread over an area of 880 square km at the beginning of 20th century. However, over the years, due to severe erosion and deforestation, the island's size shrunk to about 400 square km by 2014.Majuli is the seat of neo-Vaishnavite culture initiated by reformist saint Srimanta Sankaradeva and his disciple Madhavdeva in 16th century who established about 70 Vaishnavite monasteries. Majuli is the hotspot of flora and fauna and a popular tourist destination.

Thunderstorms with lightning

monsoon has further advanced into more parts of central Arabian Sea, some parts of Maharashtra, entire Karnataka, some parts of Telangana, entire Tamil Nadu, some parts of Andhra Pradesh, more parts of central Bay of Bengal and northeast Bay of Bengal and the entire northeastern states of India and also most parts of the sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim on Sunday," said Sunit Das, a senior scientist from the Regional Meteorological Centre of the IMD.s per IMD's long-range forecast, seasonal rainfall in the northeast is most likely to be below normal this monsoon (from June to September) with less than 95 per cent of the long period average (LPA). In its long range forecast for the southwest monsoon, the IMD recently predicted that rainfall over the country as a whole is most likely to be normal, ranging from 96 per cent to 104 per cent of LPA.The Met office said after onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala, it advanced further and caused rainfall over parts and sectors of the meteorological sub-divisions, maintaining the spatial continuity of the northern limit of monsoon. For the last four to five days, the three meteorological sub-divisions of NE region received light to moderate rainfall at many to most places with isolated heavy rainfall. By Sunday, conditions became favourable for the onset of monsoon in the region.Currently, a cyclonic circulation lies over sub-Himalayan West Bengal and neighbourhood and extends upto 1.5 km above mean sea level with a trough aloft between 2.1 km & 3.1 km above mean sea level roughly along Long .90 degree East to the north of Lat. 23 degree North. As a result of the weather system, weathermen said, the northeastern region is likely to get more rains.Most of the northeastern states experienced deficit rainfall during the three month-long pre-monsoon season that culminated on May 31.

Uttarakhand has lowest child sex

overall SDG score improved by 6 points—from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020-21. This positive stride towards achieving the targets is largely driven by exemplary country-wide performance in Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), where the composite Goal scores are 83 and 92, respectively," said Niti Aayog.First launched in December 2018, the index has become the primary tool for monitoring progress on the SDGs in the country and has simultaneously fostered competition among the states and union territories by ranking them on the global goals. With one-third of the journey towards achieving the 2030 Agenda behind us, this edition of the index report focuses on the significance of partnerships as its theme, the Aayog said.Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog said, "The report reflects on the partnerships we have built and strengthened during our SDG efforts. The narrative throws light on how collaborative initiatives can result in better outcomes and greater impacts."The SDG India Index 2020-21, developed in collaboration with the United Nations in India, tracks the progress of all states and UTs on 115 indicators that are aligned to MoSPI's National Indicator Framework (NIF). The index represents the articulation of the comprehensive nature of the Global Goals under the 2030 Agenda while being attuned to the national priorities.e modular nature of the index has become a policy tool and a ready reckoner for gauging the progress of states and UTs on the expansive nature of the Goals, including health, education, gender, economic growth, institutions, climate change and environment.

Delhi sees huge traffic jams

can function between 10 AM to 8 PM on an odd-even basis, ie, shops can open on alternate days depending on their shop number. Delhi Metro, which was suspended since May 10, has also resumed services with 50 per cent capacity, whereas, the private offices have also been allowed to function with 50 per cent staff.However, cinemas and theatres, restaurants (except home delivery/take away), bars, gyms, spas, barbershops, salons, beauty parlours and any shop pertaining to entertainment/ amusement services have not been permitted to operate.This is to be noted that the Delhi government had first imposed a lockdown in the national capital on April 19 due to the second wave of COVID-19. The lockdown was extended a few times since then. After a continuous decline in daily coronavirus cases for several days, Kejriwal announced that the national capital will begin to unlock from May 31 in a phased manner, wherein, manufacturing and production units were allowed to function.Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has stated that the air quality over Delhi-NCT is likely to remain in 'Moderate category' on Monday. The air quality is likely to deteriorate and crossover from Moderate to 'Poor category' on Tuesday. "The predominant pollutant will be PM10. The strong surface winds are favourable for raising dust locally and transport of dust from the nearby region," the IMD predicted.

AAMSU stages protest in Gossaigaon

Gossaigaon, June 7: The All Assam Minority Students Union in short AAMSU), West Kokrajhar District Committee have staged a protest against the land eviction that took place at Kaki in Hojai wearing black ribbon here in Padmabil under Kokrajhar district on June 7.The Students Union had alleged that the Hojai District administration defying the order of Guwahati High Court carried out the land eviction drive Amidst the pandemic situation through out the state considering the matter of serious concern and is inhuman act which will not be tolerated anymore.The Students Union further strictly condemned the state government and appealed before the concerned authority to rehabilitate the victims with adequate compensation as soon as possible.The organization further submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam through SDO-Civil Gossaigaon for necessary arrangements for the scattered families.

Flood caused by major rivers inundates many areas in Lakhimpur district

North Lakhimpur, June 07: As per the assessment of the Lakhimpur district administration, the flash flood has affected during the last 24 hours a total of 18 villages, 11,529 people and 191.3 hectre crop area in the district.

Wanted criminal arrested at Nagaon

NAGAON, June 7: Tajnur Hussain alias Raju, a fake CID official who was declared as being absconded by Nagaon police one year back was arrested recently from Juria area by Nagaon police.

Sources claimed that Nagaon police recovered one 7.65mm pistol from his possession last year when police picked him up. But fortunately Tajnur Hussain was able to flee from police net on the same day following which he was declared as being absconded by Nagaon police.

Since Tajnur was hiding in Morigaon district and people of Morigaon often witnessed him in a white XUV car in the district. Besides, he frequently wore police uniform and identified himself as a CID personnel to the people of the district and visited Morigaon Police Guest House.

Sources claimed that he was able to do all those misdeeds due to his closeness to a top cop of Morigaon district.

Hence the arrest of Tajnur Hussain alias Raju has drawn sharp reaction among the people of the district. Conscious people of the district demanded a high level probe into the secret nexus between the criminal Tajnur Hussain and the top cop of Assam police.

CM reviews activities of Agriculture department

CM directs to draft guideline for a mission in agriculture sector



Guwahati, June 7: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewed the activities of the Agriculture department in a meeting held at his office in Janata Bhawan today and made several directions to rejuvenate the agriculture sector in the State. The Chief Minister instructed the officials to draft a guideline for a mission to be launched in the agriculture sector similar to Sarva Shiksha Mission (SSA) or National Health Mission (NHM) with a view to give a renewed stimulus to the agriculture sector. He also directed to transfer all Agricultural Development Officers who have completed three years of service in a particular place of posting. Further to ensure supply of quality seeds to the farmers of the State, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma asked the department to procure seeds directly from the seeds corporations of the best seeds producing States. The Chief Minister also suggested steps for a comprehensive survey to assess the scenario of agricultural produce in 3000 village panchayats and VCDs involving the students of Assam Agricultural University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University. Moreover, the Chief Minister directed to take needful steps for making the list of beneficiaries of PM Kisan Scheme error-free so that genuine farmers could avail the benefits of the scheme. He also asked the department to initiate stringent action against those involved in the irregularities of fertilizer supply. Underlining the potential of horticulture products of the State, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma instructed the department to take steps for promotion of horticulture products which have rich export potential and market value. Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Additional Chief Secretary Ravi Shankar Prasad, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, Secretary cum Director of Agriculture Vinod Seshan, CEO of MMS-CMSGUY Anant Lal Gyani were present in the meeting among others.

204 more fresh COVID cases detected in Nagaon dist

NAGAON, June 7: Total 204 more fresh COVID cases were detected today here at Nagaon, taking the total cumulative active COVID cases to 3774 while 424 people who were undergoing treatment in hospital as well as at home after being affected by the virus, have been recovered from the infection today, sources added. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 96 were immediately admitted to Nagaon COVID hospital as well as other COVID Care Centres set up at various places in the district while the rest were put in home isolation. Rapid Antigen Test was conducted on 5742 people today while RT-PCR test was conducted on 232 swab samples, sources further added.Meanwhile the district administration today scheduled two vaccination camps on June 9 next at Nagaon Dawson HS and Multi purpose School and Haiborgaon High school respectively for those people who took the first dose of Covaxin on or before April 16, 2021 last in the district. Besides, the schedule for the second dose of Covaxin for the people who took the first dose on April 17 or thereafter will be intimated to all later on, a press release issued by district information and public relations office, Nagaon stated. In the release, it was also stated that people who were vaccinated on April 17 or thereafter, were requested not to crowd unnecessarily at those two vaccination camps on June 9 next.

AIIMS Delhi starts screening children from Monday for Covaxin trials

New Delhi, June 07 : The All India Medical Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is expected to start screening of children for clinical trials of India-made Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin from Monday. Last week, AIIMS Patna started a similar trial for Bharat Biotech's children aged between 12 and 18.After getting permission from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), AIIMS Delhi is now starting the screening process before starting the actual trials.The DCGI's approval came after a recommendation on May 12 by a Subject Expert Committee (SEC), it further reported.The paediatric trials for Covaxin started in AIIMS Patna last Tuesday after Bharat Biotech's vaccine received DCGI nod on May 11 to conduct clinical trials on children."After these trials, the age group will be 6-12 years and then 2-6 years but now we have started trials in the age group of 12-18 years," said Dr Prabhat Kumar Singh, Director, AIIMS, Patna.Dr Singh informed that 54 children registered for the trials of which 16 were in the age group of 12-18. Apart from physical examination, RT-PCR tests were also conducted on these children to check for Covid-19 antibodies or any other pre-existing diseases, he added.India started the world's largest vaccination drive on January 16 this year in a phased manner with healthcare workers getting inoculated first. The vaccination of frontline workers started on February 2.The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for those over 60 years of age and for people aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions.

England penalty fiasco won't happen again, says unhappy Southgate

Pretending that booing England is about 'keeping politics out' is cowardly



London, June 07 : Gareth Southgate has said he will not allow a repeat of the episode in which Jordan Henderson took penalty duties away from Dominic Calvert-Lewin during England's 1-0 victory against Romania at the Riverside Stadium on Sunday. On a day when a section of the crowd booed the players taking the knee before kick-off again, confusion reigned when Calvert-Lewin won his side's second penalty. England's designated takers, Marcus Rashford and James Ward-Prowse, were off the pitch at the time and Southgate was unhappy when Henderson's spot-kick was saved after he had taken the ball off Calvert-Lewin. "I was expecting Dominic to take it and when Hendo walked over I thought he was making sure that happened, so I will have to check what happened," England's manager said. "We will pull rank next time." Marcus and James Ward-Prowse were the two nominated at the start of the game and they'd both come off. But Hendo was the captain on the field by then. He was

the one to make the decision. If I was Dom as the centre-forward I might not have gone along with that so easily." Henderson, who came off the bench to make his first appearance since sustaining a groin injury in February, remains a huge doubt for England's opening game against Croatia at Euro 2020. "We know the situation Hendo is in," Southgate said. "It's a step forward for him physically today, which was important for him to be able to play some sort of part in the tournament and we are realistic about what that could be. We're not hanging our hat on him being fit. If we can get him to a good level then that's a bonus." Southgate, whose side won thanks to a penalty from Rashford, was unhappy with the reaction from the crowd when the teams took the knee in the fight against racism. "I sadly sort of expected what happened to happen," he said. "We have accepted that as a group. It's not going to stop what we're doing and what we believe. It's not going to stop my support for our players and staff. We're going to have to live with that." Southgate is due to name a replacement for the injured Trent Alexander-Arnold and was impressed with Ward-Prowse. "Prowse's professionalism and approach all week given the disappointment of being left out has been first class," Southgate said. "The decision won't necessarily be about the performances today. It's going to be positional and the area we feel we need the most cover."

London, June 07 : Romania's players agreed to take the knee for the first time at the Riverside Stadium as a gesture of solidarity with their English hosts. As loud, angry boos rang out around the ground the Romanians must have wondered what they'd stumbled into here. What kind of weird, contorted, backwards kind of country is this England anyway? Didn't they used to be someone? Welcome to England 2021. Divided, belligerent, set against itself - and reduced now by the formalities of a football match to debating the idea of "Englishness" until it falls apart at the seams. This is England a week away from a de facto home Euros, two weeks away from the great unlocking after a year of angst-ridden isolation. This is England, and everything's going to be OK. Probably. Has there been a more fraught, muddled and downright weird buildup to an England tournament to date? Clearly not. The world itself has never been this punch-drunk while still attempting to stage major leisure industry events. It isn't Gareth Southgate's fault that the schedule has been so brutal, that the players have been passed to him in a state of fatigue, that the country has managed to generate and encourage so many people who are still clearly confused



by the meaning of words such as tolerance and equality. But this is where we find ourselves. At the end of this muddled, chancy 1-0 defeat of Romania England have a week to go until their first Group D fixture against Croatia. They're being booed by their own fans. The first team haven't had a runout since March. Jordan Henderson, Southgate's great midfield hope, isn't fit enough to play more than a half (and enacted a penalty kick abomination here). Southgate hasn't blinked, has continued to speak with great clarity. But he will be entering this tournament with fingers crossed, and a sense of trusting to the winds. First, the booing. Nothing was solved here despite Southgate's own, very clear and respectful call for kindness. It will be there again at Wembley. What to do with this now? There are issues with kneeling. Nobody has to agree with anyone else about anything. You might feel this is not necessary, or believe that discrimination is overplayed, or - who knows - a good thing. You might feel there is something odd in football as an industry preaching about inequality, or men who earn 350 times the national wage in a country where people go hungry.

These are points for discussion. But the public booing of a simple anti-racism gesture is a shameful, hurtful act. Doing so to young men, your own players, who are regularly racially abused is doubly shameful. Pretending this has something to do with "keeping politics out", or that creeping "Marxism" is a threat to your way of life in Britain (Conservative majority: 83) is cowardly and disingenuous. It is worth remembering in the middle of all this that football is just an amplification of what is out there. If there are racists, boneheads and people without compassion at England football matches, this is because these people exist in England. The harm they do is not confined to, contained by, or even that relevant to football. Football has to live with it, because no other physical human activity offers this soapbox, this visible theatre of hate. And in reality the people who need to answer for this level of dissonance and rage are those in power: governments of the past 20 years; a sickly strain in the British media; and all those diffuse clumps of intolerance and ignorance wherever they may be found. There was also a football match at the Riverside - but not much of one. The starting

team was another England B, another Duchess of Sandwich XI affair. It is pointless to criticise Southgate for this when he has full knowledge of his players' levels of fatigue and readiness. There has never been a season, or indeed a football tournament quite like this. But it is hard to avoid the feeling of a slight loss of focus. The 26-man squad has allowed a kind of lacuna for woolly thinking, the overmanning in some areas, the presence of injured "good blokes", the use of pressed-men to pad the warmups. At the 1958 World Cup in Sweden England's squad was joined by a businessman called "Chalwyn", a friend of Stanley Rous who joined in training as it pleased him. Are we in Chalwyn territory here? These are still good players, England still a good team, and as such there were still positive to be drawn. Jack Grealish was willing and bold and fun, and won England's decisive penalty with a clever piece of play. An induced foul, but also poor defending. James Ward-Prowse's free-kicks were accurate and menacing. Marcus Rashford showed some good movement and took a fine penalty. Sam Johnstone made an incredible save from close range. Henderson appeared at half-time and ran around a bit. With zero goals in his 58 previous England games, he grabbed the ball from Dominic Calvert-Lewin as England were awarded another penalty on 77 minutes. Henderson took a poor kick that was saved. And so on we go into the great unknown, the overwhelming excitement of a kind-of home Euros. There are no rules here. England have never looked so rushed before a tournament. But they are resourceful and talented; and in an odd kind of way all the more bonded by the hostility of a very audible group of their own fans.

Mo Farah brushes off bad run and says he can defend Olympic 10,000m title

London, June 07 : In elite sport there is often a fine line between defiance and delusion, and Mo Farah appeared to be skirting dangerously close to the latter in the aftermath of one of the worst runs of his career on Saturday night. Speaking after running 22 seconds outside the qualifying time for the Olympics, and finishing eighth in a race that doubled as the UK trials, the 38-year-old insisted he was still capable of defending his 10,000m title in Tokyo - if he recovered from what he said was a "little niggle" in his left ankle. "This will not be the end," he said. "No, no, no, no. There's a lot of work to be done and I just have to get this thing sorted. It won't take me long in terms of my fitness. I have to make sure I'm right." When asked whether he believed he could still win at the Olympics, which starts in

six weeks' time, Farah replied: "Yeah, I believe so. It will take courage and balls to be able to go out there and mix it with the guys." Crucially, he also admitted: "At the same time, if it is in a situation like now, then there's no chance. But I believe if I get my head down in the next three or four weeks, knuckle down, get this little niggle out the way and then hopefully we should be all right." Farah still has three weeks to run the 27:28.00 time needed to qualify for Tokyo and one option could be to try again in the Golden Spike meeting at Leiden next weekend. However, that may be too soon. Another idea could be to try to qualify over 5,000m instead at the British Athletics Championships at the end of the month. Either way, there is a growing sense that time - as well as his body - is against him. "It will be painful to miss out if it



happens," said Farah. "But at the same time I don't want to just go and make a team. I want to go out there and challenge Joshua Cheptegei and the other guys. It will take sub-27 minutes to win. Can I be in that form? I believe I can, but the most important thing is getting this thing sorted." There were some suggestions on social media that age has finally caught up with him. Or that, without the help of his former coach Alberto Salazar, who guided him to four Olympic

gold medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016, he is no longer the same force on the track. Perhaps. But sources at UK Athletics and his management company insist Farah was in great shape when training last month in Flagstaff, Arizona. But while the ankle niggle does not appear serious it was telling that Farah nodded when asked whether he faced a race against time to defend his Olympic title. "Yeah," he added ruefully. "Is it Mo time or real time?"

Euro 2020 team guides part 15: England

London, June 07 : This article is part of the Guardian's Euro 2020 Experts' Network, a cooperation between some of the best media organisations from the 24 countries who qualified. theguardian.com is running previews from two countries each day in the run-up to the tournament kicking off on 11 June. Although the hype around England has ended up looking ridiculous in previous years, the optimism feels justified this time. There is no need to adopt an inferiority complex. It is not entitled to point out that Gareth Southgate's side are capable of ending the talk of 1966 and all that. This is not the usual English arrogance before a major tournament. There is no denying that England, who swept through qualifying, are one of the main contenders. They boast a fearsome attack and have progressed since reaching the World Cup semi-finals in 2018, adding depth to the squad with the introduction of some excellent youngsters. It is exciting to imagine technically gifted players such as Mason Mount and Phil Foden linking behind the captain, Harry Kane. Jack Grealish is another who offers unpredictability and it is tempting to assume that the main question for Southgate is how best to assemble his attack. Raheem Sterling cannot be discounted despite his indifferent form for Manchester City and, although Marcus Rashford has struggled with injuries this season, the Manchester United forward remains a key player. Yet caveats still apply. For all the excitement about the attack, doubts persist elsewhere. Jordan Pickford can be erratic in goal. The defence is a concern. Harry Maguire is an injury worry and although the rehabilitation of John Stones is welcome, the Manchester City centre-back's mistake against Poland in March demonstrated that he has not completely cut out the errors from his game. The worry for Southgate is that

England will stumble against stronger opposition. It is why he has used a back three at times. Although he has been criticised for his conservatism, Southgate is conscious of the need to defend properly and will not throw caution to the wind if he does use a 4-3-3 system. Do not expect to see England line up with Declan Rice holding everything together on his own in defensive midfield. It is likely to be a double pivot with another player protecting the back four, though Calvin Phillips and Jordan Henderson are injury concerns. "We have to find a balance," Southgate says. That is the challenge awaiting the manager. England must be tactically astute against the better teams, but also need to play with the right tempo, show no fear and be adventurous. Southgate does not want to be accused of holding this side back. M&S reported that sales of waistcoats rocketed by 35% during the 2018



World Cup, when Gareth Southgate's preference for traditional formal wear turned him into an unlikely fashion icon. His fondness for fielding two holding midfielders shows he is scarcely more adventurous tactically than he is sartorially, but he is a sensible and serious custodian for a fine generation of English talent, and comes into the tournament with one of the best win percentages of any England manager. Over the last year Marcus Rashford, once just an unusually talented footballer, has morphed into a figure of genuine national importance, repeatedly beating the British government in a one-on-one, scoring an MBE and transforming into hot commercial property. He has joined Jay-Z's Roc Nation talent agency, launched a charitable partnership with Burberry and co-hosted an online cookery programme with Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge. Oh, and he has started a book club for disadvantaged children and written a book himself, called You Are a Champion. A year ago, Jude Bellingham was a promising kid with a few Championship appearances to his name. A move to Borussia Dortmund, outstanding performances in the Champions League and injuries to other midfielders made his inclusion inevitable. "I couldn't be more impressed with him as a human being" is Southgate's verdict so far. If England win their group, they will play their last-16 match at Wembley on Bellingham's 18th birthday, or as long as there are Three Lions on England's shirt, the Euro 1996 anthem will ring across the terraces. The "30 years of hurt" now stretch to 55, which is both depressing and much harder to squeeze into the song.

Pérez wins dramatic Azerbaijan GP after Verstappen crash and Hamilton blunder

Pérez takes advantage of late restart to take victory

London, June 07 : That Lewis Hamilton might put so much as a finger wrong has come to seem almost inconceivable, so deft his every touch and so sure for so long. Yet at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix the faintest, erroneous brush of his steering wheel proved enormously costly. It left Hamilton and his Mercedes team understandably shellshocked given the world champion had a potentially significant lead in the title fight in his grasp. That lead disappeared in a puff of brake dust as for once the Hamilton magic turned against him. The race was won by Red Bull's Sergio Pérez, a superb drive for his second F1 victory, but it was overshadowed by the drama whereby both title protagonists, Hamilton and Max Verstappen, failed to score a point. Verstappen suffered a tyre failure late in the race, costing him a likely win, and Hamilton made a highly unusual

error to drop from second to 15th on the penultimate lap. Both incidents will elicit serious investigations. The import of Hamilton's vicissitude was writ large on the face of Mercedes' team principal, Toto Wolff, who looked drained and distraught afterwards. Mercedes knew Baku and Monaco would be perhaps their least competitive races of the season and to have been close to gaining at least 18 points over Verstappen only to see it disappear was clearly difficult to deal with. "The emotion and frustration is so overwhelming at the moment," said Wolff. "Both of us are destroyed to be honest. For him as a driver it's so close, then it's all gone." The decisive moment came as drama enveloped what for much of the afternoon had been a pedestrian affair. Verstappen's late tyre failure caused the race to be red-flagged on lap 49, leaving a two-lap sprint to the flag, with Hamilton

lining up in second beside Pérez. At the restart Hamilton flew from the grid and looked to have the lead, only for his brakes to lock and his car to career straight on into the run-off area. It seemed inexplicable given Hamilton knew how important it was to consolidate the points. "You have to remember this is a marathon not a sprint," Wolff said to his team before the restart. Later he said he believed it was a perfect start let down by a tiny imperfection. "Did I have the magic on?" Hamilton asked of the race engineer, Pete Bonnington, afterwards. Bono confirmed he did. The "magic" button switches brake balance in the car forward to warm the front tyres during formation laps. It is then switched off for the start but Hamilton confirmed he had nudged it on again by accident. It was an almost imperceptible moment in the cockpit but enough to cause the lock-up that cost him so dearly. "It's a very painful experience," said Hamilton. "Today was really a stroke of bad luck but Max had bad luck too. Naturally I am sorry to all the team but we will regroup and try and come back stronger. It's quite a humbling experience to come away with nothing after all the hard work." It transpired the day had presented a very personal struggle for Hamilton as well. "It's quite difficult also because I lost a friend this morning, so it's a mixture of emotions," he said. He had been off the pace almost all weekend and to have

claimed a hatful of points with Verstappen out would have been beyond expectations. Wolff admitted this race and the previous round at Monaco were the toughest of his time as team principal. Verstappen, then, had a lucky escape in maintaining his four-point championship lead but more importantly in now walking away from a high-speed crash. The Dutchman had led from Pérez and Hamilton for most of the race before his misfortune. He went out when his left-rear failed causing a high-speed crash into the wall on the straight. He had a major impact but was unharmed and furious enough at his bad luck to deliver an angry kick to the guilty tyre. Aston Martin's Lance Stroll also suffered a left-rear failure at 180mph on the main straight and had an even bigger impact with the wall. The incidents have called into question the structural integrity of the Pirelli tyres but Pirelli's head of F1, Mario Isola, said preliminary investigations suggested debris had been to blame. Red Bull's team principal Christian Horner believed it had been a tyre problem rather than a puncture. "I think it's a tyre failure," he said. The Red Bull sporting director, Jonathan Wheatley, told the FIA the team had no warning in their data of any impending failure. The FIA red-flagged the race shortly afterwards, allowing all the teams to change their tyres before the restart that proved so costly for Hamilton.



Serena Williams out of French Open after straight sets defeat by Rybakina

Washington, June 7 : The only certainty in the bottom half of the women's singles draw at the French Open this year is the constant thrill of uncertainty. On Sunday afternoon



the final top-20 player in the section fell and it was the most successful of them all as Serena Williams was thoroughly outplayed by a young Kazakh star called Elena Rybakina, who won 6-3, 7-5. With Williams' defeat Rybakina, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Tamara Zidansek and Paula Badosa remain in the bottom half of the draw. None has ever braved a major semi-final and only Pavlyuchenkova has contested a quarter-final. One will seize the moment and become the newest first-time grand-slam finalist. Rybakina may not yet be widely known beyond

the confines of the tennis world but this has been coming. She has been ready to explode ever since her first rise into the top 100 in 2019. Perpetually composed, cold-blooded and

doubt as Williams tried to assert herself. The American desperately attempted to respond to Rybakina's fearless ball-striking by moving her around with angles but she was initially too passive, dropping the ball short and watching as Rybakina easily cleaned up. Elena Rybakina produced the biggest win of her career against Serena Williams. She later over-compensated and over-hit, never finding a comfortable balance. Her short bursts of quality were insufficient against such a consistent, high level of attacking tennis from the Kazakh. Even when she wavered at times and nerves seemed on the brink of taking over, Rybakina always had an ace or a seamless down-the-line backhand winner up her sleeve to steady herself. Williams appeared to have wrestled control in the second set after recovering Rybakina's early break but, with Williams serving at 5-5, Rybakina broke to love and she never looked back. In Rybakina's short career on the WTA circuit she is already known for her composure and a swirling question was whether the biggest win of her career would provoke any positive emotion on victory. It did not. After seeing a Williams return go long, off one final crushing serve, to secure the victory of her career, Rybakina simply stared blankly ahead. "Everybody laughs about my reactions but for me it's much easier like this, not to show

any reactions," she said. "I'm a really calm person but on top of this all my nerves [are] inside. Sometimes it's good. Sometimes of course it's not, because to hold everything inside, it's not possible. One day it's going to explode, and who knows when, so it's dangerous for other people, especially close ones." For now, Rybakina is a danger to only those across the net. Williams will rue her failure to take the opportunity of the draw but she was outplayed by one of the brightest young stars. She departed with the understanding that she has made progress in Paris and a far greater chance of winning her 24th major is on the faster surfaces to come. "I'm in a much better place than when I got here," she said. "You know, just literally trying to win a match, because it had been a really difficult season for me on the clay. And although I love the clay, I was, like, if I could just win a match." For Rybakina, who represented Russia in her youth but switched to Kazakhstan after receiving no financial help, this is simply the first positive mark on a long road ahead. "The end goal is always to win the tournaments and dream and go of course to win the Grand Slam. So every time I step in on court I try not to think against who I play," she said. "Just try to do my work, follow the plan which we have. If it works well, I'm winning and, if it's not, I'm learning from the matches."

Sifan Hassan smashes women's 10,000m record by 10 seconds in super spikes

London, June 7 : The game-changing effect of super spikes on track and field was again dramatically emphasised in Hengelo on Sunday as Sifan Hassan obliterated the women's 10,000m record by more than 10 seconds. On a day when Britain's Dina Asher-Smith ran a meeting record of 10.92sec in the women's 100m, it was the Dutchwoman who stole the show in front of her home fans. The 28-year-old Hassan, who appeared to be wearing the latest version of the Nike ZoomX Dragonfly spikes, which have been billed as the "fastest shoes ever", ran 29:06.82 to destroy the previous best of 29:17:45

get for a record. Hassan, who was trained by Alberto Salazar until the controversial American coach's four-year doping ban in 2019, has always maintained she was a clean athlete and believed in him. Salazar, meanwhile, is appealing against his ban. Later in the afternoon Asher-Smith also looked impressive as she breezed to victory in the women's 100m at the Continental Tour event. The 26-year-old, a silver medallist at the 2019 world championships, clocked 10.92sec in Holland, not only breaking the meeting record but well inside the Olympic qualification time of 11.15. Britain's Dina Asher-Smith (right)



set by Almaz Ayana of Ethiopia at the 2016 Olympics. Incredibly Hassan, who fled from Ethiopia for the Netherlands at age 16 as a refugee, ran the final kilometre in 2:45.77 as she powered into history. She now owns world records for the mile, road 5km, one hour run and the 10,000m - as well as 1500m and 10,000m world titles. "Wow, to run this world record here today in Hengelo is something I could only dream of," said Hassan, who achieved her latest world record on the same track where Haile Gebrselassie set his final 10,000m world record in 1998 and Kenenisa Bekele set his 5,000m world record in 2004. "It's the perfect confirmation of the hard work we've put in getting ready for Tokyo. I am so happy to share this record in front of my Dutch fans. I am so happy." In 2019 World Athletics introduced new rules for track spikes, limiting the use of plates and restricting the sole to no thicker than 30mm. However they have had little effect. All four men's and women's 5,000m and 10,000m world records have been broken over the past 10 months. Athletes have also benefited from pacing lights on the track, which allows them to see whether they are on tar-

in the Diamond League at Gateshead International Stadium in May 2021. She has just set a 100m meeting record in Hengelo. There was a slight tailwind, but Asher-Smith looked to have plenty left in the tank, finishing ahead of rivals Dafne Schippers and Blessing Okagbare and setting a meeting record. Britain's Daryll Neita was third with a personal best 11.04. "It's amazing to be back here in Hengelo," Asher-Smith said. "I remember when I raced Dafne here in 2015. It was my first ever race breaking the British record and I'm really happy to have broken the meeting record. It's so nice to have real people back at a track meet." There were also wins for Britain's Jemma Reekie in the women's 800m and Jake Wightman in the men's 1500m. Reekie took it out from the front to win the 800m in 2:00.77 to hold off her fast-finishing training partner Laura Muir. Meanwhile Wightman looked highly impressive as he broke clear with 200m to go to win in 3:34:67 from Abel Kipsang. Meanwhile the world pole vault record holder Mondo Duplantis cleared 6.10m in a highly impressive display, although he was unable to set a world record after failing three times at 6.19m.

Alistair Brownlee disqualified for 'ducking' and faces Olympic omission

London, June 7 : Alistair Brownlee's hopes of winning a third successive Olympic title appear to be over after he was disqualified for "ducking" a rival during a World Triathlon Championship Series race in Leeds. The 33-year-old has struggled with injuries in recent months but was hoping to do enough to secure the second place in the British men's team alongside his brother Jonny. But after his disqualification he indicated that he would be having ankle surgery rather than trying to go to Tokyo. Brownlee's decision came after he was judged to have pushed the American Chase McQueen under the water and disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct, although he

later insisted it was accidental. Brownlee, who won gold at London 2012 and Rio 2016, continued to race, and only found out while on the 10km run after finishing the swim and bike section. Brownlee tweeted: "I'm very embarrassed about being D'ed. The swim action was completely unintentional and I've had worse done to me in every World Series race I've ever done. However it is a field of play decision and I chose not to protest it." He added: "I've known my ankle needs surgery for a little while. My focus will be on getting healthy again and then long distance triathlon in the future." Brownlee's slim hopes of going to Tokyo further eroded when the



23-year-old Alex Yee, tipped to challenge for an Olympic medal, sprinted away to win his first series event. Brownlee wrote: "I think GB have a great team going to the Olympics and I wish them all the best. [Alex's] performance today was outstanding and

a breakthrough." The selectors will decide in the coming weeks who will get the second spot, while Britain could yet earn a third place if they send a team to Mexico next week and do well. But Yee rightly indicated that he expected to go. "That's probably the best feeling I've ever had in my life," Yee said. "The best person will go because I trust the governing body to make the right decision." In the women's race Britain's Jess Learmonth was denied victory by the Netherlands' Maya Kingma. Sophie Coldwell and Lucy Charles-Barclay were third and fifth respectively, while Beth Potter - who ran the fastest 5k road time in April - took seventh.

Yuka Saso wins US Women's Open after Lexi Thompson's final day collapse

Washington, June 7 : Yuka Saso birdied the third playoff hole to beat Nasa Hataoka on Sunday and become the second teenager to win the US Women's Open after Lexi Thompson collapsed down the stretch. Saso overcame back-to-back double bogeys early in the round to make the playoff. She then won it with a 10ft putt on the ninth hole to become the first player from the Philippines to win a golf major. Saso matched 2008 winner Inbee Park as the youngest US Women's Open champion at 19 years, 11 months and 17 days. Both players made pars at Nos 9 and 18 in the two-hole aggregate playoff, sending the tournament to sudden death back at the ninth hole. That set the stage for Saso to win it just up the road from Daly

City, dubbed the Pinoy Capital of the United States for its large population of Filipinos. "My dream was to be world No 1 and win the US Open, but I wasn't thinking I would hold this trophy this week," she said. "I am really happy. I knew there were par fives on the last few holes and maybe I could get my chance. After 18, I felt my stomach a little ... it hurts ... I don't know why. But I ate a banana and it feels better now. This means a lot." Thompson, who had a five-stroke lead after the eighth hole, played the final seven holes in five-over to finish a stroke back. "I really didn't feel like I hit any bad golf shots," she said. "That's what this golf course can do to you, and that's what I've said all week." High



school junior Megha Ganne played in the final group but shot 77 and finished three-over as the low amateur for the tournament. "I'm going to remember this for the rest of my life," Ganne said. "It's everything I've wanted since I was little, so it's just the best feeling." Saso overcame a rough start to the final round with double bogeys on the second and third holes that seemed to knock her out of contention but she managed to steady herself with a birdie at No 7. Saso then made back-to-back birdies on the par-five 16th and 17th holes to get to four-under and join Hataoka in the playoff. Hataoka used

a run of three birdies in a four-hole span on the back nine that put pressure on Thompson. Thompson wilted down the stretch, making this the seventh straight LPGA Tour major won by a first-time winner. Thompson had a five-stroke lead when she walked off the eighth green but she squandered it all on the back nine. She made a double bogey at No 12, a bogey at 14 and then a bogey six on the 17th that was reachable in two shots based on the tee location. "It's hard to smile, but it was an amazing week," Thompson said. "I played not so good today with a few of the bogeys coming in on the back nine, but the fans were unbelievable, hearing the chants and just gives me a reason to play."





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