

The Assam Rising

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Emmanuel Macron slapped in the face during walkabout

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Debbie Hewitt to become FA's first chairwoman in its 157-year history

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NEWS IN BRIEF

GMC Workers Assaulted

Guwahati, June 9 : A group of miscreants misbehaved and assaulted officials of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) in a city neighbourhood creating hindrance in the lawful discharge of duties by public servants. The incident occurred at Jonali in Zoo Road when GMC workers were engaged in cleaning of roads and sewages at Zoo Road, Jonali. An official release from GMC read that around 11:00 p.m. on Tuesday, a group of 4-5 persons got off from a Swift Desire bearing no. AS01HC5235 and threw garbage at the main road in front of a shop M/s Junali Electricals. "At the same time, Satyajyoti Baruah, ACS, Joint Commissioner-I, GMC, along with other officials of GMC, were inspecting the conservancy works of GMC. The GMC officials tried to restrain them from throwing garbage in the street and tried to make them understand the hard work that officials and workers of GMC are undertaking to keep the city clean," the release stated.

8-Hour Shifts

Guwahati, June 9 : Assam Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta on Wednesday said that henceforth the police personnel will have eight hours of work shift. Moreover, the police department will function in two shifts to reduce the work load of the personnel. Addressing a press meet on speeding up investigations and re-viving the police force, the DGP said that Assam Police is undergoing a massive transformation and will soon be re-vived.

Body found floating

Guwahati, June 9 : The body of a man was found floating in the Dikra river at Kukura Pohia in Assam's Sivasagar district on Wednesday morning. Locals spotted the body early in the morning and informed the police. The deceased was identified as 37-year-old Sanjeev Bora by his family members. Soon district magistrate Rantu Baruah along with a team of police officials arrived on the spot. The body was retrieved from the water and sent for autopsy at the Sivasagar Civil Hospital, the report of which is awaited. Bora was a resident of the Habiram Bora Path in Sivasagar town. According to family members, the victim had been missing from about 4 pm on June 5. They also suspected foul play into the incident, claiming that Bora had been murdered. The police have however, started investigations into the incident.

Assam notifies Dihing Patkai as its 7th National Park



Guwahati, June 9 : Assam has become the second state in the country to have the highest number of national parks. Madhya Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar have 9 national parks each. Assam thus now is in the second position now in terms of national park. Popularly known as Dihing Patkai Rain Forest, it has unique floral and faunal diversity, which was recognized by the Government

of Assam in 2004, when 111.19 sq. km. of this area was notified as Dihing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary. Government of Assam has added has notified Dihing Patkai as a National Park. Assam Minister for Environment and

Forest, Parimal Suklabaidya said, "Raimona and Dihing Patkai National Parks have been formally notified, adding to Assam's total tally of National Park (NP) to 7. Assam has become the second state in the country to

have the highest number of NPs. The newly created NPs will help to boost conservation efforts and provide fillip to tourism and agriculture sectors. "Suklabaidya added, "Madhya Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar

have 9 NPs each. Assam is in the second position now in terms of NP" According to the state government this National Park, a contiguous stretch of forests, starting from Upper Dihing Reserve Forests in Contd...Page 6

Police Busts Numerous Illegal Smugglings In The State

Guwahati, June 9 : Assam Police had busted numerous cases of illegal smugglings in the state on Wednesday. Police teams at various places in Assam had carried out operations where they have seized large quantities of illegal substances and apprehended racketeers. At an operation carried out by Cachar police, Burmese supary at the Kabugang area has been seized. A Contd...Page 6



First ever Assam Police SPs Conference held in Kaziranga

CM gives thrust to prudent policing for speedy delivery of justice

Guwahati, June 9 : Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Prudent policing is the backbone of good governance which

ment'. Addressing a daylong conference of the Superintendents of Police of the state in Kaziranga on Wednesday CM Sarma

ling to get into the root of any crime to facilitate expeditious delivery of justice. During the daylong deliberations, CM Sarma while reviewing the law and order prevailing in the state also took stock of the internal security issues which have greater ramifications on the peace and prosperity of the state including a skilled and professional intelligence gathering system. The Chief Minister during the conference also harped on the importance of robust strategies for stopping the commission of crimes and performing well researched, exhaustive and intelligent

investigations. During the conference, ways and means were also discussed for police modernisation and giving new momentum to policing. It was also decided to raise professional commando battalions of 10 numbers Contd...Page 6



also plays the role of a catalyst in propelling develop-

urged upon the SPs to be more prudent to enable po-

15 days special casual leave for govt employees whose parents test COVID positive : Centre

New Delhi, June 9 : All central government employees will be able to get 15 days

of special casual leave (SCL) in case their parents or any dependent family members test COVID-19 positive, according to an order issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. "In case of active hospitalisation of any of the family members/parents even after 15 days of the

expiry of SCL, the government servants may be granted leave of any kind due and admissible beyond 15 days of SCL till their discharge from hospital," it said. The ministry has come out with a detailed order on treatment, regularisation of hospitalization or quarantine period during COVID-19 pandemic after it received several queries related to it and keeping in view the "hardships Contd...Page 6



Man threatens to hijack planes from Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal and Indore airports to Pakistan, held

Bhopal, June 9 : Police have detained a 34-year-old man for allegedly threatening to hijack planes from Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal and Indore airports and take them to Pakistan, an official said on Wednesday. Officials at the Raja Bhoj Airport here received

a phone call around 5 pm on Tuesday wherein the caller made the threat, Bhopal's Gandhinagar police station in-charge Arun Sharma told. Later, the airport management complained to the Gandhinagar police. "The man, who allegedly Contd...Page 6



Vaccination process in Assam will be over by August 15 : Health Minister Keshab Mahanta

Guwahati, June 9 : Assam Health Minister Keshab Mahanta has claimed that the vaccination process in the State will be over by August 15. Keshab Mahanta said this on Wednesday in Kaziranga on the sideline of first Assam Police SPs conference. The Assam Health Minister further said that the State will receive sufficient numbers of COVID-19 vaccines by June 21, which would enable the Health Department to ramp up the vaccination process and complete it by August 15. t

may be mentioned here that as per Government data, as on June 7, only 27 percent of Assam 45+ age group population have received doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Meanwhile, stating that the COVID-19 situation in Assam has improved in the last few days, Assam Health Minister Keshab Mahanta said that Contd...Page 6



Nagaland government announced an extension of the ongoing Covid-related lockdown

Kohima, June 9 : The Nagaland government on Wednesday announced an extension of the ongoing Covid-related

lockdown till June 18 with easing of some restrictions. The decision was taken by the states High Powered Committee on COVID-19 at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio two days before the current lockdown was to end, state minister Neiba Kronu said. This will be the third extension of the lockdown in the state. Earlier, a seven-day lockdown was imposed in the northeastern state from May 14 to contain the spread of coronavirus. Subsequently, it was extended till May 31 and then up to June 11. "Views of all the District Task Force (DTF) were Contd...Page 6



Nepal stops distribution of Coronil kits gifted by Patanjali

Kathmandu, June 9 : Nepal's Department of Ayurveda and Alternative Medicines on Monday stopped distribution of Coronil kits that were gifted by the Patanjali group of Indian yoga teacher and businessman Ramdev. Kathmandu's order cited that proper procedures were not followed while procur-

ing the 1,500 kits of Coronil that Patanjali claims are useful in dealing with COVID-19 infection. The issue has drawn attention as it is being interpreted as a move to delink leading Madhesi political families from the Indian group. The latest order of the Government of Nepal says, the tablets and nasal

oil that are part of the Coronil kit are not equivalent to medicines to defeat COVID-19 virus. While pointing at shortcomings of the kits, Nepalese officials pointed to the recent statements

stopped distribution of Coronil in the kingdom. However, Nepal remains close to the Patanjali group as the organisation maintains a large production facility and distribution net-



Woman dies hours after taking COVID-19 vaccine, State Government assures probe



Imphal, June 9 : A 37-year-old woman in Manipur's Thoubal district has died just hours after taking the

first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The deceased woman was administered Covishield vaccine at Sangaiyupham Public Health Centre in Thoubal district of Manipur at around noon on Monday. Soon after taking the vaccine shot, her health condition started to deteriorate rapidly and was admitted to the Thoubal Contd...Page 6

against Coronil by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), which has challenged Mr. Ramdev to prove the efficacy of his products to deal with the COVID-19. Nepal is the second country after Bhutan to stop distribution of Coronil kits. Bhutan's Drug Regulatory Authority has already

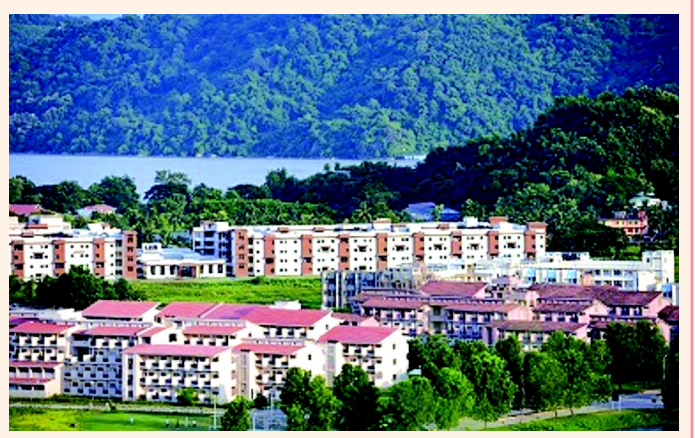
works in Nepal. It is not yet clear if the ban on the distribution will be limited to the particular consignment or get expanded to cover Coronil kits across the country. Monday's order also sparked controversy within the Government of Nepal as the Coronil kits were received Contd...Page 6

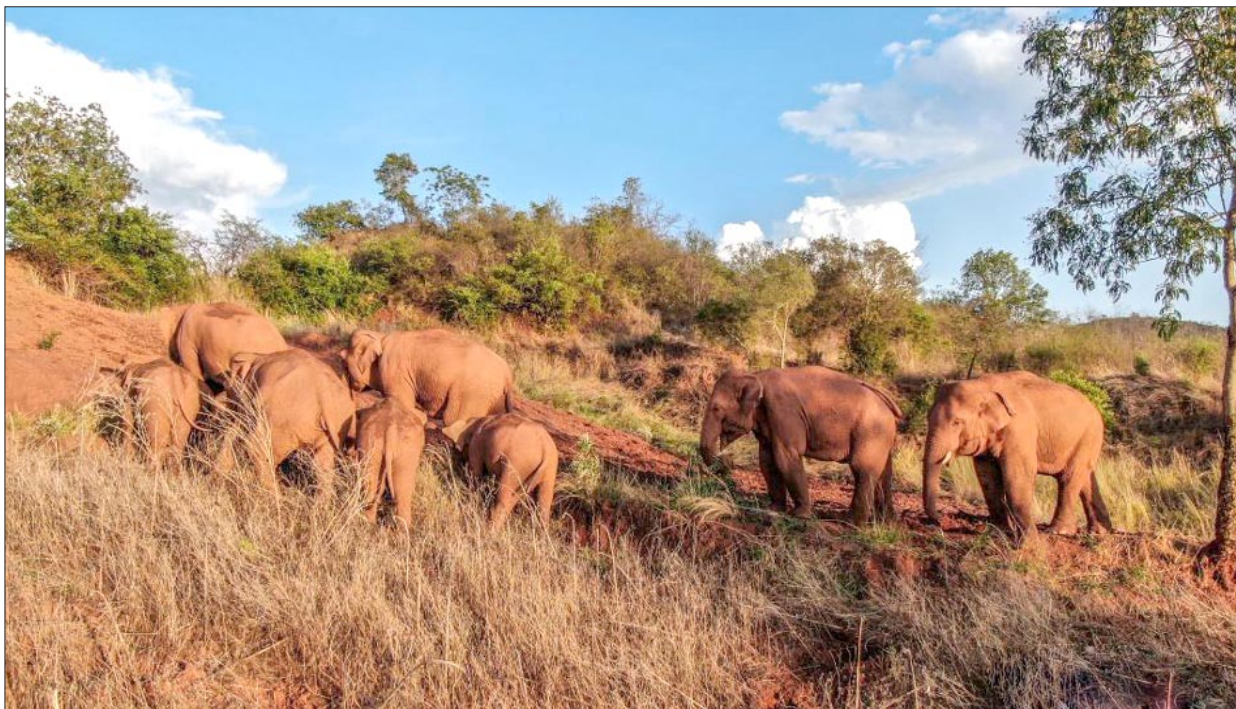
IIT Guwahati gains rank 41 Globally in the 'Research Citations per Faculty' category of the QS World University Rankings 2022

Overall, the Institute improved its position by 75 places this year and ranks 395 globally from 470 in 2021

Guwahati, June 9 : Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, one of the premier educational and research institutes across the nation, has broken into the top 50 institutes and secured 41 st rank globally (56 th in 2021) in the 'Research Citations per Faculty' category, of the QS World University rankings 2022 announced today, 8th June 2021. Along with this, the Institute has gained rank 395 in World Uni-

versity Ranking globally. This marks an huge improvement of 75 places by the IIT Guwahati, which was ranked 470 in the 2021 edition of the QS World University rankings. The main reason for this increase is the strong improvement in the 'Citations per Faculty' category where IIT Guwahati has improved from 77.9 in the year 2021 (Global Rank 56) to 94.8 in 2022 (Global Rank 41). Speaking Contd...Page 6





shows wild Asian elephants in Jinning District of Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan

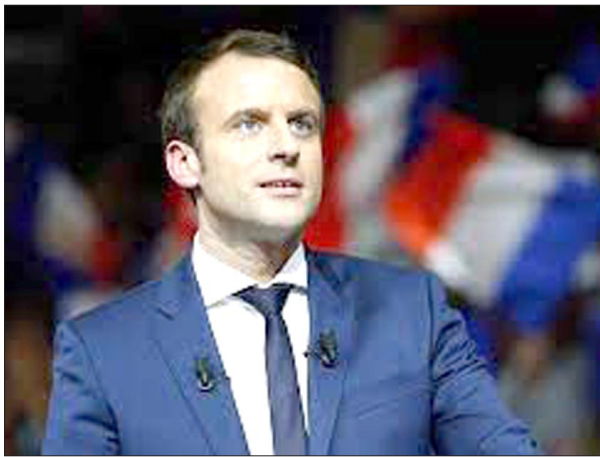
'Bring them home': fresh calls for release of family in Australian detention centre

London, June 09 : The plight of a three-year old girl who has spent nearly her entire life in Australian immigration detention facilities has galvanised opposition to the country's offshore detention system. Tharniccaa Murugappan was evacuated to a children's hospital on Monday where she was diagnosed with a blood infection and pneumonia, which she contracted on a remote island detention centre. Tharniccaa was born in Australia but for more than three years the government has held her in detention as it fights deport her and her family. Known by many in Australia as the "Biloela family" - named after the regional Queensland town that welcomed them and campaigned for their release - they have been held in some form of detention for more than 1,000 days. Tharniccaa's parents, Priya and Nades, fled the Sri Lankan civil war and had been living in the Queensland town until 2018, when the Australian government contacted them. For the past three years, the authorities have been attempting to deport Priya, Nades, Tharniccaa and her sister Kopika, who is five. During this period, the two sisters have lived in detention and guards take them to school. The residents of Biloela say they want the family to return, and have called on immigration ministers to release them. Advocates, lawyers and other politicians have repeatedly said the minister for immigration could release the family of four "with the stroke of a pen". None have done so. On Monday, Tharniccaa was airlifted to Perth children's hospital from the detention centre on Christmas Island. Doctors in Perth diagnosed her with a blood infection from suspected untreated pneumonia. She had been sick for 10 days - her symptoms include fever, dizziness and vomiting - without adequate medical care. Her father and sister were not allowed to travel with her. No child's suffering is worth any Prime Minister's ego or stubbornness. The latest development in the family's saga has reignited opposition to their detention. A friend of the family, Angela Fredericks, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation her "blood was boiling" as she heard how the family pleaded to have Tharniccaa taken to hospital. Politicians from the opposition Labor party and the Australian Greens have repeatedly called for the family to be released. The children have had health issues since they were first housed in the detention three years ago. Tharniccaa and Kopika became vitamin D deficient months after moving there, after being allowed outside for only half an hour a day. When Tharniccaa was two, some of her teeth rotted and she needed surgery to have two removed. Before their detention, Priya and Nades lived in Biloela for three years. Nades worked in an abattoir and volunteered at a local charity. Tharniccaa and Kopika were born in Australia. In 2018, Priya and Nades's claims for refugee status were rejected and the Australian Border Force placed them and their children into detention. In 2019, the family was onboard a plane deporting them to Sri Lanka when a last-minute legal victory found that the

the government had denied the two children procedural fairness in attempting to remove them. But instead of returning them home, the government placed the family in indefinite detention as they considered the next legal move. Christmas Island formerly housed thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, who were held there after successive Australian governments declared that nobody who arrived by boat, including refugees fleeing persecution, would be allowed to settle in Australia. The detention centre closed in 2018 but it was reopened the following year. For the past 18 months, it has housed only Tharniccaa and her family.

Emmanuel Macron slapped in the face during walkabout

Paris, June 09 : Emmanuel Macron was slapped in the face by a man during a walkabout in southern France. The president's security detail immediately pulled the man to the ground and moved Macron away from the crowd, though the president appeared unhurt and determined to continue meeting the public. A video of the incident showed the president, in a white shirt and tie, approach onlookers waiting behind metal barriers at Tain-l'Hermitage in the Drôme department. Macron, wearing a mask, is seen reaching out to shake hands with a man in a green T-shirt wearing glasses and a mask. Reuters reported the man was heard shouting "à bas la Macronie" (down with Macronism) before he grabbed the president's right arm and delivered a slap to the left side of his face. He was also reported to have shouted "Montjoie Saint Denis", the battle cry of the French armies when the country was a monarchy. Two people have been arrested in connection with the assault, according to reports, and are being held for "deliberate violence against a person of public authority". The French prime minister, Jean Castex, said the incident was an affront to democracy. "Politics can never be about violence, verbal aggression, and even less about



physical aggression. I call for a republican awakening, we are all concerned, the foundations of our democracy are at stake," Castex told the Assemblée Nationale. Last week, Macron began a six-week political tour de France aimed at "taking the pulse" of the country as it emerges from the coronavirus crisis. In the run-up to regional elections this month and, more importantly, the presidential battle next year, the French leader will make two regional visits a week until mid-July. He was in the Drôme to meet local restaurant owners and students to talk about how their lives are slowly returning to normal as Covid restrictions are lifted. Macron was accompanied by Guillaume Gomez, a former chef at the Élysée who was named the president's "special adviser on French gastronomy". Alex Perrin, public prosecutor in nearby Valence,

Hundreds arrested in global crime sting after underworld app is hacked

Melbourn, June 09 : A global sting in which organised crime gangs were sold encrypted phones that law enforcement officials could monitor has led to more than 800 arrests in 18 countries. The operation by the FBI and Australian and European police, ensnared suspects in Australia, Asia, Europe, South America and the Middle East involved in the narcotics trade. More than 800 suspected members of organised crime gangs were arrested and \$148m (£104m) in cash seized in raids around the world, along with tonnes of drugs, cryptocurrencies, weapons and luxury cars. The Australian prime minister said the operation "struck a heavy blow against organised crime - not just in this country, but one that will echo ... around the world". "This is a watershed moment in Australian law enforcement history," Scott Morrison added. Operation Greenlight/Trojan Shield, conceived by Australian police and the FBI in 2018, was one of the biggest infiltrations and takeovers of a specialised encrypted network. It began when US officials got involved in the development of AnOm, a supposedly secure encrypted messaging app, which was then sold to organised crime networks. The FBI helped to infiltrate the phones into 300 criminal groups in more than 100 countries. Calvin Shivers of the FBI's criminal investigative division told

reporters in The Hague. In a pattern repeated elsewhere, one Australian underworld figure began distributing phones containing the app to his associates, believing their communications were secure because the phones had been customised to remove all capabilities, including voice and camera functions, apart from AnOm. As a result, there was no attempt to conceal or code the details of the messages, which police were reading. "It was there to be seen, including 'we'll have a speedboat meet you at this point', 'this is who will do this' and so on," said the Australian federal police commissioner, Reece Kershaw. "We have been in the back pockets of organised crime ... All they talk about is drugs, violence, hits on each other, innocent people who are going to be murdered." Shivers said the FBI had been able to see photographs of "hundreds of tons of cocaine that were concealed in shipments of fruit". Australian police said they had arrested 224 people, including members of outlawed motorcycle gangs. On Monday alone, they seized



104 firearms, including a military-grade sniper rifle, as well as almost A\$45m (£25m) in cash, including A\$7m from a safe buried under a garden shed in a suburb of Sydney. In Europe, there were 49 arrests in the Netherlands, 75 in Sweden and over 60 in Germany, where authorities seized hundreds of kilograms of drugs, more than 20 weapons and over 30 luxury cars and cash. The operation also revealed that gangs were being tipped off about police actions, which prompted "numerous high-level public corruption cases in several countries", according to an affidavit from an FBI agent. Kershaw said the Australian underworld figure, who had absconded, had "essentially set up his own colleagues" by distributing the phones, and was now a marked man. "The sooner he hands himself in, the better for him and his family," he said.

IMD issues orange alert for Mumbai and adjoining areas, know more

Mumbai, June 09 : The Meteorological Department has predicted heavy rains in Mumbai and adjoining areas from June 9 to June 14. The Meteorological Department has also issued an orange alert for Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad on Saturday. In view of this, people have been evacuated from the coastal areas. The fishermen have also been instructed to stay away from the sea. The Meteorological Department says that the first monsoon rains in Mumbai will be very strong. There was heavy rain in Mumbai and adjoining areas even today. Due to heavy rains, many low-lying areas were flooded. As per the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Mumbai, up to 30 mm rainfall was recorded in areas like Malvani, Borivali and Dahisar here till 11 am. Earlier, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday confirmed the arrival of the southwest monsoon in Maharashtra, when it had reached up to Harnai port in coastal Ratnagiri district. But, despite favourable conditions, the monsoon has still not progressed to Mumbai. When contacted, Shubhangi Bhute, director at the RMC Mumbai, termed the present rainfall in the city as "convective precipitation". "You can observe that there is thunder, lightning and a constant variation in the intensity of the showers. You can call it pre-monsoon showers, but certainly not the south-west monsoon," she said. There are no indications of the onset of the monsoon here as yet, the official said. "There has to be less variation and rains have to be widespread (to be called as monsoon showers). Apart from Mumbai, there should be rains over central Maharashtra also. Then only we can identify it as the southwest (SW) monsoon, she said. The official further said going by the present observations, the SW monsoon onset here could be declared after a couple of days - by June 10. "There is also an off-shore trough in the Arabian Sea, but it is weak.



G7 plan 'will slash UK tax revenue from US tech firms' say experts

London, June 09 : Experts have warned that US tech companies, including Google, Amazon and Facebook, could pay less tax in the UK and several other big economies under global reforms agreed at the weekend by the G7. In a key stumbling block emerging days after the landmark deal, research from the TaxWatch campaign group indicates that the UK Treasury stands to lose about £230m from the taxes paid each year by the four big US technology firms. The study estimates that Facebook, Google, eBay, and Amazon, contribute about £330m between them to the UK's

digital services tax - a levy on internet search providers, online marketplaces and social media firms. The tax was launched last year as a stopgap measure until a global deal could be reached. TaxWatch said the UK tax bills paid by these firms would fall to just over £100m under the G7 plan. The campaign group calculated the sum by analysing the UK accounts of each company for 2019, the most recent year when data was available. Although precise details of the global tax changes are still being negotiated and limited information has been published so far, the group estimated tax liabilities

based on details in the G7 communique published last weekend. According to the research Google is estimated to contribute £219m to the digital services tax but would pay just £60m to the UK exchequer under the G7 plan. For Facebook the tax take would fall from £58m to £28m. For Amazon it would drop from £50m to £10m, and for Ebay from £19m to £3.8m. The figures are estimates because the Treasury does not publish a breakdown of the amount each firm contributes to its digital services tax. Raising questions over whether the proposals would become a reality, sources said the UK and EU nations were continuing to push for more in tax to be raised within their borders by large US tech companies. It comes ahead of the next key moment for tax reforms, at a meeting of the G20 in Venice in July. Chris Sanger, global government and risk tax leader at the accountancy firm EY, said: "The UK will not want to turn off the taxing of those global multinationals, under the digital services tax, until it feels it has another tax that can deliver equally or better. There is still a lot of detail to be worked through in this

space." At the heart of the issue are the two "pillars" in the G7 deal: one enables countries to tax large company profits based on their sales in that market, and a second sets a minimum global corporation tax rate. The global minimum would be set at a rate of at least 15% and capture thousands of firms and be paid in their home countries. Because so many multinationals have their headquarters in the US, other nations are demanding that the largest companies also pay tax in nations where they generate their revenues. So under pillar one, the UK should receive a portion of the tax generated in the country by Apple and Facebook. A mechanism for redistributing the profits of the largest companies is under discussion. A list of 100 companies whose profits could be divvied up in this way was presented at the G7. The list remains confidential, though is understood to include tech companies, but not banks or extractive firms such as mining and oil groups. The redistribution mechanism would apply to companies with "superprofits" - profit margins exceeding 10% of revenues.

Ratko Mladi?, 'butcher of Bosnia', loses appeal against genocide conviction

London, June 09 : UN appeal judges have upheld the convictions of the former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladi? for genocide and other offences during Bosnia's 1992-95 war and confirmed his life sentence. The judgment on Tuesday means that the 78-year-old former general, who terrorised Bosnia throughout the war, will spend the rest of his life in prison. He is the last major figure from the conflict that ended more than a quarter century ago to face justice. Mladi? joins his former political master, the former Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic, in serving a life

sentence for masterminding ethnic bloodshed in the Bosnian war that left more than 100,000 dead and millions homeless. Mladi?, once a military strongman known as the "butcher of Bosnia", commanded troops responsible for atrocities ranging from "ethnic cleansing" campaigns to the siege of Sarajevo and the war's bloody climax in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. Now, he is a frail man whose ill health delayed this final judgment. His toxic legacy continues to divide Bosnia and his dark shadow has spread far beyond the Balkans.



A worker transports a package of Chinese COVID-19 vaccines at the Phnom Penh International Airport in Phnom Penh, Cambodia



A 150-year old bicycle in North Lakhimpur: Literateur Padmanath Gohain Baruah rode it

North Lakhimpur, June 9: There is a 150-year old bicycle in North Lakhimpur which is still in good condition and usable. The cycle is kept in the house of Dinen Gohain Baruah, a resident of Nakari, Ward no.1, North Lakhimpur town. The family sources of Dinen Gohain Baruah told that their forefather Ghinaram Gohain Baruah bought this bicycle in 1890 earstwhile in the then Kolkata. The cycle belonged to the Onlookus Company and was made in Birmingham, England. The serial number of the cycle was 82. Ghinaram Gohain Baruah, who also

resided at Nakari, North Lakhimpur, was a mouzadar of four mouzas and he had four sons --- Nilakantha Gohain Baruah, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, Kannath Gohain Baruah and Muktanath Gohain Baruah. Besides these four sons, the son of Muktanath Gohain Baruah Upendra Nath Gohain Baruah used to ride this cycle. Padmanath Gohain Baruah who was the first President of Asom Sahitya Sabha did the activities of the organization by riding this cycle. Similarly, Upendra Nath Gohain Baruah, who was a teacher, used to go to school by riding this cycle. Father Ghinaram

gave the charge of keeping the cycle to son Muktanath. From then, their grandsons and great-grandsons have been preserving the cycle with utmost care and riding it. Presently, the bicycle, with which the memories of social worker Ghinaram Gohain Baruah and Literateur Padmanath Gohain Baruah are related, has been preserved by Bhaskar Gohain Baruah, the son of Dinen Gohain Baruah, who also rides it. Looking at the 150-year old bicycle, a heritage of the Gohain Baruah family, the family members feel joy and ecstasy, the family sources added.

COVID claims one in Nagaon district, 206 fresh cases recorded

NAGAON, June 9: One Arshad Ali Morol (45) of Fakulipathar under Juria PS who was undergoing treatment in hospital died of COVID 19 today, taking the total death toll in the district to 72. Besides, 206 more fresh COVID cases were detected today, taking the total cumulative active COVID cases in the district to 3356 while 425 people who were being treated in hospital as well as at their respective homes after being affected by the virus, have recovered from novel corona virus today in the district, sources said. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 85 people were immediately admitted to 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 6969 people today while RT-PCR test was conducted on 192 swab samples, sources further added. Meanwhile Anup Laskar and his associates members from district body of Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) on Wednesday distributed packets of essential commodities as well as vegetables among the people below the poverty line and those people who were being isolated at their homes after being affected by novel corona virus at Behejia Dimu Bangthaigaon as well as wards nos 20 and 6 in the town. Speaking to the local media persons here, AJP leader Anup Laskar said that his initiative to help the people of the weaker section of the society would be continued in other areas of Nagaon assembly constituency in the days to come. It is nothing but a mere token of love and compassionate support to them during the pandemic situation, Laskar said.

CSIR-IICT licenses process knowhow for synthesis of 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose to Lee Pharma Ltd.

New Delhi, 9 June : Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, (IICT), a constituent laboratory of CSIR and Lee Pharma, an integrated pharmaceutical company, based in Hyderabad had entered into a non-exclusive licensing agreement for the synthesis of 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose (2-DG). Recently, 2-DG developed by DRDO and Dr Reddy's Laboratories has received approval for use in Covid-19 patients. It has been found to help speed up recovery and reduce oxygen dependence and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has launched the drug in the form of sachets. Lee Pharma informed that they would file the application for getting the approval from DCGI, New Delhi. Lee Pharma will manufacture and commercialize the 2-DG sachets from their formulation facility located at SEZ, Duvvada, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, which has the

accreditations, by global regulatory agencies. Dr. Srivari Chandrashekar, Director CSIR-IICT highlighted that "There is role of CSIR in development of 2-DG, as CSIR-CCMB tested the drug on SARS-CoV-2 viral cultures. CSIR has been engaged in development of drugs for treatment of Covid-19 and has undertaken many clinical trials for repurposed drugs. Additionally, this agreement with Lee Pharma Ltd. is towards increasing affordable therapeutic options for treatment of Covid-19". Raghunitha Alla, Director, Lee Pharma said, "This collaboration with CSIR-IICT for 2-DG, API is part of our broader strategy for enhancing Covid-19 treatment options. Further CSIR-IICT, Hyderabad is well-known for its high quality research & development of various new molecules and we feel proud to be associated with them."

Golaghat Administraton Opens Helpline for Lodging Grievances Regarding Unethical Trade Practice and Price Hike

Golaghat, Jun 9: Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat today a Helpline Number of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs department was made available for the public. The Helpline Number 03774-283282 will be available for lodging grievances regarding unethical practice, price hike and unscrupulous activities of traders under Golaghat Sadar Sub-Division. On the other hand today in a order by the ADC of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Golaghat requested all the Circle Officers of Golaghat, Dergaon, Bokakhat and Morongi Revenue Circles regarding deletion of ineligible beneficiaries of National Food Security Act 2013. The Circle Officer of each of the four Revenue Circles will have to give directions to the concerned Gaon Burhas under his or her jurisdiction to verify the NFSA, 13 list of the Fair Price Shops to weed out the bogus, ineligible and ghost Ration Cards which are retained by beneficiaries. The Circle Officer will have to submit the verification list duly signed by the concerned Gaon Burha and the Fair Price Shop retailer within seven days.

Special market linkage initiation During during Covid Times

21 MT pumpkin sent to Kolkata from Mandia



Barpeta, 9 June : In the midst of COVID pandemic, it was a happy day for the farmers of Mandia, 3 No. Bordaloni village, Barpeta, as they could sell 21MT of pumpkin from farm gate to wholesale buyer from Bara Bazar, Kolkata on 8th June 2021. This was an emergency market linkage initiative for helping the farmers of the district in marketing of their surplus agricultural produce during the pandemic times. The market linkage from farm gate of Assam to Kolkata wholesaler was initiated end to end under Assam Agri Business and Rural Transformation Project (APART) on special request of Tej Prasad Bhussal, the Deputy Commissioner of Barpeta. The operation on the ground was supported by officials of the District Agricultural Office, Barpeta District. The benefitted farmer, Rahimuddin, from 3 No Bordoloni, Mandia had a good harvest of pumpkin this year but was struggling to sell the

same due to the restricted movements during the pandemic. He expressed his gratefulness to the Department and officials for the timely intervention.

'We were deceived': hundreds protest in Venice at return of giant cruise ships

London, June 09 : Anti-cruise ship campaigners in Venice claim they were "deceived" by the Italian government as hundreds protested against huge vessels docking in the historic city's port on Saturday. Residents were caught by surprise on Thursday when a cruise liner sailed into the lagoon city for the first time since the pandemic began, despite prime minister Mario Draghi's government declaring that the ships would be banned from the historic centre. The 92,000 tonne ship MSC Orchestra collected 650 passengers before leaving for Bari, in southern Italy, on Saturday. "The Italian government has been great at deceiving not only citizens of Venice, but newspapers and public opinion around the world," said Tommaso Cacciari, leader of the activist group No Grandi Navi (No Big Ships). A counterprotest was held by Si Grandi Navi, a movement that supports the thousands of people in the area whose livelihoods depend on the cruise industry and who have been out of work since the pandemic struck in spring last year. The government announced in late March

that cruise ships would be prohibited from sailing past St Mark's Square and docking in the historic centre. The plan was for the ships to be diverted to the industrial port of Marghera while plans were made for the construction of a cruise terminal outside the lagoon. The decree was approved by the lower house of parliament last month, with Dario Franceschini, the culture minister, reiterating that ships "as tall as apartment buildings" had been stopped from arriving in the centre of Venice "for good". In reality, to make it feasible to redirect cruise ships to Marghera port, infrastructure work needs to be done first. In the meantime, the only way for the ships to enter Venice is via the Giudecca canal, where in June 2019 a 13-deck vessel operated by MSC crashed into a wharf and tourist boat, injuring five people. "The government knew it was impossible, as the canal that the ships must pass through to reach Marghera is too narrow and not deep enough," said Cacciari. "So you would need to dredge the canal in order for that to happen, which would be even more devastating for the equilibrium of the lagoon." Cacciari added: "The aim of this protest is to make the government realise and explain - the whole world reported on this story - and yet here the big ships are again. It's shameful." Elena



Riu, a Venice resident, said: "It doesn't surprise me as we're used to declarations coming to nothing. But more than anything it makes me angry as we've had all this time during the pandemic to reflect and come up with something better. Instead, nothing has changed." Tourists have started to fill the narrow lanes of Venice again after coronavirus travel restrictions were eased in mid-May. Before the pandemic, the city hosted an estimated 28 million visitors a year. Cruise ships have always been a bone of contention in the city, with those against them arguing that they have damaged the lagoon and eroded the foundations of buildings in the Unesco world heritage site. But the travel and cruise industries have also contributed to the local economy - around 5,000 people are usually employed at Venice's cruise terminal.



Shillong- KSU donated Oxygen Cylinder and PPEs

Tele Medicine Service and Special Helpline Numbers Launched in Golaghat

Golaghat, Jun 9 : With a view to help Covid 19 affected people in Golaghat the district administration has launched some special Helpline Numbers. Any person can get Covid related informations simply by making calls to the Helpline Numbers. Also any complaints regarding Covid can be given through the numbersame. A District Covid Complain Redressal Cell has been set up under ADC Health of Golaghat.

Any person can give complaints to this cell by calling on the number 03774-283001. Also one can contact the Control Room of District Disaster Management Authority on 03774-283282 or 1077. On the other hand Covid patients can avail the facility of tele medicine service by calling on the number 03774-281281. One can consult with the doctor directly over phone through this tele medicine service Helpline Number.

The district administration has appointed two doctors for this purpose. Doctor Shyamanta Shyam will be available from 9 AM to 2 PM on Monday, Wednesday and Friday every week and on first and second Sundays of the month. Similarly Dr Sudeshna Dutta will be available for consultation on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday every week and on third and fourth Sundays of the month.

Web Portal for Students

online classes only. With a view to provide help to the students in learning of their academic course several Assamese educationists and teaching professionals working in different parts of the country as well as other countries in the world have come forward and started a web portal for the students. This web portal named '15 Minit Xikhya' (15 Minutes Education) will be offering classes on the major subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Social Science. Some short duration YouTube videos on different subjects are prepared. A student can discuss with the concerned resource person after a week of getting the uploaded video. The students can interact with the resource persons through Zoom App. On June 13

Wrangler Dr Anupam Saikia from IIT Guwahati will interact with the students on the video that he had uploaded. The topic of this video is about the concept of Prime Numbers in Mathematics. It is to be mentioned that Dr Rifat Mannan from the USA, Dr Hiranya Nath, Economics Professor at Sam Houston University, Dr Pawan Sahariya, ex professor at Cotton State University, Dr Sanghamitra Goswami, Dr Munima Bora Sahariya, Syed Miftahur Rahman, Syeda Tamanna Zarin, Dr Uddipana Goswami from John Hopkins University, Dr Anupam Saikia, Dr Kalyan Raidegiya, Dr Prasenjit Khanikar, Dr Neelkamal Mahanta from the IITs are behind the concept and creation of the web portal '15 Minit Xikhya'.

Online Quiz on The Topic of Social Science Held

Golaghat, Jun 09: An online quiz competition on the topic of Social Science was held today. The quiz competition was jointly conducted by four leading government educational institutions of Golaghat namely Golaghat Government Bezbaruah HS School, Dergaon HS School, Kakodunga HS School and Nabhangra Bapuji High School. Two teams from each of the four schools participated in this competition. Dr Devojit Baruah, Subject Teacher of Dergaon HS School conducted the competition. Technical Coordinator Sameerjyoti Medhi, coordinators Dhruvajyoti Saikia, Suresh Pujari and Diganta Kumar Nath offered their assistance

in conducting this online quiz competition. In the results first position was secured by the team of Priyanka Neog, Mainu Bora and Chayatri Bora. On the other hand from the same school the team of Nilutpal Saikia, Pompi Bora and Bandana Gogoi secured second position while the third position was bagged by the team of Rahul Bora, Rashmi Bora and Priyanti Chanda from Golaghat Govt Bezbaruah HS School. Meanwhile Ankur Bora of Nabhangra Bapuji High School able to get special consolation prize for answering highest number of questions in individual level. All the winners were awarded with E Certificates.



Shillong- Meghalaya CM Press Meet

THE ASSAM RISING

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Surge in hospital cases

A new coronavirus variant that was first sequenced in India has been doubling about every eight days in England since early April. The Delta variant is now dominant in England, and according to a recent risk assessment from Public Health England (PHE), it has a substantially increased rate of transmissibility compared with the previously dominant variant Alpha, which was first sequenced in the UK. Having just a single dose of vaccination is less effective against Delta, and it may lead to a surge in hospital cases. We always knew variants were a risk to England's roadmap out of lockdown. In January, the science advisory group Sage warned that England's red-list border policy of "geographically targeted travel bans" was unlikely to keep new variants out, not least because we didn't know where the next one would come from. England spent the winter trying to keep out the Beta variant, first sequenced in South Africa, and the Gamma variant, first detected in Japan in travellers from Brazil. The effort mostly succeeded, but the government's red-list policy entirely missed the rise of a dangerous new variant in India. India, a country with close travel links to the UK, first reported a concerning new variant on 24 March. Cases had more than doubled in the country over the preceding two weeks. On 9 April, the UK put Pakistan and Bangladesh on its travel red list, but despite mounting cases and a concerning new variant, India wasn't included. It finally added India to the red list on 23 April. Imported cases dropped soon afterwards, but the damage was already done. The new Delta variant has mutations that are associated with vaccine resistance - so why didn't PHE immediately escalate Delta to a variant of concern in March? Part of the reason was a lack of firm evidence showing the new variant was more transmissible, more severe or more vaccine resistant. Yet, as the scientific adage puts it, "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence". Establishing the evidence takes weeks of careful science. If a variant is spreading rapidly, the answer isn't to wait, but to act decisively and quickly. In a document prepared for Sage on 11 May, researchers highlighted the risk that incontrovertible evidence showing Delta was more transmissible "may come too late". "In the face of uncertain evidence," they warned, "the risk of overreacting seems small compared to the potential benefit of delaying a third wave until more people are vaccinated." Their concerns were justified. In early April, the Delta variant accounted for 0.2% of sequenced cases in England. Two weeks later, this had grown to more than 3%. By 15 May, a mere seven weeks after the variant was first identified in England, it accounted for 38% of sequenced Covid-19 cases. Many explanations for its spread were offered: it was mainly among travellers; there was something unique about the communities where it was spreading; we couldn't infer anything from rapid spread in India because the country's sequencing was poor or its situation did not translate to ours. Moreover the continued decline in the previously dominant Alpha variant masked the rise of Delta: people could point to overall case numbers as proof that there was nothing to be concerned about. In fact, we were living through two epidemics - one declining and one rising. This was obvious to anyone watching the relentless exponential growth of Delta during April. By the middle of May, after PHE eventually escalated Delta to a variant of concern, members of Sage were becoming extremely worried. Modelling from a Sage subgroup showed that a variant that was 40% more transmissible than Alpha could cause a huge surge in hospitalisations - even if vaccines were still effective against it. Delta may be 50% more transmissible than Alpha, according to Sage minutes from 13 May. The scientific group warned that progressing to step 3 of the roadmap on 17 May could result in a January-level surge, and that the principles of "earlier, harder, broader" responses were key. Sage could hardly have been clearer about its serious concerns, but the government went ahead with plans to loosen restrictions. Almost all indoor spaces were opened up on 17 May, indoor mixing of households was allowed and mask mandates dropped in secondary schools. Meanwhile the Delta variant continued its remorseless rise. By the week of 22 May, it comprised nearly 60% of sequenced cases in England, with new hotspots emerging in Bolton, Blackburn and Bedford. Firm evidence of the dangers posed by the Delta variant has now been established, but not in time for us to prevent its dominance. Meanwhile new research from the Francis Crick Institute shows that protection from two doses of the Pfizer vaccine may wane significantly against the Delta variant after a few months and in older people. Our most vulnerable populations are just now reaching the three-month post-second dose milestone. Through its poorly applied border policy, England managed to keep out the Beta variant but let in an equally resistant, more transmissible and more severe distant cousin. The new dominance of Delta is already making itself felt. Cases in England soared in the week prior to 4 June. There have been many headlines warning of the start of a third wave - but in truth, the third wave started eight weeks ago, when Delta began its march to dominance. The lessons are clear. We have a leaky and inefficient border policy. As so many times before, the government did not act on early signs of exponential growth. Every week I've become more alarmed by the growth of the Delta variant. Three questions remain: given the evidence we finally now have, will the government act to curb spread?

On the 7th of April, 1979, a group of young Assamese nationalists assembled at Ranghar, the historical monument of Ahom rule in Sibsagar district and formed an organisation named as United Liberation Front of Assam, (in short ULFA) and launched an armed movement with the demand of sovereign Assam for the indigenous Assamese people. The members in the organisational structure of the militant group, to name a few were : Paresh Baruah - Commander in Chief, Raju Baruah - Deputy Commander in Chief, Arabinda Rajkhowa - Chairman, Pradip Gogoi - Vice Chairman, Anup Chetia - General Secretary and some others. Throughout the long years till the day many people lost their lives in ULFA's militant activities. In 1990, the Government of India banned the organisation, citing it as a terrorist organisation. The organisation involved in many cases of abduction, extortion, assassination and bombings in Assam. They had reportedly established training camps for their cadre in Kachin of Myanmar and also in Bhutan and Bangladesh. Since 1990 various army operations were launched against ULFA, the Operation Bajrang (Nov.27,1990), Operation Blueprint (June.91), Operation Cloudburst (Sept..91), & Operation Rhino (Oct.2001). In Operation Bajrang, reportedly 15 cadres were killed, 1,208 weapons & Rs 5 Crore seized and many arrested. In Operation Rhino (1990). In 1991 in a controversial encounter with Army ULFA's Dy Commander in Chief Hiral Jyoti Mahanta was killed.. In December 2003 & January 2004 there had been military operations against ULFA jointly by Indian army & Royal Bhutan army in southern regions of Bhutan and destroyed ULFA encampments for training to their cadres. Reference may be made of ULFA's senior most octogenarian leader and political Advisor Bhim Kanta Buragohain @ Mama who was regarded by ULFA as its Godfather, was arrested during an operation and later died on 19 December 2011 in cardiac arrest while on bail granted by court. Another top ranking ULFA cadre Ashanta Bagphukan, organising secretary had gone missing since 2003 army operation in Bhutan.

Back in September 8, 2005, ULFA constituted the People's Consultative Group (PCG) comprising of 11 elite members pursuing different professions, believed to be ULFA sympathisers, with the objective to work out the modalities of the peace talks and play the role of a mediator between the ULFA and the Central Government. Some The 11 member PCG included the following members headed by Jnanpith Awardee litterateur Mamoni Raisam Goswami as the Chief Interlocutor.

1. Mamoni Raisam Goswami (Jnanpith Awardee litterateur)
2. Reboti Phukan (Former renowned footballer and Paresh Barua's childhood friend).
3. Lachit Bordoloi (MASS leader)
4. Arup Borborah (Lawyer)
5. Mukul Mahanta (Engineer)
6. Dilip Patgiri (Adviser to Asom Jatiyatadabi Yuba Chatra Parishad)
7. Hiranya Saikia (Sports organiser)
8. Diganta Konwar (Advocate)
9. Brajen Gogoi (Doctor)
10. Haidar Hussain (the then Editor, Asomiya Pratidin)
11. Ajit Bhuyan (Editor, Assamese Daily - 'Ajit')

On September 11, 2005 just after three days of its formation, the PCG launched a statewide opinion sharing campaign through letters, SMS, fax and email. It appealed to the then Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi to expedite the peace process. In September 14, 2005 in an operation of security forces 12 ULFA cadres were killed in upper Assam affecting the peace initiative. On November5, 2005 the group launched a campaign rally in Nalbari seeking an immediate end to army's counter insurgency operations. The PCG with its genuine sincerity could have initiated a fruitful peace talks between the ULFA and the government, had it not been dissolved by the ULFA Chairman Mr Arabinda Rajkhowa in February, 2011.

However the peace talk process was carried forward by the pro-talk ULFA wing under the leadership of its Chairman after the PCG was dissolved. The pro-talk ULFA cadres, who were Central Committee members, and who had either surrendered or arrested by security forces and are facing criminal charges in the court. They are Mr Arabinda Rajkhowa - Chairman, Pradip Gogoi - Vice Chairman, Anup Chetia - General Secretary, Chitranob Hazarika - Finance Secretary, Sashadhar Chowdhury - Foreign Secretary, Mithinga Daimary - Central Publicity Secretary, Smt. Pranati Deka - Cultural Secretary and others. The Central government in June 2010 appointed Sri P.C. Haldar IPS as the interlocutor who had served till December 31, 2015. In 2017, Government appointed Dineswar Sharma, the Ex-Chief of the Intelligence Bureau as interlocutor for peace talks with Assam's insurgent groups including ULFA for a tenure of one year. Dineswar Sharma having been transferred as the administrator of Lakshadweep, in January 2018 A.B. Mathur IPS, former Special Secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) was appointed as the Interlocutor for talks with ULFA. There was reportedly split in the organisation in 2011, between the overground faction led by Arabinda Rajkhowa and Paresh Barua's underground faction. Though Rajkhowa faction had been holding talks with the government through interlocutors in fits and starts the talks could not and also would not have merited any result without the participation of ULFA's Commander in Chief Mr Paresh Barua. In February, 2020, Mr Rajkhowa urged that formal process to initiate peace talks should start without any delay. He expressed his belief that talks over Paresh Barua's single point agenda would be possible on the negotiation table if the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister take special initiative for taking up his single point agenda for talks. From Rajkhowa's In an answer to a Rajya Sabha question asking the latest position of the peace talks being conducted between the central government and the United Liberation Front of Assam, the Home Ministry stated in March, 2021 that the process of peace talks with the United Liberation Front of Assam is an ongoing process. However, the

EDITORIAL

ULFA, nsurgency And Prospective Peace Talks

Commander in Chief of ULFA Paresh Barua has said on January 29, that the banned rebel group would join talks with the Centre only if sovereignty is included as the main agenda for talks. While secession from India has been ULFA's declared goal, it has also consistently stood against the issue of illegal migration, which remains a hot button issue in Assam, with AASU and the regional political parties the Asom Gana Parishad and the newly formed Asom Jatiya Parishad. ULFA has also been raising voice against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 (AFSPA) that grants special powers to the Indian Armed Forces to maintain public order in disturbed areas in which Assam included. In spite of a series of talks held between government and Arabinda Rajkhowa faction of ULFA by the government appointed interlocutors since 2010 onwards, nothing has been disclosed to the public about the progress of peace talks. We are constrained to believe that no any headway has been made between the Arabinda Rajkhowa faction of ULFA and the Central government till this day. The Government is also to be blamed for its lackadaisical attitude to solve the ULFA problem. When government has been offering hospitality to the Arabinda Rajkhowa led Pro-talk ULFA faction for a decade now, why government failed to pressurise the said faction to persuade Mr Paresh Barua to come to the negotiating table? The attitude of the BJP government for solving the problem for the last five year term was no different with the earlier Congress governments in the State.

While speaking of the main demand of ULFA for a sovereign Assam, reference must be made of some other tribal insurgent groups for creation of either sovereign State or Autonomous State within the Indian federation. In 1966, the Bodo tribe formed the 'Plains Tribal Council of Assam' (PTCA) and demanded a separate Union Territory 'Udayachal'. From Seventies, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) had their slogan- divide Assam 50-50, demanding half of Assam's territory for Bodos only. Their agitation was marked by violent activities with crimes like arson, abduction, extortion, mass killing in bomb blasts, damage to public properties etc. In the later period more militant organisations like Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) took birth. The militant organisations' main objective was gain independent nation for Bodos. The NDFB which was formed in 1989 carried out a series of bomb blast operations in different parts of Assam including Guwahati city in which many innocent people lost their lives.

The government of India with an endeavour to bring peace signed three accords so far with the Bodos. The first Bodo accord was signed with the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) in 1993, leading to the creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). The second accord was signed in 2003 with BLT which led to the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Assam. As for the 3rd Bodo accord, it was on 2nd January 2020, all factions of the NDFB together with ABSU signed a peace accord with the Centre and the State government, following which about 1,615 cadres comprising 836 members of NDFB(P), 579 of NDFB(RD) and 200 of NDFB(S) laid down their arms at an event held at Guwahati. Sequel to the agreement, the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) has been renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Their long standing demand for a sovereign State remained unmet. As a part of the agreement the Bodos would get more political and economic benefits from the Centre. While addressing a celebratory rally at Kokrajhar, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a Rs 1500 crore package for the Bodo areas. Sri Pramod Boro has been elected the Chief Executive Member of the Bodoland Territorial Council after his party the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) emerged victorious in the election in BTR.

In Kabi Anglong also there was armed movement by several terrorist groups. In March 1999 with the merger of two terrorist outfits, the Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) and the Karbi People's Front (KPF), the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) was formed. On May, 23, 2002 the outfit led by Kiri Rongphar signed an agreement with the Union government for one year. This agreement led to a split in the UPDS into pro-talk & anti-talk factions. On 16 May 2004, the anti-talk faction of UPDS renamed itself as the Karbi Longri N.C. Hills Liberation Front (KLNLFF). The group was operating its insurgent activities in Karbi Anglong & Dima Hasao districts of Assam. Its declared objective was self rule for the Karbi people. In November 2011 the UPDS gave up arms and signed a tripartite Memorandum of Settlement with the Centre and the Government of Assam, settling for enhanced autonomy and special package for the KAAC. The then General Secretary of the UPDS, Horen Sing Bey has later joined the BJP to become an MLA. As of 14 December, 2014 the UPDS has formally disbanded itself following the mass surrender of all its leaders. On February 23, 2021, 1,040 militants of five militant groups Karbi People's Liberation Tiger (KPLT), People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK), led by its Chief Songbijit Ingti Kathar, Karbi Longri N.C. Hills Liberation Front (KLNLFF), Kuki Liberation Front (KLF), and United People's Liberation Army (UPLA), surrendered before the then Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and ceremonially laid down arms depositing 300 weapons and 11,203 bullets, at an event in Guwahati. These outfits' core demand was for a separate State. After the surrender of the militant groups a Karbi Anglong peace treaty is in the offing.

The insurgent group Dima Halam daogah (DHD) is the break away group of Dimasas National Security Force which ceased operations in January, 1993. The DHD was launched by its Commander in Chief Jewel Garlosa. After the peace agreement between the DHD and the central government in 2003, the group broke out into two factions- the DHD(Jewel), also known as Black Widow & DHD(Nunisa).

The Black Widow.s declared objective is to create Dimaraji for the Dimasa people in Dima Hasao district only, whereas DHD (Nunisa faction)'s objective is to include parts of Karbi Anglong, Cachar, and Nagaon districts in Assam, and also sections of Dimapur district of Nagaland. Its Chairman is Dilip Nunisa. The DHD(J) surrendered en masse in 2009 to police with about 364 cadre strength along and deposited a huge quantities of sophisticated arms like 37 AK seies rifles, 10 M-16 rifles, 11 US Carbines etc. On October 8, 2012 the historic Dimasa Accord was signed between the Central government, State government and the two factions of DHD. Presently, the Dima Hasao district is being administered by Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council.

Apart from the autonomous councils stated above, the State government in a bid to placate some tribal groups which were supposedly discontented for being deprived of equitable benefits of government's various developmental schemes, constituted six numbers of autonomous councils such as the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council, Mising Autonomous Council, Tiwa Autonomous Council, Deori Autonomous Council, Thengal Kachari Autonomous Council and Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council.

To speak the truth the autonomous councils have not been able to do a little for the development of the tribal groups due to malfunctioning of the councils and mismanagement of the government funds made available to the councils. In another move to placate three of the six agitating groups for scheduled tribe status, the State government announced the formation of three autonomous councils for Koch-Rajbanshi, Moran and Matak communities, just before the Assam Legislative Election process was started. It is quite uncertain how much time it would take for the newly announced autonomous councils to be functional. It is feared that it may take another five year Assam Assembly term or more than that as legal complexities may come to surface in constituting the councils for hitherto non tribal communities.

Coming to the initiation of peace talks with ULFA, in response to an appeal made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Dr H.B. Sarma, the ULFA Commander in Chief Paresh Barua has released one Ritul Saikia, an ONGC Engineer, under his captivity. The ULFA Commander has also reportedly announced three months' ceasefire unilaterally. Ritul Saikia's release and the ceasefire announcement have been viewed by the government as a welcoming gesture. The Chief Minister has announced during the three day first session of the newly constituted Assembly that he has urged Mr Paresh Barua to come to the negotiating table. It is expected that Mr Barua will respond with a positive gesture and sit for talks soon.

Now the moot point is that the government of India neither did accede to the demand of sovereignty made by separatist groups earlier, nor likely to sit for talks with an agenda including Sovereignty as an item. The Chief Minister while addressing a press conference the other day said that there cannot be any negotiation on the Sovereignty issue. Now, it is left to Mr Paresh Barua to come to the negotiation table with an agenda sans sovereignty issue, prepared by him with due deliberation with all his confidants including the Arabinda Rajkhowa faction who are now overground and have already involved in talks with the government appointed interlocutors. In preparing the agenda and for carrying out the talks, Mr Barua might be in need of the help of a group of advisors, well versed in knowledge to be able to guide ULFA during the course of talks with government for a fruitful talks. In this regard Mr Barua may take note of the few lines stated below.

For quite sometime after ULFA's birth, a bulk section of indigenous Assamese people's moral support was earned by it so far as its demand for autonomy was concerned, but the support base gradually faded away from the time ULFA started committing heinous crimes like kidnapping, extortion, and especially killing of innocent people by bombings etc. It has long been distressful for the indigenous people of Assam for having been long deprived from its due share by the Centre and so, there is the need of self rule by the indigenous people. And therefore, there has ever been growing a tendency amongst the people to form regional political entities to gain political power to be able to serve the native to their best. ULFA's objective is more or less similar to the indigenous people's desire. In the given circumstances, ULFA's agenda for talks might find place the following demands.

1. Autonomous State :- Assam to be an Autonomous State with a separate Constitution and a Flag of its own. The State to be administered by a council of ministers to be elected by the indigenous people of Assam. The constitutional head is also to be an elected person. Distribution of subjects may be re-arranged between the Centre and the State. The Centre will have to cede to the State all the departments except External Affairs, Defence, Railways, Communications, Shipping, Civil Aviation, Highways Construction, Currency, Custom, Heavy industries etc.

2. Representation in International Bodies :- Assam is the State where people of different ethnic groups live. Their varied problems often require international attention. So, Assam should have the right of representation in all the International bodies along with the Central government's representatives and address the bodies.

3. Population Census :- The population of Assam multiplied manifold in less than two centuries time creating the biggest problem for Assam. A Census for the entire population is needed in the line of NRC and the population be categorised in the following way :-

a) The indigenous or the original inhabitants of Assam living at the time of the Yandabu Pact of 1826,

b) People who came after 1826 from other parts of India (barring North East) for some business or other purpose and settled in Assam,

c) The people whose forefathers were imported by British from outside States to be

engaged as workers in tea gardens,

d) The immigrant muslim people who migrated from East Bengal during British era and also after independence.

The original inhabitants together with certain selected classes of people would be eligible to hold the right of citizenship and they would be issued Assam Citizenship Card with mention of category in which he falls. Non citizens thus silted out will be taken care of by the Centre for deportation or rehabilitation as the case may be. Foreigners or Indians from other States seeking entry to the State would require Visa or analogous permission from concerned State authority.

4. Financial autonomy :- Assam would have a complete financial autonomy. Revenue earned by the State from the oil industries and other sources would be at the disposal of the State authority. The Centre's share of revenue would be fixed by the State.

5. Ownership of land and immovable property :- Barring the indigenous people others would be entitled to a limited immovable property right as permitted by the State authority. Excess of permissible property would be liable to be confiscated by the State.

6. Establishment of Heavy Industrial Units :- To facilitate the State to achieve a sound economic status and to generate more employment opportunities to the youths, a minimum of 50 numbers of heavy industrial units with a minimum annual turn over of a billion rupees would have to be established in the State.

7. Introduction of State Administrative Service :- In line of Indian Administrative Service, a State Administrative Service would be introduced or the present State Public Service to be upgraded, and recruitment to the service would be made only by indigenous people of the State. With a team of native bureaucrats seriously concerned for the cause of Assam, the State will progress at a rapid pace.

8. Responsibility of the Centre for the flood & allied problems :- The Centre would have the sole responsibility of the flood problem and allied perennial problems of great magnitude arising out of a natural disaster etc.

9. Outsider official of oil industries to be replaced in :- All the executive grade employees serving in the oil sectors like IOC, ONGC, OIL and other important public sectors hailing from outside Assam may be replaced by native officers in phased manner to be completed within two years. This time period might be required to train up the technical officials to be able to do their task efficiently. For this training schedule to be arranged outside the State or outside India as per necessity for specialised training. This will solve the unemployment problem to a considerable extent.

10. Establishment of Universities and High Educational Institutions:- There are only few Universities in Assam and very less number of government colleges that too with limited courses of study. Due to shortage of Universities & Colleges, Assamese students have to go to other states for higher studies. At least five more universities, five Engineering Colleges, five Medical Colleges and fifteen government colleges, having modern courses of study be established to cater to the needs of the students seeking admission for higher study.

11. Railway services to be increased :- Railway communication services presently being afforded for the people of Assam is far deficient both in case of passenger service and service for transportation of goods due to shortage of trains running from Assam to places of other states. It is difficult to get reservation at short notice to travel to other state capitals. In the same way due to shortage of goods trains, essential commodities imported from outside the state becomes costlier after being unloaded in Assam. As such, more train services for Assam and other North East States are needed.

12. More Surface Transport facilities :- There is not enough Surface transport facilities in Assam for easy trade and commerce activities. There are very limited Highways connecting Assam and the North Eastern states. Moreover, there are only five bridges over river Brahmaputra connecting few northern districts with another few southern districts. The districts on the north of river Brahmaputra shares the border with Arunachal Pradesh which state is strategically located for the defence point of view as the Indian state has its common international border with China and the international border dispute between India and China has long been the cause of concern for India. Against five bridges over Brahmaputra, there are as many as 33 bridges over river Ganga. There is need for more surface transport facilities to extend trade and commerce and cultural exchange beyond the international borders in the east.

13. Government controlled trade and commerce :- Assam and the North East states have been victims of illegal trade practices by traders who imports various kinds of goods ranging from small items of domestic use to heavy machineries for industrial establishments from outside Assam, and sell or supply here in exorbitant prices making high profits. This is because of the want of government control over trade and commerce. Every trade and commerce within the state must be under the control of the state government so that people should not be cheated and there should not be wastage of government fund.

14. Special Laws & Judicial infrastructure :- Corruption in public life has eaten to the very vitals of the economy and polluting the society badly. In addition to the existing laws a set of special laws need be enacted to punish the criminals, specially of white-collar crimes. Necessary judicial infrastructure be installed to expeditiously get the criminals booked and justice delivered to the aggrieved.

In conclusion, the people of Assam have had the bitter experience of ULFA's three decade long insurgent activities, and so, would like to appeal Mr Paresh Barua, the Commander in Chief of ULFA and also the respective governments to sit for talks at the earliest to give a logical end to the insurgent group's three decade long armed movement.

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Ami Organics files IPO papers with SEBI; firm's 2nd attempt at public issue



Mumbai, June 09 : Ami Organics, specialty chemicals maker, has filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the capital markets regulator SEBI to launch an IPO. The proposed public issue comprises a fresh issue of Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 60.6 lakh shares by its existing promoters and shareholders. Ami Organics said that it is in consultation with its book-running managers for pre-IPO placement of up to Rs 100 crore. Intensive Fiscal Services Pvt Ltd, Ambit Pvt Ltd and Axis Capital Ltd are the book running lead managers to the issue. Link Intime Private Ltd is the registrar to the issue. The equity shares offered through red herring prospectus (RHP) are proposed to be listed on the stock exchanges. This is the Ami Organics' second attempt to go public. In 2018, Ami Organics had filed preliminary papers with SEBI and received the capital

markets regulator's approval to launch the initial public offering. However, it did not float the IPO. The company has planned to utilise the proceeds from the issue for repayment of financial facilities of up to Rs 140 crore. The firm will also use up to Rs 90 crore for funding working capital requirements. Paytm IPO, Paytm grey market shares Paytm share price doubles to Rs 24,000 in grey market on IPO buzz; should you

buy it ahead of IPO? IPO, SPACSPACs: Bidding goodbye to traditional Initial Public Offers, but will it work for Indian firms? Upon successful listing, Ami Organics will join the likes of Aarti Industries, Hikal Ltd, Valiant Organics, Vinati Organics, Neuland Organics and Atul Ltd. The average P/E of the industry peer stands at 44.82x. The emerging market and developing economies are expected to lead the overall growth rebound, with the chemicals sector driving the growth story. As the chemical industry lies at the heart of several value chains and acts as a solution provider to other sectors of the economy, it plays a pivotal role in leading a sustainable recovery, the company said in the DRHP. Specialty chemicals industry can be categorised into a mix of end-use driven segments and application-driven segments.

Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-owned pharma stock may see covid vaccine windfalls; ICICI Direct sees 26% upside

Mumbai, June 09 : Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-owned Jubilant Pharmova could benefit from contract manufacturing deals signed for covid-treatment and vaccines, according to brokerage and research firm ICICI Direct. During the previous quarter, the company saw its revenue from the CDMO segment grow 48% on-year basis to Rs 574 crore even though overall revenue growth was flat. Foreseeing further growth in the CDMO segment, aided by covid treatment and vaccines, domestic brokerage and research firm ICICI Direct has upped the target price for Jubilant Pharmova. On Monday, the stock was down 5%, trading at Rs 792 per share. Jubilant Pharmova saw revenues slip in the radiopharma segment, down 23.5% on-year basis. The company management said that two lungs scan related radiopharma products were impacted due to lower diagnostic testing and patient footfall amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The Allergy business of the firm is now back to pre-covid levels. The generics segment recorded muted on-year growth and a sharp decline sequentially amid a decline in Remdesivir sales and pricing pressure in a few products in the US. Overall, Jubilant Pharmova reported a 13.7% fall in net profit to Rs 183 crore. Titan company, Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, Titan Rakesh Jhunjhunwala's favorite stock hits all-time high; Titan stock may touch Rs 1,800 in next few days Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-owned drug stock hits new 52-week high; charts show it may rally up to 20% more Although the performance in the quarter was muted by the de-growth in the Radiopharma segment, the management expects a gradual recovery in the division supported by one new launch this fiscal year and normalcy in the base business. "Going ahead, we expect the company to post better margin performance and to be back on the growth track thanks to cost rationalisation mea-



sures and strong order book visibility in the CDMO segment along with partnerships for generic products," ICICI Direct said. Analysts at ICICI Direct added that a key monitorable for the company would be developments on the CDMO agreements that the company has signed for Covid treatment and vaccine candidates. Jubilant Pharmova said that the CDMO segment has a strong visible order book of Rs 3,600 crore to be serviced over the next three years. ICICI Direct has

a target price of Rs 1,000 per share on Jubilant Pharmova, translating to a 26% upside from the current price. Jubilant Pharmova consists of Jubilant Pharma, Biosys and Therapeutics business of the erstwhile Jubilant Life Sciences. The company demerged into Jubilant Ingrevia and Jubilant Pharmova in February this year. Big bull Rakesh Jhunjhunwala owns a 6.3% stake in the company. The current value of his stake is close to Rs 793 crore.

Bank of Baroda rating - Reduce: Performance in Q4 was better than expected

Mumbai, June 09 : Separately, the stress in the book is mainly in the lower ticket retail and MSME segment, which makes us a bit cautious. We, therefore, maintain Reduce with our TP revised up to Rs 75. BOB reported a loss owing to deferred tax adjustment as it moved to a lower tax rate regime. Core PPOP (excluding treasury gains), however, grew at 26% y-o-y, 8% above our estimate. This was driven by 4.5% y-o-y growth in NII, 71% y-o-y growth in non-interest in-

come, offset by 26% y-o-y growth in expenses. NII was impacted by interest write-off on account of slippages as well as compound interest for loans > Rs 20 mn. Gross slippages were at ~Rs 123 bn (7.1% slippage ratio on 12m prior loans) which includes pro-forma slippages of Rs 86 bn, resulting in net Q4 slippages of ~Rs 4 bn. BOB's slippages in retail and MSME and outstanding NPL ratios, as well as overall SMA portfolio, is much weaker as compared to SBI. Separately, the

stress in the book is mainly in the lower ticket retail and MSME segment, which makes us a bit cautious. We, therefore, maintain Reduce with our TP revised up to Rs 75. Advances grew 2% y-o-y and 1% q-o-q to Rs 7.51 lakh crore. Retail lending portfolio increased 14% y-o-y to Rs 1.2 lakh crore. BoB reports net loss of Rs 1,047 crore due to one-time tax reversal of Rs 3,837 crore. CBICBI carries out searches at 100 locations across 11 states in separate bank fraud

cases Asset quality held up better, stress mostly in small ticket retail & MSME: Gross and net NPL declined to 8.87% and 3.09% compared to pro-forma gross and net NPL of 9.63% and 3.36%, respectively, in Q3. Gross slippages were at ~Rs 123 bn. SMA1 and SMA2 for ticket size above Rs 50 mn stood at 3.87%. Collection efficiency for Mar'21 stood at 93% vs 92% in Q3FY21. The bigger worry for BOB is the stress build-up in the smaller ticket loans where the SMA1 and SMA2 to-

talled to 8.1% vs 4.4% for ticket size > Rs 50 mn, as of Dec'20. Asset quality weaker compared to SBI: Outstanding NPL ratio for BOB is substantially higher than SBI e.g. in corporate 10.3% vs. 5.6%, in MSME 13.5% vs 7.7% and in retail 2.3% vs. 0.8%. Similarly, new NPL formation for BOB is quite elevated vs. SBI across all segments barring agriculture. Likewise, the SMA1 and SMA2 for above-Rs 50-mn loans, is significantly higher at 3.9% for BOB vs. 0.45% for SBI.

PNB, MRF, Mrs Bectors Food, HDFC, Emami, Inter Globe Aviation, Union Bank of India stocks in focus

Mumbai, June 09 : Trends on SGX Nifty suggest a gap-up start for BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 with a rise of 46 points on Monday. The Nifty futures were trading at 15,745.80 on the Singaporean Exchange. PNB, MRF, Mrs Bectors Food, HDFC, Emami, InterGlobe Aviation stocks in focus Investors will continue to focus on the trajectory of daily COVID-19 cases and vaccination drive in the country. Trends on SGX Nifty suggest a gap-up start for BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 with a rise of 46 points on Monday. The Nifty futures were trading at 15,745.80 on the Singaporean Exchange. In the previous session, the 30-share Sensex ended 132 points down at 52,100, while the Nifty 50 index ended 20 points down at 15,670.



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Investors will continue to focus on the trajectory of daily COVID-19 cases and vaccination drive in the country. Besides, the trend in Brent crude oil, movement in rupee against US dollar and foreign institutional investors inflows would also continue to guide markets. After witnessing late intraday recovery from losses in the previous session, Nifty looks to maintain its momentum in upward direction. "Higher levels to look out shall be 15,800 and 16,000. Key support levels for the near term remain at 15,500 and 15,300," said Mohit Nigam, Head, PMS - Hem Securities. MRF, Mrs Bectors Food: BSE-listed companies such as Union Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Mrs Bectors Food Specialities, Dynamatic Technologies, MRF, New India Assurance Company, Shree Pushkar Chemicals & Fertilisers, SMC Global Securities, SMS Lifesciences India, Tower Infrastructure Trust, Victoria Mills, and Yuku India,

among others are scheduled to announce their January-March quarterly earnings on June 7. IndiGo quarterly loss widens to Rs 1,147 crore IndiGo quarterly loss widens to Rs 1,147 crore On loan growth, Rao said, "At the conservative level, we would like to show a growth rate of 8% if the economy moves on expected lines where the GDP growth is 9.5% and the Covid-19 impact is reduced or eliminated by June." PNB expects to triple FY22 net profit, identifies Rs 8,000 crore NPAs for NARCL Punjab National Bank: PNB expects to triple its net profit during the current financial year to Rs 6,000 crore, compared to Rs 2,022 crore during FY21, MD and CEO SS Mallikarjuna Rao said on Saturday. The lender also expects to grow its loan book by 8% during FY22, despite Covid-related impacts. HDFC: As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, Housing Development Finance Corporation has commit-

ted an initial amount of Rs 40 crore this year for COVID-19 support and pledged to increase this commitment over the next two quarters based on need. The COVID-19 initiatives are being undertaken through its philanthropic arm the HT Parekh Foundation. HDFC Ltd said in a statement. Emami: Emami Ltd has raised product prices on an average by four per cent in the current fiscal to offset the present input cost pressure that will help the company to retain a gross margin of 66-67 per cent, a senior company official said on Sunday. The company's long-awaited project Khoj that aims deeper rural reach to retain profitability momentum, has been launched in Uttar Pradesh with the relaxation of lockdown. InterGlobe Aviation: IndiGo on Saturday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,147.2 crore in the three months ended March, primarily due to a sharp decline in revenues amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Global fund managers fear inflation more than covid-19; remain bullish on growth expectations

Mumbai, June 09 : The bullish bias of fund managers is reflected well in the low cash levels they have been sitting on. BofA showed that cash levels are as low as 4.1%, implying that most of the investable money available has been invested. Fund managers across the globe are over the fear covid-19 pandemic, according to Bank of America's (BoFA) recent fund manager survey. Among the 194 fund managers surveyed by the global investment bank, as many as 35% of the respondents believe inflation is now again the biggest risk for markets. Meanwhile, only 9% believe covid-19 to be the biggest tail risk for investors. Although inflation is seen as a risk, 69% of the respondents continue to remain bullish and expect an above-trend growth accompanying their expectation of above-trend inflation. The bullish bias of fund managers is reflected well in the low cash levels they have been sitting on. BofA showed that cash levels are as low as 4.1%, implying that most of the investable money available has been invested. On-month basis, investors have moved towards late cyclical such as energy. Staples, REITs, banks, utilities, and materials have also seen a positive change in terms of investor positioning, according to the survey. On the other hand, Emerging markets, technology, and commodities have seen a negative trend. Allocation towards the technology sector is the third-lowest since 2006.



Financial mistakes that can push you into credit card debt trap

The interest-free period on fresh credit card transactions till the repayment of the unpaid credit card bill. Thus, non-payment of entire

entire unpaid dues to EMIs, they can avail interest free period on fresh credit card transactions. Just paying minimum



credit card bills for several consecutive months along with continued credit card spending during that period can lead you to a credit card debt. The best way to deal with such situations is to convert the unserviceable component of the credit card bill. Opt for the EMI option if you are unable to service your credit card bill. The interest rate charged on such EMI conversion is much lower than the finance charges levied on unpaid credit card bills. The tenure of such EMI conversions can range anywhere between 3 and 60 months basis the card issuer. This allows you to choose EMI tenures based on the EMI repayment capacity. Credit card issuers also allow card users to convert select transactions beyond a predetermined threshold amount into EMIs. Once the card holders convert their

amount due by the due date Credit card issuers charge finance charges on all the ATM cash withdrawals made through credit cards. They also levy a cash advance fee of up to 3.5% of the amount withdrawn. Card holders will continue to incur finance charges until they repay the entire amount withdrawn from ATMs. Avoid ATM cash withdrawals through credit cards to the extent possible. If making ATM withdrawals become completely unavoidable, then make sure to repay the entire cash withdrawal as soon as possible. EMI conversion should always be the first response to save yourself from stepping into credit card debt trap. Having said that, you should also explore other options if the interest rates charged on EMI conversion and/or the quantum of the unpaid credit card dues

are on the higher side. Here are some of the alternative options -# Credit card balance transfer: Many credit card issuers offer balance transfer options to the existing credit card users of other card issuers. This option allows card users to transfer their unpaid balance to another card issuer at lower or nil interest for a pre-specified period, usually up to 3 months. This period is also known as the promotional interest period. This option can be especially beneficial for those having the capacity to repay their entire unpaid dues within the specified promotional interest period. However, card issuers start levying usual finance charges on the unpaid proportion of the transferred balance after the expiry of the promotional interest period. Some credit card issuers also allow the transferred balance to be converted to EMIs. This option would be helpful for those lacking the capacity to repay the entire transferred balance within the promotional interest period. Personal loans, gold loans and top-up home loans (in case of existing home loan borrowers) can be availed for getting out of credit card debt traps. The interest rates charged by the lenders for personal loans, gold loans and top-up home loans are usually lower than the interest rates charged on EMI conversions. Hence, those being charged high interest rates for EMI conversions can consider these alternative loan options to reduce their overall interest cost. A reduced interest cost will increase their chances of getting out of their debt traps sooner.

EV batteries that charge 60 times faster: Aluminium-ion tech offers range breakthrough

Mumbai, June 09 : A clean technology company based in Australia Graphene Manufacturing Group (GMG) has stated that its graphene aluminium-ion batteries can charge up to 60 times faster than lithium-ion batteries that are currently considered the best solution to electric mobility. The company also claims that the new tech will hold three times the energy of the best aluminium-based cells, also be long-lasting, safer and have a lower impact on the environment in comparison to traditional batteries. GMG could roll out the graphene aluminium-ion coin cells in the market later this year or early next year, along with plans to launch automotive pouch cells

in early 2024. GMG develops energy storage products using its own production process that produces GMG graphene from methane and not mined graphite, which the company says is high quality, tuneable, has low contaminants and offers low input costs. The material can be used in anything from watches to phones, laptops up to electric vehicles and grid storage battery systems. The company along with the University of Queensland announced a research agreement to develop graphene aluminium-ion



cells in April. The data from the initial experiments at the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology has been released. The graphene aluminium-ion batteries could offer a charge time that is up to 22 to 60 times faster than lithium-ion batteries.

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Assam notifies Dihing Patkai as its

the East (under Digboi Division, Tinsukia District) up to the Jeyapore RF (under Dibrugarh Division, Dibrugarh District), comprises some pristine forests along the Assam-Arunachal interstate boundary, classified as Assam Valley Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests. Popularly known as Dihing Patkai Rain Forest, it has unique floral and faunal diversity, which was recognized by the Government of Assam in 2004, when 111.19 sq. km. of this area was notified as Dihing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary. Forest and wildlife conservation have now been strengthened here by adding another 123.07 sq.km. to the original sanctuary area and conferring National Park status to 234.26 sq. km, with the highest level of protection available under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Notification of the National Park includes areas falling within the existing Dihing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary along with all the additional Reserve Forests i.e. Upper Dihing RF (West Block) and Jeyapore RF. However, Forest Village area diverted under Forest Conservation Act has been excluded. Short stretches of Dirak and Buri Dihing rivers falling within this contiguous patch of proposed National Park have been included. Preliminary notified on 01.12.2020, proclamations were issued on 01.01.2021 by the Deputy Commissioners of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh, after no claims were received and Dihing Patkai was finally notified as a National Park, following due process as outlined in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The newly notified National Park shall be administered by Sorapung Range of Digboi Division and Jeyapore Range of Dibrugarh Division, both falling under Conservator, Eastern Assam Circle, who shall be notified as Director of Dihing Patkai National Park. For intensive patrolling and conservation of the new area, additional Anti-Poaching Camps and manpower is being provided by the Govt. of Assam.

Vaccination process in Assam

the State Government will come up with a fresh set of SOPs after June 15. The Assam Government recently had extended the COVID-19 restrictions in the State till June 16, which also bans inter-district movement of individuals. Notably, Assam COVID-19 situation has improved considerably in the last few weeks with the daily positivity rate dropping below 3 percent on Tuesday. Assam currently has 49,158 active COVID-19 cases. The recovery rate in the State stands at 87.75 percent. As the number of COVID-19 cases in the state is decreasing, the Assam government will issue a new set of SOP on June 15, informed Assam Health Minister Keshab Mahanta. Speaking to Newsline, the Health Minister said, "New SOP will be issued on June 15. As the Covid situation in Assam is turning normal there will be some relaxations in the new SOP." "Tomorrow Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma will inform about the current COVID situation in the state," Mahanta added. It is to be mentioned that Assam's COVID-19 caseload mounted to 4,42,694 on Tuesday as 3,948 more people tested positive for the infection while 43 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 3,738, the National Health Mission bulletin said. The number of COVID-19 patients dying of other causes is 1,347. The current death rate is 0.84 percent. At present, Assam has 49,158 active COVID-19 cases, the bulletin said. The new cases were detected out of 1,33,212 tests conducted on Tuesday with the daily positivity rate at 2.96 percent while the cumulative tests conducted in the state so far are 1,19,41,949. As many as 3,88,451 people have recovered from the infection, including 3,419 on Tuesday. The COVID-19 recovery rate in the state is 87.75 percent. A total of 35,87,993 persons have received the first dose of vaccine and 8,60,549 persons have got the second dose.

Police Busts Numerous Illegal

total of 80 bags of Burmese Supary had been seized from a truck while taking it to a godown. Cachar police has also apprehended two smugglers who are identified as Nazmul Hussain Laskar and Tazmul Hussain Laskar. At a separate operation against drugs, Police had once again seized 12 grams of Heroin at Bokajan from the residence of Prabhas Shah. As per reports, the seized heroin worth of Rupees 40 lakhs was buried in soil and police had apprehended wife of Prabhas Shah, Parvati Devi and their two sons Ramdev Shah and Kapil Shah. Police had also seized drugs at Jaluguti of Morigaon district on Wednesday and apprehended Iqbal Hussain in relation with the drugs racket. The operation was carried at Iqbal Hussain's residence wherefrom police seized a container full of drugs along with 15 empty drugs containers. Another operation was carried out at Tarabari of Sarthebari wherefrom police seized 1200 tablets of harmful drugs and 26 empty containers along with a syringe. The drug racketeer has been identified as Shahdat Ali who is apprehended by police in the case. Additionally, another case of drug racket had also been reported in Guwahati today. The Guwahati crime branch seized drugs from the vehicle bearing registration no AS 01EC 1175. As reported, the crime branch had followed the truck from Khetri area and captured it in Lalmati of Guwahati. The police have seized one packet of drugs along with thirteen thousand rupees from the truck driver who has been identified as Babu aka Dwipen Deka. Meanwhile police is carrying out operations in search of the truck handyman. As reported, the handyman was living as a tenant in the residence of MLA Dr. Idris Ali of Dhing constituency. Although the handyman was not found in the rented room, police and crime branch team had apprehended another young man and seized drugs. The man is identified as Bapukon Ali of Hajo. As per reports, operation is still in force by the police and crime branch team to bust drugs racket in the state.

Nagaland government announced

taken through video conferencing. It has been a consensus to continue lockdown with more relaxation," Krontu, who is also the HPC spokesperson, said. The HPC has recommended the COVID-19 war room to increase the duration of shopping timings for essential commodities, which is currently from 6 am to 12 noon throughout the state, he said. The HPC also decided that trains will not stop at Dimapur, the only railway station in the state. While construction activities had resumed in the state, it was decided that labourers from outside Nagaland would not be allowed if they do not furnish a negative COVID-19 test result. Previously all places of worship and church services had been restricted, but the HPC meeting on Wednesday permitted a maximum of 20 members to attend prayer service in churches. The government also allowed the opening of stationery shops, he said. However, classes will continue in the online mode. HPC co-spokesperson and advisor Mmholnomo Kikon said while the Nagaland chief secretary would issue an overall lockdown guideline for the entire state but the respective DTF of the districts would issue necessary orders for relaxation as per the situation in the districts. Nagalands COVID-19 caseload during the start of the total lockdown on May 14 was 17,531, which mounted to 21,680 on May 31, when the extended lockdown was to end. The number of COVID-19 deaths had also doubled from 190 on May 14 to 376 on May 31, necessitating an extension of the lockdown with total restrictions till June 11. However, in the past 8 days, there has been a decrease in daily case count. The COVID-19 tally in the state on Tuesday was 23,051, and with the demise of three coronavirus patients, the death toll was 432. The recovery rate in Nagaland has also improved from 72.59 per cent on May 31 to 75.03 per cent till Tuesday.

15 days special casual leave

faced by the government servants". A government servant shall be granted commuted leave up to 20 days when he or she is COVID-19 positive and is in home isolation/quarantine, the order said. In case of a government servant testing COVID-19 positive and is in home isolation and has also been hospitalised, he or she shall be granted commuted leave/SCL/earned leave (EL) for a period up to 20 days starting from the time having tested positive, it said. "In case of hospitalization beyond the 20th day from his testing COVID positive, he shall be granted commuted leave, on the production of documentary proof of hospitalization," said the order issued to all central government ministries. A government servant shall be granted special casual leave of 15 days in case a dependent family member or parents (whether dependent or not, living with him) are COVID-19 positive, it said. In case the government servant comes into direct contact with a COVID-positive person and remains in home quarantine, "he shall be treated as on-duty/work from home for a period of seven days", the ministry said in its order dated June 7. It said that the period of quarantine spent by government servant, as a precautionary measure, residing in the containment zone "shall be treated as on-duty/work from home till the containment zone is de-notified". These orders shall be applicable with effect from March 25, 2020, until further orders.

Woman dies hours after taking

District Hospital. The woman breathed her last at around 5:30pm in the hospital. The deceased woman has been identified as Kiranbala Devi and was a school teacher by profession. She was also a mother to a seven-month-old child. The family members of the deceased woman have claimed that she died due to aftereffects of the vaccine dose. However, the real reason for the woman's death is yet to be ascertained. The body of the deceased woman was sent for autopsy at the JNIMS in Imphal, report of which is still awaited. Meanwhile, the Biren Singh-led Manipur Government has assured formation of a one-man committee to probe the death of the woman.

Nepal stops distribution

during the tenure of previous health minister Hridayesh Tripathi and the minister in charge of women and child development, Juli Mahato. Soon afterwards, Ms. Mahato and her husband Raghuvir Mahaseth tested positive drawing attention to their support for Patanjali group. The latest order is being interpreted as an attempt by Oli government to distance itself from the Patanjali group as it is perceived to be close to Ms. Mahato's brother, industrialist Upendra Mahato. Mr Mahato is one of the biggest industrialists of Nepal and is widely known to be a partner of Patanjali group in the country. Following last week's cabinet reshuffle, Mr Mahaseth has been appointed one of the three Deputy Prime Ministers and he is also in charge of the Foreign Ministry. Sher Bahadur Tamang has taken over as the new Health Minister. The Mahatos and the Mahaseths are prominent Madhesi families of Nepal and Mr. Ramdev's business facilities in Nepal are also located mostly in the Madhes region also known as the Terai plains. The latest development highlights the connection between the Indian group and Nepal's current political leaders, especially the resurgent Madhesi. In 2016, Patanjali set up a production facility near Birgunj in partnership with Mr. Upendra Mahato. The facility was inaugurated by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari. Apart from the Madhesi leaders, Patanjali group is also known to have good relation with the leaders like Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" among others. Opponents of the Oli government like former PM Madhav Kumar Nepal and Mr. Prachanda have accused Mr. Oli and his chosen Madhesi leaders from the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) of having benefited from India's political support. The health department of Mr Oli's government has been criticised over the handling of the pandemic in Nepal, which has been hit hard by the second wave in recent months.

CM gives thrust to prudent

to be placed at various critical places. The new commandos will be trained in line with NSG commandos. Moreover for reducing the work load on police forces, two shifts of duty will be introduced in all police stations across the state. The conference also discussed welfare of police forces including construction of quarters for them. Moreover, one month special leave will be given to the police personnel posted at different battalions to enable them to live with their families. A Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) will be prepared soon to implement it. A free compulsory health check up facility will be introduced for the police personnel once in a year. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said that to enable the SPs and DCs to sort different issues of administrative importance two separate conferences will be held every year in the state. The first DCs conference will be held in August in Diphu this year. Moreover seven forensic science laboratories will be set up in the state. The conference also decided to adopt zero tolerance towards cow smuggling and drug smuggling. All SPs have been asked not to allow their districts to be used as transit routes. Talking about inter-state boundary issue, Sarma said that Assam will protect its boundaries at all cost. However it will also live in the spirit of seven sisters to promote balanced development. P&RD Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, Health Minister Keshav Mahanta, DGP Bhaskarijoti Mahanta, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, Principal Secretary of Home Department Neeraj Verma and other senior police officers were present during the conference.

Man threatens to hijack planes

threatened to hijack the planes, was caught late Tuesday night from Shujalpur town (about 100 km from Bhopal). He is being extensively questioned as part of the investigation into the matter," the official said. Security has been tightened at the Bhopal airport following the threat call, another official said. On Tuesday evening, a Mumbai-bound flight took off from Bhopal after a strict security check, he said.

IIT Guwahati gains rank 41

on this occasion, Prof. T. G. Sitharam, Director, IIT Guwahati, said, "I congratulate the faculty, students and staff of IIT Guwahati for this remarkable growth in this performance which clearly shows that despite the pandemic, the institute has been working tirelessly to make such a global impact. The institute has improved in Research Citations per Faculty indicating the visibility of research activities of the institute as well as in the Academic Reputation as the major contributors in this increase" Prof. Parameswar K. Iyer, Dean Public Relations, Branding and Ranking, IIT Guwahati, mentioned, "The ranking of IIT Guwahati has been improving consistently across International and National agencies due to the concerted efforts the institute has been making over the past several years. This has impacted on various aspects of institutional growth, including Internationalization, enhancing the reputation (perception), promoting research and technology transfers, which are now becoming visible and being recognized both nationally and globally." The QS World University rankings 2022 announced today were based on six metrics; Academic Reputation, Employers Reputation, Faculty Student ratio, Citation per Faculty, International Faculty and International Students. IIT Guwahati has also been ranked in 12 different subject categories by the QS World University rankings announced earlier this year with a break into the 51-100 range in Petroleum Engineering. The subjects that IIT Guwahati finds mention are Engineering and Technology, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical, Aeronautical and Manufacturing Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Computer Science and Information Systems, Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Natural Sciences, Biological Sciences, Mathematics, Petroleum Engineering and Environmental Studies (2021 onwards).

Covishield At 780, Covaxin At 1,410: Maximum Price For Private Hospitals

New Delhi, June 09 : The Centre today fixed the maximum price that private hospitals can charge for Covid vaccines amid opposition allegations of profiteering. The price of Covishield has been fixed at ₹ 780 a dose, Russian vaccine Sputnik V at ₹ 1,145 a dose and indigenously made Covaxin, at a steep ₹ 1,410 a dose. This includes taxes as well as a 150-rupee service charge for the hospitals. The Center has asked the states not to allow private hospitals to levy more than ₹ 150 as service charge. The state governments have been asked to monitor the private hospitals regularly and said strict action will be taken against

any private vaccination center for charging more. Under the new vaccine policy announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday -- which will be implemented from June 21, the International Yoga Day -- the Centre said it will procure 75 per cent of the vaccines produced by companies, including the 25 per cent currently assigned to states. Private hospitals will continue to buy the remaining 25 per cent and vaccinate those who are willing to pay. In government-run institutions, vaccines will be provided for free to all eligible persons, Prime Minister Modi said yesterday in his address to the nation. The ear-

lier vaccine policy announced in May has been much criticised because of the differential pricing. Critics pointed out that many countries are inoculating all sections of their population for free, with the government bearing all costs. The Supreme Court said asking people between the ages of 18 and 44 years to pay for vaccines which people above the age of 45 were getting for free, is "prima facie arbitrary and irrational". After the Prime Minister's address to the nation yesterday, Congress's Rahul Gandhi questioned why people have to pay for vaccination in private hospitals. Under the hashtag

#FreeVaccineForAll, he tweeted, "One simple question- If vaccines are free for all, why should private hospitals charge for them?" The Congress has been demanding "one nation one price" for vaccines for long. Today, its senior leader Jairam Ramesh said: "Our country is the only country where we have said that 25 per cent of the vaccine will be given to the private sector and there you will pay ₹ 800, 1,000, 2,000... it is not in the interest of the country or the people and again we repeat our demand -- all Indians should get free vaccination, in government hospitals and private hospitals."

No more mandatory negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report for train travel? Check what Indian Railways is planning

New Delhi, June 09 : If you're planning to travel by train in the near future, then you might not have to carry the mandatory negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report. As per sources, instead of a COVID-19 report, the Indian Railway is mulling to allow train passengers with a COVID-19 vaccination certificate. A person can also show his/her certificate through the Aarogya Setu app. The move will also promote people to get vaccinated. Sources claimed that this has been suggested to the Ministry of Railways by several states and the development can likely be confirmed by June 15. Earlier on June 6, Minister of Civil Aviation (MoCA) Hardeep Singh Puri had also said that a joint team from several ministries and stakeholders, including the Health Department, are in discussion to take a final decision on allowing travelling by air without an RT-PCR test for those who have received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. He had also stated that this decision will not be taken alone by the MoCA, nodal agencies, including health experts who are working with the government will also contribute towards making a decision in the interests of passengers. Currently, domestic passengers are mandatorily asked to produce a negative RT-PCR report before travelling to some states, where active COVID-19 cases are still high. "Health is a state subject, and to ask passengers for a negative RT-PCR report before they enter a state is solely the right of that particular state," Puri added. Meanwhile, India recorded 92,596 new COVID-19 cases and 2,219 deaths in the last 24 hours, the Union Health Ministry informed on Wednesday (June 9). With this, the country's total coronavirus caseload has increased to 2,90,89,069, of which, 3,53,528 have succumbed to the virus, while 12,31,415 are active cases. The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered across the country has also increased to 23,90,58,360.

Covishield Produced More Antibodies Than Covaxin In Early Study: Report

New Delhi, June 09 : The Covishield vaccine produced more antibodies than Covaxin, according to a preliminary study by Coronavirus Vaccine-induced Antibody Titre (COVAT) involving healthcare workers (HCW) who have received both doses of either of the two vaccines. Seropositivity rates to anti-spike antibody were significantly higher in Covishield recipients compared to Covaxin after the first dose, the study claimed. The study is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed, so should not be used to guide clinical practice. It said that both vaccines - Covishield and Covaxin - elicited a good response after two doses, but seropositivity rate and median anti-spike antibody were significantly higher in Covishield. "Amongst the 552 HCW (325 Male, 227 Female), 456 and 96 received the first dose of Covishield and Covaxin respectively. Overall, 79.3 per cent showed seropositivity after the first dose. Responder rate and median (IQR) rise in anti-spike antibody were significantly higher in Covishield vs Covaxin recipient (86.8 vs. 43.8 per cent; 61.5 vs 6 AU/ml; both p<0.001)," the study said. The study involved those healthcare workers who have been administered either of the two vaccines, Covishield and Covaxin, and are with or without past history of SARS-CoV-2 infection. "This ongoing, Pan-India, Cross-sectional, Coronavirus Vaccine-induced Antibody Titre (COVAT) study is being conducted amongst HCW, with or without past history of SARS-CoV-2 infection. SARS-CoV-2 anti-spike binding antibody is being assessed quantitatively at four timepoints between 21 days or more after the first dose to 6 months after the second dose," the study said. However, the conclusion of the study said that both the vaccines have elicited good immune response. "While both vaccines elicited immune response, seropositivity rates to anti-spike antibody were significantly higher in Covishield recipient compared to Covaxin after the first dose. Ongoing COVAT study will further enlighten the immune response between two vaccines after the second dose," it said.

BJP hits out at Kejriwal over doorstep delivery of ration scheme

New Delhi, June 09 : Hitting out at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for attacking the Centre over its move to stop the doorstep delivery of ration scheme, the BJP claimed the union government had forestalled a "big scam" to divert subsidised foodgrains. Speaking at a virtual press conference on Sunday, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra alleged there is zero Aadhaar card authentication in Delhi, against the national average of 80%, and that the Kejriwal government had earlier stopped operation of POS machines which allow biometric verification. "It means there is no way one can find out if food grains are being delivered to the needy or diverted," he alleged. "Kejriwal blamed the Centre, but the truth is that over 72.78 lakh people are benefitting from the Food Security Act," Patra said. Under PM Garib Kalyan Yojna, which provides free ration to the poor in May and June, the Delhi government has so far lifted 53,045 MT of grains out of 72,782 MT sent by the Centre and distributed only 68% of what it has lifted, he further said. Patra also alleged the Delhi government's scheme was a scam as people will be charged money to get wheat flour as part of it. Responding to Patra's charge, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said: "He said we want to levy an extra charge. Mr Patra should read the Centre's guidelines. It is written clearly that if someone wants wheat to be ground to aata, Rs 3 can be charged for this. Our scheme says we will charge Rs 2 and will deliver aata to their homes. Your problem is not Rs 2, your problem is that ration will reach people's homes, and BJP will not be able to pilfer it." He added: "I had hoped the BJP would understand that giving ration to people at home was a step in the right direction. ... but I was mistaken. Sambit Patra abused the Delhi CM many, many times today, but I am not going to stoop to that and respond to it." Sisodia also accused the BJP of wanting the current system to continue, saying they benefit from it: "They want us to shut our eyes to pilferage and theft that goes on..."

Debbie Hewitt to become FA's first chairwoman in its 157-year history

London, June 09 : The Football Association has appointed the first female chair in its 157-year history, with the business executive Debbie Hewitt expected to take up the position in January. The appointment is subject to confirmation by the FA Council next month, but if the formalities are completed Hewitt will become the permanent successor to Greg Clarke, who resigned after making racially offensive remarks in front of a parliamentary committee. Hewitt has an extensive background in business that suggests a more polished approach to high-profile positions representing her employer. She is a former chief executive of RAC and the current nonexecutive chair at Visa Europe, the clothing brand White Stuff and the financial services group BGL, which owns price comparison site Compare The Market. Hewitt has also spent six years on the board of The Restaurant Group plc, which owns Wagamama and Frankie and Benny's. She will step down from that role on taking up her FA position. "I've been passionate about football from a very young age and I'm excited by the opportunity to play my part in shaping the future of something that means so much to so many," said Hewitt, who was awarded an MBE in 2011 for services to business and the public sector. Hewitt will take charge of English football's governing body at one of the most precarious financial moments in its history. The FA has projected estimated financial losses from Covid-19 to reach £300m by 2024 and has laid off 124 members of staff. She also arrives at a time of turbulence, not only because of Covid. The consequences of the failed European Super League have caused ructions across the game and the government is



conducting a review into the governance of football in England, which could lead to the introduction of an independent regulator. "As the events in recent months have shown, this is a significant moment in time for English football, with a clear purpose for all stakeholders to secure the long-term health of the game at all levels," said Hewitt. "I'm looking forward to working alongside our CEO, Mark Bullingham, and the team across Wembley Stadium and St George's Park, and relish the opportunity to chair an organisation that has the potential to be a very positive force for good throughout the game and across society." Kate Tinsley, an independent non-executive director at the FA who led the appointment process said: "This is an excellent appointment for the FA and English football in general." Debbie was the outstanding candidate from a talented and experienced field.

'A perfect analogy for cricket': Tudor, Atherton and Jonassen on Test 99s



London, June 09 : Numbers come with their own individual baggage. Lucky seven and unlucky 13. Three is a magic number, but also a crowd. Sixteen is sweet and life begins at 40. History and culture play their role, be it Douglas Adams asserting that 42 is the meaning of "life, the universe and everything" or St John the Apostle decrying 666 as the number of the beast, fear of which is known as Hexakosioihexekontahexaphobia - a swine to spell (or say) but it does get you value for money on your word count. In the Nightwatchman, Andy Zaltzman writes that cricketers particularly can feel aggrieved that "human beings irritatingly evolved with 10 digits on their hands and thus developed a decimal system of counting". There is one particular number that teeters between joy and disaster. It induces clammy hands and quickened pulses in players and spectators alike. The twitchiest number of the nervous nineties: 99. Clem Hill has the dubious honour of notching the first 99 in Tests, against England at Melbourne in 1902. Pleasingly for stats but no doubt vexing to him, he followed up with scores of 98 and 97 in the next game at Adelaide. There have been 95 scores of 99 in Test matches. On 89 of those occasions, when within a sniff of a century, the batter perished. Six were left stranded on it. One of the six is Alex Tudor, whose 99 not out against New Zealand in 1999 still rangles, becoming more of a Miss Havisham innings with each passing year. Tudor was sent in as a nightwatchman and biffed his way majestically to 84. Graham Thorpe arrived at the crease with 34 required to win; he was in no mood for sentimentality. Instead of seeing Tudor through to a remarkable century, Thorpe hit a rapid 21 and Tudor was left one run shy of the milestone. "My mum is still fuming," says Tudor, booming down the phone. Thorpe wrote that he regretted his approach that day. Five years later he shepherded Nasser Hussain to a century in his final innings, Hussain's 14th ton. Tudor never made one. "I was 21 at the time, I kept thinking I'd get the opportunity again. As the years go on, it does get more frustrating. It would be

incredible to say 'I've got a Test match hundred'. But I can't. "One of the most wretched 99s is Michael Atherton's at Lord's in 1993. "Tragedy, Tragedy." Atherton mimics Tony Lewis's commentary line as he reflects on the incident. He says it was the decision to bat in half-rubbers and half-spikes that proved fatal. A dodgy call from his batting partner didn't help either. Mike Gatting came barrelling down for a third run before aborting, sending Atherton clambering back to his crease. He slipped. Twice. A gleeful Ian Healy whipped off the bails to seal his fate. "I've never held it against [Gatting], we have a chuckle about it when we see each other." Atherton made two Test 99s and confides that he was nearly the first man in history to chalk up three. In his 185 not out at Johannesburg he was one shy of a century when Gary Kirsten missed a sharp chance at short-leg off Allan Donald. I was not out in the first innings so I tell people I was 131 not out from the Test match as a way of getting round it. He scored 16 Test centuries but never did make one at Lord's, his name remaining absent from the honours board. "Looking back, it makes it more poignant," he says. "They have now put a one-day honours board up, so my name is on there somewhere." Tudor too has his own method of solace. "I was not out in the first innings so I do tell people I was 131 not out from the Test match as

a way of getting round it. "Three women have scored 99 in Test cricket. Betty Snowball was the first, run out at the Oval in 1937, followed by Jill Kennare in Mumbai 62 Tests and 47 years later. Both have Test centuries to their name. Jess Jonassen scored 99 on debut against England at St Lawrence in 2015. She is yet to shake off the numerical shackles, it remains her highest Test score. Jonassen found herself on 95 not out overnight and even did the press conference that evening. Was she not worried that might jinx it? "I wasn't dwelling on the potential to bring up three figures, which looking back is bizarre," she says down the line from Brisbane. "It's more after the fact that you feel like 'Arghhhh! What would it have felt like, what would my celebration have been, silly things like that." "I still blame my partner [who was in the crowd] a little bit. When I got to 99, she got her camera out ... "Can she remember the feeling of being on 99? "I did have a little moment where I thought, 'oh, is this the ball?' The ball that was then bowled to me was one that I had faced thousands of in my life and I just missed it. I remember looking up at the umpire and thinking 'please don't'. Then I saw his finger starting to move ... It hit me straight away. What have I done?" Jonassen's partner did get a picture, of her hauling herself from the field utterly disconsolate. She chuckles as she notes the photo is now in her childhood bedroom, framed. "A 99 is a perfect analogy for what cricket is, there's disappointment and poignancy but something keeps you coming back for more." She still has hope her day will come, she'll go one run better and be able to replace the image in the frame. Atherton, though, is as phlegmatic as ever. "I don't think about my playing career at all, unless I'm probed by people like you." As Atherton trudged off that day in 1993, Tony Lewis lamented that "those few yards are going to live with him for ever". "Well, they don't," says Atherton. "I do remember the gutting feeling though. It is impossible to know why that one run matters so much. But it does."

Premiership team of the season: Blair Cowan leads standout selections

London, June 09 : The final weekend of the English Gallagher Premiership regular season is nigh. It has been a uniquely demanding campaign, as much a mental challenge as a physical one on occasions. Here is The Breakdown's standout team of 2020-21, selected only from players who have appeared in 10 league games or more ... Full-back: Stuart Hogg (Exeter). Had Max Malins played more regularly he would have been hard to omit. Freddie Steward, Mike Brown, Tommy Freeman, Tom Parton and Tom Penny also deserve a mention. But in a busy season where he has had to juggle the Scotland captaincy with club duties, Hogg's pace and footwork out wide have been a consistent menace. Right wing: Paolo Odogwu (Wasps). His club increasingly like him at outside centre but when Odogwu was flying in midwinter it did not matter what number he was wearing. His recent serious knee injury was a desperately unlucky end to a season that should have yielded a full England cap. Luke Morahan, Louis Rees-Zammit, Ben Loader and Tyrone Green were all mustards, too. Outside centre: Semi Radradra (Bristol). Hard to look past (when fit) arguably the best player in the world. Almost unstoppable at times and is also a deceptively smart operator. Joe Marchant and Luke Northmore at Quins have both caught the eye while Curtis Rona at London Irish has been a constant

menace but Radradra it has to be. Inside centre: Mark Atkinson (Gloucester). The best No 12s make those around them look good without hogging the glory for themselves. The unselfish Atkinson fits that job description perfectly and fully deserves his selection here, with Exeter's Ollie Devoto and Bristol's Piers O'Connor snapping at his heels. Left wing: Tom O'Flaherty (Exeter). You could simply brandish the stats which show the Exeter winger as a runaway leader in both the metres



gained and defenders beaten categories. Or you merely trust the evidence of your own eyes and the spectacular tries he has an uncanny knack of scoring. Ollie Hassell-Collins at London Irish and Marland Yarde at Sale also merit a collective round of applause. Fly-half: Marcus Smith (Harlequins). One of this season's standout features has been the platoon of in-form fly-halves whirling the baton for their respective sides. This accolade could easily have gone to the excellent Callum Sheedy, the cussed Dan Biggar, the consistent Joe Simmonds or the outstanding AJ MacGinty but Smith has been winning games single-handed and is easily the country's leading scorer. Scrum-half: Faf de Klerk (Sale). As the British & Irish Lions will soon discover, there is much more to Faf than his trademark blond hair and feisty competitive edge. Plenty of other nines have

had good seasons, not least Danny Care at Quins, Dan Robson at Wasps and the Bristol duo of Andy Uren and Harry Randall but De Klerk has been instrumental in the Sharks' play-off emergence. Loosehead prop: Joe Marler (Harlequins). An encouraging number of young English-qualified props are emerging but Marler continues to hang tough among the country's top set-piece operators. How much longer, though, can he hold off Wasps' Tom West and Sale's Bevan

Rodd, both of whom are improving steadily. Neither Ellis Genge nor Beno Obano played sufficient minutes to be considered. Hooker: Akker van der Merwe (Sale). His younger brother, Duhan, may be going on the Lions tour but the Sale hooker, capped three times for the Springboks, is still arguably the hardest member of the family to stop. Strong, mobile and relentless he has been as integral to Sale's rise as any of the other South Africans currently on the club's books. Tighthead prop: John Afoa (Bristol). Leaving aside the furore surrounding his return to the field against Leicester on Saturday, the 37-year-old Afoa has been absolutely central to the Bears' table-topping season. Rock solid on the field and a cheerful presence off it, the former All Black's impromptu Superman impersonation as he ran out for the second half of the home match

against Worcester in November was great fun. Lock: David Ribbans (Northampton). Again we shall ignore the red card against Exeter on Sunday and concentrate on the energy and competitive zeal that have caught the eye of the England head coach, Eddie Jones. The 25-year-old, once of Western Province, gets the nod ahead of Bristol's Dave Attwood and Leicester's Harry Wells in a crowded field. Lock: Chris Vui (Bristol). Whether it be at close quarters or lurking out wide, the Samoan international has been a key figure in the Bears' all-court game. Will Rowlands at Wasps, Rob Simmons at London Irish, Newcastle's Greg Peterson and Exeter's Sam Skinner have also been important assets for their respective clubs. Blindside flanker: Dave Ewers (Exeter). It is no coincidence Exeter are so hard to stop from five metres out when the massive Ewers is around to drive the ball carrier over. Latterly, with four tries in his past six league games, the big man has also been in prolific touch himself. Jean-Luc Du Preez of Sale and London Irish's Matt Rogers have also worked their socks off. Openside flanker: Blair Cowan (London Irish, capt). Gloucester's Lewis Ludlow tops the tackle charts by a mile and Harlequins' Will Evans is the league's undisputed turnover king in a year when Tom Curry and Ben Earl have largely been absent on Test duty. For work-rate, enthusiasm and leadership, however, there are few to match Cowan, such an inspirational figure at London Irish. No 8: Sam Simmonds (Exeter). Should be a highly competitive category with Jasper Wiese, Alex Dombard and Zach Mercer all enjoying strong seasons. No one, though, has come close to matching Sam Simmonds' record-breaking impact for Exeter: 20 tries in 20 games, twice as many as anyone else in the league this year, have also deservedly propelled him into this summer's British & Irish Lions squad.

Kyle Sinckler eager to make most of late Lions call-up for South Africa tour

London, June 09 : Kyle Sinckler has urged Warren Gatland to "put me on the field" after earning a British & Irish Lions reprieve with the Bristol and England prop determined to prove he deserves his place in the squad following his late call-up. Sinckler was the shock omission from the original 37-man squad but when Ireland's Andrew Porter was ruled out with a toe injury he received the call from Gatland on Sunday morning. By his own admission, Sinckler had written off any hopes of touring South Africa after processing the initial disappointment last month - plain for all to see in an emotional interview days after the squad announcement. When announcing his call-up, Gatland urged Sinckler to "continue to stick two fingers up to me about leaving him out in the first place", in a reference to his form for Bristol in recent weeks. And having played a key role on the 2017 tour of New Zealand, appearing in all three Tests as a replacement despite still waiting for a first England start, Sinckler is seeking to prove his worth in South Africa. Asked if he would speak to Gatland about why he was initially left out, Sinckler said: "What's the point? I'm there



now, put me on the field. I just have to show through my performances that I deserve to be there. I was absolutely gutted and I just tried to harness that disappointment, anger and all the emotions I had inside of me." I told [Warren] about my disappointment of not being involved in the initial squad and, on reflection, how grateful I was to go on the 2017 tour. How special it was for me to be involved with that and how, fingers crossed, I want to come in and contribute to whatever the team needs. I'm raring to go." Meanwhile Sinckler believes the Lions need to be aligned over their decision as to whether to take a knee, or make any other anti-racism

gesture, in South Africa. The England football team have decided to keep taking the knee during the forthcoming European Championship finals in the face of boos from some of their supporters. Sinckler said: "Whatever the team and the senior boys want to do, and everyone is behind it, that's that. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. I was only called into the squad yesterday. Whatever they want to do, as long as everyone is aligned." The key is whatever the team buys into that's what they should do. And no one else's opinions should affect that. If the England boys think taking a knee is what they should do, then they should and everyone should buy into it."

England braced for backlash if Craig Overton replaces Robinson

London, June 09 : Chris Silverwood has said he is braced to deal with any criticism should Craig Overton emerge as the player who replaces the suspended Ollie Robinson in England's team for the second Test. Robinson has been stood down from the squad to play New Zealand at Edgbaston in the match starting on Thursday pending the outcome of an investigation into the offensive tweets that emerged during his debut in the Lord's draw last week. It leaves a vacancy for a bowling all-rounder at No 8 but while Overton is the most

like-for-like candidate at present and has taken 36 wickets at 12 runs apiece for Somerset this season, the 27-year-old has a past indiscretion on his record. Overton avoided a level-three disciplinary charge for "language that vilifies another person on the basis of race or national origin" in 2015 after he was heard telling Sussex's Pakistan-born batsman Ashar Zaidi to "go back to your own fucking country" during a match. The Cricket Discipline Commission decided this was a level-one offence - the

lowest of the four - and while it triggered a two-match ban due to accumulated points on his record, this would not have been the case had it been clean. Asked whether



he was ready for the additional attention that would result from picking Overton this week Silverwood, the England head coach, replied: "If Craig plays, we will deal with that when we get there." This incident - first revealed by the Guardian - was reported by the umpire Alex Wharf, with Sussex's Mike Yardy offering supporting evidence having also heard the remark at the non-striker's

end. Overton was withdrawn from the match, although he has always denied making the comment and won four Test caps since. "I don't believe I said it," Overton told Wisden.com last week. "I don't believe that I'm that sort of character. We've had [the Pakistan batsman] Azhar Ali in our [Somerset] changing room and I'm the first one to go up and speak to him and have a chat with him." "I'm not that sort of person. Sometimes in the heat of the moment, when I was younger, I could be a bit feisty, and I've definitely calmed down as a person from then."

French Open 2021 Defending champion Iga Swiatek holds off Marta Kostyuk, reaches quarters

Paris, June 9 : Sakkari's progress to the quarter-finals along with Stefanos Tsitsipas made it the first time a Greek woman and a Greek man have made the last eight at the same Major. Greek Maria Sakkari bundled American fourth seed Sofia Kenin out of the French Open on Monday with a 6-1, 6-3 thrashing to

going into her clash with Greek 17th seed Maria Sakkari as she bids to become the first woman to retain the Roland Garros title since Justine Henin in 2007. Against an 18-year-old opponent who threw everything at her, Swiatek kept her composure on an empty court Philippe Chatrier, with fans not allowed to attend due to



reach her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final. The decisive break for Swiatek came in the seventh game when Kostyuk netted a sliced forehand while attempting to retrieve a lob. Defending champion Iga Swiatek held off a fierce challenge from Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk to reach the French Open quarter-finals with a 6-3, 6-4 victory on Monday (June 7). The eighth-seeded Pole has now won 22 consecutive sets at Roland Garros

Paris's 9pm COVID-19 curfew. "There were so many differences (from a day match)," said Swiatek. "It was hard for me to adapt. The light are really bright and I had to adjust, sometimes I was facing the lights when I had to smash, it was hard." Kostyuk, who had not dropped a set in powering through the first three rounds, piled on the pressure early on to put Swiatek on the back foot and earn a break for 2-1. An

unfazed Swiatek, however, broke straight back before gaining the upper hand in the eighth game when Kostyuk's attempted backhand down the line went wide. The Pole served out to take the lead after a hugely competitive set in which she faced five break points. Swiatek capitalised on her opponent's errors to break for a 2-1 lead in the second, only for Kostyuk to level at 2-2. The decisive break for Swiatek came in the seventh game when Kostyuk netted a sliced forehand while attempting to retrieve a lob. Kostyuk bounced her racket in frustration after Swiatek earned a match point at 5-3, but the Pole squandered that chance. Kostyuk went 30-0 up in the 10th game but Swiatek won four points in a row, wrapping it up with a superb lob at the end of a quick exchange at the net. "Her defence was crazy, it was hard for me to finish the points a few times," said Swiatek. "She was getting everywhere, so big bravo to her, she has a bright future ahead of her." Greek Maria Sakkari bundled American fourth seed Sofia Kenin out of the French Open on Monday with a 6-1, 6-3 thrashing to reach her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final. Sakkari, 25, had lost her two previous fourth-round appearances in Grand Slams and came into Monday's clash having lost twice in majors to 2020 Australian Open winner Kenin. But the Greek, who won their last meeting in Abu Dhabi this year, raced into a 4-0 lead in the opening set as Kenin, the highest

women's seed left in the tournament, served two double faults in each of her two service games. "I was stuck in the third round a lot of times, and that was an obstacle that I wanted to just kind of like break that curse and make it to the fourth round," Sakkari told reporters. "Now I'm excited to be in the quarter-finals for the first time. I knew it was going to come. I didn't know when. But I think that I've been playing very good tennis, especially this year." A wasteful Kenin, last year's finalist at Roland Garros, managed to hold just two service games and cut a frustrated figure on Suzanne Lenglen court, constantly muttering to herself but failing to solve her problems. She was the highest-seeded player surviving in the women's draw after injured world number one Ash Barty's retirement, second seed Naomi Osaka's withdrawal due to mental health issues and third seed Aryna Sabalenka's defeat. But Kenin, who played with taping on her left thigh, failed to turn up, serving nine double faults and making 32 unforced errors - the last when she sent a shot long on the second match point. "I'm obviously disappointed today. It's definitely not the match that I wanted to play. I feel like nerves got the better of me," Kenin told reporters. Sakkari's progress to the quarter-finals along with Stefanos Tsitsipas made it the first time a Greek woman and a Greek man have made the last eight at the same Major. The 17th seed will meet either Polish defending champion Iga Swiatek.

Susie Wheldon 'Dan would have been over the moon about our sons racing'

London, June 9 : Susie Wheldon's two sons want to be elite race-car drivers someday, which is no surprise. Sebastian and Oliver Wheldon's father, Dan, won the Indianapolis 500 twice and an IndyCar Series driving championship, and as Susie says of her boys, now ages 12 and 10 respectively: "They have that blood in their veins." Sebastian and Oliver started racing go-karts at a track near their home in St Petersburg, Florida, before they were even old enough to go to school. They decided they liked racing enough to focus on it, knowing that the sport is competitive. They also know, all too well, that the sport is extremely perilous. Dan Wheldon, the brash-yet-charming, silver-shoed British star on the IndyCar Series, was killed at the age of

after the announcement, even though she already knew her husband was well-liked and well-respected in the racing community. "I think he'd have the biggest smile on his face," says Wheldon, who was born in Canada but moved to the US when she was 15. "I think he'd be over the moon. He'd probably offer a lot of guidance - and a lot more than that." Like his sons, Dan Wheldon, who was born in Emberton, Buckinghamshire, started racing go-karts. He was inspired by Nigel Mansell, the British driver who won both the Formula One world championship and the IndyCar World Series. Wheldon climbed the racing ladder steadily, landing in the US in 1999. By 2002, he was racing in the IndyCar Series, and by 2003, he was in his first Indy 500, flipping



just 33 in October 2011 when his car was involved in a multi-car crash in the season finale at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Before she married Dan Wheldon in 2008, Susie was a racing publicist for a sponsor, then a personal assistant for her husband at Chip Ganassi's race team, so she was familiar with the dangers of racing. But allowing her sons to chase racing careers like their father turned out to be not all that complicated a decision. "It's not my decision - it's their decision," Wheldon tells the Guardian. "At the end of the day, I have to put my feelings aside. I certainly don't have all the answers as to the best way to go." She says racing was not necessarily something she wanted her sons to do, and she kept asking them if racing was really something they wanted. But she adds firmly, referring to her husband's fatal accident: "It was never a question of, I'm never going to let them do that because of what happened." So her sons were added in April as developmental junior drivers at Andretti Autosport, the powerful race team owned by Michael Andretti, the former series champion who is the son of the legendary Mario Andretti. Dan Wheldon won the Indy 500 for Michael Andretti in 2005 and was to rejoin the team in 2012, replacing Danica Patrick, who went to NASCAR. For now, the Wheldon boys will drive in three national series in go-karts, which are substantially slower, lighter and safer than those turbocharged rockets on the IndyCar Series. Andretti has given similar opportunities to other young drivers over the years, but Wheldon understands her sons will be more closely monitored, because of who their father was. "I almost feel as if they have to prove themselves more," Wheldon says. The agreement was announced literally beneath a monument of Dan before the IndyCar Series season opener, which was held at St Petersburg. Wheldon says she has been "blown away" by the positive feedback she has received

his car and finishing 19th. He won the Indy 500 in 2005 and 2011, but he was somewhat overshadowed both times - in 2005 by Patrick, who became the first woman to lead the race, and in 2011 by the American rookie JR Hildebrand, who crashed on the 800th and final turn while leading the race, allowing Wheldon to slip past him to win the race on the last day of his contract. Less than five months after he posed with Susie at the start-finish line at Indy - him holding Sebastian in his arms, her cradling Oliver in her arms - Dan was gone. IndyCar later said in a 49-page report a "perfect storm" of unforeseeable events led to the fatal. When Sebastian, then Oliver, turned to driving, then became more serious about it, Wheldon says she missed it, too, adding: "I kind of realized that I'd been in racing a long time, and I knew how to take care of an established driver. She teamed up with her husband's former business agent, Adrian Sussman, to, as she says, 'figure out what we can do by the boys and see where they'd be the best fit'." It turned out to be Michael Andretti's team. "I feel like their team is always looking out and seeing who's coming through the ranks," she says. Michael Andretti with Sebastian and Oliver Wheldon below the monument of their late father on Dan Wheldon Way in St Petersburg, Florida. When the arrangement was announced, Andretti said: "We see a lot of Dan in both Sebastian and Oliver," adding: "No one will ever be able to replace Dan in their lives, but we're happy to offer a network for mentorship to help the boys grow their careers." Wheldon says she thinks her sons are, in many ways, predisposed for such a venture, saying of the attention: "They've managed it very well, but they've been under a spotlight for a long time. Their dad was a champion driver. It's been a part of their lives." And yet, she says: "They're typical kids. They love to run around and be outside."

GB Gymnastics accused of 'sinister warning' after dropping Downie for Olympics

London, June 9 : GB Gymnastics has been accused of sending a sinister warning to whistleblowers by dropping the 2019 world silver medalist, Becky Downie, from its Olympic team for Tokyo. The surprise decision came less than a year after Downie spoke out about an "environment of fear" in the organisation. Downie tweeted: "Winning an Olympic gold medal has always been my dream. I don't have the words to describe how it feels now not being able to even try. This past year has been incredibly difficult, but this last month has been unimaginable. I'm not sure what will happen in terms of my future, but all I know is that I still love the sport, and I feel like I'm in the form of my life." Downie has won 14 major medals for Team GB and England during a glittering career but the 29-year-old athlete's relations with the governing body have become increasingly strained. Last July she and her sister Ellie claimed that "cruel" behaviour in British Gymnastics was "so ingrained in our daily lives that it became completely normalised". Last month Downie was granted an additional trial following the sudden

death of her brother Josh. However, a selection panel overlooked her for a place on the four-member team and she has not been named among the three reserves. The decision was immediately condemned by gymnasts for Change, a group of former gymnasts - including the Olympians Jen-

nasts of her generation," its statement said. "The decision to exclude her from the Tokyo team is a total shock." It is incomprehensible why the bars specialist has been dropped in a year she achieved a 6.8 SV in training in what has been touted as one of the most difficult routines in



nifer Pinches and Hannah Whelan - who are making a group-claim lawsuit against British Gymnastics, alleging physical and psychological abuse. "Becky Downie is on world-beating form and easily one of the most talented women's artistic gym-

nastics performance director, James Thomas, insisted the decision was based purely on merit. "Many will have seen some very good performances from Becky in 2019," he said. "The panel viewed that based on current form they hadn't seen the level of performance required to win a medal." He also denied that Downie had been punished for speaking out. "For me I'm very confident the team were considered on their gymnastic merits and nothing else," he said. Thomas said that Downie had missed out after the number of places in the women's team went down from five to four, and a decision was made to prioritise all-rounders for the team event rather than those with individual specialities. He added that independent members of the panel had observed the decision, including the BOA and British Athletes Commission, and that Downie's subsequent appeal had been rejected. However, Downie's sister Ellie, who withdrew herself from consideration following the family tragedy, made her displeasure felt on social media. "I would say it comes as a shock but after how we've been treated this year it's not really," she tweeted.

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