



The Assam Rising

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Vol. No. VI ■ Issue No. 92 ■ RNI-ASSEN/2014/58385 | GUWAHATI ■ TUESDAY ■ MAY 18, 2021 | PAGES 8 ■ PRICE RS. 7.00

UN chief remarks Israel-Palestine conflict ...

03

Opportunities beckon as Eddie Jones ponders options for ...



07

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vaccines damaged in fire

Indore, May 17 : Vaccines worth lakhs were damaged in Madhya Pradesh's Indore after a massive fire broke out in a vaccine godown. Even as the country is reeling under vaccine shortage and growing Covid cases, vaccines worth lakhs were destroyed in a fire at a godown in Indore. The incident took place in the warehouse Bharat Serums and Vaccines Limited in Indore. The reason for the fire is yet to be ascertained. The fire brigade was rushed to the spot and the fire could be contained. Vaccines kept in the godown along with injections for Black Fungus were also damaged in the fire.

Journalist died

GUWAHATI, May 17 : Assam chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma mourned the demise of Bokajan correspondent Rubul Dihingia on Sunday. Dihingia died of post-COVID complications at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH). "Chief minister @himantabiswa expressed deep grief over the untimely demise of News Live Bokajan correspondent Rubul Dihingia. The Chief Minister wished eternal peace to the departed soul of the journalist and conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family," chief minister office said in a tweet in Assamese.

Vivek Raj Wangkhem Dies Of COVID-19

Guwahati, May 17 : Former Manipur MLA and national general secretary of National People's Party (NPP), Vivek Raj Wangkhem, has lost his life to COVID-19 in Delhi on Monday. Wangkhem reportedly tested positive for coronavirus a week back and was undergoing treatment at Delhi's DRDO hospital. Before joining NPP, Vivek was elected to the Manipur Legislative Assembly on a Congress ticket from Kshetrigao constituency in the 2002 Manipur Assembly election. Meanwhile, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has condoled his demise and expressed grief. "Pained by the demise of Sh. Vivek Raj Wangkhem, former Manipur MLA & National General Secretary of NPP who lost the battle to Covid.

Ban on inter-district movement from Friday, says CM

GUWAHATI, May 17 : The Assam government has decided to put a ban on inter-district movement from Friday, said Assam chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma. Talking to reporters, CM Sarma said "A notification regarding the ban has already been published." Assam on Sunday recorded 3659 new COVID-19 cases out of the total 42,884 tests done in the State. The positivity rate for the day was 8.51 percent. Out of the new cases, 1197 cases are from the Kamrup Metropolitan district. On the other hand, 56 persons succumbed to the infection on Sunday. In an attempt to check the spread of coronavirus in the state, the Assam government has decided to ban inter-district movement from Friday. Assam chief minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma confirmed that a notification regarding the ban has already been published. Assam Director-General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta also informed that the details of the ban will be notified shortly. The



government stressed that an inter-district travel ban is essential as citizens from districts with high positivity rate keep traveling frequently to the districts with lesser positivity rate. Such movement will trigger increase in the cases. Therefore a decision has been taken to implement the inter-district travel ban for at least two weeks. As of Sunday evening, Assam has 43,377 active Covid cases in the state with a positivity rate of 8.51

per cent. Kamrup Metro reported 1197 cases. The state so far has registered 2,179. Meanwhile, to contain the virus, a 12 noon to 5 am curfew has been imposed across all districts in the state. From 11 am onwards, the government has directed the complete closure of shops and commercial establishments. The government has also urged citizens to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the government in order to keep the

spread of the virus at bay. Meanwhile, Premier Cryogenics at Saukuchi has resumed one of its unit with a capacity of producing 14 metric

tones. With this Assam's Oxygen capacity has gone up to 84.5 metric tonnes. It may be noted, visiting Premier Cryogenics at Saukuchi on May 1, chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma requested the company to resume oxygen production. On Monday Dr Sarma visited the unit which has become operational. "ASSAM'S OXYGEN CAPACITY GOES UP TO 84.5 MT On May 1, I had visited #Oxygen unit Premier Cryogenics in Saukuchi, Ghy, to request that production be resumed in this shut down co. Glad that one unit is functional now & producing 14 MT. I visited them again today," CM Himanta Biswa Sarma tweeted.

First Batch Of DRDO's Anti-COVID-19 Drug 2DG To Be Available From Next Week



New Delhi, May 17 : The first batch of 2DG medicine for treating COVID-19 patients would be launched early next week, Defense Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) said on May 14. Speaking to ANI, DRDO officials said that as many as 10,000 doses of the drug would be administered across India. Jointly developed by DRDO

and Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), the drug has been found to expedite recovery in coronavirus patients and also reduce their dependency on oxygen. On May 1, the 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2DG) medicine was granted approval for emergency use in India. The anti-COVID-19 therapeutic *Contd...Page 6*

Cyclone Tauktae: PM Modi discusses preparation with CMs of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa

New Delhi, May 17 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday (May 17) called the chief ministers of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa and the Lt Governor of Daman and Diu to discuss the preparations to manage cyclone Tauktae that hit the western coast of India. PM Modi assured the state governments to provide all necessary assistance to deal with the severe cyclonic storm that is wreaking havoc in the region. In a telephonic conversation with Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav



Thackeray, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and Daman and Diu Lt Governor Praful Patel, he took stock of the situation. The prime minister said that the

National Disaster Response Forces (NDRF) teams are actively carrying out relief and rescue operations. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday evening called up Chief Minister Vijay Rupani over

the phone and sought details of preparation by the state government to deal with cyclone Tauktae," Gujarat Chief Minister's Office said in a statement. The chief minister apprised the PM about the precautionary steps being taken by the state government to tackle the situation. According to the statement, the state government has evacuated 1.5 lakh people living in a 10 km radius of coastal areas of different districts that are likely to bear *Contd...Page 6*

CM visits oxygen plant in the city Assam generating 80 mt oxygen and would get additional 100 mt from Centre: CM



Guwahati, May 17: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today visited the Premiere Cryogenics Limited's oxygen plant at Saukuchi in the city and

took stock of the oxygen generation capacity of the plant for boosting oxygen availability in the state. Later talking to the newsmen, the Chief Minister informed that Assam's oxygen production *Contd...Page 6*

COVID-19: Refrain from steam inhalation, says Tamil Nadu Health Minister

Chennai, May 17 : Taking hot steam is generally considered beneficial in clearing congested nose and throat. A lot of people have been suggested by doctors to take steam in COVID-19. In a recent development, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian on Monday (May 17) warned the people of the state not to inhale steam without following proper medical advice. Health Minister said here that people in large numbers were inhaling steam as a preventive measure



against COVID-19 infection, adding that inhaling steam without proper advice would damage the lungs. There were several messages spread on social media, saying that inhaling steam would help prevent the spread of the infection. Subramanian said *Contd...Page 6*

Cancel FIRs Over Posters Against PM: Plea In Supreme Court After Arrests



New Delhi, May 17 : The Supreme Court has been petitioned to cancel Delhi Police FIRs against those accused of putting up posters criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government over the handling of the Covid pandemic and the national vaccination policy. The petition, filed by a Pradeep Kumar, cites the right to

freedom of speech and expression, and asks that Delhi Police be directed not to register FIRs (first information report) or act against those who allegedly put up the posters across the national capital over the past few days. Twenty-four people have been arrested so far and as many FIRs have been registered. The

posters - spotted across the city - have messages like: "Modi ji, aapne humare bacchon ki vaccine videsh kyu bhej diya?" (Modi ji, why did you send vaccines meant for our children abroad?). With states scrambling to find the lakhs of vaccine doses needed to inoculate India's massive population, the opposition, civil society and experts have questioned the government's decision to allow large quantities of the drug to be exported, or sold, to other countries. On Thursday six people were arrested in East Delhi's Kalyanpuri after police received input the posters were being pasted. Over 800 posters and banners were recovered. The arrests were made by four different

divisions of Delhi Police - which is controlled by the central government. The divisions involved were Eastern Range, East, Central and Northeast, suggesting a coordinated operation on the officials' part. "More FIRs are likely to be registered if further complaints are received in this regard. As of now, investigation is underway to ascertain on whose behalf these posters were being put up and accordingly further action will be taken," a senior police officer told news agency PTI on Sunday. Action against the posters has sparked political backlash, with the Congress' Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi *Contd...Page 6*

Covid positive youth spends 11 days on tree

Hyderabad, May 17 : An 18-year-old youth in Telangana spent 11 days on a tree after testing positive for Covid-19 as he could not isolate himself in his small home. Fearing that he might infect his parents and sister if he stays in the house, Ramawat Shiva Naik set up his own innovative 'isolation facility' on a tree near the house. A resident of Kothanandikonda village in Adavidevulapally mandal of Nalgonda district, Shiva is an engineering student at college in

Hyderabad. As the college was closed due to second wave of Covid-19 a few weeks ago, Shiva had returned home. To help his family, he started working as 'hamali' (porter) at a paddy procurement centre set up by the state government in the village to purchase paddy from farmers. As he was suffering from fever and had other suspected symptoms of Covid-19, he underwent the test at a primary health centre (PHC), located about five km from his village. He tested positive for Covid



on May 4 but since he had mild symptoms, a health worker at PHC told him

that there is no need for hospitalisation but advised him to isolate at

home. With four members of family sharing *Contd...Page 6*

Rare foaming frog resurfaces after 108 years



GUWAHATI, May 17 : Doria's foam-nesting treefrog (*Chirixalus doriae*) was first described in 1893 from Karin Biao in Myanmar and was later sighted in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Bangladesh. Special Arrangement. The natural history and distribution of Doria's foam-nesting *Contd...Page 6*



Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewing the functioning of the Water Resources Department in a meeting held at his office conference room at Janata Bhawan on Monday

Ban usage of tobacco products and smoking in public places to protect public health and check the spread of COVID-19

Guwahati, May, 17: "Smoking or chewing tobacco can raise your blood pressure, increasing the risk for heart diseases and heart attack. Tobacco use also increases risk of severe COVID-19 infection." Said by the renowned Cardiologist of the State Dr. Chinmoy Mazumdar. Today on the occasion of World Hypertension Day, Chief Consultant Cardiologist of Hayat Hospital, Guwahati, Dr. Mazumdar share some thoughts in context of present COVID-19 pandemic situation and urge Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to strengthen COPTA 2003 to regulate the availability of tobacco products to protect Indians from tobacco related diseases & deaths and also check the spread of Covid-19. He

said, "as per WHO, people with NCDs, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases have a higher risk for developing more severe COVID-19 infection. We urge Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam to ban usage of tobacco products and smoking in public places to protect public health and check the spread of COVID-19. Smoking and exposure to second hand smoke increases the risk of buildup of fatty substances in arteries, leading to high BP. Smoking impairs lung function, thereby reducing the immunity and making it harder for the body to fight off various diseases including COVID-19." on the occasion of World Hypertension Day, Advocate Ajoy Hazarika, Secretary, Consumer's Legal Protection Forum,

Assam said that Municipal authorities should implement the MOHFW's 21st September 2017 advisory and advisory dated Sept. 28, 2018 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation to develop mechanism for licensing tobacco vendors. Vendor licensing assists enforcement and reduces young peoples' exposure to tobacco because suspension or withdrawal of a vendor's license for violations of COTPA is an effective sanction. Municipalities should provide licenses only to shops that exclusively sell tobacco products so that children are not exposed to them in general stores. Vendors should only be licensed in locations that are not within the proximity of educational facilities.

27 Complete Three Weeks of Training Courses Imparted at Aalo Military Station



Aalo, May 17 : Altogether twenty seven participants of various ages have successfully completed their three weeks of training under the Hospitality and Home Stay Skill Development Course conducted under the aegis of Aalo Military Station as part of Year of Tourism, an initiative by the state govt. During the Closing Ceremony held on 15th May last, their Commander Aalo Military Station congratulated the participants for successful completion of the course and encouraged the participants to volunteer for

Adventure Tourism course which is scheduled in future. The commander also appreciated the effort of

district authority for giving valuable support during conduct of this flagship programme. Speaking on behalf of the trainees, Miss Oman Tamut updated about the three weeks of training course and expressed her gratitude to the Indian Army for imparting such trainings which will come handy for them in future. The participants also organised a cultural programme to commensurate the closing Ceremony.

Tributes pays to Homen Borgahain at Doulguri

SIPAJHAR, May 17 : Tributes pays to Eminent Litterateur Homen Borgahain at Doulguri in Darrang district. Following the COVID protocol a memorial meet was organised at Doulguri under the auspices of Doulguri Gian Uday Puthibharal under the President ship of Mathura Mohan Deka, Advisor of the Puthibharal. Speaking on the occasion Paban Kumar Kalita, President, Doulguri Gian Uday Puthibharal, Ajit Kumar Deka, Secretary, Undivided Darrang district Kalita Jana Gosthi Sammilan, Bhaba Jyoti Saharia, Vice President, Doulguri Gian Uday

Puthibharal and Khargeswari Kalita, Assistant teacher, Doulguri Primary school highlighted on the various aspects of the life and contributions of late Homen Borgahain in details. The meet also decided to preserve all the books of Homen Borgahain at Doulguri Gian Uday Puthibharal for the greater interest of the readers. The Management Committee of the Puthibharal has called upon the book lovers to donate at least one of the book of Homen Borgahain to the Puthibharal on this regard. Earlier Bubul Kalita, secretary of the Puthibharal explained the purpose of the meet.

BSF Apprehended One Indian Smuggler Along With Huge Quantity Of Narcotics From Indo- Bangladesh Border



Guwahati, May 17 : In yet another success in its crusade against smuggling activities, 100 Bn BSF under the aegis of Guwahati Frontier of Border Security Force apprehended 01 Indian smuggler along with 996 bottles Phensedyl and two E-Rickshaws on 16th May 2021 from bordering area of village Sitai, PS-Sitai, Distt-

Coochbehar (West Bengal). 02. Acting on tip off, on 16th May 2021, BSF troops of Border outpost (BOP) Sitai of 100 Bn BSF carried out a special operation in the general area of village Sitai close to Indo-Bangladesh border. Operation party stopped two E-Rickshaws which were plying from Sitai Market area towards village Kayeterbari. Alert BSF troops apprehended one driver along with 996 bottles of Phensedyl and two E-Rickshaws while the consignment was trying to be smuggled from India to Bangladesh. 03. Details of apprehended Indian narcotics smuggler is as under:- Ainuddin Mia (60 Yrs), S/O Lt Ahmuddin Mia, R/o Vill- Kayeterbari, PO & PS Sitai, Distt. Coochbehar, (West Bengal) 04. Apprehended Indian narcotics smuggler and seized items have been handed over to PS, Sitai, Distt.- Coochbehar (West Bengal) for further legal action. 05. Keeping in view of the vulnerability of border, heightened activities of the smugglers and anti-national elements on the border, BSF troops are always alert towards the issues of trans-border crimes & illegal infiltration and are making all out efforts to prevent commission of such crimes.

Foundation stone plate broken at Jamugurihat



Biswanath Chari, May 17: The plate of the foundation stone of the government Law College to be setup at Chowkighat here was witnessed in a broken state Sunday. According to the information, the inscribed plate was broken by some unidentified mis-

creants. It is to be mentioned here that the foundation stone of Tezpur Government Law College was laid by Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the then education minister in presence of Tezpur HPC MP Pallab Lochan Das and Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika on October 1 last year. Notably, the site where the Tezpur Government law College has been chosen for construction was once illegally encroached by some doubtful voters. Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika had taken immediate action to free the government land from the clutches of the suspected settlers. Later on, some parts of

More 427 fresh cases recorded, one dies of COVID at Nagaon

NAGAON, May 17: As many as 427 COVID 19 cases have been recorded today, taking the total cumulative active COVID positive cases in the district to 2390 while one COVID patient succumbed to the virus today.

As per an official statistics, total 297 people who were undergoing treatment in hospital as well as being isolated at their homes, were recovered from infection of the virus today.

Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 49 positive people were immediately admitted to Nagaon COVID hospital while the rest were put in home quarantine. Rapid Antigen Test was conducted on 5268 people while RT-PCR test was conducted on 40 swab samples, sources added further.

Killing 18 bulky animals by lightning an absurd argument: Assam engineers' forum

Guwahati, May 17 : Shocking death of 18 wild Asiatic elephants due to electrocution by lightning within seconds can be justified with only an absurd argument, stated All Assam Engineer's Association (AAEA) demanding a high-level scientific investigation into the Nagaon incident that took place on the night of 12 May. The forum of engineering graduates termed it as a matter of serious concern (caveat) for the wildlife and entire human race, if such a massive thunderbolt had stricken the planet on that fateful night. As the State government in Dispur, precisely the forest minister and the preliminary findings of a probe committee, claimed that it might be a thunderbolt that killed all 18 bulky animals within seconds, the debate needs to focus on the essential volume of energy to hit all the jumbos at a time. Even if, it is assumed that the animals were

close to each other during the incident, they needed more than 36 square-meter area to accommodate themselves (means the area of impact), pointed out the AAEA statement. Engineering science narrates that a lightning strike, created by the electrical discharges due to imbalances caused between the Earth and storm clouds (or sometimes within the clouds), can produce 40 Kilovolt to 120 kV and 5 Kiloampere to 200 kA. Hence in an average a lightning bolt (from cloud to ground) may generate around 1,000,000,000 Watt (around one billion volts of electricity) and it can heat the surrounding air to 53000° Fahrenheit (5 times hotter than the Sun's surface). When the cloud-to-ground lightning hit an animal, it creates sudden disturbances to the internal electric signals of a living being, which is necessary for functioning of organs like heart, lungs and

the nervous system. Normally the affected animal faces a cardiac arrest, brain injuries, spinal cord damages or even severe burns and subsequently it succumbs to wounds. Worldwide around 2,000 people are killed every year by the incidents of lightning, where of course many survive with long lasting injuries. "Hammering all the elephants within seconds demands a huge volume of energy that could have generated a massive thunder and light. So the news of such a thunderbolt in the Nagaon locality could have preceded the actual happening," claimed AAEA president Er Kailash Sarma, working president Er Nava J Thakuria and secretary Er Inamul Hye, adding that there was no visible major burns on the site and none in the locality admitted that they heard such a massive sound of thundering in the last few days.

MLA, Sipajhar stressed on anti erosion measures



SIPAJHAR, May 17 : MLA, 66 Sipajhar LAC, Dr Paramananda Rajbansi has stressed on the undertake of early anti

erosion measures at Kiringibori in Sipajhar revenue circle under Darrang district. It may be mentioned here that massive erosion of Nonoi river poses severe threat to Kiringibori area. Though one anti erosion scheme was at an estimated cost of one and half cores was officially undertake but in was not implemented due to redtapism as alleged by the local villagers. MLA, Sipajhar has visited the erosion affected area along with the Executive Engineer, Water Resource Department, Mangaldai Division, Dipak Bhatta and other officials of the department and asked the officers of the department to take early adequate anti erosion measures without delay. He also ordered the officers to complete the construction work of ring bundh at Kurua. The people of the Sipajhar LAC while expressed satisfaction on the initiative of MLA urged upon him to take adequate flood control steps.

DA Initiates Weather Proof Social Distancing Shed At SBI Entry Point Again



Aalo17 May : Keeping in view of surging Covid-19 cases everywhere and to contain rush in SBI Aalo after shortening the bank working hours, the district administration has erected a waiting shed again for the SBI Bank Customers on 16th May last The West Siang Deputy Commissioner Shri Moki Loyi also visited the site and said that shed has been

put up again to maintaining the social distancing in this crowded place right from the early morning and provide comforts to the people from sun and rain as well. It is regulated by police and advised all to follow the norms put in place there. The construction works were done by the ALC of District administration under the supervision of DDMO Shri Nima Dorjee.

Well Known Businessman AM Chaliha Passes Away

Golaghat, May 17: A well known Businessman from Golaghat and former Vice president of Assam Chamber of Commerce Golaghat District Unit Ananya Madhav Chaliha (Paplu) passed away today. Chaliha was the

proprietor of AM Chaliha Medical Store in Golaghat. Assam Chamber of Commerce Golaghat District Unit has deeply mourned the demise of this young business personality. In a statement President of the organiza-

tion Shyamal Das stated that Ananya Madhav Chaliha was closely associated with Assam Chamber of Commerce Golaghat District Unit since its inception and he was also associated with several social activities.

Eight Covid Deaths in a Single Day in Golaghat

Golaghat, May 17: Today people of Golaghat became more worried when the report of eight Covid deaths in a single day came to light. As per the report today 180 cases of Covid positive were reported and at present the number of Active Covid cases in the district is 908.

Today eight persons in the district succumbed to Covid. With these eight deaths Covid death toll rises to thirty. The deceased are Ghanshyam Das (44), Jaya Gogoi (48), Bhai Chutia (50), Dilip Dey (64), Deuji Thakur (79), Nagen Gogoi (61), Bipin Chandra Goyari (61) and Ananya Madhav Chaliha (47).

MLA Sarupathar Meets Officials of Numaligarh Refinery

Golaghat, May 17: Today Sarupathar MLA Biswajit Phukan had a discussion with Executive Director of Numaligarh Refinery Limited Bhaskarjyoti Phukan, General Managers Kajal Saikia and Mintu Handique and Chief Executive Officer of Numaligarh Bio Refinery Anup Baruah. After the prolonged discussion in the meeting it was decided that The Sapta Swahid Site will be constructed into a Swahid Smarak; Employment will be given to five hundred unemployed youths each year under the CSR Scheme; A Stadium will be constructed at Morongi Mouza; A Skill Development Centre will be set up in Sarupathar Constituency; Financial Aid will be provided to Barupathar, Sarupathar and Morongi Colleges from the NRL; An ETP will be set up for garbage disposal & An Auditorium will be constructed in Barupathar.



Instructor Han Fei uses sign language to conduct the dancing group at the theatre of the Tianjin University of Technology in Tianjin, north China

Half of emissions cuts will come from future tech, says John Kerry

Washington, May 17 : The US climate envoy, John Kerry, has said 50% of the carbon reductions needed to get to net zero will come from technologies that have not yet been invented, and said people "don't have to give up a quality of life" in order to cut emissions. He said Americans would "not necessarily" have to eat less meat, because of research being done into the way cattle are herded and fed in order to reduce methane emissions. "You don't have to give up a quality of life to achieve some of the things that we know we have to achieve. That's the brilliance of some of the things that we know how to do," he told BBC One's Andrew Marr show. "I am told by scientists that 50% of the reductions we have to make to get to net zero are going to come from technologies that we don't yet have. That's just a reality." And people who are realistic about this understand that that's part of the challenge. So we have to get there sooner rather than later. "Kerry is visiting London next week to meet government representatives before the UN climate change conference Cop26 due to be held in Glasgow in November. On Saturday Kerry met Pope Francis in Rome, and he described him as "one of the great voices of reason and compelling moral authority on the subject of the climate crisis". "I think that his voice will be a very important voice leading up to and through the Glasgow conference, which I believe he intends to attend," Kerry told Vatican News. "We need everybody in this fight. All the leaders of the world need to come together and every country needs to do its part." When asked by Marr if the US would support an end to all coal-fired power stations if called for by the UK at Cop26, Kerry said Joe Biden had set a goal of making the US power sector carbon-free by 2035 but he could not speak for the president on specific proposals.

UN chief remarks Israel-Palestine conflict 'utterly appalling' as death toll reaches 192 in Gaza, 10 in Israel

London, May 17 : The death toll in Gaza jumped to 192, including 58 children, its health ministry said, amid an intensive Israeli air and artillery barrage since the fighting erupted last Monday. Over ten people have been killed in Israel, including two children, Israeli authorities say. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the hostilities in Israel and Gaza were "utterly appalling" and called for an immediate end to fighting. Gaza: With Israeli planes renewed airstrikes in Gaza, the age-old cross border conflict between Israel and Palestine entered seventh day on Monday (May 17, 2021). The Israeli air strike killed 42 Palestinians, including 10 children, on Sunday, health officials revealed. As the U.N. Security Council convened to discuss the worst Israeli-Palestinian violence in years, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel's campaign in Gaza was continuing at "full force". The death toll in Gaza jumped to 192, including 58 children, its health ministry said, amid an intensive Israeli air and artillery barrage since the fighting erupted



last Monday, while ten people have been killed in Israel, including two children, Israeli authorities say. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the UN Security Council on Sunday that hostilities in Israel and Gaza were "utterly appalling" and called for an immediate end to fighting. Opening the 15-member council's first public meeting on the conflict, Guterres said the United Nations is "actively engaging all sides toward an immediate ceasefire" and called on them "to allow mediation efforts to intensify and succeed." "Each time Israel hears a foreign leader speak of its right to defend itself it is further emboldened to continue

murdering entire families in their sleep," Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki told the Security Council. Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan said Israel's response to indiscriminate attacks by Hamas strictly adhered to international law and that the country was taking "unparalleled steps to prevent civilian casualties." "Israel uses its missiles to protect its children. Hamas uses children to protect its missiles," Erdan said. The truce efforts being made by Egypt, Qatar and the United Nations have so far offered no sign of progress in decelerating the age-old conflict. The United States sent an envoy to the region and President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday as well. On the other hand, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed the violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza in phone calls with the Qatari, Egyptian and Saudi foreign ministers, the State Department said on Sunday.

First-hand stories shed new light on Nazi death marches

London, May 17 : First-hand accounts from survivors of Nazi death marches, which formed a last ruthless chapter of the genocide, are to go on display with testimonies translated into English for the first time. During the death marches, tens of thousands of people died on roadsides of exhaustion, shot for failing to keep up, or murdered in seemingly random massacres as the Nazis moved people from concentration camps before liberation by the allies, leaving a trail of blood across Europe. The Wiener Holocaust Library, which collected testimonies from some of the small numbers of survivors in the 1950s and 1960s, aims to bring light to these "mobile concentration camps" in its new London exhibition, Death Marches: Evidence and Memory. The accounts will also be available for free online. The exhibition focuses on this often overlooked and understudied aspect of the Holocaust and at how forensic and

other evidence about the death marches has been gathered since the end of the second world war. Among contemporary photographs are clandestine images taken by Maria Seidenberger, who captured a forced march from Buchenwald to Dachau as it passed near her home in Herbertshausen. Her mother distributed potatoes to the prisoners while she took these images secretly from the window of their home. The exhibition highlights stories such as that of Gertrude Deak, a Hungarian Jewish survivor, sent to a number of camps. "Hers is a remarkable story of survival in which she was on a death march, then was hiding in a barn, and survived attempted sexual assaults by soldiers and people she encountered," said the exhibition's co-



curator, Dr Christine Schmidt. Other images include those of Sabina and Fela Szeps, two Polish Jewish sisters. One photograph was taken in a Polish ghetto in 1939. "They were deported to a subcamp of Gross-Rosen and then sent on this death march. We have these really poignant images of the women in the ghetto, before their physical devastation. And then images of them in May 1945, after liberation. And they are completely emaciated, completely physically devastated."

Gaza rocked by fresh airstrikes after Netanyahu vows to keep attacks at 'full force'

Gaza, May 17 : Israeli warplanes have launched what appeared to be the heaviest airstrikes yet on Gaza City, hours after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu signalled the bombardment would rage on. The series of attacks early on Monday rocked the city from north to south for 10 minutes and was more intense, covered a broader area and lasted longer than the raids 24 hours earlier in which 42 Palestinians were killed - the deadliest single attack in the latest violence between Israel and the Hamas militant group that rules Gaza. Local media reports said the main coastal road west of the city, security compounds and open spaces were among the targets hit early Monday. The power distribution company said the airstrikes damaged a line feeding electricity from the only power plant to large parts of southern Gaza City. There were no immediate reports of injuries. It comes after air-raid sirens sounded for the seventh consecutive day across southern Israel as Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza launched more rocket attacks into the country - and reaching further - than in the



entirety of the 2014 war. As the UN security council met in a specially convened session, foreign ministers and ambassadors called for a ceasefire and for both sides to respect humanitarian law, but there was no sign of even a temporary truce to allow medics in Gaza to recover people - alive and dead - from under collapsed buildings. The UN secretary general, António

Guterres, said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was heading for an "uncontainable security and humanitarian crisis". "The fighting risks dragging Israelis and Palestinians into a spiral of violence with devastating consequences for both communities and for the entire region," Guterres told the UN security council on Sunday. "It

whole." In a televised address, Netanyahu said Israel's attacks were continuing at "full force" and would "take time". Israel "wants to levy a heavy price" on the Hamas militant group, he said, flanked by his defence minister and political rival, Benny Gantz, in a show of unity. Hamas also pressed on, launching rockets from civilian areas in Gaza toward civilian areas in Israel. One hit a synagogue in the southern city of Ashkelon hours before evening services for the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, Israeli emergency services said. No injuries were reported. In the Israeli air assault early on Sunday, families were buried under piles of cement rubble and twisted metal. Shards of glass and debris covered streets blocks away from the major downtown thoroughfare where the three buildings were hit over the course of five minutes around 1am. The hostilities have repeatedly escalated over the past week, marking the worst fighting in the territory that is home to 2 million Palestinians since Israel and Hamas' devastating 2014 war. "I have not seen this level of destruction through my 14 years of work," said Samir al-Khatib, an emergency rescue official in Gaza. "Not even in the 2014 war." Rescuers furiously dug through the rubble using excavators and bulldozers amid clouds of heavy dust. One shouted, "Can you hear me?" into a hole. Minutes later, first responders pulled a survivor out. The Gaza health ministry said 16

women and 10 children were among those killed, with more than 50 people wounded. Haya Abdelal, 21, who lives in a building next to one that was destroyed, said she was sleeping when Sunday's airstrikes sent her fleeing into the street. She accused Israel of not giving its usual warning to residents to leave before launching such an attack. "We are tired," she said, "We need a truce. We can't bear it any more." The Israeli army spokesperson's office said the strike targeted Hamas "underground military infrastructure". As a result of the strike, "the underground facility collapsed, causing the civilian houses' foundations above them to collapse as well, leading to unintended casualties," it said. Among those reported killed was Dr Ayman Abu Al-Ouf, the head of the internal medicine department at Shifa Hospital and a senior member of the hospital's coronavirus management committee. Two of Abu Al-Ouf's teenage children and two other family members were also buried under the rubble. The death of the 51-year-old physician "was a huge loss at a very sensitive time", said Mohammed Abu Selmia, the director of Shifa. Gaza's health care system, already gutted by an Israeli and Egyptian blockade imposed in 2007 after Hamas seized power from rival Palestinian forces, had been struggling with a surge in coronavirus infections even before the latest conflict. Israel's airstrikes have levelled a number of Gaza City's tallest buildings, which Israel alleges contained Hamas military infrastructure. Among them was the building housing the Associated Press Gaza office and those of other media outlets. Sally Buzbee, the AP's executive editor, called for an independent investigation into the airstrike that destroyed the AP office on Saturday. Media

watchdog Reporters Without Borders has asked the international criminal court on Sunday to investigate Israel's bombing of the building as a possible war crime. The Paris-based group said in a letter to the court's chief prosecutor that the offices of 23 international and local media organisations had been destroyed over the past six days. It said the attacks serve "to reduce, if not neutralize, the media's capacity to inform the public". The latest outbreak of violence began in East Jerusalem last month, when Palestinians clashed with police in response to Israeli police tactics during Ramadan and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish settlers. A focus of the clashes was the al-Aqsa mosque, a frequent flashpoint located on a hilltop compound revered by both Muslims and Jews. Hamas began firing rockets toward Jerusalem on Monday, triggering the Israeli assault on Gaza. At least 188 Palestinians have been killed in hundreds of airstrikes in Gaza, including 55 children and 33 women, with 1,230 people wounded. Eight people in Israel have been killed in some of the 3,100 rocket attacks launched from Gaza, including a five-year-old boy and a soldier. Hamas and the Islamic Jihad militant group have acknowledged 20 fighters killed in the fighting. Israel says the real number is far higher and has released the names and photos of two dozen alleged operatives it says were "eliminated". The assault has displaced about 34,000 Palestinians from their homes, UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland told an emergency meeting of the UN security council, where eight foreign ministers spoke about the conflict. Efforts by China, Norway and Tunisia to get the UN body to issue a statement, including a call for the cessation of hostilities, have been blocked by the US, which, according to diplomats, is concerned it could interfere with diplomatic efforts to stop the violence. Palestinian foreign minister Riad Al-Malki urged the security council to take action to end Israeli attacks. Israel's UN ambassador, Gilad Erdan, urged the council to condemn Hamas "indiscriminate and unprovoked attacks".

Trouble brews between Trappist monks and Belgian mineral empire

Rochefort, May 17 : For a decade the monks of Notre-Dame de Saint-Remy, in Rochefort, south Belgium - one of only 14 abbeys in the world producing Trappist beer - have been fighting with a quarry owner over the purity of the local spring water. The monks have doggedly claimed that plans by Lhoist, an international company run by one of Belgium's richest families, to deepen its chalk quarry



and redirect the Tridaine spring risked altering the unique taste of their celebrated drink. Now, thanks to a deed dating back to 1833, it appears that makers and drinkers alike need no longer worry. A court of appeal in Liège has confirmed that while the quarry owner also owns the spring, it does not have the right to "remove or divert all or part of the water which supply the abbey". A spokesperson for Lhoist, Jean Marbehan, said the company would study the ruling before deciding whether to make a final appeal to the court of cassation, which only hears cases on procedural grounds. The company has also drawn up a plan B, to excavate in a different

direction in order to prolong the life of the quarry to 2040. The saga began a decade ago when Lhoist announced its plan to deepen the Boverie quarry in Rochefort to extend its life from 2022 to 2046. The site employs about 150 local people. Such an operation would involve pumping underground water beneath the quarry. The monks, whose abbey bears the motto Curvata resurgo (Bent over, I stand up), said this would impact on the quality of the groundwater that is a crucial ingredient of their beer. The quarry owner had conducted repeated tests to show that this was not true. But the monks of Rochefort were unconvinced and a David and

Goliath battle ensued. Lhoist is the world's largest lime, mineral and dolomite producer, with 100 branches in more than 25 countries and 6,400 employees, generating a turnover of more than €1bn. In contrast, life in the Trappist abbey - which boasts a brewing halls described as the most beautiful in Belgium, akin to a "beer cathedral" - is characterised by prayer, reading and manual labour. The earliest mention of a brewery at the monastery was in 1595, but the current site dates to 1899. The water for the beer is drawn from a well inside the monastery walls. The renowned quality of the monks' beer has, however, earned the abbey a significant income.



shows the view of the Baihetan hydropower station under construction in southwest China. Baihetan on the Jinsha River, the upper section of the Yangtze

THE ASSAM RISING

VOL. NO. VI, ISSUE NO. 92 TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021

Crimes against humanity

The reality of that "strike hard against violent extremism" campaign, which followed decades of repressive policies, is now clear: Chinese authorities are committing crimes against humanity. Xi's comments followed several violent incidents reportedly involving Uyghurs that year. And among his statements, in documents leaked to the media, was this: "Don't be afraid if hostile forces whine, or if hostile forces malign the image of Xinjiang." The Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti - Jewher Ilham's father - who devoted his career to promoting equality and defending free speech, was an early victim of that crackdown, with a sentence to life in prison on baseless charges of separatism. Jewher has not seen her father since 2013, and does not know when or if she will see him or other family members again. None of her family members have seen her father since 2017. Ilham Tohti's fate was a grim harbinger of the government's campaign of repression against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims across the Uyghur region. The Chinese government has since arbitrarily detained an estimated 1 million Turkic Muslims in "political re-education" facilities. There they are pressured to relinquish their cultural identity. Unprecedented numbers have been imprisoned after sham trials and given harsh sentences. Many were tortured or forcibly disappeared. In addition to these violent attempts to strip the Uyghur people of their culture, the Chinese government is running a programme to "cleanse" ethnic minorities of their "extremist" thoughts. More than 80,000 Uyghurs and people from other Turkic and Muslim minorities have been coercively transferred to work in factories, where they are not given the freedom to return home. The region is awash in surveillance technology that the authorities use to penalise legal and everyday behaviour. The cultural devastation - marginalising Turkic languages, bulldozing mosques, destroying cemeteries - along with the deep psychological harm, is likely irreparable. Children have been institutionalised without their parents' consent, and a number of women who have fled the region share chilling stories of enduring sexual and reproductive violence in detention. The authorities' own slogan for the abusive campaign - to "break people's lineage" - reflects a violent ambition. As evidence of these abuses has piled up, Chinese authorities - from Xi all the way to local-level officials - have tried various strategies to reject the "hostile forces whining and maligning". Their initial approach was simply to deny these crimes were happening at all. When confronted with testimony of those who had been arbitrarily detained, and satellite imagery showing the construction and growth of camps, authorities changed their story and said they were providing "vocational training" to help economic development in the region. Chinese government officials insisted that participation was voluntary, and organised Potemkin visits for diplomats, journalists and even religious figures whom they expected would faithfully repeat Beijing's version of events. Meanwhile, Beijing continues to stonewall independent international investigators, denounce critics and produce a tidal wave of propaganda. Governments and United Nations officials are increasingly critical of China's actions. The United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Canada have imposed unprecedented, coordinated sanctions. Dozens of UN human rights experts, the high commissioner for human rights and the previously quiet secretary-general have expressed concern about Beijing's treatment of Turkic Muslims. Groups like the Coalition to End Forced Labor in the Uyghur Region are also pressuring corporations to stop profiting from these crimes. Some 20% of the world's cotton comes from the Uyghur region, and it is likely that one in five cotton garments in the marketplace are tainted by Uyghur forced labor. Some brands, such as Marks & Spencer and Eileen Fisher, have taken an ethical path by agreeing to remove the Uyghur region from their supply chains. Others, such as Fila, have doubled down on their support for Xinjiang cotton to preserve their Chinese market share. Crimes against humanity are considered among the gravest human rights abuses under international law. They are serious, specified offences - arbitrary detention, cultural persecution, enforced disappearances, among others - that are knowingly committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population. Ensuring justice for the victims is primarily the responsibility of the state in question. Xi's 2014 speeches gave no sense that any Chinese officials expected to be held accountable for these crimes, and this is where other governments and the United Nations need to act to prove them wrong. Various governments have pushed for a United Nations-backed investigation into the Uyghur region; if Beijing continues to obstruct such a mission inside the country then UN investigators should gather evidence outside China.

How did it happen that Israel's Jews and Arabs rose up against each other?



Wartime is especially tense: in 2000, the Israeli police killed 13 Israeli Arab citizens who were demonstrating at the start of the second intifada, a wound that has never healed. But since Israel's founding, no one could recall waves of people attacking people, property and symbols, civilians on civilians, among Israeli citizens. The violence began on Tuesday and spread through towns around the country and it has not ended. Tel Aviv was not a flashpoint for riots and on Friday took no more rocket fire. In a break from rocket attacks which resumed in force on Saturday, the city suddenly felt quiet on a spring day, but eerie. Last week, Israelis learned that beneath the sunny veneer lies the menace of ethnic conflict, but only after it crashed through the surface. Some see the acts of destruction as symmetrical - Jewish and Arab mobs hunting each other down. In TV studios, journalists sought to quantify which group, Jews or Arabs, committed more violence. But the quest for symmetry or quantification is futile. What matters is to learn how it happened that

citizens rose up against one another. For Jews and for Arabs, the answers are vastly different. Many Palestinian citizens of Israel have been swept up in demonstrations in recent weeks, around the events in Jerusalem that precipitated the latest Israeli-Palestinian escalation. They were expressing a long history of despair. These citizens often liken themselves to African Americans: they too have been excluded from the nation since its founding. The two groups share a long history of political, social and economic marginalisation that continues today. Among Palestinians in Israel, those conditions have contributed to severe problems of gangs and gun violence, with little redress from the state. The community has been under-policed internally or met with heavy-handed enforcement if crime - or demonstrations - spill out. The Covid-19 crisis hit both the health and economy of this community hard; gang warfare flourished and pushed casualties to a peak. But the deterioration of the political status of Palestinians in Israel hangs

heavily over social and economic problems. Over the last decade, Israel has passed laws targeting Palestinian citizens' rights, culminating in the 2018 "nation state" law, elevating Jews to a superior status in Israel. Anti-Arab rhetoric from rightwing politicians has crossed the line to incitement. In a longstanding process, the state even attacks their homes, through lack of planning for Arab localities, making permits difficult to access, and then issuing demolition orders for construction without permits. From 2012 to 2014, 97% of home demolition orders were in Arab towns. Entire villages have been razed; a controversial 2017 law sought to increase the punishment for "illegal construction". Many see this situation as an extension of Israel's occupation, so when the eviction of Palestinian families from their East Jerusalem homes seemed imminent recently, it sparked solidarity protests around Israel. When an Arab man in Lod was shot dead by Jews on Tuesday after the rocket attacks had begun, demonstrations gave way to riots targeting people, synagogues and even a theatre and a restaurant in the northern city of Acre that had symbolised coexistence. Ironically, Benjamin Netanyahu's government poured money into Arab areas to improve infrastructure and social services. But money didn't counter decades of what many experience as suppression of their legitimacy as Palestinians in Israel. Demonstrators are rebelling against powerlessness. The Jewish rioters live in a different reality. Jews sit at the top of Israel's social, political and economic hierarchy. The gangs still stalking Israeli towns shouting "death to Arabs" have tremendous power and want more. The party that represents their ideas is called Jewish Power. And power is

available to them everywhere. Reports show Jewish rioters in Lod with police at their side as they threw stones - hardly any were apprehended. Jews from extremist settlements in the West Bank joined the riots in Lod. Here, too, there are underlying trends. Israel's rightwing parties have campaigned for far greater Jewish dominance in Israel. The nationalist right wing has led and legitimised rage against Arabs, leftwingers, migrants and the media. One of the most important but lesser-known campaigns of the right wing is a long-term assault on the legitimacy of the law itself. For a decade or so, leaders from the very top have been undermining the judiciary, including the supreme court, the state prosecutor, the attorney general and law enforcement itself. Tension with the supreme court has deep historic roots in Israel, but the relentless anti-judiciary campaign seems to have severed the ethos of compliance itself. One of the Jewish vigilantes organising on Telegram, the encrypted messaging app, wrote to a journalist at the Israeli newspaper Haaretz: "I'm not interested in the law of the state, I go by the laws of the Torah from back then, 2,000 years ago. I'll explain something: Arabs in Israel are taking over the state, they've lifted their heads too high." His Telegram group laid out plans too graphic to reproduce here. No cause or circumstance justifies vigilante violence. All attacks on civilians are a crime; defiling synagogues or mosques is atrocious. Perpetrators are personally responsible and must be held accountable. The landscape looks grim, especially as sirens continue to scream. I have been asked if Jews and Arabs can live together again. We can, but the first step is to face the causes. Ideally, the next step is to heed WH Auden: "We must love one another or die."

Why the Covid variant from India won't halt UK's reopening plans, at least not yet

Although the eradication of SARS-CoV-2 would be nice, most people accept we'll have to live with the virus for some time, almost as we do with the flu. But a variant from India is now forcing the U.K. to define just what "living with it" means. It comes as England reaches another milestone on its roadmap to unlocking. From Monday, people can mix inside homes (up to six people or two households); pubs and restaurants will be able to serve customers indoors. Hotels are reopening, as well cinemas, theatres and concert halls. School children no longer have to wear masks. Those reopenings will go ahead, but the phase after that suddenly looks a little less certain. There are several strains fueling India's rampant Covid crisis, but the variant formally known as B.1.617.2 is the one casting a shadow over Britain's plans to end most restrictions from June 21. The official number of cases of the variant in the U.K., at 1,300, looks low enough to wonder what the fuss is about. There are more than 200,000 cases of the dominant variant in Britain - the Kent variant, also known as B.1.1.7, which Public Health England estimates is up to 50% more infectious than the original strain. And while there were concerns about variants from



South Africa and Brazil, neither has derailed the country's reopening plans. But numbers of cases tied to the Indian variant have doubled in the past week - and current figures are likely gross underestimates, since it takes a couple of weeks for positive cases to show up in the data. The variant is now evident in most regions of the U.K. (with signs of an exponential rise in Scotland), and there is every likelihood that it will spread further. The question is whether that poses a significant risk to life. For

THERESE RAPHAEL

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, He told people to plan for a merry Christmas of family gatherings after a second national lockdown, only to U-turn when the Kent variant grew rampant. In January he put the country into another state of cryogenic suspension. First, some 90% of people over the age of 40 in England have now had a first vaccine dose. A new analysis by Public Health England suggests that by the end of April, vaccines had saved almost 12,000 lives and pre-

vented around 33,000 hospital admissions. So far the cases are largely among people who haven't yet been vaccinated. And those who are getting the variant after being vaccinated seem to be getting a much milder form of Covid. In the northern town of Bolton, which has seen a concentration of the Indian variant, rates of infection have increased far more sharply in the under-60s group than in the over 60s, which has a higher vaccination rate. Even in India, it seems that vaccination is affording some protection against the variant. Second, it's not clear yet whether the new variant is intrinsically more transmissible than the other ones circulating. If transmissibility is higher, then the expectation is that the Indian variant will supersede the other strains. That doesn't seem to be the case so far. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at the University of East Anglia, speaking to the BBC on Friday, said early indications suggest that the Indian variant is not as resistant to vaccines as the South African variant, but is more resistant than the Kent variant. A third reason for hope: We have better detection now. The widespread availability of rapid testing can help identify clusters of cases. The government has also put in place surge testing, even going door to door to test people in some places with a high concentration of the new strain. And now the U.K. is seeking to reduce the time between first and second vaccinations for more vulnerable people. (There's currently a lag of up to 12 weeks.) Although this may accelerate vaccinations in worrying hotspots, it will also mean taking supply from elsewhere. The current reopening roadmap remains dependent on four tests: the continued rapid rollout of vaccinations and continued effectiveness of vaccines, as well as the infection rate and presence of new variants. If the India variant does continue to increase at the same rate, there will be a large number of infections by June. Johnson faces pressure to stay the course, but he's well-placed to resist it given his parliamentary majority and recent election boost. Another key indicator should be hospitalizations. As of May 6, there were fewer than 1,000 hospital beds occupied by Covid patients; and only 144 were beds with ventilators. Keeping those numbers low is critical, not least because the NHS has a huge backlog of non-Covid cases to clear through. Epidemiologists have been warning that a third wave of some kind is likely and we may now be facing it. Unlike previous waves, we have better defenses and more experience with adaptation. Nothing is certain with this virus, but the odds look better this time around.

It's 2021, but floating bodies in UP and Bihar have sent us back to 1918

For residents living close to Ganga and Yamuna, witnessing dead bodies is a routine affair. But nothing could have prepared the residents of Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh and Buxar in Bihar, or anyone receiving the latest viral videos, for what is now going to be forever etched in their memory - floating dead bodies, unattended for several days, as the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic engulfs India. The country was stunned. Even though there is a provision in Hinduism of immersing the dead, the sheer numbers in the past two weeks suggest something is amiss. There was no dignity in death. The visuals have left an indelible mark in the minds and hearts of everyone who watched the viral clips, but especially those who witnessed it first hand. And so, the

image of corpses floating in Ganga and Yamuna is ThePrint's Newsmaker of the Week. In Bihar's Buxar district, as many as 71 corpses washed up at the Mahadev Ghat of the Ganga river. Local residents described the sight like "hell breaking loose." In Hamirpur district in Uttar Pradesh, the sight of dozens of corpses floating in the river has had a similar psychological impact on the residents. But many are now also worried about the potentially massive health hazard this brings. For fishermen, the stench of the corpses that has enveloped the river has made their lives difficult. Some

Fatima Khan

say that dogs have begun mauling and dragging the dead bodies, leaving pieces of flesh floating in the river. They are worried that if these bodies continue floating, and no action is taken, then their livelihood will be at risk. "Of course it feels very disgusting to be in the river when there are so many bodies there. The stench is really horrible and the flesh pieces make it worse. But as fishermen, we have no other option," Ratan Kumar, a fisherman living on the banks of

Yamuna said. After reports of the visuals in Ganga and Yamuna emerged, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath said that "the last rites should be done according to the deceased's religious beliefs". The CM has now ordered patrolling by the police and the State Disaster Response Force to stop disposing of bodies in the rivers. But Bihar and UP governments have shifted blame to each other. Buxar District Magistrate Aman Samir has denied that the corpses were from his jurisdiction, claiming they floated downstream from UP's Ghazipur. However, Samir's counterpart in the UP district has rejected the claim. In UP's Hamirpur, the police claimed that the bodies had come from Kanpur Dehat district, and not been dumped by local residents. But while bodies in Buxar were later buried, in Hamirpur, local residents allege there has not been any effort from the administration to remove the bodies. In fact, Hamirpur's Additional Superintendent of Police told ThePrint that removing the bodies from the river now would be "violative of the rituals." Many have expressed shock that this is happening in India of 2021. "We have seen bodies every year. Some float, and a fraction get washed ashore, but this time, it looked like all hell had broken loose," Sitaram Chaudhry, a fisherman from Bihar said. The horrific second wave of Covid-19, which most experts agree the central and state governments mishandled, has led to cremation and burial grounds running out of

space. This isn't the first time this is happening. India has had to see these visuals a century ago too. In his book *The Age of Pandemics*, author Chinmay Tumbe wrote how during the 1918 influenza pandemic, similar visuals were seen in various parts of India. "Down in the plains, numberless bodies were thrown in the river... since there was insufficient firewood for the cremation of Hindus." And the reasons, even today, remain more or less the same. Procuring wood is a tough ask in these times - when the commodity has become expensive and several places are reporting shortages due to excessive deaths in the past few weeks. Even after the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984, bodies were dumped into the Narmada because of the sheer overwhelming numbers. In fact, there was so much confusion about corpses that Muslims ended up cremating, Hindus ended up burying. After talking to people around the ghats, it's clear the visuals of floating bodies have shaken villagers to the core. They questioned how the government allowed the situation to deteriorate so much. "Helplessness" has set in among the bereaved families who couldn't even cremate their loved ones. Ordinary citizens are having to take on the task of helping the less-privileged in these times. "Who will take responsibility for this? There are bodies floating all over... What happens to Namami Gange project?" asked Amit, a resident of Gahmar in Uttar Pradesh who, along with his friends, has been helping the poor with food and other needs.



LG Electronics Pledges Usd 5.5 Mnto Support India's Fight Against Coronavirus



New Delhi, May 17 : LG Electronics, India's leading consumer durable brand has been supporting through various initiatives for the past 24 years. Continuing its commitment to support India in the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, LG Electronics has pledged to help 10 makeshift hospitals across India. This will be done in association with local government bodies and NGOs. As a part of this association, LG will be providing a financial assistance of USD 5.5 MN, to set up medical infrastructure in these crucial times. Today, LG Electronics has completed 24 years in India & this contribution is an extension of brand philosophy of making LIFE'S GOOD for people. To support Govt. & citizens in the fight against COVID-19, LG Electronics is collaborating with Govt. Hospitals & NGO partners. India's biggest medical facility AIIMS will be adding more beds to treat COVID-19 patients, the required infrastructure will be funded by LG Electronics. All these Makershift hospitals will be made across Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Pune, Bhopal, Udaipur, Lucknow & other cities in association with various Government hospitals. LG Electronics will be working with implementation partners including People to People foundation across various states. Speaking of the initiative Young Lak

Kim, MD- LG Electronics India said, "We stand committed to lending our full support to the Government & citizens in fight against COVID-19. In the onset of pandemic last year, we provided support by sharing our resources with the healthcare community. Our focus has always been on the well-being of the people and we believe through MAKESHIFT HOSPITALS we can contribute to saving lives by creating medical infrastructure. It has been 24 years since our inception in India & we are committed to make Life's good for India. We will continue our social initiatives to contribute in a meaningful way. We will be working with various Govt's/Partners to create required medical infrastructure with a budget of USD 5.5 MN." In April 2020, LG partnered with Akshaya Patra Foundation to serve 1 million meals across India. LG India also donated products like Water Purifier, Air conditioners, Refrigerator & TV to the 300+ hospitals allotted for quarantine/ isolation wards in state & districts. Several State Governments have appreciated LG Electronics support to fight against this pandemic. LG Electronics has taken a pledge to support India's fight against the pandemic. LG Electronics is committed to offer active support to people in need in this current situation.

CBIC starts special drive to clear pending GST refund claims by month-end



Mumbai May 17 : Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, pending GST refunds, Principal Commissioners of Central Tax formations, COVID-19 pandemic, Special GST Refund Disposal Drive is expected that during this special drive, all GST refund claims, pending as on May 14, shall be disposed of by May 31, 2021. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has launched a special drive to clear all pending GST refunds by month-end. The 15-day Goods and Services Tax (GST) refund drive is on the lines of an ongoing similar drive organised by the CBIC for refund of customs and duty drawback claims. In an instruction to all Principal Commissioners of Central Tax formations, the CBIC said there is a need to focus on timely disposal of all pending GST refund claims in order to provide immediate relief to business entities, especially MSMEs, in the difficult times of second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Free foodgrains PDS Wheat procurement grows by 30 pc to 366.61 lakh in this season. Unlike urea, P&K fertilisers are decontrolled products. The prices are fixed by the manufacturers and the government gives them fixed subsidies each year. For the current fiscal year, subsidies for P&K fertilisers have been kept unchanged. Govt considering subsidy

to offset rise in global prices of P&K fertilisers' raw material. "It is hereby instructed that a 'Special GST Refund Disposal Drive' will be launched by all Central Tax formations during the period from 15th May 2021 to 31st May 2021 for processing and disposal of all pending GST refund claims on priority," it said. The CBIC further said that the GST law provides 15 days for issuing acknowledgement or deficiency memo and total 60 days for disposing of refund claims without any liability to pay interest. "It is, however, expected that all Central Tax formations will take up all the pending GST refund claims for processing on priority and endeavour to dispose them of much earlier than the statutory time limits, preferably before a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of the refund application," the CBIC added. It is expected that during this special drive, all GST refund claims, pending as on May 14, shall be disposed of by May 31, 2021. The tax officers will coordinate with the major trade and industry associations (especially those that cater to exporters and MSMEs) for the assistance and handholding of taxpayers, including for submission of required documents/ reply by the taxpayers (if a claim is pending for want of a required document/ reply to notice, etc). The CBIC also asked taxmen to ensure that communication with taxpayers is done through the GST portal, or if need be, through email using the official email ID of the officer. All communication with

taxpayers must be done through the GST portal, or if need be, through email using the official email ID of the officer. The Special Refund Disposal Drive should be widely publicised among the trade and industry. "It is urged that in these difficult times, all central tax officers should endeavour to make their best efforts and contribution in the fight against COVID-19, by liquidating the pending GST refund claims by May 31, 2021," the CBIC added.

Dilemma of having 2 PAN cards? Here are remedies to resolve it

Mumbai, May 17 : The income tax officer can impose a penalty of Rs 10,000 on the concerned person if he possesses more than one PAN cards. The method of submitting a PAN card to the Income Tax Department is similar to the procedure that is followed in the correction and surrender of the PAN card. As per the situation, if you possess more than one Permanent Account Numbers (PANs), whether you acquired them intentionally or accidentally, you get caught in a real dilemma. You might be penalised and even might be criminalised in some cases. But don't panic. Here are the remedies to solving the aforesaid dilemma of having 2 PAN numbers. But before that let's recall the various provisions of the Income Tax Act 1961. Non-resident is required to file an Income Tax Return only if his total income, from all sources (after giving effect to exemption in respect of income from NRE account) exceeds maximum amount not chargeable to tax (i.e. Rs 2.5 lakh). Your Queries - Income Tax: Gains from share trading taxed under business profit, file ITR 3/4. Govt extends timelines for tax compliance, ITR for FY20 can be filed till May 31. Section 139A of the Income Tax Act, 1961 is concerned with the eligibility criteria to apply for the PAN, when an individual should quote it and so on. As per the aforesaid section, a person can possess only one PAN. As per the seventh provision of the aforesaid Section 139A, "No person who has already been allotted a permanent account number under the new series shall apply, obtain or possess

another permanent account number." As per this section, the income tax officer can impose a penalty of Rs 10,000 on the concerned person if he possesses more than one PAN. On an in-depth examination of this section, the penalty imposed is discretionary — If a person is found to have 2 PAN cards, it depends on the income tax officer to decide whether to levy a fine or not. The criteria of decision making is to know the real intention of a person having two PAN



cards. # This section further says that the defaulter (who has 2 PANs) shall be given the opportunity of being heard. The reason being, he might have committed the fault unintentionally in a hurry or for avoiding hassles or for some other cause which is unavoidable. For Instance, an NRI comes to India and applies for a PAN. In a hurry to honour his commitments abroad, he again moves out of the country and when he revisits the income tax office after 5 years, he reapplies for PAN. Another instance is as follows — a person has been issued the PAN 10 years back. Now he has moved to a new address but his PAN card shows the old address. In such a case, the formalities for address change might be very complex and to avoid hassles, he may apply for a new PAN and shall have 2 PANs now. Here the intention of an individual is not wrong but he has committed fault to avoid an error. However, there may be cases where an individual has applied for a second PAN fraudulently. For instance, an individual might have applied for PAN intentionally for getting a loan when he has lost credibility. In such a case, he may become the offender along with the imposition of a penalty of Rs

10,000. How to apply for the surrender of a PAN Card when an individual has 2 PAN Cards? There is a prescribed procedure to submit one PAN card out of 2 PAN cards to the income tax department as mentioned in the Income Tax Act 1961. However, in the era of Information and Communication Technology, there are 2 ways to apply for surrender of Card — Online Method and Offline Method. The method of submitting a PAN card to the Income Tax Department is similar to

it in such a way that one portion of the signature is on the photo and one portion is on the acknowledgement receipt. Note: If the person applying is not the individual, the acknowledgement shall be signed by Superscribe the envelope with 'Application for PAN cancellation' along with the acknowledgement number. Step 9 (Last Step) Following items should be submitted to the below mentioned postal address: National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) e-Gov at 'Income Tax PAN Services Unit, NSDL e-Governance Infrastructure Limited, 5th Floor, Mantri Sterling, Plot No. 341, Survey No. 997/8, Model Colony, Near Deep Bunglow Chowk, Pune — 411 016. For surrender of the additional PAN card offline, you ought to present the PAN correction form at the nearest collection centre of NSDL and also file a letter with the concerned jurisdictional Assessing Officer while listing the duplicate PAN details and requesting for the cancellation of the same. In some cases, the Assessing Officer might be requiring an affidavit that mentions the current PAN and states that an individual does not possess any PAN other than the present one that is in use and the PAN card that has been surrendered. Column 11 of this form shall ask you to mention the PAN which you desire to surrender. A Xerox copy of the aforesaid PAN should also be submitted along with the application. 1. While making an online application, the duly signed acknowledgement along with essential documents ought to reach the office of the NSDL within 15 days after submitting the online form in the said time. 2. It is worth mentioning that the PAN correction form is used as a multi-tasker, i.e. making corrections in PAN, reissuing of PAN without correction and surrendering additional PAN, so be careful while filling the form. 3. There's a likelihood that Income Tax officials shall undertake investigation. So, be prepared. 4. Just filling out the online form does not guarantee that your additional PAN shall be cancelled. You might have to visit the concerned Assessing Officer for convincing him that your additional PAN was accidentally acquired. 5. One should be prepared to face questions from income tax officials. Similarly, you might have to convince assessing officials if it is required.

Petrol, diesel price hiked again; petrol price nears Rs 99 in Mumbai



Mumbai May 17 : Petrol price on Sunday was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 27 paise, pushing rates across the country to record highs and that of petrol in Mumbai to near Rs 99 a litre. Petrol prices, diesel prices, petrol diesel prices in Mumbai, price hike, highest value-added tax, incidences of local taxes, petrol prices crossing Rs 100 mark. A litre of petrol in Mumbai now comes for Rs 98.88 and diesel is priced at Rs 90.40 per litre. Petrol price on Sunday was in-

creased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 27 paise, pushing rates across the country to record highs and that of petrol in Mumbai to near Rs 99 a litre. The increase led to rates in Delhi climbing to Rs 92.58 per litre and diesel to Rs 83.22, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. Rates had already crossed Rs 100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and with the latest increase, price in Mumbai too was inching towards that

level. A litre of petrol in Mumbai now comes for Rs 98.88 and diesel is priced at Rs 90.40 per litre. Gold imports, gold demands. Gold import jumps to USD 6.3 bn in April. Clearly, Hindi poetry and poets are seeing a huge shift in reception today. A Poetic Moment: Hindi poetry witnessing a huge rise in popularity. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. This is the ninth increase in prices since May 4 when the state-owned oil firms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal. Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan had the costliest petrol and diesel in the country at Rs 103.52 per litre and Rs 95.99 a litre, respectively. In nine increases, petrol price has risen by Rs 2.19 per litre and diesel by Rs 2.49. Since March last year when the government raised excise duty on fuel to an all-time high, petrol price has increased by a record Rs 22.99 per litre (after accounting for a handful of occasions when rates fell) and diesel by Rs 20.93. Oil companies, which have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting a peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal. No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trend in international oil markets. Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. The union government levies Rs 32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 on diesel.

Yamaha India Extends Warranty and Service Period due to outbreak of 2nd wave of COVID-19

Guwahati, May 17 : In lieu of the outbreak of the 2nd wave of COVID-19, India Yamaha Motor (IYM), as a responsible company, believes in empowering and protecting customer rights. Given the conditions that have resulted in movement restrictions, customers may struggle to service their vehicles on time or even avail warranty benefits that may expire during the lockdown situation. Hence, as a part of our Yamaha Lifetime Quality Care approach, we are extending benefits related to service and warranty that were committed by us to our customers, till 30th June 2021, from the date of expiry, as a gratitude towards a long-lasting relationship with our customers. The following services will be extended: * Free service: Services expiring during the lockdown, will be extended. * Normal warranty: Normal warranty expiring during the lockdown, will be extended till 30th June 2021. * Annual maintenance contract: Expiring during the lockdown, will be extended till 30th June 2021.

M-cap of eight most valued companies plummets over Rs 1.13 lakh crore



Mumbai May 17 : During the holiday-truncated trading week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 473.92 points or 0.96 per cent. m-cap companies, top-10 most valued companies, TCS, Infosys, HDFC bank, HUL, ICICI bank, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India. The valuation of Tata

Consultancy Services tumbled Rs 30,054.79 crore to Rs 11,28,488.10 crore. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services tumbled Rs 30,054.79 crore to Rs 11,28,488.10 crore. Eight of the top-10 most valued companies witnessed a combined erosion of Rs 1,13,074.57 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and HDFC Bank emerging as the worst hit. Among the top-10 most valued companies, only Reliance Industries Limited and State Bank of India managed to book gains on a weekly basis. During the holiday-truncated trading week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 473.92 points

or 0.96 per cent. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services tumbled Rs 30,054.79 crore to Rs 11,28,488.10 crore. Infosys witnessed an erosion of Rs 15,168.41 crore, taking its market worth to Rs 5,61,060.44 crore. Petrol prices, diesel prices, petrol diesel prices in Mumbai, price hike, highest value-added tax, incidences of local taxes, petrol prices crossing Rs 100 mark. Petrol, diesel price hiked again; petrol price nears Rs 99 in Mumbai. Gold imports, gold demands. Gold import jumps to USD 6.3 bn in April. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank eroded by Rs 15,139.12 crore to Rs

7,65,035.49 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank plummeted by Rs 14,398.04 crore to Rs 3,38,358.80 crore. The valuation of HDFC Bank eroded by Rs 15,139.12 crore to Rs 4,36,879.75 crore and that of Bajaj Finance tanked Rs 9,844.62 crore to Rs 3,21,592.05 crore. The m-cap of Hindustan Unilever Limited diminished by Rs 8,505.43 crore to stand at Rs 5,58,445.28 crore and that of ICICI Bank dipped by Rs 6,533.78 crore to Rs 4,13,243.07 crore. In contrast, Reliance Industries added Rs 3,518.62 crore to take its valuation to Rs 12,27,855.04 crore and State Bank of India added Rs 2,052.66 crore to help its m-cap reach Rs 3,21,732.25 crore.

Contd. From Page 1

First Batch Of DRDO's Anti-COVID-19

has been developed by DRDO scientists at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS). The drug has been developed in collaboration between DRDO and Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) in Hyderabad. The drug was ready for clinical trials in April last year after DRDO and INMAS scientists conducted experiments inside the lab and found 2-DG to be safe and effective against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Based on the results from the lab experiment, DCGI permitted DRDO to conduct Phase-II clinical trials of the drug. The trials showed 2-DG was effective against the COVID-19 virus and demonstrated signs of recovery in patients. Following the successful Phase-II trials between May and October 2020, the drug was tested again in Phase-IIa and Phase-IIb trials, which were conducted at six and 11 hospitals respectively. Overall the Phase-II trials were conducted on 110 patients. The DRDO received approval to conduct Phase-III trials of the drug by DCGI in November 2020. The Phase-II trials were conducted between December 2020-March 2021 at 27 hospitals across India, including in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, etc. The Phase-III trials were conducted on 220 patients. The results showed faster recovery in patients who took the drug as compared to those who followed just the Standard of Care (SoC). The use of oxygen in patients who took 2-DG declined significantly. Speaking exclusively to Republic Media recently, DRDO scientist Dr Anand Narayan Bhat said that they started the project in May 2020 with CCMB Hyderabad where the drug was tested. After successful results, DCGI was approached for phase 2 trials, added Bhat. The scientist lastly mentioned that it took almost a year to complete all the trials and process after which the drug controller gave permissions for emergency use.

Cyclone Tauktae: PM Modi

the brunt of the cyclonic storm. Goa CM Sawant said that the Prime Minister called to enquire about the impact of cyclone Tauktae on the state, and assured all possible assistance from the Central government. Earlier in the day, Maharashtra CM's Office tweeted, "CM Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray is closely monitoring the Cyclone Tauktae situation in the state." As per the latest update given by the IMD, cyclone Tauktae, which has now intensified into an "extremely severe cyclonic storm", is likely to cross the Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva, around 20 km east of the Union territory of Diu between 8 pm and 11 pm on Monday with a maximum sustained wind speed of 155-165 kmph.

Cancel FIRs Over Posters Against

Vadra among the most vocal. Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra has also tweeted. The opposition leaders said they stood by the questions and dared the authorities to "arrest me too". Delhi has been one of the worst-hit territories in the second wave of the pandemic, with nearly 30,000 new cases per day and a positivity rate of 35 per cent at the peak. On Sunday the city reported fewer than 6,500 new cases in 24 hours and a positivity rate of 10.4 per cent. Restrictions on movement have been extended to ensure the chain of transmission is broken. At the peak of the second wave Delhi witnessed horrific scenes - traumatised doctors dying by suicide, overwhelmed hospitals, and patients dying because of the lack of medical oxygen. Prime Minister Modi's government has been sharply criticised - by the opposition and international media - for appearing more intent on addressing bad publicity than solving the COVID-19 crisis. Among the points of criticism are its vaccination policy, which international medical journal The Lancet this month called "botched" and "falling apart" at the central level.

Covid positive youth spends 11

a one-room house with a single washroom, Shiva found that home isolation is not possible. With no government-run isolation facility in his village or in surrounding villages, the youth hit upon innovative idea. "I had no other option. I did not want my family members to suffer because of me," said Shiva. Since he had learnt that Covid-infected people are suffering from low saturation level, he chose the tree for his isolation hoping that this will help him maintain good oxygen levels. He selected a tree in front of his house as the isolation facility. The tree, which is called 'Ganuga' in Telugu (Pongame tree), is also said to have some medicinal properties. Using bamboo sticks, ropes and few other items, he made a cot and tied it to the tree branches. Shiva's parents used to keep his meals, water and other requirements in bucket and he used to pull up the same with a rope. Shiva remained in touch with family and friends through his mobile phone, which also proved useful to kill the time. He sent a few messages calling up on local authorities to set up an isolation centre in the area. Responding to his appeal and growing requests from people in his village and about a dozen other villages, the authorities set up an isolation centre late last week. They converted a hostel meant for students belonging to Scheduled Tribes into an isolation centre. They also persuaded Shiva to move to the centre. He will soon be completing his isolation period. Shiva's incident highlighted the problems faced by Covid infected in villages. Living in small houses with no or single washroom, they can't isolate themselves. In some instances, last year and also during the ongoing second wave, individuals who test positive were not allowed to enter into villages. At few places, Covid-infected patients are living in isolation either in huts outside the villages or in the fields.

Rare foaming frog resurfaces

treefrog, last recorded in India in 1912, is virtually unknown. A virtually unknown treefrog with known traits such as changing skin shade and whipping up foam to protect its eggs has resurfaced in India after 108 years. A team of zoologists from Mizoram University's Developmental Biology and Herpetological Laboratory spotted Doria's foam-nesting treefrog during a nocturnal survey in the buffer area of Mizoram's Pualreng Wildlife Sanctuary in June 2020. The only previous record of this treefrog in India was south of Arunachal Pradesh's Tenga Valley in 1912. This frog belongs to the genus Chirixalus, of which there are currently 14 recognised species. These are distinguished from the Rhacophoridae family of frogs by the presence of opposable fingers. The "rediscovery" of Doria's foam-nesting treefrog in the country after a century was published in the April issue of Reptiles & Amphibians, the journal of the U.S.-based International Reptile Conservation Foundation. The authors of the report are Lal Muansanga, Lal Duhzuali, Lal Biakzuala, Vabeiryureilai Mathipi, Saisangpuia Sailo and H.T. Lalremsanga. "Very little is known about the natural history and the distribution of this treefrog. The species apparently is rare in India and no specimen had been collected since 1912 until our survey," Mr Lalremsanga told. "Treefrogs can usually change their colour from lighter to darker or tan. This frog derives its name from the secretion of foam for covering the eggs the female lays. The foam guards the eggs against predators, direct sunlight and desiccation," he said. Doria's foam-nesting treefrog (Chirixalus doriae) was first described in 1893 from Karin Bia-po in Myanmar and was later sighted in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Bangladesh. The Mizoram University team collected a female specimen from a twig above the ground along the edge of a fish pond surrounded by flowering banana plants. "Considering the intraspecies genetic divergence, we presume that the specimen from north-eastern India likely represents a distinct population of the taxon. However, we suggest that further sampling for more specimens and genetic data are necessary to illuminate the population status of the species in the region," the team's study said. Herpetologists based in Guwahati said more research on this "rarest of rare" treefrog could throw light on the quality of habitat or ecological changes in the region.

Assam generating 80 mt oxygen

capacity has gone upto 80 mt as against the requirement of 70 mt. He also said that the Central Government has allocated 100 mt oxygen to the state which would be transported by a dedicated train. Apart from fulfilling state's own requirement, Assam is helping other NE states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Nagaland by providing oxygen supply, he said. MP Pallab Lochan Das, MD of Premiere Cryogenics Ltd Abhijit Barooah were present among others during the visit of the Chief Minister to the plant.

COVID-19: Refrain from steam

if people have COVID-19 symptoms they must consult a doctor rather than taking medication on their own. The statement from the Health Minister's office said the treatment given to patients in Siddha COVID Care Centres is done under medical supervision and based on the guidance of a government medical committee.

CM reviews WR department, directs to complete maximum works within May



Dispur, May 17: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today reviewed the functioning of the Water Resources Department in a meeting held at his office conference room at Janata Bhawan and directed the officials to take urgent steps to complete maximum ongoing schemes within this month to minimize the damage caused by flood to people and property. Chief Minister Sarma also asked the department to identify the vulnerable points in the embankments across Assam and carry out strengthening on a war footing while completing the breach closing works at the earliest. He stressed on quality and timely completion of projects and suggested the department to prioritize works to ensure best use of financial and human resources. Stating that dredging could bring satisfactory results in reducing the impact of flood, the Chief Minister directed the department to identify rivers that cause maximum havoc during flood and examine the feasibility of dredging on those rivers. Further suggesting a fundamental shift in the functioning of water resources department, Chief Minister Sarma asked the senior officials to take up time bound and technology oriented approach while implementing flood protection and repairing schemes. The Chief Minister instructed the department to submit a draft proposal outlining the areas for improvement apart from innovative and technologically sound systems to make the department more efficient. He also directed the department to develop an accountability mechanism to ensure judicious utilization of public money. Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika, Additional Chief Secretary of WR Department S Abbasi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Samir Sinha, CEO FREMAA Siddharth Singh, Commissioner & Secretary of Revenue & Disaster Management Department MS Manivannan, Additional Secretary to Chief Minister Dr. Jeevan B, Chief Engineer of WR Department Borsing Rongpi and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

CM reviews flyover construction status with PWD Complete construction of Supermarket flyover by Sept 30: CM

Guwahati, May 17: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today held a meeting with PWD at his conference hall at Janata Bhawan and reviewed the progress of ongoing construction of flyovers in Guwahati. He directed completion of construction work of the flyover at Dispur Supermarket in the city within September 30 and expeditious construction of all other flyovers. In the meeting, the Chief Minister directed the finance department to release required funds at the earliest for the three ongoing flyovers at Supermarket, Serabhati and Maligaon. He stressed on the need to speed up construction of Maligaon flyover and directed Commissioner of Police to prepare a traffic plan to reduce congestion in Maligaon area during the construction period. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma also instructed the PWD to complete the piling of Serabhati flyover during the curfew period imposed due to COVID-19 and prepare the DPR of the flyover connecting Ambari with Noonmati in the city within three months including the traffic plan. Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, DC Kamrup Metro Biswajit Pegu, Commissioner of Police Munna Prasad Gupta, top officials of PWD and other concerned departments were present in the meeting.

'Shame': Abhishek Manu Singhvi reacts as bodies of suspected COVID-19 victims found floating in Ganga in Bihar Bihar

Patna: A day after several bodies, suspected to be of people who died due to COVID-19, were found floating in the river Ganga in a Bihar district, Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi called it the most "inhuman scene that ever emerged from this country". "This is how low the dignity of life has become in India," tweeted Singhvi. Amidst a surge in COVID-19 cases, the administration in Bihar's Buxar district on Monday found at least 45 bodies, most of them in a decomposed stage, in Ganga. "Shocking scenes coming in from Bihar where several bodies have been dumped in holy #Ganga. This is how low the dignity of life has become in #India. most inhuman scene that ever emerged from this country. Several govts at state & centre wld resign in other countries. #Shame," posted Singhvi on Twitter. As soon as the news surfaced, officials in Chausa block of Buxar, which borders Uttar Pradesh, rushed to the spot. Ashok Kumar, the Block Development Officer of Chausa, said that 45 bodies have been spotted at Mahadev Ghat. "Chausa is located on the Bihar-Uttar Pradesh border. These dead bodies are definitely thrown in districts in Uttar Pradesh. We have deployed guards at Mahadev Ghat and cremations of dead bodies are underway," he said. While talking to news agency PTI, Kumar said: "Many Uttar Pradesh districts are situated right across the river and the bodies may have been dumped in the Ganges for reasons not known to us. We cannot confirm whether the deceased were indeed COVID-19 positive. The bodies have started decomposing. But we are taking all precautions while ensuring that these are disposed of in a decent manner". Anjoria Devi, the wife of the Dom Raja of Mahadev Ghat, has claimed that relatives of the deceased are throwing the bodies into the Ganga without cremation. "Around 10 dead bodies are being thrown in every day. When they were asked not to do so, they assault us. They also argue who would bear the expenses of cremation," she told the media. Meanwhile, Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has termed the incident as "unfortunate". "The incident of corpses found floating in Ganga in Buxar region of Bihar is unfortunate.

Bill Gates Quit Microsoft Board Amid Probe Into Relationship With Employee

London, May 17: Resignation of Bill Gates in 2020 from Microsoft's Board of Directors came after the board hired a law firm to investigate a romantic relationship he had with a Microsoft employee that was deemed inappropriate, people familiar with the matter said. Quoting Wall Street Journal, CNN reported that some Microsoft Directors began an investigation in 2019 into the woman's allegations of prior sexual relationship with Bill Gates. During the probe, some board members decided it was no longer suitable for Gates to sit as a Director at the software company he started and led for decades, the people said. Gates resigned before the Board's investigation was completed and before the full board could make a formal decision on the matter, another person familiar with the matter said, reported Wall Street Journal. "Microsoft received a concern in the latter half of 2019 that Bill Gates sought to initiate an intimate relationship with a company employee in the year 2000," a Microsoft spokesperson said. "A committee of the Board reviewed the concern, aided by an outside law firm to conduct a thorough investigation. Throughout the investigation, Microsoft provided extensive support to the employee who raised the concern." Meanwhile, Gates's spokeswoman refuted the allegations and said the decision to leave board in 2020 was not related to the matter. A spokesperson for Gates said, "There was an affair almost 20 years ago which ended amicably." The spokesperson said his "decision to transition off the board was in no way related to this matter. In fact, he had expressed an interest in spending more time on his philanthropy starting several years earlier," reported Wall Street Journal. The spokesperson said the "claim of mistreatment of employees is also false," and that "the rumours and speculation surrounding Gates' divorce are becoming increasingly absurd and it's unfortunate that people who have little to no knowledge of the situation are being characterized as 'sources'." Earlier this month, Melinda Gates — Bill Gates' wife and co-founder of their foundation — filed for divorce after 27 years of marriage. In a statement announcing their split, the couple said, "after a great deal of thought and a lot of work on our relationship, we have made the decision to end our marriage."

Shahid Jameel quits as head of virus genome sequencing group

New Delhi, May 17: Shahid Jameel, eminent virologist and head of the advisory group to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (Insacog), resigned from his post on Friday. Dr. Jameel confirmed to The Hindu that he'd quit but did not give any reasons for his departure. Multiple scientists who are part of Insacog — a group of 10 laboratories across the country, tasked with tracking evolving variants of the coronavirus — told The Hindu that Dr. Jameel's decision appeared to be sudden as he hadn't communicated reasons for his resignation to consortium members but one of them cited "government pressure" as a potential reason. Dr. Jameel, who is Director, Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University has been critical of aspects of the government's handling of the pandemic. On May 13, in an invited opinion piece for the New York Times, Dr. Jameel summarised India's response to the multiple waves and the uneven vaccination rollout and concluded by saying "scientists were facing stubborn resistance to evidence-based policy-making. On April 30, over 800 Indian scientists appealed to the Prime Minister, demanding access to the data that could help them further study, predict and curb this virus. Decision-making based on data is yet another casualty, as the pandemic in India has spun out of control. The human cost we are enduring will leave a permanent scar." The Insacog, setup in December, faced initial challenges with funds and equipment but since March has considerably accelerated sequencing samples from all over the country for variants. It has been tracking international variants of concern as well as discovered the so called 'Indian variant' (B.1.617) that is believed to be instrumental in India's devastating second wave.

Mamata Banerjee stages protest at CBI office in Kolkata, violence erupts over arrest of TMC leaders

Kolkata, May 17: Following the arrest of four TMC leaders, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday (May 17) sat in protest outside the CBI office in Kolkata. She rushed to the 15th floor of the 'Nizam Palace' that houses CBI's anti-corruption cell and asserted that she would not leave until the leaders are released. "Didi (Banerjee) will not leave this CBI office until her party colleagues are released or until she is also arrested," Banerjee's spokesperson, lawyer Anindyo Raut was quoted by. Meanwhile, violence erupted outside the office as well as other locations in the city as thousands of TMC supporters staged a protest. Reports of stone pelting at central para-military forces have also surfaced. Earlier today, the CBI arrested West Bengal cabinet ministers Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee along with TMC MLA Madan Mitra and ex-West Bengal minister Sovan Chatterjee in connection with the Narada case. The probe agency will submit a chargesheet and produce them before the jurisdictional court. Besides them, the Prosecution Sanction has been received from the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding SMH Meerza, IPS (SPS), the then SP, for having seen to have received illegal gratification of over Rs five lakhs. Meerza, notably, had already been arrested and is presently out on bail. The arrest comes a week after West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar accorded sanction to prosecute the four former TMC ministers.

Delhi's Daily Covid Cases Fall Below 5,000, First Since April 5

New Delhi, May 17: Delhi has logged less than 5,000 daily coronavirus cases for the first time since April 5, in what appears to be early signs that the more dangerous Covid wave is receding from the city. The national capital's case positivity rate has also dropped below the 10 per cent threshold after weeks. Experts, however, urged caution as Covid tests have also declined sharply in the last few weeks. Delhi on Monday reported 4,524 cases in 24 hours. At 340, the number of deaths remained worryingly high. The case positivity rate that had reached over 30 per cent last month, stood at 8.42 per cent in the last 24 hours - lowest since April 8. The city's active caseload is currently 56,000, lowest since April 15. The recovery rate has improved to 94.42 per cent, whereas the death rate rested at 1.56 per cent. In the last 24 hours, 10,918 patients were discharged, the government's official statement said. The city's total of Covid cases has reached 13,98,391. The total death count is 21,846. The national capital had recorded 6,456 fresh COVID-19 cases and 262 fatalities on Sunday. Its positivity rate was 10.40 per cent. The city's positivity rate was 11.32 per cent on Saturday, 12.4 per cent on Friday, 14.24 per cent on Thursday, 17 per cent on Wednesday, 17.8 per cent on Tuesday, 19.10 per cent on Monday and 21.67 per cent on last Sunday. The national capital had recorded its highest positivity rate of 36.2 per cent on April 22. Around 91,500 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Delhi in the last one week as compared to 70,000 infections detected during the period. The number of cumulative cases increased from 13.23 lakh on May 9 to 13.93 lakh on May 16. Recoveries rose from 12.17 lakh to 13.09 lakh during the period, news agency PTI reported. The Delhi government has imposed a complete lockdown to bring under control the surge that has overwhelmed the city's health infrastructure.

Stephen Curry takes NBA scoring title as Warriors clinch play-in seed



London, May 17 : Stephen Curry became the oldest scoring champion since Michael Jordan in 1998, finishing with 46 points as the Golden State Warriors held off the Memphis Grizzlies 113-101 on Sunday in a regular-season finale that determined the play-in tournament's eighth and ninth spots. The Warriors wrapped up the No 8 seed and will play on Wednesday, while Memphis finish at No 9 and will host the Spurs on Wednesday. Golden State's opponent is dependent on Sunday night's results for the Lakers and Portland. If they face the Lakers it would set up a delicious face off between Curry and LeBron James. The winner of the game involving the Warriors and Lakers or Portland will be the No 7 seed in the West playoffs; the loser of that game will play the Memphis-San Antonio winner on Friday to be the No 8 West seed. At 33, Curry and Jordan are the only scoring champions age 33 or older. Curry also joins Jordan, Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the only players with multiple scoring titles, MVPs and championships. Two-time MVP Curry locked up his first scoring title since 2015-16 with his second basket of Sunday's game late in the first quarter. He made nine of 22 three-pointers and also contributed nine assists and seven rebounds in Golden State's sixth straight win. Curry averaged 32 points during his second 2,000-point season. Elsewhere, the Eastern Conference matchups are set after Sunday's games. No 7 seed Boston will host No 8 Washington, and No 9 Indiana host No 10 Charlotte in the NBA's first elimination game this season. Both of those games are Tuesday. The Boston-Washington winner goes straight to the playoffs as the East's No 7 seed; the loser of that game will host the Indiana-Charlotte winner on Thursday to determine the East's No 8 seed, who will face top-seeded Philadelphia in round one of the playoffs proper. Getting to the play-in round is a massive comeback story for the Wizards, who started the season 0-5 and 3-12, were shut down for two weeks in January for coronavirus-related issues, had to play 38 games in the season's final 67 days to make up for all that lost time and were 17-32 early last month. They're 17-6 since, rallying from 16 points down to beat Charlotte on Sunday and with Russell Westbrook the league's all-time triple-double king getting his 38th one of the season. "Obviously, Washington's rolling," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "They're a heck of a basketball team. ... They're a handful. Tuesday night's going to be one heck of a challenge." Meanwhile, New York who were sent home after the regular season in each of the last seven years not only are back in the playoffs but will open them at home. New York's win over Boston locked the Knicks into the East's No 4 seed and a first-round matchup against No 5 Atlanta. That means reigning East champion Miami will open as the No 6 seed. The Heat will open the playoffs at Milwaukee.

'God put his hand on my head': Alisson devotes Liverpool winner to late father

London, May 17 : Liverpool kept alive their dreams of qualifying for the Champions League in remarkable circumstances as goalkeeper Alisson scored a 95th-minute winner at West Bromwich Albion. The emotional Brazilian, who lost his father in a drowning accident in February, dedicated the first goal of his senior career - a fine, glancing header - to his family as he said: "God put his hand on my head today". Jürgen Klopp claimed a partial assist for "the technically insane" goal that came after Mohamed Salah, moving level on 22 goals with Harry Kane in the chase for the Premier League's golden boot, had cancelled out Hal Robson Kanu's opener for West Brom. "I saw Ali starting to go forward," said Liverpool's manager. "My part in the goal is that I didn't shout for him to stay back!" "We are really close so I know exactly what it means to him [Alisson] and what he thought in that moment, it's touching," Klopp added. "It's only football but it means the world to us. Now we need to keep going and make sure we are ready for Burnley." The entire Liverpool team huddled around Alisson after the 28-year-old rushed upfield to glance Trent Alexander-Arnold's inswinging corner into the far top corner. Klopp said: "The way his teammates [celebrated] showed today how much they care for him. He's a wonderful,

wonderful person: funny, smart, thoughtful, intense in moments. He's just a great guy. [After all he's been through] a special moment like that couldn't have happened to a better person." Liverpool travel to Burnley on Wednesday before hosting Crystal Palace on Sunday. Just three points separate the three teams contending for the final two Champions League places, with Chelsea and Leicester, fresh from Saturday's FA Cup final, meeting on Tuesday. It could yet come down to goal difference. Alisson spoke of the importance of qualifying for the Champions League even as he reflected on what he has been through this spring when Klopp withdrew him from the team after his bereavement. "I'm too emotional, with everything that's happened in my life recently with my family: football is my life, from since I remember with my father. I hope he was there watching and celebrating," said Alisson. "Sometimes we [Liverpool] have been doing things and it's not been working. The Champions League is so important to us and I'm so happy I am able to help." I looked over the bench, didn't get anything, then John [Achterberg, goalkeeping coach] shouted with conviction to head up. "I think it is the best goal I have ever scored." "You can't explain a lot of things in life.

Opportunities beckon as Eddie Jones ponders options for summer Tests

London, May 17 : Premiership crowds are finally returning from Monday evening and the chance to nudge the national selectors offers a further powerful incentive as the business end of the domestic season approaches. With 11 England players making the British and Irish Lions tour party there is obvious scope for summer experimentation, just as there was in Argentina in 2017 when, among others, Tom Curry made his Test bow. Eddie Jones's England will host the United States on 4 June and Canada the following weekend, both at Twickenham, while England A play their Scottish counterparts on 27 June at Welford Road. Even at this distance there seems limited value in naming George Ford, Joe Marler, Ben Youngs, Jonny May, Mark Wilson and Billy Vunipola, about whom Jones already knows plenty. Better, surely, to investigate one or two alternatives, following England's fifth place in the Six Nations, and give some non-Lions regulars a break. Particularly in this bubble-infested year, the psychological benefits of freshening up mind and body cannot be underestimated. The coaching panel has already had its own spring clean: with Simon Amor and Jason Ryles no longer on board, Jones himself will take charge of the backs for now. Logistically, though, a few other issues still need squaring away. The A game - the first since England Saxons last played in 2016 - should be a prime opportunity to study the next layer of talent but it falls on the same weekend as the Premiership final. If, say, Bristol face Exeter in that game that will rule out Harry Randall, Piers O'Connor, Siva Naulago, Joe Simmonds, Tom O'Flaherty, Ollie Devoto and Jack Yeandle, all of whom would otherwise be obvious candidates for such a fixture. There is also the complication, in some cases, of dual eligibility. Decision time is looming for, among others, Naulago, Randall, Bevan Rodd, Ewan Ashman and Paolo Odogwu, all of whom could appear for other nations. The dynamic Fiji-born Naulogo, who previously played rugby league for Hull FC, is in the British army

and eligible if required. In the cases of the Sale pair Rodd and Ashman, both Scottish qualified, it is a question of which nation they feel happiest representing. Ashman has already trained with the Scotland squad while Rodd was born in Dunoon. Having already 'lost' Cameron Redpath to Scotland, Jones is adamant he only wants players desperate to play for England. With Italy sniffing, though, Odogwu's spirit was sapped after he was picked in this year's Six Nations squad only to spend the whole tournament on the sidelines. With Amor having now been jettisoned, Odogwu must be privately starting to wonder if declaring for Italy might be simpler. It feels fractionally too soon, either way, for the youthful Fin Smith, Freddie Steward, Jack van Poortvliet and Raffi Quirke, who are better off banking the experience gained in their debut Premiership seasons and having a proper pre-season. This has been a uniquely long, unrelenting Premiership campaign stretching back to August's resumption of the previous season and there is scant respite ahead either. Wasps hooker Alfie Barbeary is another who will expect to face the USA and Canada at Twickenham next month. For some, though, a little representative recognition would be timely encouragement. It is a pity Harlequins' excellent openside Will Evans has been injured at the wrong moment; now might also be a good moment to send recuperative best wishes to the sidelined Jack Willis. The latter's brother, Tom, is also one to watch and, if Sale do not reach

the Premiership final, maybe this will be the summer Ben Curry finally emerges from the representative shadow of his twin brother. Exeter still hope the re-injured Jack Nowell will return before the end of the season and Manu Tuilagi is also due back at the end of this month. But what

expert finishers, Northampton's Ollie Sleightholme is a chip off the old family block. Luke Northmore at Quins, Richard Capstick, Josh Hodge at Exeter ... let no one say English rugby is short of promising youth. The trick, as ever, is to pick it at the right moment, mix it judiciously and put enough

newcomers need. England XV (possible) Malins (Bristol); Nowell (Exeter), Slade (Exeter), Tuilagi (Sale), Naulago (Bristol); Smith (Harlequins), Robson (Wasps), Obano (Bath), Barbeary (Wasps), Sinckler (Harlequins), Ribbans (Northampton), Ewels (Bath), Underhill (Bath, capt), Earl



about some less established names? Look at the stats, for example, and Exeter's O'Flaherty leads the country both in terms of metres gained and defenders beaten. The Exiles' game against the Chiefs on Tuesday is also a perfect chance for the attack-minded Ollie Hassell-Collins, Tom Parton and Ben Loader at London Irish to bolster their growing reputations. Dark horses? Worcester's Nick David, bound for Quins this summer, has something about him; so does the Newcastle winger Ben Stevenson. In terms of

pressure on the incumbent names to raise standards across the squad. Ford may have edged out Quins' Marcus Smith at Welford Road on Saturday but the first-half dominance of Leicester's pack also played its part. Marcus Smith and Max Malins in the same backline, with a returning Tuilagi and Henry Slade in midfield and Wasps' bullocking force of nature Alfie Barbeary at hooker? It would shift a few tickets, Indian variants permitting, as well as offering an enticing glimpse of the future. Half a chance will be all some of the

Dombrandt (Bristol), England A (possible; nb. omits potential candidates from clubs currently in Premiership top four): De Glanville (Bath); Sleightholme (Northampton), Odogwu (Wasps), Lawrence (Worcester), Cokanasiga (Bath); Umaga (Wasps), Mitchell (Northampton); Genge (Leicester), McGuigan (Newcastle), Stuart (Bath), Kpoku (Saracens), Martin (Leicester), T Hill (Worcester, capt), Ludlam (Northampton), Chick (Newcastle).

Sheffield United's Daniel Jebbison pounces early to deepen Everton woes



London, May 17 : Carlo Ancelotti's luck is about to run out. His Everton team have delivered the worst Premier League campaign at Goodison Park since 1993-94, when a final-day miracle was needed against Wimbledon to keep Mike Walker's side in the top flight, and to a backdrop of silence instead of the scorn that would usually descend from full and furious terraces. There will be no opportunity for escape when 6,500 Evertonians return against Wolves on Wednesday. Bottom club Sheffield United, relegated with only one previous away win all season, condemned an Everton team supposedly with designs on European football to a ninth home league defeat of the season, the joint worst return in the club's history. The teenager Daniel Jebbison illuminated the contest with the only goal on his full Premier League debut. His moment of glory, along with United's victory, was richly deserved. The visitors were hungry, committed and confident on the ball. Everton failed in every department,

serving up another atrocious Goodison performance. Only relegated Fulham have collected fewer points at home in 2021 than Ancelotti's expensively assembled but pedestrian team. "I have to take responsibility but I hope the players take responsibility for this as well," a dejected Everton manager said. "I am really embarrassed. Fortunately we have supporters here for the next game and I hope they wake us up because we need to wake up. We are so good away and so bad at home. It is really difficult to explain." A deflating season for United still has a capacity for joy as Jebbison demonstrated in the seventh minute of his Premier League debut. The Canadian-born England under-18 international was chosen to lead the line by Paul Heckingbottom following his first appearance for the club as a substitute against Crystal Palace last week. At 17 years and 309 days the striker was the youngest player to start a Premier League game for United. His first meaningful contribution was to become the youngest player to score

on his Premier League debut. Jebbison's place in the record books was crafted by the defender Jack Robinson, who weaved past weak challenges from Abdoulaye Doucoure and Allan to enter the Everton area before drilling a low cross along the face of Jordan Pickford's goal. Ben Godfrey, continuing Everton's passive resistance, stepped out to leave the teenager free to convert at the back post. Jebbison's last competitive start had been for Chorley, on loan at the National League North side in December, and he was understandably mobbed as the visitors celebrated a perfect start. "It was a fantastic moment," said United's caretaker manager. "It couldn't have worked out any better. He's a hard-working lad who has developed quickly in the academy. Everyone will be talking about him now and that will bring different expectations but we will manage him properly." The teenager could have added a second when Mason Holgate under-cooked a back pass on the sodden pitch straight to the goalscorer. Confidence was evident as he attempted to chip the advancing Pickford but his effort was clawed away by the Everton goalkeeper and Ben Osborn was unable to capitalise on the loose ball. United were sharp in possession and fiercely committed. Everton, by contrast, had too many players going through the motions yet created enough chances to have overturned the deficit by the interval. Aaron Ramsdale, the United keeper, denied Allan at full stretch when the Brazilian midfielder curled a shot towards his bottom corner. He then produced a superb double save to thwart Richardson and Dominic Calvert-Lewin, flinging himself to his right to keep out the Brazilian's diving header from a James Rodriguez cross and then leaping up to block the England international's follow-up with his chest at close range. Michael Keane created another clear opening for Richardson on the stroke of half-time but, running in behind the United defence, he badly scuffed a first-time volley high over the bar. Jonathan Moss rejected Everton appeals for a penalty when Seamus Coleman's flick struck Robinson's outstretched hand but their latest tale of Goodison woe was not down to misfortune. Ancelotti's team were flat and it was no surprise when Holgate was replaced at half-time by Gylfi Sigurdsson. The switch to 4-3-3 did not disturb United's confident, well-organised performance, however, and Everton's threat evaporated in the second half. John Egan headed a good chance over from Oliver Norwood's free-kick while David McGoldrick and Osborn worked tirelessly in support of Jebbison. McGoldrick should have eased any late anxieties in the United ranks when he missed an excellent chance from Enda Stevens' low cross. Not that the visitors were unduly worried as Everton laboured to a familiar Goodison defeat.

PFA chairman John Mousinho: 'The majority of footballers are really vulnerable'



London, May 17 : John Mousinho has had a 16-year career in the lower leagues and that gives him a particular perspective on those who play his sport. "Despite what a lot of people

might think about football and footballers, the majority of them are really vulnerable," he says. "It's a very difficult industry to be involved in. It's a very tough and harsh industry and one you can be spat out of at a very young age, or an old age, and just left on your own." Mousinho was named the new chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association this month. The Oxford United club captain believes it is his job to change perceptions and not just about the players who elected

him to the role. Technically, the 35-year-old is chair of the players' board, a new body set up as part of a wide reorganisation of the union. Change came only after external criticism and the whiff of scandal had dogged the PFA for years. There is now an attempt to draw a line and start again, however, and Mousinho, in his role as "the ultimate representative of the voice of all of the players", will be at the forefront of that. Where does the PFA go from here? Perhaps surprisingly, Mousinho

says the first task is to reconnect with its members. From the outside the PFA can seem one of the most influential groups of organised labour left in the UK: well-financed and effective. During the past year it has protected its members' wages from cuts caused by the pandemic and overturned an EFL salary cap in the courts. But Mousinho says that internally the picture is different, with a membership (standing at 5,000 players) distant from the organisation and sceptical of its

purpose. "There are far too many people, rightly or wrongly, who don't use the PFA to its full use, don't necessarily know what it does," he says. "You go into the dressing room and players say: 'They don't do anything for us.' There is this negative perception out there and we need to re-engage." With the PFA membership made up of "international captains to players that have forged a career through the non-leagues", Mousinho says interests diverge.

Youri Tielemans picks up the baton as Leicester's legends near the finish line



Leicester, May 17 : Tireless FA Cup hero is emblematic of a club that responded to its fabled title triumph by building shrewdly for the future. Pick a Leicester player, any Leicester player. Or the manager. Or the owner. Each has a story to tell that could lift the heart, even bring a tear to the eye. The same is true, no doubt, of the 6,250 supporters who travelled in a convoy of 160 coaches to watch their club make history at Wembley on Saturday. And for thousands of others not able to make that trip but who, wherever they were, whooped as joyously as the giddy players did as they lifted

a trophy that had been eluding the club for 137 years. The FA Cup does not mean much any more? Leicester say that ain't so. "I know how much this means to fans, I've been a Leicester fan since I was born," said Luke Thomas. The 19-year-old defender made his debut in July and scored his first Premier League goal in Tuesday's win at Manchester United but had never played a senior match in front of spectators until helping Leicester beat Chelsea in the FA Cup final. "If you had asked me a year ago, I'd have said, 'What are you on about, mate?'" At 37, found the latest twist in an ex-

traordinary career difficult to credit. The man who captained Leicester to their preposterous title triumph in 2016 spent most of this season in the background, encouraging younger teammates while trying to hold his body together. He had not played since December and did not imagine being included in the squad for the final. But Brendan Rodgers, who has improvised smartly all season in the face of injuries, knew the gnarled centre-back might be needed. Jonny Evans was forced to depart the game early with the injury he had been battling all week and, after Chelsea sent on Olivier Giroud with eight

minutes to go, Rodgers turned to Morgan to help his team over the line. "Did it really happen? I'm just in shock," said Morgan. "Forty-eight hours before the final I didn't think this would happen. I wasn't sure if I was going to make the squad. The gaffer asked me if I could make it on the bench and I said if I'm needed for the last 10 minutes, I'll be available. The last thing I expected a week ago was to be playing again but I came on and now I've won an FA Cup." A glorious last hurrah for a stalwart whose contract expires in the summer? "I need to discuss it with the club but I don't think I've got too many more miles on the clock," said Morgan. Leicester's winning goal came courtesy of a player entering his prime, Youri Tielemans, and it ranked immediately as an all-time classic. "We knew what Youri was capable of," said Morgan. "Sitting on the bench I was thinking, 'Please just shoot'." The goal encapsulated Tielemans' qualities: awesome power, impeccably dispensed. He lashed the ball into the one part of the goal the world's most expensive goalkeeper could not reach. Tielemans does not always hit the ball so hard but is seldom anything other than precise. He is as happy to flick the ball two yards as he is to deposit a long curling pass at the feet of a striker or fire into the net himself. It all depends on what the situation demands. He has the intelligence to see the best option, the poise and skill to execute it. And Tielemans works tirelessly. Tracking back, tackling, intercepting. In the Premier League he has played more minutes this season than any other outfield Leicester player, and almost 500 more than any Chelsea midfielder. Morgan, Jamie Vardy, Kasper Schmeichel and Marc Albrighton are exemplary figureheads for Leicester, each now holding an FA Cup winner's medal to go with the league title they won with the club. Tielemans is the perfect flagbearer for what Leicester are becoming. He was hardly cheap but the club's record signing - bought for £40m in 2019 after impressing on loan - represents money well spent, talent cleverly cultivated. Richer clubs may woo him - and others such as Wesley Fofana, Wilfried Ndidi and James Maddison - but Tielemans now knows for sure there is no need to hurry off elsewhere. Players can achieve great things with Rodgers and Leicester.

Kobe 'laughing in heaven' as he is enshrined in Hall of Fame

London, May 17 : Vanessa Bryant took Michael Jordan's hand and walked down from the stage, a familiar chant breaking out throughout the arena as she made her way back to her seat. Kobe Bryant is in the Hall now, along with contemporaries Tim Duncan and Kevin Garnett, headliners of a group of nine who got their delayed and long-awaited enshrinement on Saturday night, more than a year after being announced as the Hall's Class of 2020. "I used to always avoid praising my husband in public because I felt like he got enough praise from his fans around the world and someone had to bring him back to reality," Vanessa Bryant said. "Right now, I'm sure he's laughing in heaven because I'm about to praise him in public for his accomplishments on one of the most public

ily, particularly his four daughters. "Thank you for being the best husband and father you could possibly be. Thank you for growing and learning from your own mistakes," she said. "Thank you for always trying to be better. Thank you for never giving up on us. Thank you for all of your hard work. Thank you for our family. Thank you for our daughters: Natalia, Gianna, Bianka and Capri. Thank you for working so tirelessly to provide for us and for giving us the most amazing life together. Thank you for waking up at 4am to train, for making it home to kiss me good morning and for dropping our girls off at school only to go to practice, come home and pick up our girls from school whenever you could." Thank you for never missing a birthday, a dance recital, a school



stages. I can see him now, arms folded, with a huge grin saying, 'Isn't this some shit?' He's still winning." Bryant died in January 2020 in a helicopter crash that also killed his daughter Gianna and seven others. Much of Vanessa Bryant's speech concentrated on his relationship with his fam-

awards show, show-and-tell or any games our daughters played in if your schedule permitted. Thank you for putting your love for our family first. Thank you for bringing so much joy to our lives and joy to people around the world. Thank you for inspiring us to be better than we were the day before. Thank you for teaching me, and all of us, to put someone else's joy before our own. "Thank you for being so selfless and loving with a heart of gold. Thank you for never taking yourself too seriously. Thank you for your sense of humor. Thank you for your wit. Thank you for never telling me no and always letting me have my way, most of the time. Thank you for being patient and easygoing. Thank you for letting me burst your bubble every chance I got. Thank you for graciously taking all my harsh comebacks. Thank you for dishing them back." Vanessa Bryant ended her speech by congratulating her husband. "All of your hard work and sacrifice has paid off," she said. "You once told me, if you're going to bet on someone, bet on yourself. I'm glad you bet on yourself, you overachiever. You did it. You're in the Hall of Fame now. You're a true champ." You're not just an MVP. You're an all-time great. I'm so proud of you. I love you forever and always, Kobe. Bean. Bryant." Bryant, Duncan and Garnett were joined in the class by three-time NCAA champion coach Kim Mulkey, two-time NBA champion coach Rudy Tomjanovich, four-time Olympic gold medalist Tamika Catchings, three-time Final Four coach Eddie Sutton, 1,000-game winner Barbara Stevens and longtime Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann.

Tokyo Olympics Japanese oppose hosting the Olympics this year



Tokyo, May 17 : More than 80% of Japanese oppose hosting the Olympics this year, a new poll published on Monday showed, with just under 10 weeks until the Tokyo Games. The latest survey comes after Japan expanded a coronavirus state of emergency Friday as the nation battles a fourth wave of virus infections. The surge has put pressure on the country's healthcare system, with medical professionals repeatedly warning about shortages and burnout. The weekend survey by the Asahi Shimbun daily found 43% of respondents want the

Games cancelled, and 40% want a further postponement. Those figures are up from 35% who backed cancellation in a survey by the paper a month ago, and 34% who wanted a further delay. Only 14% support holding the Games this summer as scheduled, down from 28%, according to the poll of 1,527 replies from 3,191 telephone calls. If the Games do go ahead, 59% of respondents said they want no spectators, with 33% backing lower fan numbers and 3% a regular capacity Games. For months, polling has found a majority in Japan oppose

holding the Games this summer. A separate poll by Kyodo News published Sunday showed 59.7% of respondents back cancellation, though further postponement was not listed as an option. Olympic organisers says tough anti-virus measures, including regular testing of athletes and a ban on overseas fans, will keep the Games safe. But the Kyodo poll found 87.7% of respondents worry that an influx of athletes and staff members from abroad may spread the virus. Japan has seen a smaller virus outbreak than many countries, with fewer than 11,500 deaths so far. But the government has come under pressure for a comparatively slow vaccine rollout. The

Kyodo poll found 85% of respondents considered the rollout slow, with 71.5 percent unhappy with the government's handling of the pandemic.

Rafael Nadal defeats Novak Djokovic to make it perfect 10 in Italian Open

London, May 17 : Rafael Nadal warmed up for the French Open with a battling 7-5, 1-6, 6-3 win over world No 1 Novak Djokovic as the Spaniard claimed a record-extending 10th Italian Open title in Rome on Sunday in the latest chapter of their rivalry. After a mid-match wobble, Nadal turned up the heat in the decisive moments of his 57th meeting with top seed Djokovic - the pair's ninth in Rome - to secure the victory over

the defending champion in two hours and 49 minutes. "I was lucky in some moments, especially against [Denis] Shapovalov," Nadal said, referring to the last-16 match he won in a tiebreak in the decider. "And then I think I played a good tournament, I have been playing better and better, finding my rhythm on clay. I had a very positive week and I'm very happy." It's amazing to have this trophy in my hands for the 10th time. It's something impossible

to imagine but it happened so I'm super happy and can't thank my team enough. "Nadal broke to go ahead 6-5 in a tight opening set and staved off a late comeback attempt from Djokovic to take the early advantage in the contest with a searing inside-out forehand that caught the Serbian off guard. But Djokovic, who lost to Nadal in their previous meeting in the Roland Garros final last year, pounced in the second set to race ahead 5-1 as the Spaniard's intensity dropped and quickly levelled the match. Second seed Nadal then saved two break points at 2-2 in the decider and fired an emphatic shot down the line to hold, before switching gears to complete the win and match Djokovic's record of 36 ATP Masters 1000 titles. Nadal will now target a 14th French Open crown when the grand slam begins on 30 May.



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