



The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Filmmaker Dara Ahmed died

Guwahati, May 24 : Assam's popular filmmaker Dara Ahmed passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati on Monday. He was 72 years at the time of his demise. The filmmaker was admitted to the city's Apollo Hospital on Sunday after he felt chest pain and breathed his last in the hospital on Monday morning. He was undergoing treatment in the ICU of the hospital. Dara Ahmed entered the filmmaking industry of Assam as an assistant director in the film 'Dr Bhabani' (1969), directed by Brajen Barua. After that Dara Ahmed directed a number of popular Assamese films. Some of the Assamese films, directed by Dara Ahmed include 'Rikshawala', 'Jakhini', 'Urbashi', 'Dhruvatar', 'Pooja' and 'Devi' (jointly with Sambhu Gupta). Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has expressed his deep condolence at the demise of Ahmed.

2 more Covid19 deaths

Guwahati, May 24 : The death toll climbed to 25 after the two patients died of Covid19 infection on Sunday. The deceased include a 36-year-old woman and a 51-year-old man, both residents of villages under the Chapar Revenue Circle of Dhubri district. A health official admitted that Covid19 cases are increasing fast in the district. He informed that the health department is paying more and more focus on detection of new cases as well as vaccinating the people. Meanwhile, 61 new positive cases have been detected in a span of 24 hours on Sunday. With the new 61 cases, the district has reported a total of 2,799 positive Covid19 cases so far. Of the total positive Covid19 cases, Dhubri district currently 1,201 active cases.

NGO to support Covid19 patients

Guwahati, May 24 : At the initiative of Dibrugarh deputy commissioner Pallav Gopal Jha, the Pratishruti Cancer and Palliative Trust, a Dibrugarh-based non-profit foundation has continued supporting Covid19 patients, who have preferred home isolation. Last year, Pratishruti Cancer and Palliative Trust had helped many Covid19 patients to recover in home isolation. This NGO launched a project in Kamrup Metro district in the first wave of Covid19 pandemic and helped many Covid19 patients during their stay in home isolation.

CBSE Class 12 board exams: What are the options before states, when a decision can be expected



New Delhi, May 24 : As thousands of students across the country eagerly await a decision on conducting the Class 12 board examinations, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has suggested two options for conducting the Class 12 board examinations amid

the COVID-19 pandemic during a high-level virtual meeting held on Sunday. During the high-level meeting, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the CBSE Board suggested two options - first, to hold regular exams for only the major 19 subjects at notified

centres. While the second option put forward by the board is to shorten the duration of the exam - to hold 90-minute exams at the school where students are already enrolled. During the meeting, most states said that they are in favour of holding the board examinations and agreed to explore the options suggested by the Board. After the crucial meeting, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said that there is a broad consensus among states about conducting Class 12 board exams and an 'informed, collaborative' decision. **Contd...Page 6**

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma addressed the Assembly

Akhil Gogoi "Mentally Unfit" To Attend Assembly Session: CM Sarma

GUWAHATI, May 24 : Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma addressed the Assembly on Monday. Here are the pointers from his speech: No communal violence in the past 5 years. We have laid the foundation of a new Assam. A peaceful Assam is the right of the next generation. Thankful to ULFA(I) for the release of Ritul Saikia. Shall make efforts to stop cow slaughter under provisions of Indian Constitution. MLA Akhil Gogoi brought comfortably to the Assembly by following full



COVID protocols. Govt. discriminates against none. Orunodoi scheme to speed up during June-July. Goal is to provide vaccination to over 3 crore citizens. Request to Paresh Baruah to join peace

talks. Assam shall be one of the top two states in terms of COVID recovery rate, mortality rate and disease burden rate. Construction of new bridge in Gohpur-Numaligarh. Focus on Agricultural sector for strengthening Assam's economy. Stern action against illegal encroachment of Satra land. We shall keep our promise to revise NRC. No imposition of tax on Petrol and diesel this year. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma seems to have made a controversial remark against **Contd...Page 6**

Narada case: CBI moves Supreme Court against house arrest of TMC leaders

KOLKATA, May 24 : The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has approached the Supreme Court against the Calcutta High Court's order directing house arrest for four Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders arrested by the central agency in connection with the Narada bribery case. According to reports, the probe agency has sought adjournment of the hearing of the Narada case in front of a larger bench of the high court, scheduled to be held on



Monday (May 24, 2021). The agency has filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) before the Supreme Court challenging the Calcutta High Court's order which allowed the house arrest of four Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders, who are accused in the Narada case. CBI moves Supreme

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Court against the Calcutta High Court order which allowed house arrest of 4 TMC leaders in Narada case, seeks adjournment of hearing today. The Calcutta High Court, in its order recently on May 21, had allowed four TMC leaders, including two sitting ministers, accused in the Narada case, to be granted bail, and to be kept under house arrest. The Calcutta High Court had referred the bail pleas of these four leaders to be heard by a five-judge bench after the split verdict was passed by the two-judge bench. The four politicians of West **Contd...Page 6**

CM inaugurates 28 new ICU beds in GMCH

200 ICU beds would be added in GMCH by June 15: CM



Guwahati, May 24: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today inaugurated 28 new ICU beds in GMCH apart from taking stock of Covid19 treatment facilities and

other aspects of the hospital. Talking to the newsmen on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that new ICU beds would greatly boost **Contd...Page 6**



219th death anniversary of Motok King Sarbandan Singha observed by Guwahati Motok Samalnani Committee on Monday

Technical reports on the deaths of 18 wild elephants in Assam cited lighting as the cause

Guwahati, May 24 : These, along with the forensic test report conducted by the state government, have ruled out poisoning, which was suspected by some as a probable cause of deaths. The final investigation report on the May 13 deaths at Kanduli Hills area of Nagaon district is expected in the next few days. "We received report of the histopathology tests conducted by the department of pathology, College of Veterinary Science, Assam Agricultural University (AAU), on Sunday. This more or less confirms lightning as cause of the death of the elephants," said Vasanthan,

divisional forest officer, Nagaon. The report prepared by Prof SM Tamuli and assistant professor A Deka mentions "lesions are suggestive of high voltage electrical burn injury" as the tentative diagnosis of the tests. "We examined the tissues and other materials provided by the forest department and found desquamation of the keratinized layer (peeling off of the external layer of the skin)," said Prof Tamuli. The report mentions "distortion and separation of intra epidermal tissues" and "separation of epidermal and dermal layers, highly dilated and congested blood vessels and severe

haemorrhage observed in the dermal papillae as well as in the sub-epidermal region". A preliminary technical report on incidents of lightning over and around the site where the elephants' bodies were found by North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) says that many lightning strikes took place in the area between 5.30am on May 12 to 5.30 am on May 13. "A large number of lightning strikes were reported around the area where the elephant bodies were found. The total number of lightning flashes reached 350 and CG (cloud to ground) flashes were 150 every 2 **Contd...Page 6**

Cyclone Yaas to intensify into Severe Cyclonic Storm in next 24 hours

IMD issues rainfall warning for West Bengal, Odisha and six other states

New Delhi, May 24 : The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday (May 24, 2021) morning said that Cyclone Yaas is going to intensify into a 'Severe Cyclonic Storm' in the next 24 hours and issued a rainfall warning for West Bengal and Odisha. "The Deep Depression over East-central Bay of Bengal remained practically stationary during past 6 hours, intensified into Cyclonic Storm 'Yaas' and lay centred at 0530 hrs IST of Monday over East-central Bay of Bengal near latitude 16.3°N and longitude 89.7°E, about 600 km north-northwest of Port Blair (Andaman Islands), 540 km south-southeast of Paradip (Odisha), 650 km south-southeast of Balasore (Odisha) and 630



km south southeast of Digha (West Bengal)," the IMD said in a bulletin at 8:30 AM. They added, "It is very likely to move slowly north-northwestwards, intensify further into a Severe Cyclonic Storm during next 24 hours and into a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm during subsequent 24 hours." As per the weather department, Cyclone Yaas would continue to move north-northwestwards, intensify

further and reach Northwest Bay of Bengal near north Odisha and West Bengal coasts by May 26 early morning. Subsequently, it is very likely to cross north Odisha-West Bengal coasts between Paradip and Sagar islands around noon of May 26 as a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm. West Bengal and Sikkim: The India Meteorological Department predicted light to moderate

rainfall at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall over Medinipur, South & North 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly districts on May 25. It also predicted extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places over Jhargram, Medinipur, North & South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Kolkata and heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places over Nadia, Bardhaman, Bankura, Purulia, Bhirbhum and heavy falls at isolated places over Murshidabad, Malda and Dakshin Dinajpur Districts on May 26. On May 27, heavy to very heavy rain is expected at isolated places in Malda and Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Sikkim and heavy rain at a few places over ankura, Purulia, **Contd...Page 6**

Covaxin's paediatric trials may begin in June, Bharat Biotech expects WHO approval by end of Q3 or Q4

New Delhi, May 24 : Dr Rakesh exuded confidence that vaccines for kids may get the license in the third quarter of this year. "We focused on developing the product last year. Now our focus is on ramping up our manufacturing capacity," Kids vaccine trials of Bharat Biotech may get the license in the third quarter of this year," he added. Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech is all set to begin paediatric trials of its Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin from June. The company's **Business**

Development and International Advocacy Head Dr Rakesh Ella said that the company expected approval from the World Health Organisation (WHO) for Covaxin by the end of the third or fourth quarter. About WHO approval, Dr Rakesh said that the company has initiated the process and may get its approval soon, adding "A few of our products in the past got their approval. We expect approval for Covaxin by the end of Q3 (quarter) or Q 4." Holding a **Contd...Page 6**



GRD Pharmaceuticals shows its commitment towards social responsibility

Contributed 12 lakh in Chief Minister's Relief Fund for covid Vaccination



Guwahati, May 24: Every vaccine counts! Keeping this in mind during covid pandemic GRD Pharmaceuticals, the leading company of the Northeast India have come forward and contributed an amount of 12 lakhs to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund on Saturday. Renowned social worker Sri Ashok Dhanuka and young industrialist Dr. Ghanshyam Dhanuka handed over the cheque of rupees 12 lakh to Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma at his office which will help Assam government in getting Covid vaccination for two thousand people. On this occasion, Mr. Dhanuka said that every single vaccine is valuable in this era of corona pandemic. In

such a situation, we are inspired by the appeal made by the Chief Minister Dr. Sarma recently, he today handed over a cheque of 12 lakh rupees to the Chief Minister for vaccination of 2000 persons. He said that in the same way if every person come forward voluntarily and donate to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund as per their wish, then the government will get help in giving vaccination free of cost to the people of the state. He said that our small contribution can not only save the lives of many people, but can also prevent many families from being shattered. On this occasion, Dr. Sarma thanked the grant given by GRD Pharmaceutical.

New SP institutes two separate special police squad teams to launch ops against drugs menace and other crimes in Nagaon district

NAGAON, May 23: Newly appointed Superintendent of Police, Nagaon IPS Anand Mishra has constituted two special squads in the district to uproot the drugs menace as well as various crimes. Narcotics squad and riders squad - these two special squads are active for round the clock in the district, additional superintendent of police (headquarters) Dhruva Bora said today while addressing a press conference held at Nagaon police reserve. ASP Bora said that during the last couple of days, the narcotics squad had launched a series of operations against drugs at various places in the district including Samaguri, Rupahihat, Dhing, Batadroba, Kampur and Nagaon town and arrested a dozen of drugs mafia

as well as retailers from various pockets. Besides, the squad was able to seize various forms of narcotics substance like suspected heroine, brown sugar, capsules and huge number of cough syrup bottles. Similarly, the riders squad also arrested one criminal named Dipankar along with fake gold boat from Bhuyanpatty area in the town, he said adding further that ongoing frequent operations would be continued simultaneously against drugs and other forms of crimes for long in the district until and unless the issues come under control. He however said that additional superintendent of police (border) Manash Saikia would supervise the riders squad while the narcotics squad would be supervised by SP himself.

Number of Positive Cases Slightly Decreased in Golaghat : 180 Got Discharged Today

Golaghat, May 24: Today only 77 persons were tested Covid positive in Golaghat. This number is much less than that of last few days. Also 180 patients got discharged today. But unfortunately today four persons lost their lives due to Covid in Golaghat. The deceased have been identified as Dipankar Konwar (46) from Uriamghat, Sarupathar, Diganta Tamuli (58) from Borchapori Tea Estate, Numaligarh, Momina Begum (45) from Chotojan, Kamarbandha and Dilip Sharma (62) from Chelengi Gaon, Golaghat. With these four deaths the death toll rises to 46 in the district.

Let's Paddle carry out a cycle rally



Biswanath Chariali, May 24: Let's Paddle, an NGO of Biswanath Chariali had carried out a cycle rally maintaining Covid protocol to create a mass awareness about Covid 19 on Sunday. The cycle rally was taken out from Madhupur Tiniali and marched towards Biswanath Ghat, Nabapur, Bargaon with an aim of creating mass awareness among villagers. The team members had handed over soaps, face masks through VDP secretaries of Biswanath Ghat, Nabapur and Bargaon asking them to distribute the same to the poor and needy people. The cycle rally was also attended by Snehankar Chakrawarti, Nihar Saikia, Raj Rishi Bhattacharya, Champak Sarma, Dhiraj Gupta and Sekhar Gupta along with others.

Strict action taken against illegal Dumper and Tractors by Rangia Administration



Rangia, May 25: A Joint team of Sub Divisional Administration, Police and Enforcement led by Rahul P. Gogoi, ACS, EO, RMB and EM, Rangia seized four dumpers/tractors carrying earth in an illegal manner without possessing any document and registration number. They

have been caught in the Bhutan Bus Stand Area on 24th May 2021. This joint team has been constituted by Swapneel Paul, SDO (Civil), Rangia for bringing into book the tractors and dumpers operating illegally within the town without any valid document.

CM Sarma assesses disaster mitigation plan before seasonal flood Asks DCs to complete fortification of all weak embankments and creation of task force

Guwahati, May 24: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma asked the Deputy Commissioners of all the districts to adopt the '3-R' strategy Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation to reach out to the people affected by flood. He also asked them to create 'Task Force' both at the district and circle level to assess the size and grant compensation to the flood affected victims. Taking to the Deputy Commissioners via video conference here today to assess preparedness of the districts to deal with seasonal flood, Chief Minister Sarma asked the DCs to pursue 'rescue, relief and rehabilitation' approach to help the flood affected people. He also asked the DCs to create task force at the district and circle level to assess the volume of damage perpetrated by flood and decide on the compensation to be given to the flood affected people. Asking the DCs to keep their district disaster management plan ready, Sarma asked them to set up relief camps in compliance to the COVID 19 protocols. He also asked the DCs to take the services of 'AAPADA Mitra' and 'Pratirodhi Bondhu' to serve the flood affected people. Assessing the condition of embankments across the state, Chief Minister Sarma asked Principal Secretary Revenue and Disaster Management Avinash Joshi to complete all pending works to fortify the embankments to mitigate the impact of flood. He also asked the department to prepare a robust evacuation plan. Chief Minister Sarma also asked the DCs to put up their dedicated front to deal with flood and take steps in favour of the people.

He also announced that all the districts would get Rs. 10 lakh each from Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Sarma asked the DCs to use the amount to meet unforeseen expenditure like helping the flood victims outside the ambit of flood manuals. Sarma also asked the DCs to ensure that adequate treatment facilities are put in place in the relief camps and doctors should remain present along with paramedics to meet the medical requirement of the flood victims. He also said that no revenue circles in the districts should remain vacant and therefore, asked the Principal Secretary Personnel to place officers in the vacant circles. With regards to Kaziranga and the brunt it bears because of seasonal flood, Chief Minister asked Deputy Commissioner Golaghat to prepare an ex-

haustive plan using technical and human intelligence for Kaziranga. He at the same time asked the Superintendents of Police of the districts bordering Kaziranga to maintain a constant vigil during flood to save the stray animals of the park from poaching. Health and Family Welfare Minister Keshab Mahanta, Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management Jogen Mohan, Political Secretary to the Chief Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah, DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, Principal Secretary to Health Anurag Goyal, Principal Secretary to Revenue Avinash Joshi, CEO ASDMA GD Tripathi and other senior officers of the government were present during the meeting.

Sachet and Parampara break all records with their original mix, Meera K Prabhu!
The 1 min long video set the internet on fire with millions of fans asking for the complete version!



Guwahati, May 24: Ever since the composer duo, Sachet and Parampara Tandon started making reels for Instagram, original mixes for their social media and even their daily banter, they have become a household name, and each asset has resulted in a viral effect. The song crossed 20 million views on Instagram in 7 days with over 20,000 reels making it an Online Sensation! Their latest original mix called "Meera K Prabhu," crossed over 20 million views in a span of 7 days. Not only this, over 20,000 reels were made on Instagram using this song, and the positive reviews and comments have been non stop since the song was uploaded. Sachet and Parampara have been busy compiling such songs, spending time with each other and keeping audiences thoroughly entertained through these trying times.

To Ensure Best Medical Care To Covid Patients, Biswanath Dc Makes Frequent Surprise Visits To Hospitals

Biswanath Chariali, 24 May: With the Chief Minister laying stress on late night visits to Covid hospitals, the Deputy Commissioner of Biswanath Mr. Pranab Kumar Sarmah has taken personal initiative in this regard and has been making surprise visits to various Covid hospitals of the district at odd hours and taking stock of situations therein. Other administrative officers too have been issued directives by the Deputy Commissioner to make regular such visits to hospitals. Recently, the Deputy Commissioner, along with the Superintendent of Police Mr. Ripul Das, made visit to at least five Covid hospitals from 3 am onwards. The first visit was made to Biswanath Chariali Civil Hospital where most of the Covid positive patients of the district are currently undergoing treatment. The DC interacted with the doctors on duty and enquired the condition of the patients and the medical support being extended to them. It was followed by surprise visits to Borgang Model Hospital, Kalabari Model Hospital, Covid Care Centre (CCC) at Chariduar and

Balichang Model Hospital. "As per the directive of our Chief Minister, we are making regular visits to Covid hospitals at late night and wee hours. Such visits create extra alertness among the doctors and medical staff and at the same time it's a great morale booster for them. I am hopeful these visits will surely help in curbing the fatality rate due to Covid-19," said Mr. Sarmah. With large number of Covid positive cases being reported from Tea Estates in Biswanath district, the Deputy Commissioner too has been making personal visits to them and taking stock of the situation. The administration is in constant touch with the managements of the tea gardens to keep a tab on the condition of patients admitted at CCCs within tea gardens and also regarding relief being extended to those inside containment zones. The administration is also ensuring that relief is being distributed on time in other containment as well as micro containment zones in the district so that hardships of residents inside them are minimized.

Illegal hand-sawn timbers seized at Karbi Anglong- Nagaon border area

NAGAON, May 24: Forest personnel from Salna range led by range officer Nepal Mandal, seized huge number of hand-sawn illegal timbers at Koinarbasti near Nagaon - Karbi Anglong district border last night. Sources claimed that the value of the seized timbers would be more than Rs

50,000.00. Forest personnel later brought all the seized timbers to the range office for further legal action, sources said adding that the timbers were being laid for transporting it to unknown destination when the patrolling staff from the range seized.

DC Reviews Covid-19 Related Activities with all Stakeholders



Aalo, May 24: The West Siang Deputy Commissioner Shri Moki Loyi conducted an elaborate meeting with HODS, NGOs, GWS, Sector and Market Committee to take stock of Covid-19 related issues and preparedness at Conference Hall of DC Office today. The DC exhorted all to work in a coordinated manner and keep all stakeholders in touch about the ongoing activities so that communication gap is not there. He assured to take up important issues put forth by the participants. The lockdown

situation too may arise if the surge touches 10 percent figure. The SP briefed on policing during this pandemic time and stressed on feedbacks on infected areas to keep vigil on SOPs in those areas. The DMO and DSO Surveillance spelt out the status of Covid-19 cases and vaccination in the district. The representatives from various organisations also stressed on various steps needed to control the diseases and expressed their concern due to sudden surge of Covid-19 cases to 8 percent.

COVID claims five persons in Nagaon district

NAGAON, May 24: Five more persons who were undergoing treatment in hospital died of COVID 19 in the district today while 156 fresh COVID positive cases were recorded, taking the total cumulative active COVID cases in the district to 3470. Including these five death cases, a total of 46 people have been died of COVID 19 in the district till filing of this report, sources added. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 27 were immediately admitted to Nagaon COVID hospital as well as other COVID Care Centres set up in the district while

the rest were put in home isolation. Meanwhile due to rapid spreading of infection of the virus, district administration has declared the worker line of Jagdamba Tea estate - Kalji Danga line under Kaliabor revenue circle and Laopani village under Raha revenue circle as containment zones today. Rapid Antigen Test was conducted on 1388 people on Sunday while RT-PCR test was conducted only on 21 swab samples, sources further added. Significantly, as per official statistics, no patients have been recovered from the virus today till filing of this report.

Black Day for Students Fraternity, noted teacher Biplob Acharjee is no more

Hojai, May 23: Noted Lecturer, Social Worker Biplob Acharjee (47) breathed his last at a GMCH in Guwahati on Sunday. Notably, he was undergoing treatment for deadly Covid-19 disease, since last few days at Nilbagan Covid Hospital in Hojai and was continuously recovering, but on Saturday night his conditions turned a bit critical, seeing his condition Doctors referred him to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital in Gauhati. but at last he lost the battle and succumb to the disease. Acharjee a resident of Kalibari in Hojai was very a popular and beloved face among his students and people from all the walks of life. He was well known for imparting Commerce education in a unique selfmade style, which was highly liked by his Students. He had a long teaching career of around 20 years, where thousands of students got commerce education under his able guidance. Even, he use to guide the Students of other streams. His friendly, benevolent, candid, compassionate attitude admired his Students alot. He was a sports lover too. He was the co-founder and Vice-Principal of a private junior College namely, Vivekananda Junior College in Hojai, he was also the Vice-President of



Nabakalpa High School's governing body. His relatives, friends and Students have deeply mourned on his untimely death. "He was a committed, soft-spoken teacher, who use to teach his students in a very cordial manner, his sudden demise is heart aching, it's a great loss for the students fraternity", said Tapan Kar, Principal, Sankardev Junior College. "Today we have lost a highly energetic, dynamic mentor for whom students where top priority, it's an irreparable loss," said Pijush Nandi, Associate Professor, Hojai Girls' College. Meanwhile, many students referred it as a black day for the commerce education in Hojai. Hundreds of condolence messages have poured in social media on his death, where students and his beloved ones have shared about their bondings with their teacher, who is no more. Many social organisations, colleges, teachers' students' fraternity and people of greater Hojai have prayed almighty for the eternal peace of the departed soul and for bestowing strength to the bereaved family members of Biplob Acharjee. His demise has casted a pall of gloom in the district. He have left behind his mother, wife, a eight years old daughter, brothers and a host of relatives.

Battery Thieves Apprehended

Golaghat, May 24: For the past couple of days complaints of stealing of batteries were reported in Golaghat. Batteries from different places where mobile phone towers of different mobile service providers were located have been stolen by thieves. Today in a major breakthrough a team of Golaghat police led by Deputy Superintendent of Police Madhujya Prasad Baruah and Officer in Charge of Golaghat Police Station Dipak Bora arrested three battery thieves and recovered stolen batteries from their possession. The arrested thieves have been identified as Chandan Das, Sofiul Hussain and Akoni Das.

Fewer, bigger, more intensive: EU vows to stem drastic loss of small farms

London, May 24 : The EU is to introduce sweeping reforms of farming subsidies this week to try to halt the decline of small farms and protect them from the intensification of agriculture fostered by decades of previous policies. Janusz Wojciechowski, the EU agriculture commissioner, said: "My intention is that this process of disappearing small farms should be stopped. The European food sector in the past was based on small farms, and it should be in the future as well." Analysis by the Guardian shows that the number of poultry and livestock farms alone in the EU, excluding Croatia, fell by 3.4m between 2005 and 2016, to 5.6m, the latest year for which comprehensive data is available. While poultry and livestock numbers increased over the period, the number of livestock farms declined sharply, showing that there has been a huge intensification of farming and that small farms have been lost. The total number of all types of farm in the EU fell during the same period from 14.5m to 10.3m. This intensification, with more livestock gathered into a smaller number of farms, many of them large-scale factory-type facilities, accelerated with the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP), which has dominated Europe's farming since its introduction in 1962. The biggest farmers benefit most from the subsidy system: about 80% of the €40bn (£34bn) direct payment subsidies go to just 20% of farmers. Wojciechowski admitted that previous versions of the CAP had produced vast upheaval. "The reason we lost 4m farms in the EU was a mistake in the CAP. The support was too much [geared] to industrial farming and not enough to small and medium farms," he said. Reforms to the CAP to be brought forward this week by the EU will include measures to encourage farmers to leave more space for wildlife, to adopt organic standards for livestock, to use less chemical fertiliser and pesticide, and to nurture healthy soils. Wojciechowski told the Guardian: "Protecting small and medium farms is a priority. It is not true that we need bigger and bigger farms for food security. Small farms can ensure food security for EU citizens." "e said small and medium farms could provide more than food, as well as environmental and health benefits: "There is an understanding among legislators, parliament and the EU council that we need to protect better our small and medium farms - it's very important for food security, and better for the environment, climate change and biodiversity." European

consumers would also feel the benefits, he said. "Exports are important, but we need to pay more attention to our own markets - high-quality goods from European farms to European markets. This is a big chance for European agriculture," he said. Animal welfare would also improve, he said, from a greater emphasis on short supply chains, which would reduce the long journeys across Europe for some live animals. He added: "Our intention is to increase organic food from 8% to 25% in the next decade, for instance. This will be especially good for small farms." These reforms may stop

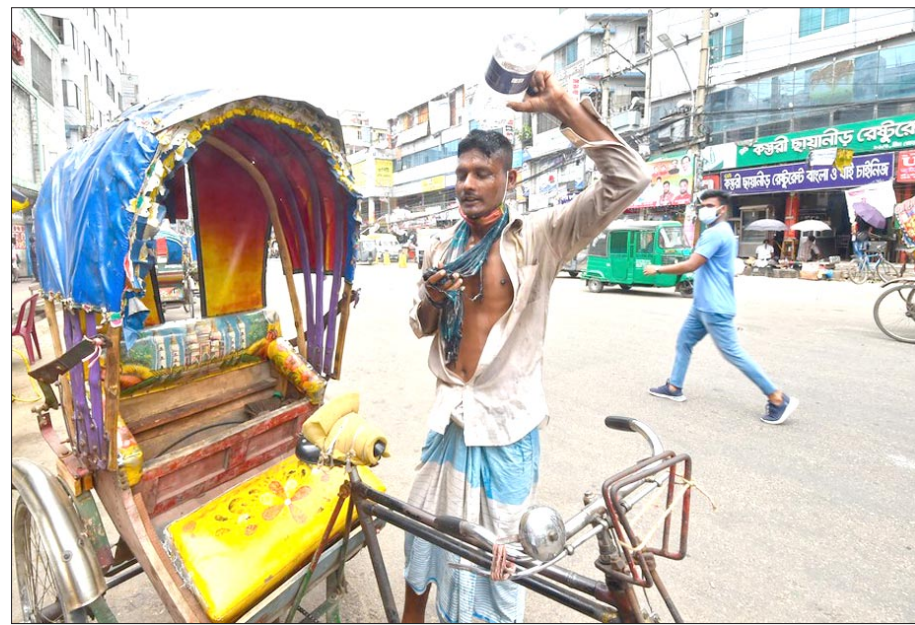


some of the haemorrhaging of small farms in the EU, but a return to small farms across the bloc looks increasingly unlikely. The Guardian's data analysis gives a glimpse of what has been far more than an economic transformation among small farms. In France, Germany and the Netherlands, more than a third of livestock and poultry holdings have disappeared since 2005. Nearly 120,000 poultry farms were lost in France between 2005 and 2016, and nearly 36,000 in Germany. The impact of the CAP can be clearly seen in the acceleration of the decline of small farms among newer EU states. Among longstanding EU member states, the decline in the number of small farms has been going on for decades. But eastern European farmers have had even more upheaval since 2004, when many joined: since 2005, Bulgaria has lost 72% of its livestock and poultry farms, Hungary 48%, Poland 54% and Slovakia 72%. In the UK, the decline over the 12-year period from 2005 to 2016 was 25%, with 45,500 livestock and poultry farms lost between 2005 and 2016. The loss was more than 110,000 from the 319,000 total of all farms in 1990. The CAP, forged in the aftermath of the second world war with the intention of promoting food self-sufficiency in Europe, has rewarded increasingly intensive and industrialised farming methods. Farmers were encouraged to produce more food

at any cost, using more chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and bringing livestock from small flocks and herds in fields into large-scale factory farms. Food production increased, but the environment suffered. The number of farmland birds in the EU has halved in three decades, according to the European Bird Census Council. Insect populations have also plummeted: numbers in Germany declined by three-quarters in the past 25 years, according to a study of protected areas, and butterfly numbers on farmed land in England fell by 58% between

2000 and 2009. Only a quarter of species in the EU have good conservation status, and 80% of key habitats are in poor or bad condition, according to Europe's environmental watchdog. Attempts in the past two decades to encourage nature-friendly farming methods, such as leaving

hedgerows intact and keeping field margins for wildflowers and wildlife, have had little impact, according to campaigners. Rural culture has also been transformed, with people flocking to cities, leaving rural areas to wealthy second-homers, with farms abandoned in less productive areas and swallowed up by huge agri-food businesses in others. "Niche producers offering sustainable farming practices survive haphazardly with the sale of their products to restaurants or small shops, or they sell their live animals outright. They're cut off from the dominant market," said Fabio Ciconte, director of the environmental organisation Terra. Campaigners have warned that the CAP deal to be announced this week is likely to be "greenwash" rather than a real transformation of EU farm policy into one that is good for small farmers and the environment. Céilia Nyssens, policy officer at the European Environmental Bureau NGO, said: "EU farm policy is a juggernaut of public spending that could be transforming agriculture towards a sustainable future and turning the tide on catastrophic nature loss. Sadly, it looks like the deal this week will continue driving the tractor in the wrong direction. A majority of funds will continue flowing to the biggest, most polluting farms, with barely any green strings attached. In this crucial decade for climate and biodiversity, the lack of ambition of the new farm policy is downright disastrous."



A rickshaw puller pours water on head during hot weather in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Myanmar: dozens of police reported killed in clashes with anti-coup movement

Yangon, May 24 : Dozens of Myanmar security force members were killed on Sunday, rebel fighters have claimed, after heavy fighting in the coup-hit country's eastern fringe. In one battle, the People's Defence Force (PDF) - a civilian anti-junta movement that fights back against security forces with homemade weapons - said at least 20 police died and a police station seized in Moebay town, Shan state. The police station was later burnt down and rebel fighters also took four security force members into custody, local media reported. Videos shared on social media showed what appeared to be the uniformed bodies of security forces and smoke pouring from the destroyed police post and a police vehicle. Other pictures showed four men who were said to be police with their hands behind their backs, blindfolded with surgical masks. The town is around 100km (60 miles) east of the capital Naypyidaw and lies near territory held by some of the ethnic armed groups

that have fought for greater autonomy for decades. PDF member Thet Wai told Agence France-Presse: "I thought today is a day of conquest. But I am also worried because we have seen airstrikes and tanks today. They have much better weapons than us." State television made no mention of the clash, and Reuters was unable to reach a junta spokesman for comment on the fighting. Myanmar has been in chaos since the February putsch that deposed Aung San Suu Kyi, with the military using lethal force to crack down on dissent. The civilian death toll has climbed to at least 815 people, according to a local monitoring group, spurring some to form groups that fight back. Aung San Suu Kyi is expected to appear in person in court on Monday for the first time, after weeks of delays to her legal case. Another civilian fighter said at least 13 soldiers had been killed on Sunday at Demoso, in Kayah state, and that four of his men had been wounded.

US joins global outcry at Belarus over seizure of blogger from Ryanair flight

Washington, May 24 : The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, has joined European leaders in condemning Belarus for forcing a Ryanair flight carrying an opposition activist to land in the Belarusian capital Minsk. European leaders - some of whom have already denounced the move to arrest blogger Roman Protasevich as an "act of state terror and kidnapping" - will meet on Monday to discuss what action could be taken against Belarus, for forcing the plane's diversion during its flight from Athens to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Latvia and Lithuania said the airspace over Belarus should be considered unsafe, with Latvia's foreign minister Edgars Rink?vi's saying it should be closed to all international flights. Lithuanian police said it had launched a pre-trial investigation into "forced disappearance". Dominic Raab, the UK foreign secretary, said: "We are coordinating with our allies. This outlandish action by Lukashenko will have serious implications." Roman Protasevich, a former editor of the influential Telegram channels Nexta and Nexta Live, was detained by police in Minsk after the Belarusian president, Alexander Lukashenko, ordered his military to scramble a Mig-29 fighter to meet the plane. Blinken said the US "strongly condemns the forced diversion of a flight between two EU member states and the subsequent removal and arrest of journalist Raman Pratasevich in Minsk. We demand his immediate release". "This shocking act perpetrated by the Lukashenka regime endangered the lives of more than 120 passengers, including US citizens," the statement said. "Initial reports suggesting the involvement of the Belarusian security services and the use of Belarusian

military aircraft to escort the plane are deeply concerning and require full investigation," he said. The plane was flying from Athens to Vilnius before it was diverted to Minsk in Belarus. The passenger plane flying from Greece to Lithuania on Sunday was forced to perform an emergency landing in Minsk after a suspected threat. According to online flight data, the plane was over



Belarusian airspace when it diverted course but was closer to Vilnius than Minsk. On its landing, authorities took Protasevich into custody. The 26-year-old journalist worked for Poland-based online news service Nexta, which broadcast footage of mass protests against Lukashenko last year via the Telegram messenger app at a time when it was hard for foreign media to do so. Protasevich is accused by Belarus authorities of organising mass riots and of inciting social hatred, allegations he denies. "I'm facing the death penalty here," a trembling Protasevich reportedly told a fellow passenger from the plane before he was led away by Belarusian police. The mass unrest charges against him carry a sentence of up to 15 years. His current whereabouts are unknown. Ursula von der Leyen, head of the EU's executive European Commission, tweeted that Protasevich must be released immediately and that those responsible for "the Ryanair hijacking must be sanctioned". Simon Coveney, foreign minister of Ireland, where Ryanair is based, welcomed von der Leyen's comments, adding: "EU inaction or indecision will be taken as weakness by Belarus." The European Council president, Charles Michel, condemned the plane's forced landing in the "strongest possible terms". "I call on Belarus authorities to immediately release the detained passenger and to fully guarantee his rights," Michel said, warning the incident would "not remain without consequences". Nato's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said the incident was "serious and dangerous" and required an international investigation. Tom Tugendhat, the chair of the UK foreign affairs select

committee, said: "If aircraft can be forced to the ground ... in order to punish the political opponents of tyrants, then journalists here in the UK, politicians anywhere in Europe will find it harder to speak out." Ryanair issued a statement on the incident, saying the plane was searched when it was forced to land in Minsk and "nothing untoward was found" onboard: "Ryanair has informed the responsible national and European security agencies, and we sincerely apologise to all affected passengers for this regrettable delay, which was outside Ryanair's control." The statement did not mention reports that a military jet had been scrambled to escort the jetliner or that a passenger from the flight had been detained during the stop in Minsk, sparking online criticism. Data from the flight radar 24.com website showed the plane was diverted just two minutes before it was due to cross into Lithuanian airspace. After seven hours on the ground, the plane took off and finally landed in Vilnius where Lithuanian prime minister Ingrida Simonyte was waiting to meet the passengers. "This is a completely unprecedented situation you have had to face," she told the passengers. Lukashenko's press service said on its Telegram channel that he had given the order to divert the flight and had ordered a Mig-29 fighter jet to accompany the plane. The EU has already sanctioned nearly 60 Belarusian officials, including Lukashenko and his son Victor, over accusations of elections fraud and then a heavy-handed crackdown on protesters that included widespread reports of brutal torture in Belarusian jails. Minsk has increasingly turned to Moscow for support, isolating it from the west but also limiting the effect of possible sanctions from Brussels or Washington.



A volunteer cleans ruins of destroyed buildings in the Gaza Strip

Pakistan: Bomb hits anti-Israel rally, killing multiple people

Islamabad, May 24 : The local leader of an Islamist party that organized one of Pakistan's many anti-Israel rallies is thought to have been the target of the bombing. Supporters of a Pakistani religious student group 'Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba' burn a representation of an Israeli flag during a demonstration. There were several anti-Israel rallies across Pakistan. At least six people died and at least 14 more were injured in a bomb blast at an anti-Israel protest in southwestern Pakistan on Friday. A religious group was rallying against Israel's campaign in Gaza. The

incident occurred in Chamman, a remote town in the province of Balochistan. The circumstances of the explosion were unclear; however, local authorities were investigating whether it originated from a motorbike bomb. No one has taken responsibility for the apparent attack. Local police chief Jafar Khan told Reuters that the blast had targeted the vehicle of the local leader of the hardline religious party that organized the rally. Local media reported that the man, JUI-Nazriyati Senior Vice President Maulana Abdul Qadir, was injured but quickly released from the hospital.

POST EXIT OFFER PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS OF DELTA IMPEX LIMITED

CIN: L51909AS1985PLC002339

Regd. Office: Kamakhya Umananda Bhawan, 1st Floor, A.T. Road, Guwahati - 781001 ; Tel: 9954236026; Email: deltaimpex1985@gmail.com; Website: www.deltaimpex.biz

This Exit Offer Public Announcement ("Exit Offer PA") is being issued, in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2009 as amended (the "Delisting Regulations") and as per the instructions of the Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited, by Mrs. Sunita Devi Jain, forming part of the Promoters/ Promoter Group (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Acquirer") of M/s. Delta Impex Limited (hereinafter referred to as the "Company" or "DIL"), to provide the remaining public shareholders ("Residual/ Remaining Public Shareholders") of DIL an exit opportunity. The Acquirer intends to acquire balance 61900 (Sixty One Thousand Nine Hundred) equity shares representing 11.48% of fully paid up equity share capital of the Company held by the Residual Public Shareholders.

Capitalized terms used but not defined in this Exit Offer PA shall have the same meaning assigned to them as in the Letter of Offer and Exit Offer Letter (As defined below).

1. INTIMATION OF DATE OF DELISTING:

1.1 Following the closure of the Delisting Offer and in accordance with the Delisting Regulations, the Company applied for the final delisting of its Equity Shares from Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited ("MSEI") i.e., the only Stock Exchange where the equity shares of the Company were listed.

1.2 MSEI, vide its letter no. MSE/IST/2021/398 dated April 06, 2021 has communicated that the equity shares of the Company will be delisted from Exchange records with effect from April 22, 2021.

DELISTING OF THE EQUITY SHARES OF THE COMPANY MEANS THAT THE EQUITY SHARES OF THE COMPANY CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE TRADED ON MSEI THEREAFTER.

2. OUTSTANDING EQUITY SHARES AFTER DELISTING:

In accordance with the Delisting Regulations, the remaining Public Shareholders of the Company who did not or were not able to tender their equity shares in Delisting process will be able to offer their equity shares to the Acquirer at the price of Rs. 4/- (Rupees Four Only) ("Delisting Offer Price") for a period of one year starting from the Date of Delisting i.e., from April 23, 2021 to April 22, 2022 ("Exit Period").

3. PAYMENT OF CONSIDERATION TO RESIDUAL SHAREHOLDERS:

Subject to any regulatory approvals as may be required, the Acquirer intends to make payments on monthly basis, within 15 days of the end of the relevant calendar month ("Monthly Payment Cycle"). The first Monthly Payment Cycle shall commence within 15 days from June 01, 2021 for Equity Shares tendered upto May 31, 2021. Payments will be made only to those shareholders who have validly tendered their equity shares. Please note that the Acquirer reserves the right to make payments earlier.

If the Public Shareholders have any query, they may contact the Company at the details appearing below:

- Contact Person: Manish Jain
- Email ID: deltaimpex1985@gmail.com
- Phone: +91 9954236026
- Address: Kamakhya Umananda Bhawan, 1st Floor, A. T. Road, Guwahati, Assam - 781001

Signed by the Acquirer: Sd/-
Sunita Devi Jain
Promoter Acquirer

Place: Guwahati
Dated: 24.05.2021

THE ASSAM RISING

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Projection under the implausible scenario

It's a myth that statisticians are obsessed with averages. We learn most from examining variability and the current concern with variants hammers home the importance of local data. Across the United Kingdom, confirmed cases of Covid-19 are stable, at 22 per 100,000 people in the week up to 17 May. Six local authorities recorded less than two cases per 100,000; while in Bolton there were 385 per 100,000, over 17 times the national rate. The excellent Public Health England dashboard provides even more granular data, down to the snappily named "middle-layer super output areas" (MSOAs) containing around 5,000 to 10,000 people. Three Bolton MSOAs had more than 1,000 per 100,000 (more than 1%) testing positive in that week, while other areas just a couple of miles away had fewer than 50 cases per 100,000. Much of this variation is likely due to the rise of the Indian variant B.1.617.2. Cases are concentrated in younger people, who are less vaccinated but more resilient; 84% of over-40s in Bolton have been vaccinated up to 16 May, using the National Immunisation Management System population numbers. This is like the England-wide average, but, again, masks local differences. The pattern of causation is complex, since similar factors, such as deprivation, ethnicity and multigenerational households, are linked to both the spread of the virus and vaccine uptake. Older white people hardly ever live with their grandchildren: of white households containing someone over 70, only 1.5% contain children and other adults, but this compares with 35% of Pakistani and 56% of Bangladeshi households that have someone over 70. As the national epidemic subsides, attention will move to local outbreaks, supporting intense local health responses such as extra testing and Bolton and elsewhere. It is vital that local data is publicly available and this is also true for economic statistics. There are now GDP measures in English regions to counter claims that national averages distract from local concerns - as one heckler in Newcastle notoriously put it: "That's your bloody GDP. Not ours." Statistics are for everyone and we all have a right to know what is going on around us. Perhaps the most famous piece of modelling came from Neil Ferguson's team at Imperial College London in March 2020, credited with provoking the full national lockdown. Unfortunately, there are repeated claims they estimated 510,000 deaths in Great Britain over two years, but that was a projection under the implausible scenario that nothing was done about the virus. Their model was, if anything, rather optimistic. Even short of a full lockdown, they projected maximum deaths in Great Britain of fewer than 50,000 and the actual total has been far higher. In July 2020, a "reasonable worst case scenario" predicted 85,000 UK Covid deaths up to 31 March 2021. This seemed pessimistic at the time but, in part due to the unforeseen "Kent" variant, the truth turned out to be rather worse than the "worst case", with about 95,000 deaths. In contrast, when a second lockdown was being contemplated in October 2020, there were leaked projections of a possible peak of 4,000 deaths a day. These outputs were not meant for release and had already been revised down. Can human predictions do better? In early April 2020, DS and his colleagues asked 140 UK experts and more than 2,000 non-experts for quantitative predictions. Experts gave a median estimate of 30,000 Covid deaths by the end of the year, whereas the non-experts said 20,000. The truth was around 75,000; this value was in only a third of the experts' prediction intervals and in only 10% of the non-experts'. People were both far too optimistic and confident, a common finding. In the words of statistician George Box, "all models are wrong, but some are useful". Epidemic models are always full of uncertainty. That uncertainty flows from their simplified structure, their assumptions and data inputs and the unpredictability of real life. Provided we view these models as tools for our understanding, they still can be useful.

Cameron's clever defence: that he can't do a proper job after leaving office either



Hauled before two select committees to answer for his Greensill lobbying role, David Cameron yesterday claimed his text to the Treasury mentioning a "rate cut" might in fact have meant to say "VAT cut". As the former prime minister put it: "I think I'm a victim of spellcheck here." A what now? Still, you'll have nothing but respect for this excuse, which is basically: "I fear that I, a standup guy, have been autocorrected into a complete chancer." And yet ... on which phone software does VAT autocorrect to rate? I'm afraid I found it rather difficult to watch this section of the hearings and not think: can you ducking believe this aunt? I say "this section of the hearings". In fact, Cameron's appearances provided if not an embarrassment of riches, then certainly an embarrassment of embarrassments. Though he declined to reveal either his vast Greensill salary, or precisely how many millions he made in 2019 when he sold just some of his shares, the audience was repeatedly invited to consider his plight. "There isn't really a roadmap for an ex-prime minister," Cameron lamented at one point, "particularly a young one ...". Seriously, dude, I'll give you a ducking roadmap. hilariously, Cameron had come ready-armed with a solution to the problem of himself. Namely, "a new special committee" to guide former holders of the highest office in the land through the moral maze of acquiring huge amounts of money. (But who would chair it? A former politician, I guess. George Osborne?) It does seem genuinely incredible that such a professed opponent of the nanny state should believe it is the state's job to provide some kind of aftercare facility to assist former prime ministers on their financial trolley-dashes. Politicians who are permanently telling ordinary people that they need to take personal responsibility are so often appalling at doing it themselves. Then again, I'm sure it's harder when

Marina Hyde

PRODUCTION UP 9,000 PER CENT

lowlights? "Just because a business goes into administration," said Cameron at one point, "it doesn't mean that everything was wrong, it doesn't mean the whole thing was necessarily a giant fraud." Oof. I enjoyed imagining Cameron's post-hearing debrief with his lawyer-appointed media trainer. "Jesus wept, David. You had one job - DON'T SAY 'GIANT FRAUD'." "But I said it doesn't mean it was a giant fraud." "Ooooooh, 'DOESN'T MEAN'! Do you think anyone is going to remember the words 'doesn't mean', you daft shepherd-hut plonker? Or do you think that thanks to you, every time they close their eyes and think of Greensill, the words lining their eyelids are going to be 'GIANT FRAUD'?" For all the excruciating theatrics of his Greensill inquisition, though, there is something slightly arse-about-it about Cameron being pulled up on his failure to understand what was hap-

The 'third way' may have worked for New Labour, but it is impossible now

For Labour, the future simply isn't what it used to be. Last week's election results have left the party even further from power than it was at the December 2019 general election. There is little indication that its leadership can identify a way forward. Worse still, the reaction to its first electoral defeat has been to reach for the familiar nostrums of the New Labour years. Peter Mandelson has been brought in to advise Keir Starmer's inner circle, and all indications are that a reprise of the third-way strategy is being touted to fill the current strategic vacuum. In moments of defeat, there is a tendency to look back at what has worked in the past and assume it could be repeated again in the future. The third-way approach of New Labour under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown was a political and economic strategy that brought remarkable electoral success over 20 years ago. It



rested on a strategy of "triangulation" - the deliberate distancing of centre-left parties from their leftwing base and politics, and the creation of a new centrist synthesis of left and right that sought

to transcend both categories. But far from representing the immutable truths of some enduring strategic playbook, the third way was peculiar to a particular moment in history, and it is fundamentally ill-suited to the world of the 2020s. Economically, this approach cannot be rerun because it depended on a very particular context - the "long boom" of the 1990s and early 2000s. The high growth of this period was the product of a unique set of circumstances, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the entry of the former Communist bloc into global markets at the same time as market reforms in China, creating a "great doubling" of the global workforce. This glut of cheap labour, alongside the liberalisation of trade and financial flows, the great wave of privatisation that fuelled the expansion of capital markets, and the rapid onset of financialisation and bidding up of asset values, gave rise to a synthetic boom. The third way was made possible in the context of this global economic boom that allowed policymakers to skim the surplus of economic growth to fund increases in social spending without fundamentally changing the distribution of wealth and power. But the approach was complicit with increased inequality, disinvestment, offshoring, deskilling, and the hollowing out of the industrial base. The great financial crisis of 2008, which definitively ended the long boom of the 1990s, exposed the inherent fragility of this economic model. Its social consequences are now written deeply into the regional economic inequalities that have become such an entrenched feature of British life. The economics of the current moment could hardly be more different or less propitious for a reprise of this strategy. Since the financial crisis, the global economy has been on life support; quantitative easing and asset-price inflation for the rich have been coupled with austerity for the poor. The decade that followed the crisis was marked by the slowest and most unequal economic recovery in living memory. By the close of 2019, just before the pandemic took hold, the global

economy had slowed to its most sluggish pace since the crash. Covid-19 has greatly increased these economic problems. As this public health emergency passes, we face a challenge of restarting - in some sectors, even rebuilding - a severely stressed economy, with inequalities of wealth, power and control greatly amplified. These are not conditions under which government can again just hope to "skim the surplus" of an extended boom. The original third way was developed in parallel on both sides of the Atlantic, and Blair was a careful student of Bill Clinton's emphasis on fiscal discipline, at a time when governments lived in fear of the "vigilantes" of the bond market. Today the economic and political environment is utterly different. Given the clear need for state-led investment to tackle risks such as the climate crisis and future pandemics, Joe Biden's new administration has thrown off such self-imposed constraints, and is making good on his promise that "we're not just going to tinker around the edges". While Biden is a veteran of the third-way politics of the 1990s, he has shifted his economic position in response to the demands of the moment, working constructively with the left of his party rather than marginalising it. His administration is charting a course of economic stimulus and large-scale public investment aimed at providing an ambitious response to overlapping crises. If the Democrats are showing that they are not stuck in the past, there is no reason why the Labour party should be either. Just as the third way is economically unsuited to the present moment, so too it is unrepeatable in political terms. The strategy involved cashing in credibility with a large part of the left's electoral constituency, a cheque that cannot be spent more than once. Political credit takes a long time to build and exists in finite supply. The idea that the left (and with it, the traditional heartlands of leftwing parties in industrial and post-industrial working-class communities) can be taken for granted because, to use Mandelson's words from 1999, they have "nowhere else to go", has been decisively disproven by the steady loss over decades of Labour's former electoral strongholds in the so-called "red wall". If Labour wants to rebuild a successful electoral coalition encompassing both the young metropolitan precariat and voters in the party's former northern strongholds, it has to offer something concrete and valuable in economic terms. The party can no longer rely on generational support built upon the interests of working people in unionised, industrial jobs that have now largely disappeared. Its loss of support in post-industrial areas did not begin with the 2019 election, but has been accelerating over a much longer period.

Once this violence in Israel and Gaza ends, there can be no return to 'normal'



If Groundhog Day were a horror movie, it would look like this. The deadly violence shaking the Middle East - Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, Hamas rocket attacks on Israel - seems to play out the same way, again and again, as if on some macabre repeat cycle. We saw it in 2009 and we saw it again in 2014. Each element is familiar: the lopsided death toll, Palestinian deaths outnumbering Israeli ones; the pictures of flattened buildings; the tears of the bereaved. And outside the region, the same armies of keyboard warriors, each parroting the talking points of their side, insistent that only their own pain counts, blind to the losses of the other. The violence that began at Jerusalem's ancient holy sites is driven by a distinctly modern zeal. It usually goes like this. The violence escalates, Israel moving from airstrikes to artillery fire to some kind of action on the ground. (Israel seems to be shifting through the gears faster this time.) The number of dead rises until, eventually, there is a ceasefire, brokered via the US and Egypt. Quiet returns, Hamas satisfied that it has asserted itself once more as the lead agent of Palestinian resistance,

Israel content that it has "mown the lawn", cutting back Hamas's military capacity. Things go back to normal - until the next time. That pattern is awful. The eruption of violence most obviously, given the agony and destruction it causes every time, but also the reversion to the status quo: that too is terrible, because it simply allows the wound of this conflict to fester until it reopens again, more

Jonathan Freedland

bloodily than before. If you're looking for evidence that the pattern might be different this time, there is a sign, but it is far from encouraging. If anything, it suggests this current episode might be even worse. That's because the war between Israelis and Palestinians has found a new front, not in the occupied territories, but inside Israel itself. This is what sets 2021 apart from 2014 or 2009: intercommunal violence in Israel's mixed cities, pitting Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel against each other on streets where they have lived side by side for decades. That violence is disturbing because it is intimate, neighbour against neighbour. It is the attempted lynching of an Arab man in Bat Yam, dragged out of a car to be beaten and kicked; it is the torching of at least five synagogues in Lod. Those scenes have shocked many Jewish Israelis who have long told themselves that their Arab fellow citizens are not like other Palestinians, that they do not have the same deep sense of national identity, that their prime goal is to enjoy economic parity with the

80% of Israelis who are Jewish. The current bloodshed shatters that consoling delusion. But it should not come as a surprise. For one thing, as the longtime analyst and sometime negotiator Hussein Agha observes, it is increasingly falling to the Arabs of Israel - "the Palestinians of 1948" as he calls them - to "carry the banner of traditional Palestinian nationalism". In his view, the lid has been kept on the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority; Gazans cannot move without running "into the wall of Hamas and Islamic Jihad", and the Palestinian diaspora in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon are too busy just getting by. That leaves the Arabs inside Israel. Besides, how exactly did Jewish Israelis expect Arab citizens, most of them Muslim, to react to the incendiary moves in Jerusalem and its holy sites that provoked this latest crisis? What did they think would happen, given the passage in 2018 of Benjamin Netanyahu's "nation state law", which spelled out that only Jews had the right to self-determination in Israel, and which stripped Arabic of its official status? And yet the pull to revert to the status quo will be powerful. You can see it in Joe Biden's transparent desire to say the bare minimum and return to the rest of his agenda. Watch The Human Factor, a riveting new documentary about past US attempts to broker a Palestinian-Israeli peace deal, and it's obvious why Biden would want to steer clear: it's a black hole that sucks in colossal amounts of energy, all for nothing. Agha suggests the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah is similarly "addicted" to the status quo. They too have concluded that no resolution of the conflict is possible; and so, for now, the current setup suits just fine, allowing them "to operate as a group with privileges", giving them status in the eyes of the UN, EU and US. The cyclical pattern certainly works for Netanyahu.

RIL, JSW Steel, Barbeque-Nation Hospitality stocks in focus



London, May 24: Nifty futures were trading 50 points or 0.33 per cent down at 15,176 on Singaporean Exchange, suggesting a negative opening for BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 on Monday. In the previous session, headline indices gained 2 per cent each. With fresh COVID-19 cases subsiding continuously in India, investors seem positive on supplanting of the restrictions by several states. Global economic revival, the risk of pickup in inflation and development on the Covid-19 front domestically would decide the market direction going ahead, said an analyst. "Technically, Nifty formed a strong Bullish candle on daily and weekly scale while has been forming higher top-higher bottom from the last three weeks. Now, it has to hold above 15050 zones to witness an up move towards 15300 then life time high of 15431 marks while on the downside support exists at 15000 and 14900 zones," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. India Cements, Ramco Cements: BSE-listed companies such as

Grasim Industries, India Cements, JK Paper, Mahanagar Gas, Barbeque-Nation Hospitality, Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Industries, India Cements Capital, JSW Holdings, Lakshmi Machine Works, Loyal Textile Mills, Pharmads Pharmaceuticals, Poly Medicure, Ramco Cements, Ramco Industries, Sparc Systems, Summit Securities, Tiaan Consumer, Tirupati Tyres, UTL Industries, and

Wall Street Finance, among others will announce January-March quarter earnings today. Infosys, Indian Oil, Adani Green, Bosch, stocks in focus. Infosys, Indian Oil, Adani Green, Bosch, HPCL, Biocon, JK Lakshmi Cement, Relaxo stocks in focus. SBI reported an 80 per cent surge in standalone net profit at Rs 6,450.75 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021, aided by a decline in bad loans. State Bank of India (SBI) had earned a profit of Rs 3,580.81 crore during the January-March period of 2019-20. Steel stocks: Domestic steel prices are at historical highs (HRC at Rs 66,000-67,000/t), despite demand being impacted as a result of local lockdowns across several states in view of the COVID-19 surge. Steel consumption at 6.72mt in Apr-21 was down 26% m-m (up 516% y-y) due to demand in key segments like auto and consumer durables being hit.

Top 12 Mutual Funds to invest in 2021 which can make you rich

Mumbai, May 24: Traditionally Indians have a habit of choosing investments that offer a fixed return and a guarantee on the safety of capital invested. On one hand, over the years, investors have gained confidence in Bank FD, Recurring Deposit, Post Office Savings Schemes, and other small saving schemes offered by the government as they have provided steady returns. But on the other hand, Mutual Funds, even though they don't carry a fixed return or capital protection, have been emerging as one of the best investment avenues even for new investors. Of late people have started realizing that at a certain level mutual funds give higher returns than any of the traditional investments. They now know the importance of diversification, professional management, strict regulation, better tax efficiency, etc. are more than enough to beat the short-term worries which are created due to market volatility. Owing to this the mutual fund industry in the country has seen stupendous growth especially over the last 10 years. As per the latest AMFI data released on 31st March 2021, the Indian MF industry has Rs 31.42 lakh crore AUM, 9.79 crore folios, and 3.73 crore active SIP accounts. The numbers have been increasing steadily. PGIM India Hybrid Equity Fund adds international equities to investment portfolio. MFs on buying spree for 2nd month in a row, infuse Rs 5,526 cr in equities in April. A common investor should prepare himself before deciding on investing money into mutual funds. He should be crystal clear about his investment objective, the period for which he can stay invested and also most importantly the risk-bearing capacity he has as an investor. Age, level of income, family-wise financial commitments etc. are a few factors that determine the risk tolerance level of an individual. Based on risk appetite, investors can be broadly classified into three. An aggressive investor is an individual who will be ready to continue staying invested in the market irrespective of its fluctuation. They are ready to remain in the market for a long time as they are confident that equity mutual funds are the best investment avenue for long term. A young salaried person with a good regular income having no financial commitments can be considered as an example of an aggressive investor. A moderate investor is an individual who is aware of market risk but is willing to accept a certain amount of market risk to seek higher long-term returns. They will be even ready to hold their investment for 3 to 5 years period. A middle-aged family man with a stable income and having long term financial objectives in life can be an example of a moderate investor. A conservative investor is an individual who wants his money to grow but does not want to risk his principle investment. They are happy to get returns which are just above the risk free instruments like bank FD. A person who is nearing his retirement or a retiree having many family commitments is considered a conservative investor. Ideally, an investor should first find out the category he belongs to and then develop a model portfolio by picking suitable schemes from the various mutual fund categories. Presence of



various schemes in the model portfolio will bring in diversification which is essential for mutual fund investment. Now, here are a few mutual fund schemes which performed well in tough times as well as during recovery in 2020 and could be considered for investment in the new financial year. Key ratios, rolling returns for different periods, consistency in performance, etc. are considered for the selection. Readers may please note that there many other performing schemes available in the market. Here we applied the above selection criteria and have handpicked a few of them. *Before you get in to various categories of equity schemes mentioned below, please have a basic idea about market capitalisation and how SEBI defines large cap, mid cap and small cap companies. In simple words, market capitalisation is the total market value of outstanding shares of a company. For example, Company A has 10 lakh shares in the market and the market value per share is Rs 50. Then the market capitalisation of the company would be 1000000*50 = Rs 5 crore. Based on size of market capitalisation, SEBI has classified the companies as Large cap, Mid cap and Small cap. Minimum investment in equity and equity related instruments of large-cap companies will be 80% of total assets. Rest is the fund manager's discretion. Large-cap segment includes big corporate giants of India. They are considered the safest equity bets and exhibit least volatility in share prices during market uncertainties. They are suitable for first time investors and those who hold conservative allocation in equities. Minimum investment in equity and equity related instruments of large-cap companies - 35% of total assets. Minimum investment in equity and equity related instruments of mid-cap stocks - 35% of total assets. The mid-cap exposure as well as the rest 30% discretionary portfolio will increase the risk reward ratio of the scheme above the pure large-cap. Medium to long term investors with better risk tolerance levels could select this scheme. In terms of risk as well as reward, this category is above large-cap and below multi cap. Minimum investment in equity and equity related instruments of mid cap companies - 65% of total assets. The 65% mid-cap exposure makes it riskier than Large caps. Hence one cannot rely on mid-caps for shorter-term goals. Investor may choose this category for long

term goals like retirement. Minimum investment in equity and equity related instruments of small cap companies - 65% of total assets. Small cap fund generally exhibits high risk-reward and hence used for long term goals. Short term volatility is an inherent nature of this category and should not affect your investment decisions unless you have achieved your investment target. Flexi cap funds to hold least 65% of their portfolio in equity and equity-related instruments. It will be an open-ended dynamic equity scheme investing across large-cap, mid-cap and small-cap stocks. Choose to invest in this fund looking at fund manager's credentials than looking at the portfolio because equity allocation across capitalisation can change any time. Balanced Advantage Funds are hybrid in nature, which means it is free to manage its exposure to equity and debt instruments without any caps or minimum exposure limits from the SEBI. Buy and sell decisions as well as portfolio constitution decisions happen according to pre-set models. Hence even though not high return yielding, the scheme tries to manage volatility effectively. As mentioned in the beginning, here we have tried to include some of the better performing schemes from prominent categories from the mutual fund industry. You can invest in the above mentioned schemes by preparing/ constructing your own portfolio which suits your age, investment objective and risk appetite. Ideally one should have higher debt allocation for short term goals and high equity allocation towards long term goals for best results.

Cipla launches Roche's Covid antibody cocktail in India for Rs 60k per dose

Mumbai, May 24: Swiss multinational drug firm Roche's antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) is now available in India, its marketing partner here Cipla said on Monday. The first batch of this therapy is now available, the firm said, and the second batch will be available by mid-June. "In total they can potentially benefit 200,000 patients as each of the 100,000 packs that will be available in India offer treatment for two patients," Cipla said. The price for each patient dose [a combined dose of 1200 mg (600 mg of Casirivimab and 600 mg of Imdevimab)] will be Rs 59,750 inclusive of all taxes. The maximum retail price for the multi-dose pack (each pack can treat two patients) is Rs 119,500 inclusive of all taxes, Cipla said. Cipla will distribute the product in India through leading hospitals and Covid treatment centres. The Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) had recently granted Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for the antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) in India. It has also received a EUA in the US and several EU countries. "Roche is deeply committed to supporting the ongoing efforts to combat the Covid-19 pan-

demic, mitigate the deadly second wave and save lives. We are optimistic that the availability of antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) in India can help in minimising hospitalisation, ease the

of hospitalisation and fatality by 70 percent and shortening the duration of symptoms by four days," the statement claimed. About the antibody cocktail The antibody cocktail can be procured against a valid



burden on healthcare systems and play a key role in treatment of high risk patients before their condition worsens," said V Simpson Emmanuel, MD and CEO, Roche Pharma India. The antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) is to be administered for the treatment of mild to moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in adults and pediatric patients (12 years of age or older, weighing at least 40 kg) who are confirmed to be infected with SARS-CoV2 and who are at high risk of developing severe Covid-19 disease and do not require oxygen. "It has been shown to help these high-risk patients before their condition worsens, reducing the risk

prescription Casirivimab and Imdevimab may only be administered in settings in which health care providers have immediate access to medications to treat an infusion reaction, such as anaphylaxis. The intravenous administration takes about 20 to 30 minutes. For the subcutaneous route, four syringes of 2.5 ml (2 each of Casirivimab & Imdevimab) need to be administered concurrently at four different sites on the abdomen or thigh. Patients should be monitored during the infusion and observed for at least one hour after the completion of the infusion and 15-30 minutes after the subcutaneous injection. Examples include: Cancer

treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, HIV (if poorly controlled or evidence of AIDS), sickle cell anaemia, thalassemia, and prolonged use of immune-weakening medications. Each pack of antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) contains one vial of Casirivimab and one vial of Imdevimab totaling 2400 mg of the antibody cocktail. Each pack can treat two patients as the dosage per patient is a combined dose of 1200 mg (600 mg of Casirivimab and 600 mg of Imdevimab) administered by intravenous infusion or subcutaneous route. The vials need to be stored at 2°C to 8°C. If opened for the first patients' dose, a vial can be used for the second patients' dose within 48 hours if stored at 2°C to 8°C. Casirivimab and Imdevimab are human immunoglobulin G-1 (IgG1) monoclonal antibodies produced by recombinant DNA technology in the lab. Monoclonal antibodies are proteins that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off harmful pathogens such as viruses. Casirivimab and Imdevimab are monoclonal antibodies that are specifically directed against the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, designed to block the virus' attachment and entry into human cells. "Thanks to its specific engineering of two neutralising antibodies which bind to different parts of the virus spike, the Casirivimab and Imdevimab cocktail remains efficacious against widest spread variants and reduces the risk of losing its neutralisation potency against new emerging variants," Cipla claimed.

Make in India? Half of manufacturing jobs lost in five years

Mumbai, May 24: According to an analysis by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) based on the CMIE monthly time-series of employment by industry, manufacturing employment in 2020-21 was nearly half of what it was five years ago. Among the service sectors, non-financial services, the largest component among service industries, the employment rose over the five-year horizon to 119.7 million to 127.7 million in 2020-21, but there was a sharp y-o-y decline in 2020-21, owing to the pandemic. While the employment scenario in the country has turned bleaker of late due to the pandemic after a brief spell of moderate recovery from the fathoms hit in May 2020, manufacturing, which has ostensibly received a lot of policy attention, has been losing out to other sectors and the most to agriculture as job creator over the past few years. According to an analysis by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) based on the CMIE monthly time-series of employment by industry, manufacturing employment in 2020-21 was nearly half of what it was five years ago. WTO's TRIPS Council to discuss revised proposal of IPR waiver to deal with COVID-19. GST Council may decide on IGST levy on oxygen concentrators imported for personal use on May 28. The decline was particularly sharper in 2020-21 owing to the pandemic - on a year-on-year basis, the sector employed 32% fewer people in 2020-21 over 2019-20. Real estate & construction also saw big fall in its share in employment in 2020-21 (see chart) and a secular decline over the five-years to 2020-21. While there has been a secular decline in manufacturing employ-

ment across all sub-sectors, except chemical industries, all sub-sectors registered a longer-term decline. From employing 51 million people in 2016-17, employment in manufacturing, which accounts for 17% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), declined by 46% to reach 27.3 million in 2020-21, reflecting the severity of the employment crisis caused by the pandemic. Similarly, the real estate and construction sector, which employed 69 million people in 2016-17, employed just 53.7 million in

ture now employs more people than five years ago. The agriculture sector that employed 145.6 million people in 2016-17, employed 151.8 million in 2020-21, allowing its share in employment to grow from 36% to 40% during the period. Employment in agriculture has been on the rise over the last two years with year-on-year growth rates of 1.7% in 2019-20 and 4.1% in 2020-21, indicating a marginal shift away from manufacturing, non-financial services, mining and real estate sectors to the traditional resort for



2020-21, down by a quarter. While the pandemic indeed accentuated the decline, the sector had even earlier been hit hard by inventory pile-up, delivery delays and developer delinquencies. The real estate sector had witnessed a sharp increase in employment growth in the 2004-2011 period, thanks to a boom. According to the CEDA-CMIE study which covered agriculture, mines, manufacturing, real estate and construction, financial services, non-financial services, and public administrative services, sectors that account for 99% of total employment in the country, agricul-

livelihood. Among the service sectors, non-financial services, the largest component among service industries, the employment rose over the five-year horizon to 119.7 million to 127.7 million in 2020-21, but there was a sharp y-o-y decline in 2020-21, owing to the pandemic. As reported by FE recently, like the one a year ago, the recent lockdown also has had an immediate, telling effect on the employment scenario in the country. The country's unemployment rate, that has remained elevated for a few weeks, soared to a near one-year-high of 14.45% in the week ended May 16.

upGrad acquires video-enabled learning platform Impartus in Rs 150cr deal

Mumbai, May 24: Higher education startup upGrad has acquired video-enabled learning solutions platform Impartus and has committed over Rs 150 crore for the buyout and for investing in its growth. Post the acquisition, Impartus has been integrated into the upGrad ecosystem and rebranded as 'upGrad Campus'. upGrad Campus will target higher education institutions and college students with its learning tools and content, in an integrated solution. It is looking to close FY22 with Rs 85 crore in revenue, with the founders continuing to run the business independently. "Our M&A strategy is focused on creating a career ecosystem and in helping build the blocks for India to emerge as the teaching capital of the world. Aligned with our vision, upGrad

Campus will bolster our presence in the university education space and help the youth of Bharat



learn the necessary skillset to become more employable and join the workforce as leaders of tomorrow," said Ronnie Screwvala, chairman & co-founder, upGrad. upGrad has set aside a corpus of Rs 350-500 crore for the acquisition and growth of its inorganic bets this year. Short-form courses, study abroad and career counselling are some of the areas it is focusing on for expansion. The startup had last year (in December) acquired recruitment and staffing solutions company Rekrut India. The acquisition is said to have brought upGrad a network of over 100 recruiting experts who work closely with many corporates, micro, small & medium enterprises, as well as large enterprises.

Contd. From Page 1

CBSE Class 12 board exams

will be taken by June 1. However, states like Maharashtra said that the 'non-examination route' for CBSE Class 12 students should be actively examined and Delhi and Kerala governments suggested vaccinating students before the exams. The Education Ministry has sought detailed suggestions from states by May 25. Sources claimed that a majority of states were in favour of the second option while some wanted a mix of both options. The CBSE has already cancelled Class 10 board exams and announced an alternative marking policy. The April and May edition of the engineering entrance exam JEE-Mains were also postponed. The board exams, which are usually conducted in February-March every year, were scheduled to be held from May 4. According to sources, the first option proposed by the CBSE Board was conducting exams at designated centres for 19 major subjects. For minor subjects, assessment can be based on performance in major subjects. This can be done if three months of time period is clearly and safely available to the board. August could be a likely month for holding the exams and the whole process is likely to go on till September end. Elaborating on the second option, the exams can be conducted twice by the board depending upon the conducive situation. If a student is not able to appear due to any COVID related matter, he or she will be provided with another opportunity to sit for exams. The exams will be of 90 minutes duration instead of three hours and will be conducted in the same schools where students are enrolled. The questions will be objective and very short answer type. Students will have to appear in one language and three elective subjects. The tentative timeline for this option is the first phase of exams from July 15 to August 1 and the second phase from August 8-26. Exams can also be conducted on Sundays; it was also proposed by the Board. It may be noted that a large section of students and parents have been demanding cancellation of board exams. The hashtag cancelboardexams also trended on Twitter as the meeting was underway.

Delhi

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said his government is not in favour of the options being explored by CBSE to conduct the exams and going ahead with the process without vaccinating students will prove to be a big mistake.

Maharashtra Maharashtra Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said the option for the 'non-examination route' for class 12 students should be actively examined keeping in mind the projection that children are more vulnerable to new strains of coronavirus.

Tamil Nadu

The Tamil Nadu government proposed conducting the exams after the COVID-19 situation subsides in the state. "Like other states, Tamil Nadu also wanted to conduct the Class 12 board exams as it plays an important role in deciding students' career," school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi told reporters after the meeting. Karnataka Karnataka state primary and secondary education minister S Suresh Kumar said it's important to conduct class 12 exams in the interest of students.

Odisha

Odisha Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said the exams can either be conducted after the situation improves or can be cut short. "State is also busy in preparation for ensuing cyclones, we will make a decision soon," he said.

Punjab

Punjab Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla said that during difficult times, the safety and security of students and teachers must be the priority of the government and every possible step should be taken in this regard. The minister suggested conducting exams of only three elective subjects.

Goa

The Goa government cancelled Class 10 exams and said that a decision on Class 12 exams would be taken in the next two days. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant confirmed that the decision has been taken to cancel the 10th standard (Secondary School Certificate) examinations due to the pandemic situation.

Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma has suggested that the exams can be conducted in the month of July if there is a significant decline in the coronavirus cases. Sharma also expressed confidence that the results of the CBSE Class 12 board exams can also be declared in a month time if the COVID-19 situation improves by July. The UP Deputy CM made these remarks during a virtual meeting that was convened to decide on the Class 12 board exams and subsequent entrance examinations that were postponed due to the second wave of COVID-19. When a decision can be expected? After the deliberations on Sunday, the Union Education Minister said, "The meeting was extremely fruitful as we received immensely valuable suggestions. I have requested the state governments to send me their detailed suggestions by May 25. I am confident we will be able to arrive at an informed, collaborative decision regarding the exams and remove the uncertainty among students' and parents' minds by informing them of our final decision at the earliest." "I want to reiterate that both students' and teachers' safety, security, and future are supremely important to us. While a broad consensus was there among the states and UTs about conducting the exams, they have been asked to examine the matter further and send their feedback," he added. The minister said the decision will be taken by June 1. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh chaired the crucial meeting which was convened to decide on the Class 12 board exams and subsequent entrance examinations that were postponed due to the second wave of COVID-19. Union ministers Smriti Irani, Prakash Javadekar and Sanjay Dhotre also attended the meeting, besides education ministers and secretaries of several states and union territories.

Narada case: CBI moves Supreme

Bengal accused in the case are two sitting ministers of Mamata Banerjee-led government -- Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee -- and TMC legislators -- Madan Mitra and former MLA Sovan Chatterjee. According to the case, the sting operation was conducted by one Narada News in West Bengal, showing around 12 then TMC ministers, leaders and an IPS officer were allegedly caught accepting bribes. The sting operations tapes were released in the case to expose the accused persons before the 2016 West Bengal Assembly elections. The Calcutta High Court had, in 2017 in its order, directed a preliminary investigation to be conducted by the CBI in the case. The Calcutta High Court passed this order after going through a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking a thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the Narada tapes sting operation case. Last week, four TMC Ministers Firhad Hakim, Subrata Mukherjee, MLA Madan Mitra and Former Mayor Sovan Chatterjee were arrested by CBI in the Narada scam. The Narada sting operation was conducted by Narada news founder Mathew Samuel for over two years in West Bengal. Conducted allegedly in 2014 for the news magazine Tehelka, it was published on a private news website Narada News months before the 2016 West Bengal Assembly elections. The case is related to a sting operation, commonly known as Narada Sting Operation, in which these former public servants were caught on camera while receiving illegal gratification from the Sting Operator, Samuel.

Cyclone Yaas to intensify into

Bardhaman, Bhubaneswar and Murshidabad. Odisha: The IMD predicted light to moderate rainfall at many places with heavy falls at isolated places over South Coastal Odisha on May 24, heavy to very heavy rainfall in the north coastal districts on May 25, heavy to very heavy rains at a few places with extremely heavy falls in Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Mayurbhanj and heavy to very heavy falls at a few places in Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Jajpur, Keonjhar on May 26. On May 27, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated places in north interior Odisha. Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely over the south coastal districts of Odisha on May 25 and May 26. North Coastal Andhra Pradesh: The IMD also predicted light to moderate rainfall at many places with heavy falls at isolated places on May 24 and heavy to very heavy falls at isolated places on May 25 and May 26. Jharkhand: The IMD said that light to moderate rainfall will occur at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Jharkhand and extremely heavy rainfall over southeast Jharkhand on May 26 and May 27. Bihar: As per IMD, light to moderate rainfall will be seen at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Bihar on May 27. Assam and Meghalaya: The IMD stated that light to moderate rainfall will take place at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya on May 26 and May 27.

Covaxin's paediatric trials may

conversation with members of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Hyderabad on "All About Vaccines", Dr Raches Ella is quoted by ANI as saying, "I am happy that our hard work is paying off well as the vaccine is working well and saving lives. We have this good feeling when we go back home from work each day. We will be soon ramping up our manufacturing capacity to 700 million doses by the end of this year." Dr Raches Ella further said, "We are happy to have the full support of the government because of which we are able to stand where we are today in this journey. The vaccine is co-developed by us and ICMR. The Government placed an advanced purchase order of Rs 1,500 crores. This will help us to increase our risk appetite. That is why we are expanding to Bangalore and Gujarat." The young executive of Bharath Biotech exuded confidence that vaccines for kids may get the license in the third quarter of this year, adding "We focused on developing the product last year. Now our focus is on ramping up our manufacturing capacity. Kids vaccine trials of Bharath Biotech may get the license in the third quarter of this year." Ella also said that Bharat Biotech will be ramping up the manufacturing capacity of Covaxin to 700 million doses by the end of this year. Welcoming the gathering Uma Chigurupati, chairperson of FLO Hyderabad described the COVID-19 as a global health crisis. She said that India is the worst hit and we surpassed Brazil. And many of us have many concerns and vaccines seem to be the only hope, adding "Let's find answers to our doubts and dilemmas." Interacting with Dr. Pragnya Chigurupati, Consultant--Breast Oncology and Oncoplastic Surgeon who moderated the talk, Dr Raches said if you inject the purest form of water into anybody it is likely to generate few reactions, adding "It is the biological nature of the body. If it doesn't then there is a problem with your body. Whenever any foreign body enters our body a good body should react. The same is the case with vaccines. That is why we have side effects." Dr Raches dispelled various myths about vaccine hesitancy. And he said COVID vaccines are safe and everyone should take vaccines. When asked why we still get Corona even after taking the first dose, Dr Raches said that the first dose gives you partial efficacy, adding that is because your immune system takes time to develop. It is a biological process and the system needs some time. "The severity of the COVID effect will be a lot less after the second dose, he explained. Right now pregnant and lactating mothers, special population, and kids are not allowed to be given vaccines. Once separate clinical trials are done on these groups and proved effective those groups may be allowed to take a jab, he said, adding "Women in menstruation and conceiving are most welcome to take jabs." Dr Raches ridiculed half-knowledge and misinformation spreading on WhatsApp. Please cut down your time on WhatsApp as it is spreading a lot of misleading information and trust only such information that comes out from a trusted source, he said. Speaking about herd immunity Dr Raches said, "If the majority of the population are inoculated the virus does not spread and that is when we will achieve herd immunity. When asked about cross-matching of different vaccines he said as of now no mix and match. The studies are on. If proved well, then we can take a call in the future." Speaking on distribution he said that right now we are allowed to sell vaccines to the Union government, the state governments, and Private Hospitals in the ratio of 70:20 and 10. If any corporates plan to inoculate their staff, they may collaborate with private hospitals, explained Dr. Raches.

CM inaugurates 28 new ICU beds

the treatment facilities for Covid patients and said these ICUs can also be used for treatment of non Covid critical patients. On Sunday, 10 extra ICU beds were added in Covid Hospital at Kalapahar and in two days a total of 38 ICU beds were added in both these hospitals, he informed. The Chief Minister also said that another 28 ICU beds would be added in GMCH in the next few days along with 10 more in Kalapahar Hospital while a total of 200 such beds would be added in GMCH by June 15. He thanked GMCH authorities, PWD and NHM Assam for completing the project in such a short time. He said that no one had to be rejected ICU beds till now in three facilities of GMCH, MMCH and Kalapahar Covid Hospital in the city. He also thanked the Health Department for executing the difficult task of conducting Covid tests on 1 lakh people daily in the state. Saying that the coming down of positivity rate to 5.68 in the state is a very welcome sign, Dr. Sarma stated that everyone must keep observing maximum precaution as the death rate is not decreasing with new dangers like black and white fungus etc. The Chief Minister also said that he would hold a meeting with Health Department tomorrow about the reportedly imminent third wave of Covid-19 and its effect on children. Health Minister Keshab Mahanta, Political Secretary to the Chief Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, Principal Secretary of Health Department Anurag Goel, Principal GMCH Dr. Achyut Baishya were also present on the occasion among others.

Technical reports on the deaths of 18

hours. That is a clear indication of the high flash rate over the area and its severity," the report mentions. Officials said the report of the forensic tests conducted at the Assam government laboratory in Guwahati has also ruled out poisoning as the likely cause of the deaths.

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta

Rajiv Dal chief and Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi during the final Assembly session today (Monday). CM Sarma claimed that Akhil Gogoi is "mentally unfit" to attend the Assembly session and is undergoing treatment for the same since four months at Gauhati Medical College Hospital (GMCH). "Akhil Gogoi has been undergoing treatment at GMCH since four months due to his mental and psychological issues. How can a person like him be allowed to attend the Assembly session?", CM Sarma said while replying to the discussion on Governor Jagdish Mukhi's speech. CM Sarma further alleged that Gogoi has flouted all COVID norms as he has been meeting everyone at the Assembly on the first day itself. He added that it was a "sign of a psychological patient". CM Sarma also refuted the previous statement made over the transportation for Akhil Gogoi for his travel to the Assembly from GMCH on Friday, saying that it was the responsibility of the government to bring him in the Assembly by maintaining proper COVID safety protocols. Earlier on Friday, the newly-elected MLA alleged misbehavior on part of the police while being escorted to the Assam Assembly for his swearing-in. He alleged that the police have flouted COVID-19 protocols. "I have been insulted inside the assembly. I was dragged in the middle of the ongoing assembly session. My words cannot be discarded by anyone. I am an Assamese, I will always speak my point and leave," he stated. "Democracy has been murdered, this is fascism. The police opted for violence instead of a peaceful interrogation," he added. 90 MLAs were sworn-in on that day while the other MLAs took oath on Saturday as the session began with 50 percent attendance keeping in mind the COVID-19 protocols.

Seven more people succumb to novel corona virus in Nagaon dist

NAGAON, May 24: Seven more people have died of COVID 19 here today including these seven death cases, a total of 53 people have died of COVID 19 in the district during the second wave of the virus till filing of this report. Besides, 419 fresh positive cases were recorded today, taking the total cumulative active COVID positive cases in the district to 3882, sources added. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 88 were admitted in COVID hospital as well as in the COVID Care Centres set up at various places in the district while the rest were put in home isolation. Significantly, rapid antigen test was conducted on 5541 people today while RT-PCR test was conducted on 43 swab samples, sources said adding further that no patient was reported to have recovered from the virus today till the time of filing of this report. On the other hand, Nagaon police picked up 21 Assam origin labourers who were able to escape from Jagiroad railway station without COVID test after arrival from Kerala on Sunday last. Sources claimed that Nagaon police intensified operation in search of them in religious minorities dominated areas of the district and were able to pick up 21 labourers from greater Juria area. Nagaon police will send all of them to Jagiroad police station for further legal action soon, sources further added. It is pertinent to mention that these labourers were being carried to Jagiroad railway station on Sunday from Kerala by Vivek Express and when the railway authority concerned made COVID test mandatory in the station itself, some of labourers created ruckus and fled from the scene.

Free Food Provided to Covid patients under Home Isolation

Golaghat, May 24: Under the aegis of Cuisine Chelengi, a family restaurant of Indian, Chinese and Italian food located at Chelengi area in Golaghat free food provided to the Covid effected people who are under Home Isolation in different places in Golaghat. The packaged, hygienic and healthy food have been given to the people who are under Home Isolation. Today on the very first day of this service total 30 Covid patients were given food. The proprietor of Cuisine Chelengi and student leader Biswajit Gogoi with the help of Golaghat District Student's Union President Simanta Jyoti Gogoi and Vice president Aakash Phukan. If any Covid positive patient who is under Home Isolation needs food then the proprietor of Cuisine Chelengi Biswajit Gogoi can be contacted on the number 7002795361. Such noble initiative of Cuisine Chelengi specially Biswajit Gogoi has been highly appreciated by all.

One More Covid Vaccination Centre in Golaghat

Golaghat, May 24: To prevent Covid pandemic by increasing number of Covid vaccination the Health Department in Golaghat has taken steps under which a new Covid vaccination centre was set up at the public hall of Brahmananda Dutta Rajohuwa Shiv Than located at Paanch Ali in Golaghat. Today in the new centre one hundred persons were vaccinated against deadly Covid. District administration, health department in association with the Managing Committee of Brahmananda Dutta Rajohuwa Shiv Than have started this additional Covid vaccination center.

Biswanath district AJYCP meets health director

Biswanath Chariali, May 24 : A delegation of Biswanath district committee of Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) had met the joint director of health services and superintendent of sub-divisional hospital of Biswanath Chariali on Monday and discussed various issues related to the health services in the district. During the discussion, the student body demanded for immediate installation of ventilation facilities, ICU's and other health care facilities. The team included Diganta Barua, Biswanath district secretary, Nihar Saikia and Biswajit Das, joint secretaries along with Arnab Bora.



216 Fresh Positive Cases, 2 Dead in Golaghat

Golaghat, May 24: Today newly 216 Covid positive cases were reported in Golaghat. At present the number of Active Cases of Covid in Golaghat is 1157. Today two persons succumbed to Covid. The deceased have been identified as Keshab Chetry (45) from Melamora, Golaghat died due to Covid at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital. Another person named Md Afel Haque (52) from Kumarpatty, Ward No 2 Golaghat was declared brought dead at Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital Golaghat. With these two deaths the death toll rises to 48 in the district. However 84 patients got discharged today.

Assam agitation leader passes away



Biswanath Chariali, May 24: Guru Prasad Goswami (73), a prominent leader of the Assam agitation who tested Covid positive last week breathed his last at TMC&H on Monday. He was jailed in the Tihar Jail during the historic Assam Movement who later shouldered the responsibility of Purvanchal Lok Parishad as a secretary. Late Goswami was closely associated with establishment of many educational institutions including Biswanath Commerce College, Little Star School. Later he joined the AGP, the regional political party of Assam. Goswami, a resident of Madhupur, Biswanath Chariali was closely associated with many other organizations of the greater Biswanath area. His demise was widely mourned by Biswanath district senior citizen's association, Biswanath district Journalist's Union, Biswanath Chariali Press Club, Biswanath AASU, AJYCP Biswanath etc. He was survived by his old mother, wife, two sons, a daughter along with a host of relatives.

Committee Formed for Monitoring Disposal of Covid Death Cases

Golaghat, May 24: In view of the surge of Covid 19 death in Golaghat district, special committees have been formed by the administration. These committees will look after proper disposal of Covid positive dead bodies following all Covid protocols. Total four such dead body disposal committees have been formed in four Revenue Circles namely Golaghat, Morongi Dergaon and Khumtai Revenue Circles. These committees will have senior officials from district administration and health department.

Alms distributed at Biswanath

Biswanath Chariali, May 24 : Manuhe Manuhababe, a trust of Biswanath Chariali had come forward with a noble mission of helping the poor and the needy people during the Covid pandemic on Sunday. A total of 150 family members living in the adjoining areas of Biswanath Chariali were handed over with some daily commodities. The alms distribution programme was also attended by Pratap Sarma, Diganta Mitra, Biswajit Das, Malay Ranjan Mahanta, Diganta Barua along with others.





Klopp hailed the inexperienced central defensive

London, May 24 : Jürgen Klopp said it was a massive achievement by Liverpool to come "from nowhere to the Champions League in five weeks" after his team sealed third place in the Premier League with victory over Crystal Palace in Roy Hodgson's final game in charge. Liverpool secured Champions League qualification with a fifth consecutive league win, their eighth in an unbeaten 10-game finish to the season, having been eighth in the table and 10 points behind Leicester following defeat by Fulham on 7 March. Klopp hailed the inexperienced central defensive duo of Nat Phillips and Rhys Williams as pivotal to the team's recovery but admitted he did not see it coming only a few weeks ago. "This is big," the Liverpool manager said. "If someone had told me five or six weeks ago that we would finish the season in third, I would have said it was impossible. It was absolutely out of reach. But the good thing this year is how we responded when we didn't feel good because too many things happened to us." The injuries followed us through the season. Even after a good 3-0 win at Burnley we go home and Rhys Williams needs a scan on his hamstring. He didn't train for the last three days but were lucky he could play today. "Today they [Williams and Phillips] both get cut and we had to fight through. How they played is absolutely incredible. The steps they made this year were on a different level. To fight through all this and finish third is the best lesson you could learn for life. From nowhere to the Champions League in five weeks is a massive achievement." Klopp confirmed Georginio Wijnaldum will leave Liverpool when his contract expires this summer, and the midfielder added: "I'm fighting against tears right now. The people in Liverpool have shown me love during the five years. I hope to have played many more years for the club but unfortunately things went different. I have to start a new adventure." The former England manager Hodgson admitted it felt "strange" to bring his top-flight coaching career to an end after 45 years. "It has been a whirlwind four or five days with so many fantastic moments," he said. "I've now got to come to terms with the fact my last game has been played and I'm pleased it was at Anfield, one of the temples of football."

Phil Mickelson wins US PGA Championship in triumph for the ages

London, May 24 : In front of howling, euphoric fans in this opulent corner of South Carolina, Phil Mickelson strode into the record books. At 50 years of age, Mickelson became the oldest major winner of all time. It was fitting that galleries, who pulled vehemently for Mickelson, were back in full force to witness the making of history. They mobbed the champion as he played his final hole. Nothing in golf's modern era will surpass Tiger Woods's 2019 Masters triumph but Mickelson has now run his old nemesis close. A second success at the US PGA Championship means Mickelson, whose career has regularly looked to be dwindling towards obscurity, has six major titles to his name. That total is only one shy of Arnold Palmer and Bobby Jones. Seve Ballesteros "only" won five. That Mickelson claimed the Wanamaker Trophy, eight years after taking delivery of major number five at Muirfield, belied his advancing years. This was glory for the ages, a sporting fairytale and a life lesson for 50-somethings everywhere. "I just believed that it was possible but yet everything was saying it wasn't," Mickelson said. "I hope that others find that inspiration. It might take a little extra work, a little bit harder effort to maintain physically or maintain the skills, but gosh, is it worth it in the end." I just love this game of golf. I love what I do and I love the challenge of competing against such great players. "Mickelson was already known as one of the best ever to play this ridiculous game but the tenacity he showed at a brutally tough Kiawah Island is worthy of immense praise. Some scoffed when Mickelson was handed a special exemption into next month's US Open. Who is laughing now? Brooks Koepka, Mickelson's Sunday playing partner, wilted badly en route to a 74. Mickelson's margin of victory - as if detail seemed to matter - was two, at six under par, from Koepka and Louis Oosthuizen, after a 73. Koepka's putting was not convincing throughout the tournament but regressed further on day four. Oosthuizen will shiver when recalling the Ocean Course's unlucky 13th hole. Twice in as many days, the South African found water



there. Mickelson's previous top 20 result was last August in Memphis, with even that a glaring exception to a tale of competitive woe. It was understandable, then, that onlookers expected him to fold under youthful pressure. Instead, Mickelson's ruthlessness forced his challengers into a series of errors. A day of epic drama was characterised within two holes. Mickelson, having started with one-stroke lead, trailed Koepka after a bogey against birdie at the 1st. Koepka encountered a horrible lie by the green at the 2nd, which triggered a double bogey. As Mickelson birdied, he now led by two. At the 5th, Mickelson delivered the kind of short game sorcery as has typified his career. From a greenside bunker, a glorious shot found the bottom of the cup for a birdie two. Koepka lurked until costly bogeys at 10 and 11, the former affording Mickelson a four-shot advantage. Oosthuizen had emerged as the key threat but Mickelson was in territory of only being able to throw this championship away. Oosthuizen found alligator-ridden waters with his approach to the 13th. No wonder he looked skywards. Mickelson had five shots to play with, meaning his ball trundling into water by virtue of a loose second to 13 needn't be altogether fateful. Another bogey, at the 14th, where Mickelson missed the green, cut the lead to three. Oosthuizen had hope; Koepka, who was by now four back, just about likewise. Mickelson just had to tick off the holes; he parred the 15th, birdied the

16th, bogeyed the penultimate hole and eased to par at the last. Koepka, to his credit, finished strongly. When Padraig Harrington chipped in for a birdie at the 14th, he was three under par and had an outside chance of an assault on the leaders. Europe's Ryder Cup captain was to bogey the 15th, halting his charge, but a tie for fourth further emphasised a major for old(er) men. Harrington turns 50 in August. There is no prospect, though, of playing duties when the USA sit in opposition at Whistling Straits later this year. "I'm well past that," said Harrington with a smile. "I'm too long in the tooth at this stage. I'm very much dedicated to being the captain. I'm letting other people have their time. I had mine and you can't do both. Nobody's ever going to be a Ryder Cup captain and a player at the same time." Shane Lowry, who played with Harrington on Sunday, matched his compatriot's aggregate, as did Harry Higgs and Paul Casey. Lowry was naturally full of praise for his partner. "He hasn't lost it, has he?" Lowry said. "He's still the ultra competitor. When he bombed a drive down 15, I was like, 'Wow, if Paddy can make one or two on the way in, he's got a good chance here.' God help those guys on the Senior Tour." Mickelson has previously wrestled with dedicating his professional time to the very same, a more placid, domain. Watching what transpired here only rendered that dilemma utterly absurd. Phil has thrilled, three weeks before he turns 51. This marks his finest hour.

They were eighth in March, many of the club's own supporters urging them to jack



Liverpool's second goal in the 2-0 home win over Crystal Palace. To fixate on Liverpool's and Chelsea's superior financial muscle is to view only a part of the broader picture. More accurately, it is the heady brew of money, pedigree, privilege and expectation, the muscle memory that reminds perennial contenders and plucky challengers alike of their true place in the world. How else to explain Kasper Schmeichel's injudicious decision to come for a cross with 15 minutes remaining and end up punching the ball into his own net? Until that moment Leicester were still

in the driving seat, 2-1 up against a poor Spurs side spearheaded by an unsmiling star striker who wants to leave and led by a manager who looks as if he has walked straight out of an advert for cryptocurrency. From that moment the day began to slip away from them. And as with Jamie Vardy's poor cross that allowed Gareth Bale to break away for Tottenham's third goal, Schmeichel's brain-fade underlined one of the keys to securing the big prizes: an ability to make the right decisions when it matters. Not that Chelsea were necessarily distinguishing themselves in this respect

either. As Traoré put Aston Villa ahead and ostentatiously refused to celebrate against his former club (albeit one for whom he played a total of 10 league games in four years and whose fans probably had to remind themselves who he was), one could feel Chelsea's composure melting away little by little. Mateo Kovacic, Jorginho and Timo Werner all flew into reckless challenges. Tuchel himself hardly gave off the air of a man in control of proceedings when he greeted the half-time whistle by legging it down the tunnel. And in a sense these sorts of situations have always been the Achilles heel of Tuchel teams, which are set up for rehearsed, immaculate control but often come unstuck in more fluid, chaotic games. It happened frequently in his final season at Borussia Dortmund, in Paris Saint-Germain's games against Marseille and Monaco earlier this season, in the 5-2 defeat against West Brom last month. Here it was most evident in César Azpilicueta's late red card for throwing an arm in the face of Jack Grealish: his first in seven years and a measure of how comprehensively Tuchel's team lost the plot. If Chelsea were fortunate here, then ultimately it was Leicester who were the real emotional fulcrum of the day: a team who for eight months had done a fine job of dressing and acting and talking like a Champions League team, only to find the cards stacked against them. Perhaps they will come back stronger next season. Or perhaps, in an age of cartels and financial polarisation, this was their best and last chance: a door that for all they heaved and shoved at it, was never truly open to them.

Max Verstappen wins Monaco Grand Prix to take world championship lead

London, May 24 : Max Verstappen's win at the Monaco Grand Prix is unlikely to have stirred the soul of Formula One fans. Yet from a broader perspective the Dutchman's victory from the front to the flag is the absolute tonic the title fight required. Mercedes and Lewis Hamilton, for once foundering, let slip what for so long has been an impregnable grip on both world championships. Verstappen revelled in his victory, the 23-year-old's first in Monaco, while Carlos Sainz was second for Ferrari and McLaren's Lando Norris a superb third, his first podium finish in the principality. Verstappen drove flawlessly, threading the needle on the streets of Monte Carlo for 78 laps with no hint of an error, while his Red Bull team were equally professional operationally. A win here is one that drivers covet over most others but in the context of this season it has even greater significance. Hamilton had gone into the race with a 14-point lead over Verstappen, every one hard fought after a bruising four meetings battling with the Dutchman. Now he must cope with an abrupt volte-face in the course of one afternoon in Monte Carlo. After suffering from a lack of grip and qualifying in seventh he could not improve in the race and was disappointed and frustrated with the Mercedes strategy whereby he finished in seventh, too. He did take the point for fastest lap

but Verstappen has taken the lead by four points in the drivers' championship, the first time he has led the title race in his seven years in F1. Worse still, with Mercedes having to retire Hamilton's teammate, Valtteri Bottas during a pitstop after a mechanical failure of the wheel nut meant they could not remove his right front wheel, they have also surrendered the lead in the constructors' championship by a single point to Red Bull. It is the first time since 2013 Red Bull have led both championships. You always want to win this grand prix. I remember when I was very little, you always want to win this one," he said. "So, of course, I'm very proud but I'm also thinking ahead. It is a very long season." He also believed he had answered Hamilton's pre-race barb that the Dutchman charged hard because he something to prove. "Actions always speak louder than words. That is a good lesson after this weekend," he said. "You have to talk on the track. That's what I like." Verstappen looks increasingly like the finished article now. Weaknesses early in his career, unforced errors and a tendency to overreach have been largely replaced by a control and maturity beyond his years. He knows if he is to challenge Hamilton he must perform at the same almost flawless capacity as the world champion and at Monaco he did exactly that. Hamilton endured a trying afternoon and had little to show for it. Mercedes pitted him early in an attempt to gain a place but it did not work out. Indeed he lost two, jumped by Sebastian Vettel and Sergio Pérez, who both stayed out longer through the stops. He questioned the team's decision to stop early and could do nothing to move again through the field, with passing all but impossible. His frustration was palpable. "It's not good enough from all of us," he said. "We win and lose as a team and it is collectively not a good job from all of us across the board and we don't take it lightly. But there is no point getting all depressed. We have to figure out why we

are in this position. We definitely cannot afford another weekend like this." On Verstappen's comments, Hamilton added: "There are 17 races to go. I'm not going to say more. It's childish when you start getting into a war of words." Largely a procession as so often at Monaco, the race's biggest drama played out before it was even underway. For the pole sitter, Charles Leclerc, at his home race there was heartbreak before he took to the grid. After he crashed in qualifying there was concern that his gearbox would have to be replaced. Ferrari had checked it and pronounced it OK on the morning of the race but on the way to the grid Leclerc reported he had a problem. The team worked further on the car and identified an issue with the driveshaft that they could not rectify, leaving Leclerc unable to join the grid and with hopes shattered. Clearly deeply upset, he was consoled by the Ferrari president, John Elkann, and then by Prince Albert of Monaco. Leclerc showed great maturity and sportsmanship in staying to the finish to congratulate his teammate Sainz. Leclerc's failure meant Verstappen had the front row to himself but Bottas had a clear run up the inside line to turn one. The Finn started well but Verstappen gave him no chance, cutting him off to hold the lead through Sainte Devote. It was crucial. Holding the course by the scuff of the neck, Verstappen held a lead he would not give up. When Mercedes' pit gamble failed their chance of improvement had gone and were left to lick their wounds. The venue may be celebrated but the racing was pedestrian, yet Verstappen overwhelmingly deserved his laurels. He knows greater challenges await him this season but for now he can rightly enjoy a victory that feels like no other. Red Bull's Pérez was in fourth and Aston Martin's Sebastian Vettel in fifth. Gasly was in sixth for AlphaTauri, with Lance Stroll in eighth for Aston Martin. Esteban Ocon was in ninth for Alpine with Antonio Giovinazzi in 10th for Alfa Romeo.

Barney Curley, betting mastermind and charity pioneer, dies aged 81

London, May 24 : Barney Curley, the architect of several of the turf's greatest betting coups and the founder of a charity that transformed the lives of thousands of children in Africa, died on Sunday at the age of 81. In an extraordinary life both on and off the turf, Curley won millions of pounds from the bookies over many decades and raised millions more to fund his work in Zambia with the charity Direct Aid For Africa (Dafa), which he set up following the death of his 18-year-old son, Charlie, in 1995. Curley always considered himself fortunate to have survived a severe case of tuberculosis as a teenager, which confined him to a bed in a sanatorium for nine months. Having planned to train for the priesthood at a Jesuit seminary, he chose instead to pursue a career as a trainer and gambler, and landed his first - and still perhaps

his most famous - coup at Bellewstown in June 1975, when a horse called Yellow Sam won in a canter at 20-1. Curley had arranged for an extensive network of contacts to place starting-price bets on Yellow Sam at off-course betting shops. Had the money been "blown back" to the track, Yellow Sam would have started at odds-on, but Curley had chosen the venue for the coup with great care.

Curley's place in racing folklore but he remained a nagging - if increasingly occasional - thorn in the bookies' side for nearly 50 years. He landed another brilliantly executed coup in May 2010 when three winners from four horses netted a payout of around £4m, though only after a prolonged struggle through the courts in Gibraltar as BetFred tried to avoid paying out.



Mickelson defies age to triumph at PGA Championship, becomes oldest Major winner

London, May 24 : Mickelson, who led by five shots with six holes to play, did see his lead cut to two shots after bogeys at the 13th and 14th compounded by a birdie at the 16th by Oosthuizen, who was playing in the penultimate pairing. Oosthuizen (73) and Koepka (74) finished in a share of second place while European Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington (69), Ireland's Shane Lowry (69), Englishman Paul Casey (71) and Harry Higgs (70) were a further two shots back in fourth place. Northern Irishman Rory McIlroy, who won the PGA Championship at Kiawah Island in 2012 and was a favourite this week, closed with an even-par 72 that left him at five over par. Phil Mickelson turned back the clock to secure a two-shot victory over Brooks Koepka and South African Louis Oosthuizen at the PGA Championship on Sunday (May 23) and become the oldest Major winner in history aged 50. Mickelson, who began the day with a one-shot lead over Koepka, put the finishing touches on one of the most impressive feats in golf with a one-over-par 73 at the Ocean Course that left him at six under on the week. When Mickelson's approach shot safely found the green at the final hole a wild scene ensued as adoring fans raced to follow one of the game's all-time greats up the fairway and completely enveloped him in a frenzied swarm. Security officials



eventually had to step in to create a narrow path for Mickelson to navigate his way to forward where he two-putted from 16 feet (4.9 metres) to seal the win. "This is just an incredible feeling because I just believed that it was possible but yet everything was saying it wasn't," said Mickelson, who is also now the only player to have gone 30 years between his first and last PGA Tour victory. "And I hope that others find that inspiration. It might take a little extra work, a little bit harder effort to maintain physically or maintain the skills but, gosh, is it worth it." By collecting the sixth major of his career and first since the 2013 British Open, Mickelson surpassed Julius Boros, who was 48 years old when he won the 1968 PGA Champion-

ship, as the oldest major winner. After an eventful front nine that produced twists and turns at seemingly every hole, it was fan-favourite Mickelson who emerged two shots clear at the turn and soaking up energy from the limited spectators in attendance at the year's second major. Mickelson moved three shots clear after a birdie at the par-four 10th and the final stretch was more a coronation than a dogfight as four-times major champion Koepka and 2010 British Open winner Oosthuizen ran out of holes. Mickelson, who led by five shots with six holes to play, did see his lead cut to two shots after bogeys at the 13th and 14th compounded by a birdie at the 16th by Oosthuizen, who was playing in the penultimate pairing.

"I tried to be as aggressive as I could without doing stupid things," said Oosthuizen, who did well to get back into the mix even after a double-bogey at the par-four 13th where his third shot landed in the water. "I felt like I had to be aggressive to give myself maybe a 15-footer for par and just caught it off the heel, and if it's windy like that in a crosswind, you know the wind is going to take it into the water." With victory in sight, an undeterred Mickelson showed great resolve and even flashed a thumbs-up to the crowd as he went on to reclaim a three-shot cushion with a birdie at the 16th before a bogey-par finish. "Truly inspirational to see @PhilMickelson do it again at 50 years of age. Congrats!!!!!!", 15-times major champion Tiger Woods, who is home recovering from serious leg injuries suffered in a February car crash, wrote on Twitter. Oosthuizen (73) and Koepka (74) finished in a share of second place while European Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington (69), Ireland's Shane Lowry (69), Englishman Paul Casey (71) and Harry Higgs (70) were a further two shots back in fourth place. Northern Irishman Rory McIlroy, who won the PGA Championship at Kiawah Island in 2012 and was a favourite this week, closed with an even-par 72 that left him at five over par.

Wrestler Sushil Kumar asked friend to make video of brawl against Sagar Rana : Report

New Delhi, May 24 : Several teams, including the Crime Branch and four teams of the Special cell, conducted raids in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Punjab, another official said. The Delhi Police had announced a reward of Rs one lakh for information leading to the ar-

rest of Sushil Kumar, who had since been on the run. Another reward of Rs 50,000 was announced for Ajay Kumar's arrest. Two-time Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar asked one of his associates to make a video of the May 4 brawl at Chhatrasal stadium in New Delhi to ensure he continues to have his influence in the wrestling circuit



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rest of Sushil Kumar, who had since been on the run. Another reward of Rs 50,000 was announced for Ajay Kumar's arrest. Two-time Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar asked one of his associates to make a video of the May 4 brawl at Chhatrasal stadium in New Delhi to ensure he continues to have his influence in the wrestling circuit

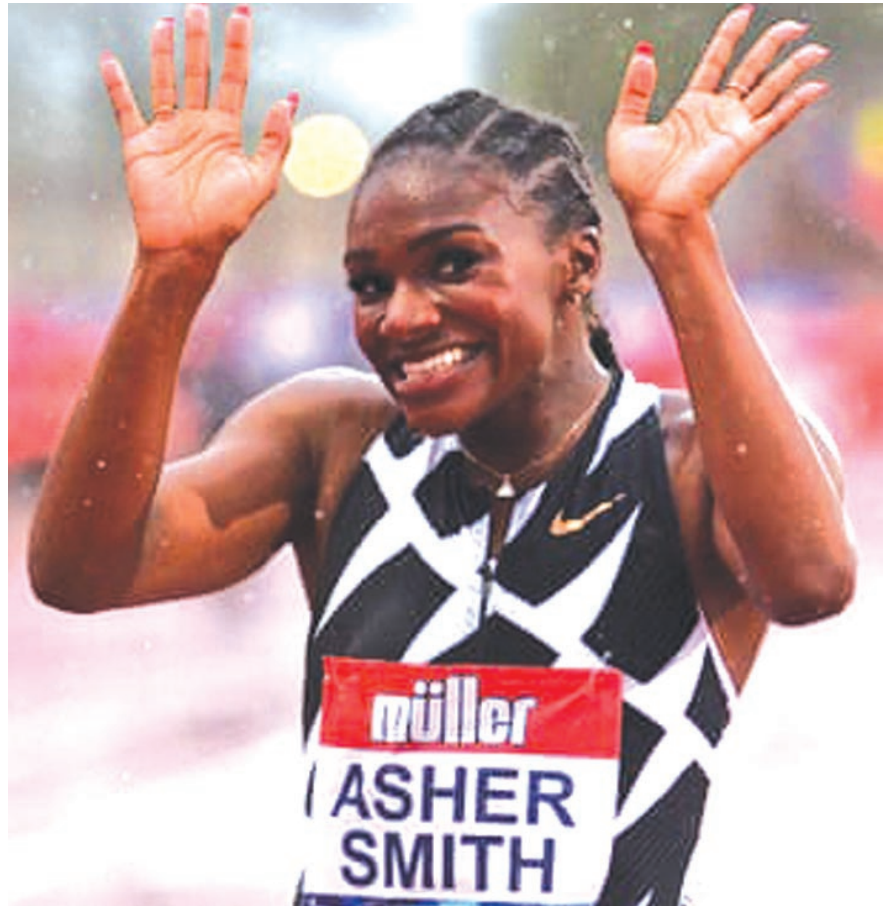
Kumar and his accomplice Ajay. "They have been charged with murder, attempt to murder, assault, criminal conspiracy, criminal intimidation and under other relevant sections, including the Arms Act," Kushwah said. During the hearing, the police informed the court that Kumar crossed the borders of as many as seven states and union territories during the past 18 days to evade his arrest. He also constantly changed his SIM cards in order to avoid arrest, informed the Delhi Police. The Delhi Police's Crime Branch will be handed over the case related to the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of a 23-year-old wrestler here, officials said on Sunday. The development comes after Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar (37) and his aide Ajay were arrested in outer Delhi's Mundka area on Sunday. The police said the case, which is currently being investigated by the northwest district police, will be officially transferred to the Crime Branch unit by Monday. "We have been told verbally that the case will be further investigated by the team of the Crime Branch. But the case will be officially handed over to us latest by tomorrow (Monday)," a senior police official said was quoted. The case relates to the May 4 incident at the stadium in which wrestler Sagar Rana died and two of his friends, Sonu and Amit Kumar,

were injured after they were allegedly assaulted by Sushil Kumar and other wrestlers. Sushil Kumar left the city as soon as he got to know about the wrestler's death, the police said, adding that multiple teams were formed to trace him and his aide but he kept changing his location regularly. Several teams, including the Crime Branch and four teams of the Special cell, conducted raids in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Punjab, another official said. The Delhi Police had announced a reward of Rs one lakh for information leading to the arrest of Sushil Kumar, who had since been on the run. Another reward of Rs 50,000 was announced for Ajay Kumar's arrest. Earlier, a Delhi court had refused to grant anticipatory bail to the two-time Olympic medallist, saying he was prima facie the main conspirator and allegations against him were serious in nature. The Delhi Police filed an FIR in the case under sections 302 (murder), 308 (culpable homicide), 365 (kidnapping), 325 (causing grievous hurt), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The case was also registered under sections 188 (Disobedience to order by public servant), 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease), 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC and various sections under the Arms Act.

Dina Asher-Smith beats Sha'Carri Richardson to 100m glory in Gateshead

London, May 24 : On a night billed as a dress-rehearsal for the women's 100m Olympic final in Tokyo, Dina Asher-Smith proved a compelling starring act. In brutal and biting conditions more akin to winter than Whitsun, she powered home to leave a string of top-quality sprinters flailing in her slipstream. Asher-Smith had promised that she was stronger than ever after working hard during the pandemic, and she proved as good as her word as she came through in 11.35sec. To the casual observer, that time may have seemed nothing special - it is nearly half a second outside her British record. But given it was into driving rain and a -3.1 m/s headwind, it was quietly spectacular. Just as notably, it also laid down a significant marker against the young American sensation

American Florence Griffith Joyner also raced in Gateshead before winning gold at the Seoul Olympics, running a modest 11.54 sec into a -2.0 m/s wind. Richardson and Asher-Smith both went faster into a wind far stronger. The rematch in Tokyo will be fascinating, thrilling - and will take place in conditions around 40F hotter. There was a second British win of the night as Laura Muir eased away from a modest field to easily take the 1500m in 4:03:73, while Cindy Sember added a third home victory in the 100m hurdles in 13.28sec. "I am very pleased with that," said Sember. "I don't think I have ever run in that much wind. It really could have been a lot worse." Elsewhere the first Diamond League meeting of the 2021 season proved not to be a night for fast times or heroes.



Sha'Carri Richardson, unbeaten for two years but only second in 11.44 - as well as the world 100m champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, fourth in 11.51. "I was really happy to start my 100m season with a win," said Asher-Smith. "It was far from ideal conditions. When you go to a Diamond League event, the most important thing is to run a good race plan, keep a good head. Asked about facing a field that included four women who have run under 11 seconds in 2021, Asher-Smith added: "It is essential to race the best. The only way to get race fit is to race the best in the world. It's these type of races you want to be in. I am in good shape. I will be looking to get more races before the Olympic trials." Richardson's scalp was particularly significant. The American has been burning up tracks throughout the spring, including a stunning 10.72sec for 100m in Florida, the sixth-fastest in history. But Asher-Smith - and the Gateshead weather - proved a step too far. However Richardson refused to blame the weather for her defeat, saying: "I already know where my faults are. I knew what the weather was like in all eight lanes. Everybody had the exact same thing." She added: "I know what I have to work on and just want to show the world and the women in my sport that I'm here to stay. I want to show them that even though this is my first year doing this, I don't just want to exist, I'm a competitor. There is something else worth remembering too. In 1988 the

For most athletes coming away without a niggles counted as a good result, especially with the Olympics just two months away. As the Jamaican Stephenie Ann McPherson put it after coming second to Ellis Kendall in the women's 400m: "It wasn't good conditions to run in, I am grateful to come out here and finish injury-free." Everywhere the weather was turning superstars into mere mortals. Mondo Duplantis, the pole vault world record-holder, has cleared 6.18m. Here he could only manage 5.55m. But to his great credit, instead of heading indoors he wrapped up and took to holding an umbrella for his rival Sam Kendricks as he prepared to take his turn. "I'm OK, I'm healthy, that's the main thing," admitted Duplantis afterwards. It was so cold that Mariya Lasitskene, the Russian world high jump champion, started her competition wearing a hat, gloves, and full length tights. Usually she floats serenely over two metres. Here she bowed out in fourth after failing three times at 1.91m. Ahead of her was Britain's Emily Borthwick, who cleared a PB of 1.91, to finish second behind Kamila Licwinko of Poland. The Norwegian Jakob Ingebrigtsen coped better than most with the inclement conditions as he won the men's 1500m in a season's best 3:36:27, but even he admitted it had been a struggle. "This is normal weather back in the west coast of Norway," he said. "But it's really tricky to run fast in these conditions, if you get a sudden gust of wind then everything is ruined."




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