

The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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On immigration, Michel Barnier has joined ...

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Brooks Koepka shows profane disdain for rival DeChambeau in leaked video

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NEWS IN BRIEF

136kgs of gun powder

Guwahati, May 26 : A major tragedy seems to have been averted as a whopping 136 kilograms of gun powder have been recovered by the Assam Rifles troopers in Mizoram. The consignment of gun powder was recovered by the Lunglei Battalion of Assam Rifles from Longpuighat of Vaseikai Village in Mizoram. "In yet another success in its crusade against smuggling activities, Lunglei Battalion of 23 Sector Assam Rifles, under the aegis of Headquarters Inspector General Assam Rifles (East), recovered 136 kg Gun Powder, in general area Longpuighat of Vaseikai Village in Mizoram on 25 May 2021," the Assam Rifles stated in a statement.

Rapid Antigen Test mandatory

Guwahati, May 26: Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) will be mandatory prior to Covid19 vaccination in Dibrugarh from Wednesday. Talking to media persons on Tuesday, the district surveillance officer of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Nabajyoti Gogoi said, "From tomorrow, Covid test will be mandatory at every vaccination centre in Dibrugarh. Prior to vaccination, one will have to undergo for Rapid Antigen Test." "Everybody, who is over 40 years of age, should undergo Covid19 test from tomorrow in every vaccination centre," Gogoi said. He said, "I appeal to everybody to maintain social distancing, wear masks and maintain the Covid19 protocols in the vaccination centres. For senior citizens, we have made arrangements in the vaccination centres." Meanwhile, the Dibrugarh district administration has taken special drive in the flood affected areas of Dibrugarh.

Baksa witch-hunt case

Guwahati, May 26 : Police have arrested two more persons in connection with the sensational Baksa witch-hunt case. The arrested persons have been identified as: Rwmwi Basumatary (21) and Subal Boro (30). Both the accused were produced before the court of Judicial Magistrate and were later sent to judicial custody. These two persons were arrested after the police questioned 13 persons including 10 women in connection with the case. Assam: Two more arrested in sensational Baksa witch-hunt case 1 Altogether, 7 persons have been arrested by the police in the case. DIG of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) - Violet Baruah also visited Tamulpur, interacted with top police officials of the district and took stock of the law and order situation there.

'How Can a Sick Person Attend Assembly'

Assam CM's Dig at Akhil Gogoi's Mental Health Draws Flak



Guwahati, May 26 : Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has come in the face of criticism after asking in the assembly as to how a

"sick person" undergoing treatment for "psychological issues" could attend sessions while responding to opposition parties'

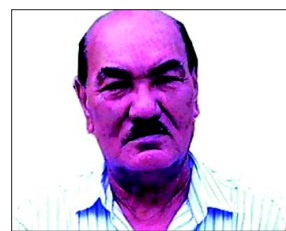
demand that incarcerated MLA Akhil Gogoi be allowed to attend. Using words that have been panned by mental health experts, Sarma on May 24, further said that Gogoi was not in a "sound mental state" as he is receiving treatment for "psychological issues". Gogoi has been receiving treatment for several ailments at a Guwahati hospital. Sarma's words met with widespread outrage. Late on Monday evening, four members of Gogoi's peasant rights' group Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and its affiliated organisations were picked up by Assam Police at Sivasagar district in Upper Assam and detained for the night. KMSS and other affiliated

bodies said the BJP government had acted fearing repercussions over Sarma's statement on Gogoi's mental health. Manas Konwar, Citu Baruah, Padmakanta Das and Jintu Mech were all let off on Tuesday morning. They are members of KMSS's student's wing Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti (SMSS), Rajor Dal (the political front of KMSS); Bir Lachit Sena, an Assamese ethno-nationalist organisation and Asom Yuva Satra Samillan. Konwar, who heads SMSS, had spent seven months in jail last year after being held over his alleged role in anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests. He was eventually charged with sedition under the

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Four-time Assam MLA dies of post-COVID complications

Guwahati, May 26 : A 68-year-old legislator in Assam succumbed to post Covid complications on Wednesday morning. Majendra Narzary, a Bodoland People's Front (BPF) politician, had represented the Gossaigaon assembly constituency since 2006. The BPF, an ally of the Congress in the recently held state elections, had won four seats. Health officials said that Narzary had tested positive for Covid earlier this month. He tested negative a few days back but was put on ventilator in the ICU at the Guwahati Medical and Hospital (GMCH) when his post-



covid complications intensified. "Although he won the fight against Covid, unfortunately succumbed to comorbidity issues," said Assam Health Minister Keshab Mahanta. The sad news of passing away of our colleague MLA Sh Majendra Narzary has been very shocking. Sh Narzary represented Gossaigaon constituency

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Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, the new CBI Director is a RAW veteran and top security expert

New Delhi, May 26 : Senior IPS officer Subodh Kumar Jaiswal has been appointed the new director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for two years, according to an order issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. Jaiswal has been appointed as the director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), for a period of two years, the Ministry order said. A Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led three-member selection committee had on Monday shortlisted his name for the post. The CBI had got an acting Director in the form of Praveen Sinha after the term of RK Shukla ended on February 3 this year. Subodh Kumar Jaiswal - A RAW veteran and top security expert Jaiswal is a 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Maharashtra cadre. Prior to his appointment as the new CBI di-



rector, he was serving as the Director-General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Jaiswal was picked by then Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to be the Mumbai Police Commissioner in June 2018 and served till February 2019. He went on to become the Maharashtra

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Sputnik V-makers have agreed to supply COVID-19 vaccine to Delhi : CM Arvind Kejriwal



New Delhi, May 26 : Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday (May 26) said that the manufacturers of Russian COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V have agreed to supply to the national capital. The Delhi CM added the quantity of the COVID-19 vaccine to be provided to the city is yet to be decided. "Talks with the makers of Sputnik V are on.

They will give us vaccine, but the quantity is yet to be decided. Our officials and the representatives of the vaccine manufacturers met on Tuesday, too," Kejriwal was quoted. Further, the AAP chief, who was speaking at Delhi's first drive-through vaccination centre at Vegas Mall in Dwarka, informed that Delhi has reported around 620

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Special grand jury to investigate criminal fraud of Trump organisation, former US president calls it 'witch hunt'

New York, May 26 : New York prosecutors have convened a special grand jury to consider evidence in a criminal investigation into former President Donald Trump's business dealings, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Tuesday (May 25). The development signals that the Manhattan district attorney's office

was moving toward seeking charges as a result of its two-year investigation, which included a lengthy legal battle to obtain Trump's tax records. The person familiar with the matter was not authorised to speak publicly and did so on the condition of anonymity. The news was first reported by The Washington Post. Manhattan District



Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr is conducting a wide-ranging investigation into a variety of matters such as hush-money payments paid to women on Trump's behalf, property valuations and employee compensation. The Democratic prosecutor has been using an investigative grand jury through the course of

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IMA, allopathy doctors upset with Coronil's success: Acharya Balkrishna defends Baba Ramdev

New Delhi, May 26 : Baba Ramdev's close aide Acharya Balkrishna has now jumped into his defence, saying the yoga guru's remark on allopathy has been blown out of proportion. Balkrishna, who is the chairman of 'Patanjali Ayurved', said that allopathy doctors are upset with the tremendous success of the Coronil anti-COVID kit developed by Baba Ramdev's firm and that's why they are blowing the issue out of proportion. Defending Baba Ramdev, he said that the



yoga guru had only read a message which came on Whatsapp and said that allopathy itself is hurting the doctors. Expressing anguish over the bitter controversy, he said that it is not right to target the yoga guru who has already withdrawn his statement. He further stated that hundreds of doctors visit Baba Ramdev's ashram in Haridwar for treatment of several incurable diseases through Ayurveda. Acharya Balkrishna also came up with a conspiracy

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Cyclone Yaas: Landfall commences in Odisha, West Bengal coasts; IAF choppers deployed, NDRF teams on alert

New Delhi, May 26 : Landfall of Cyclone Yaas has commenced in Odisha and West Bengal coasts and the "severe cyclonic storm" lay centred about 50 km South-Southeast of Balasore, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday. The IMD has also warned of strong winds over



the northwest Bay of Bengal coast. Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Yaas centred about 50 km South-Southeast of Balasore (Odisha). Landfall process has commenced around 9 am: India Meteorological Department (IMD) #CycloneYaas pic.twitter.com/L7cUSvGRT Nearly 20

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COVID-19 worst crisis humanity has faced in decades: PM Narendra Modi

New Delhi, May 26 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday reiterated that the Coronavirus pandemic is the worst crisis that humanity has faced in decades and called for renewed efforts in combating the deadly virus. "COVID-19 is the worst crisis humanity faces in decades, we have not seen a pandemic like this for a century. Our planet will not be the same after COVID-19, we will remember events in the future as either pre or post-COVID," PM Modi said. The Prime Minister also paid salute to the frontline

healthcare workers, doctors, nurses who selflessly risk their lives every day to serve others in need. "I once again salute our frontline healthcare workers, doctors, nurses who selflessly risk their lives every day to serve others in need, to those who have suffered & lost their dear ones. I extend condolences," PM said on the occasion of Virtual Vesak

Global Celebrations on Buddha Purnima. He also mourned the tragic loss of all those who died of the deadly virus. "I extend condolences to those who suffered, lost near and dear ones in the pandemic. I grieve with them," PM Modi said. PM Modi also reassured that his government is fighting the pandemic with full force and remains committed to the



welfare and safety of all Indian

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Baba Ramdev gets Rs 1000 crore defamation notice for remarks on allopathy

New Delhi, May 26 : The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has slapped yoga guru Swami Ramdev with a Rs 1,000 crore defamation notice for his controversial remarks about allopathy, scientific medicine and



their use in treating COVID-19. The defamation notice to Baba Ramdev has been issued by the Uttarakhand chapter of the IMA - the apex body of Indian doctors. The IMA notice states that if Ramdev doesn't post a video countering

the statements given by him and tender a written apology within the next 15 days, then a sum of Rs 1,000 crore will be demanded from him. It may be recalled that the IMA had earlier raised strong objections to Baba Ramdev's controversial remarks and demanded strict action against him. IMA state unit, President Dr Ajay Khanna said that a letter has been sent to the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary in this regard. "In the letter, it is written that there is a lot of resentment among the IMA doctors against the statement of Baba Ramdev. The Union Health Minister has also sent a notice to Ramdev on the same stating that the statement is considered incorrect," Dr Khanna said. He added that the state government should take strict action against Swami Ramdev immediately. A defamation notice is also being sent to Ramdev on behalf of

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স্পষ্টীকরণ

যোৱা ২৬/০৫/২০২১ ইং তাৰিখে অসমৰ বহুল প্রচলিত 'অসমীয়া প্রতিদিন' কাকতত প্রকাশ পোৱা 'দিগ্ভূতৰ মাতৃদেৱত অৰাধনা কৰা' শীৰ্ষক বাতৰিটো মোৰ দৃষ্টিগোচৰ হৈছে। এই বাতৰিটোৰ সংক্ৰান্তত মই স্পষ্টীকৰণ দিব বিচাৰোঁ যে উল্লেখিত বাতৰিটো সম্পূৰ্ণ ভিত্তিহীন, মনোমাজী তথ্য সূত্ৰৰ ওপৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত নহয়। বাণী বান্ধুৰৰ সুবন্ধৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আমাৰ বন্ধুত্বমূলক সম্পৰ্ক ক'ভিড-১৯ মহামাৰীৰ পৰিৱেশৰ মাজতো সম্পূৰ্ণ আগোচৰিহীনভাৱে নিতৌ টহলদাৰী কৰিয়েই থাকে। এনে প্রেক্ষাপটত এই ধৰণৰ মনোমাজী বাতৰিয়ে কৰ্তব্যবত ককৰমীৰ মনোবল যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে হ্ৰাস কৰি দিয়ে। এই বাতৰিটোত প্রকাশ পোৱাৰ দৰে নিতৌ নিশা ১২ বজাৰ পৰা পূৰ্বতি নিশা ১২-১৫ খনটাকে অৰৈধ কাঠ বহন কৰাৰ কোনো তথ্য বাস্তৱত নাই, এয়া সম্পূৰ্ণ কাল্পনিক। সমান্তৰালভাৱে উক্ত বাতৰিটোত উল্লেখ কৰাৰ দৰে পশ্চিম গুৱাহাটীৰ স্থানীয় বিধায়ক ৰমেন্দ্ৰ নাৰায়ণ কলিতা ডাঙৰীয়াই বন বিভাগৰ ওপৰত কোনো ধৰণৰ অৰৈধ হস্তক্ষেপ নকৰে। সেয়েহে এনে ধৰণৰ উদ্দেশ্যপ্ৰাণোদিত বাতৰি প্রকাশ নকৰিবলৈ প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি বাতৰি কাকত গোষ্ঠীক বিনাম অনুৰোধ জনালো। যিহেতু এনে ধৰণৰ বাতৰি পাঠক সমাজৰ মাজত বিভ্রান্তি সৃষ্টি কৰে।

বাণী আঞ্চলিক বন বিষয়া
শ্ৰী মনোৰঞ্জন বৰ্মন

CM visits Maha Mritunjay temple in Nagaon district



Guwahati, May 26 : Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today visited the Maha Mritunjay temple in Nagaon district and held a discussion with DC, SP and officials of forest and PWD department at the office premises of the temple in presence of MLA

and Political Secretary to CM Jayanta Malla Baruah, Nagaon MLA Rupak Sarma and Barhampur MLA Jitu Goswami with a view to transform the temple into a major tourist attraction of the district. The Chief Minister directed the Social Forestry Department to take

CM discusses plans to transform the temple into a major tourist attraction

up plantation programme including horticultural plants in the temple campus with proper landscaping. He also asked the PWD department to expeditiously execute the scheme for two laning of the road leading to the temple from the national highway. Chief Minister Sarma also directed the district administration to develop a proper traffic system leading to the temple alongwith adequate parking facilities. Further reviewing the incident of mysterious death of several elephants at Bamunipahar in Nagaon district recently, the Chief Minister asked the forest department to carry out an extensive plantation drive in the hill. He also instructed to take up self-sustaining initiatives and self-employment generation programmes involving the local community to make them an important stakeholder of wildlife protection. Additional PCCF Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden M.K. Yadav, Nagaon DC Kavitha Padmanabhan, SP Anand Mishra, Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers of PWD and DFOs of the district were present in the meeting.

MP Pradyut Bordoloi appeals to state government to increase COVID test and vaccination percentage at Nagaon, fresh 461 cases recorded in Nagaon dist

NAGAON, May 26: As many as 461 fresh COVID positive cases were recorded today, taking the total cumulative active COVID cases in the district to 4748 while one more COVID patient succumbed to the virus today. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 124 people were immediately admitted to Nagaon COVID hospital as well as other COVID Care Centres set up at various places in the district while the rest were put in home isolation. Rapid Antigen Test was conducted on 5503 people today while RT-PCR test was conducted on 77 swab samples, sources added. Meanwhile addressing a press conference held at Member of Parliament COVID Care Service Centre set up near at Nagaon Civil Gate today, Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi urged the state government as well as Nagaon district administration to increase the vaccination campaign among the people in the district. He said only 7 percent people in the district have been vaccinated till date while the COVID test is showing too under the single digit number percent which is a very poor percentage in a densely populated district like Nagaon. Appealing to the district administration as well as state government, MP Bordoloi said that government and the district administration should take immediate initiatives to increase the COVID test and vaccination campaign among the people as early as possible to combat the ongoing COVID situation in the district. - fight against COVID 19 without massive COVID test as well as massive vaccination campaigns among the people will be nothing but a mere attempt in vain, Bordoloi said. Following the press conference, MP Bordoloi also distributed the COVID protection materials like hand sanitizers, hand gloves, masks, face shields among the Nagaon town based scribes. Earlier the Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi also distributed COVID protection materials as well as other essential items among the people who live with their daily wages like cart driver, cart pushers at Nagaon Borbazaar, Dhacchapatty and Haiborgaon bazaar area today.

Generate revenue for vaccinations by compensation Cess on tobacco products: CLPF

Guwahati, May 26: Consumers' Legal Protection Forum, Assam urging the GST Council to increase compensation cess on all tobacco products to generate additional revenue for the government. Forum urges GST Council to consider it an extra-ordinary measure. This tax revenue from tobacco could significantly contribute to the increased need for resources during the pandemic including vaccinations and augmenting the health infrastructure to prepare for a possible third wave. According to Forum, increasing tobacco taxes in these challenging times will be WIN-WIN policy as it can address the economic shock from COVID-19 pandemic and directly reduce COVID 19 related co-morbidities. Consumers' Legal Protection Forum, Assam today submitted a letter to Ajanta Neog, Finance Minister, Assam along with the Samir Kr. Sinha, Principal Secretary, Finance; Rakesh Agarwala, Commissioner of Taxes, Assam and urge them to raise the issue of compensation cess on tobacco products in GST Council meeting which will be on 28 May. Advocate Ajoy Hazarika, Secretary, Consumers' Legal Protection Forum, Assam said "increasing the existing compensation cess on cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products and levying compensation cess on bidis can be a very effective policy measure to address the immediate need to raise revenue by the central government to compensate state governments for their respective GST revenue shortfalls during the pandemic time. It will be a winning proposition for generating revenue and reducing tobacco use

and related diseases as well as COVID related co-morbidities." There is growing evidence that smoking and smokeless tobacco increases risk for severe Covid 19 infection. Smoking worsens lung function and reduces immunity. Tobacco users who develop Covid infection have more complications and greater risk of fatality. It is urgent to increase taxes on all tobacco products to reduce their affordability & consumption and limit the increasing health and fatal damages and vulnerability to COVID infection. There has not been any major increase in tobacco taxes since the introduction of GST in July 2017 and all tobacco products have become more affordable over the past three years. The total tax burden (taxes as a percentage of final tax inclusive retail prices) is only about 52.7% for cigarettes, 22% for bidis and 63.8% for smokeless tobacco. This is much lower than the WHO recommended tax burden of at least 75% of retail price for all tobacco products. India has the second largest number (268 million) of tobacco users in the world and of these 13 lakhs die every year from tobacco related diseases. Nearly 27% of all cancers in India are due to tobacco. Tobacco use in all forms (smoking/ chewing) is associated with severe COVID-19 casualties as per Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Indian Council of Medical Research. The annual economic costs from all diseases and deaths attributable to tobacco use is estimated to be Rupees 177,341 crores in 2017-18 amounting to 1% of India's GDP. This will continue to grow post COVID.

Shri Ravi Kant is new Regional Executive Director of AAI, NER

Guwahati, May 26 : Shri Ravi Kant has joined as the new Regional Executive Director (North Eastern Region) at Regional Head Quarters of Airports Authority of India, Guwahati. He is a qualified Engineer in Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering. He joined AAI in the year 1990 and held various positions at different airports namely New Delhi, Khajuraho, Indore, Mumbai and Guwahati. He is an Air-Navigation-Services technical expert and has vast experience of over three decades in Planning, Operation & Maintenance of CNS facilities, Airport systems & Information technology systems in AAI. He is instrumental in installation and commissioning of Navigational aids like Instrument Landing System, VHF Omni Range and Distance Measuring equipment etc. at various airports in India. During his tenure at the Corporate Head Quarters, New Delhi as General Manager (CNS), he was responsible for operation and maintenance of various Navigational and Surveillance facilities which play vital role in safe navigation and surveillance of aircrafts. He is a member of Surveillance Panel in International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which provides technical inputs for developing International Standards & Recommended Practices and Guidance material with regard to surveillance of



aircrafts while in air or at ground. Shri Ravi Kant is of the strong opinion and belief that though North East Region has tough work situations due to geographical and weather conditions, it also has vast potential for growth in terms of Air Passengers and Air Cargo movement. Regional Connectivity Scheme conceptualized by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is a boon to North Eastern Region to connect +remote locations by Air and he is committed to give the required impetus to the scheme. As he is known to take up and convert challenges into achievements, he is very confident that he will be able to generate momentum to the ongoing AAI Projects including upcoming Greenfield airports, heliports & water aerodromes in NER with the cooperation and support of all stakeholders.

Intellectual Forum of North East (IFNE) webinar: Docs share views on Covid

Guwahati, May 26 : The Intellectual Forum of North East (IFNE) organized a two-day counselling programme, "Positivity unlimited", to discuss how the people of Northeast will fight Covid-19 and the measures they should adopt during the pandemic. Dr. Anil Agarwal from Maharaja Agrasen Hospital, Delhi, Yoga Guru Navdeep Joshi from SLBSN Sanskrit University, Delhi, Prof. Mahesh Vyas, Indian Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi and Dr. Vishal Chadha from Dr. Hedgewar Arogya Sansthan, Delhi had participated in the event. Dr. Anil Agarwal was the first to speak on the unlimited positivity through the webinar and said that the second wave of Corona was not new for Indians. He made several suggestions to stay safe from corona. He said, "Most of the Covid-positive patients either have no symptoms or mild symptoms like mild fever or cough. They don't need to be hospitalized. They can stay at home and look after themselves. Most people recover from the virus easily." He also pointed out that masks should be used as part of a comprehensive strategy of measures to suppress transmission and save lives. He also advised using cotton masks to prevent transmission. He added, "Steam inhalation help make you feel a lot better and deep breathing restores lung functions." Navdeep Joshi explained the measures in natural medicine to enable oneself against corona. He said, "Immunity of the host is an essential requisite to facilitate the eradica-

tion of infections. Disturbed immune systems seen are severely affected cases of COVID-19 infection." He also explained how several senior officials have cured themselves with the help of pranayama and yoga. "Even in the case of coronavirus, people who have been practicing yoga, meditation and pranayama have experienced a higher level of immunity and lung strength, making it difficult for the virus to affect their bodies. These practices will not only help us prevent the virus but also improve our daily life in a highly positive manner. To this effect, stay strong and stress-free with the power of meditation, breathing, and yoga," he stated. Prof. Mahesh Vyas explained that the fundamental approach of Ayurveda in any infection is to support and empower the body's innate processes to deal with the challenges posed by infecting organisms. Ayurveda system of healthcare takes holistic approach towards disease management and preservation of health in which salutogenesis (maintaining optimum health and immune status) is a major aspect. In present times when altered lifestyles, diet and stress are common, maintaining a natural immune system is challenging, and this renders a person prone to infections and diseases, he stated. The immuno modulatory interventions of Ayurveda which are included under the broad term 'Rasayana' are very helpful in preserving optimum health of a person.

NTPC Bongaigaon starts COVID Care Center



Guwahati, 26 MAY : NTPC, a Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Power continues its fight towards COVID and the dedicated team of power professionals are leaving no stone unturned to control the disease from spreading. Continuing its effort against COVID, NTPC Bongaigaon Medical Cell today made the NTPC Bongaigaon COVID Care centre operational in association with Apollo Telehealth Services. It was inaugurated yesterday by Shri Subrata Mandal, CGM, NTPC on 25th May, 2021 who inspected the facilities available. The centre incorporates state-of-art technology to manage COVID cases at remote locations. The COVID care centre is equipped with 10 COVID beds, each equipped with a multi-para monitor for continuous monitoring of temperature, SPO2, heart rate, blood pressure and respiratory rate. One e-ICU which is equipped with invasive ventilators, multi-channel bedside monitor, webcam and LED television connected to Apollo, Chennai for real time monitoring of critically ill patients are also being installed in the centre. Besides 2 BiPAP machines for non-invasive ventilation, 7 oxygen concentrators and oxygen cylinders for oxygen support,

Point-of-care diagnostics for assessment of d-dimer, troponin, CRP, ABG and ECG, 2 cart on wheels for easy accessibility of emergency medicines and equipments such as pulse oximeter, IR thermometers etc. makes the centre well equipped to deal with any kind of exigency. Besides 2 kiosks for sample collection, 6 doctors and 10 nurses will be providing round the clock services to the patients.

Deputy Commissioner Visits Covid Hospital and Covid Vaccination Centre

Golaghat, May 26: Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat Manavendra Pratap Singh today visited Covid 19 Vaccination Centres of Golaghat District Sports Complex and Brahmananda Dutta Rajohuwa Shiv Mandir and took stock of the ongoing vaccination drive in the centres. Also the senior IAS officer visited the Covid Hospital set up at Swahid Kamala Miri Civil Hospital in Bokakhat. Deputy Com-

missioner Singh appealed all the doctors and medical staff of the Covid Hospital to treat the patients with proper care and with a humanitarian view. Also the DC ordered to provide television, newspaper and magazines for the patients so that the patients can be able to get a homely atmosphere. He further ordered to provide good quality food to the Covid patients admitted there. During the

visit to the Covid vaccination centres in Golaghat Deputy Commissioner Manavendra Pratap Singh was accompanied by Additional DC Kuldeep Hazarika and Joint Director of Health Services Golaghat Dr Arun Mahanta. On the other hand during the visit to the Covid Hospital in Bokakhat Sub Divisional Officer of Bokakhat Bipul Das and Joint Director Dr Arun Mahanta were present.

Second 'Oxygen Express' train reaches Assam

12 Oxygen Expresses with 969 MT of LMO beat tough weather & cyclone to take relief to the Nation from the Eastern States

Oxygen Expresses deliver more than 17945 MT of LMO to the Nation

272 Oxygen Expresses with 1080 tankers completed their journey so far and brought relief to 15 States

Guwahati, May 26 : In the fight against Covid-19, Northeast Frontier Railway is making all out efforts to assist state governments in every way possible. N. F. Railway today ran another special train to supply Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to Assam. This second Oxygen Express train which left from Tata Nagar in Jharkhand on 25th May carrying 4 containers loaded with 80 MT of LMO, arrived at the Inland Container Depot at Amingaon in Assam on 26th May. A Green Corridor was created for fast and safe movement of the train carrying life saving consignment. The distance of 630 Km was covered by the train in about 9 hours from Malda Town to Amingaon with an average speed nearly 70 Kmph. It is to mention that NFR ran its first Oxygen Express carrying 80 MT of LMO which left

from Tata Nagar on 22nd May and arrived at Amingaon on 23rd May. Overcoming all hurdles and finding new solutions, Indian Railways is continuing its journey of bringing relief by delivering Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to various states across the country. So far, Indian Railways has delivered more than 17945 MT of LMO in more than 1080 tankers to various states across the country. It may be noted that 272 Oxygen Expresses have completed their journey so far and brought relief to various States. In a scale up of operations which continued till late yesterday night 12 Oxygen Expresses with 969 MT of LMO started their journeys from Cyclone hit Eastern States and beat tough weather to take relief to the Nation. Criss crossing the country, Indian Railways is picking up oxygen from

places like Hapa, Baroda, Mundra in the West and Rourkela, Durgapur, Tatanagar, Angul in the East and then delivering it to States of Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Telangana, Punjab, Kerala, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand & Assam in complex operational route planning scenarios. Railways have mapped different routes with Oxygen supply locations and keep itself ready with any emerging need of the States. In order to ensure that Oxygen relief reaches in the fastest time possible, Railways is creating new standards and unprecedented benchmarks in running of Oxygen Express Freight Trains.

Sanitization drive at Jamugurihat

Biswanath Chari, May 26: The Paschim Borbhagia GP had taken out a sanitization drive at various villages of Jamugurihat on Tuesday. Pares Malodas, the in charge resident of Paschim borbhagia GP and Niranjana Das along with a team had carried out a sanitization drive in the households and roads of Dekashundar, Sesa Satra villages here.

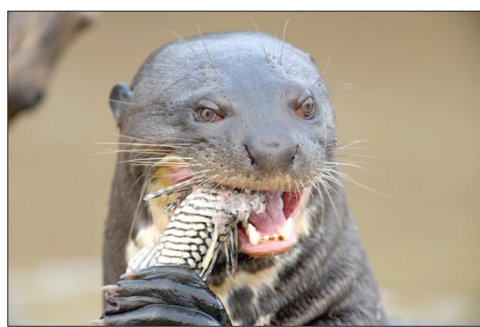


Robert Mugabe remains must be dug up and reburied at heroes' shrine-Zimbabwe chief



Harare, May 26 : A chief in Zimbabwe has ordered the exhumation and reburial of Robert Mugabe's remains at the national heroes' shrine in Harare, in a move likely to rekindle a row over the former president's final resting place. Chief Zvimba made the order after accusing the late leader's wife, Grace Mugabe, of breaking local custom by interring him at his rural home. Mugabe, who was ousted in a coup that brought Emmerson Mnangagwa to power in November 2017, was buried at his village of Kutama in 2019 after weeks of dispute with Mnangagwa's government over his final resting place. Though much of Mugabe's 37 years in power were marked by violence, economic mismanagement and corruption, the former guerrilla fighter is still revered as a liberation leader. Many in Zimbabwe see him as national hero, remembering his role in the war against white rule. Zvimba, whose district includes Kutama, said he had received a complaint from a Mugabe clan member over the manner of his burial. After presiding over a village court last week, Chief Zvimba on Monday issued a ruling that found Grace Mugabe guilty of breaking traditional norms by burying her husband in the courtyard of his home. He also fined her five cows and a goat. The former first lady did not attend the hearing. "I give powers to those who are permitted by law to exhume the late Robert Mugabe's remains from Kutama and rebury them at the National Heroes Acre in Harare," said a copy of the ruling in the local Shona language. Leo Mugabe, spokesman for the Mugabe family, immediately rejected the ruling. "He [Chief Zvimba] has no jurisdiction over Kutama. And even if the correct chief had made that ruling we would have appealed to the court," Leo Mugabe said. Chiefs in Zimbabwe have jurisdiction over their local subjects but it is rare for them to order families to exhume bodies for reburial. Mnangagwa had pushed for Mugabe to be buried at the monument for liberation war heroes, but the family refused, saying Mugabe had expressed fears to close family members before his death that some of the people who ousted him would seek to conduct a traditional ritual with his body parts.

'A huge surprise' as giant river otter feared extinct in Argentina pops up



London, May 26 : "It was a huge surprise," said Sebastián Di Martino, director of conservation at Fundación Rewilding Argentina. "I was incredulous. An incredible feeling of so much happiness. I didn't know if I should try to follow it or rush back to our station to tell the others." The cause of the excitement was the sighting, last week, of a wild giant river otter - an animal feared extinct in the country due to habitat loss and hunting - on the Bermejo River in Impenetrable national park, in north-east Argentina's Chaco province. The last sighting of a giant otter in the wild in Argentina was in the 1980s. On the Bermejo, none have been seen for more than a century. Di Martino captured the otter on his phone while kayaking. "It reared up, so its white chest was visible, which I recognised as the giant river otter [Pteronura brasiliensis]. At this point, your legs go weak and your heart starts beating faster." There are two possible explanations for the otter's return. "The closest known populations of giant otter, which is endangered globally, are in the Paraguayan Pantanal, which could connect with this river from a distance of over 1,000km. That's the simplest explanation," said Di Martino. "The other possibility is that there's a remnant population of the species in Argentina that's gone undetected. These animals live in family groups, and this was a solitary individual, which we think came from a group." Impenetrable national park was created in 2014 with the help of Rewilding Argentina and Tompkins Conservation, the organisation set up by Kristine Tompkins and her late husband, Doug, to restore wild areas of Chile and Argentina using money from their companies, The North Face, Esprit and Patagonia. Tompkins Conservation has helped protect 5.9m hectares (14.5m acres) in South America's southern cone. Working with governments and public and private partners, the organisation has helped create 13 national parks, including Corcovado, Pumalín, Yendegai, Kawésqar and Patagonia in Chile and Monte León and

Iberá in Argentina. Impenetrable's 128,000 hectares (316,000 acres) of native forest and waterways protect remarkable biodiversity in a largely intact section of Gran Chaco forest, one of the world's most endangered ecosystems. Last year, a lone jaguar, thought to be extinct in the park, was discovered and has since sired cubs. Otters have a vital role to play in balancing nature. "Giant river otters, as top predators, exert a regulatory influence in the aquatic ecosystem," said Di Martino. "It's a regulator of fish populations, which contributes to the health of aquatic ecosystems. It's a spectacular animal, and it's enormous; it can be 1.8 metres long. Adults weigh over 30kg. They're trusting and curious. To share the environment with them is marvellous." The otters are so important that, long before this sighting, there were plans to reintroduce them. Rewilding Argentina has been working to bring back giant otters since 2018, concentrating their efforts in Argentina's Iberá wetlands. Coco and Alondra, a mating pair from Denmark and Hungary, are currently in a pre-release pen there, waiting to enter their vast new home. The otters are part of a larger ecosystem restoration project to bring back top predators and other species to their native habitats. Three jaguars, the largest predators in South America, were released into Iberá in February, the first of nine that will hopefully repopulate the wetlands. "Given the right circumstances and if the reason an animal went extinct has been removed, you can bring back almost anything," said Kristine Tompkins. "Our mission is to rewild the Americas, from creating national parks to bringing back those species that have gone missing. It's a model that can be replicated all over the world. This is how we're moving the needle in the fight against the species extinction crisis." The reappearance of a lone giant otter in Argentina has bolstered the argument that if wild, natural areas are protected, animals will return and life can thrive again, said Di Martino. "For us, the importance of this sighting is that we're reminded that we have to protect more of this gem of biodiversity that is Impenetrable national park," said Di Martino. "The Bermejo River, where this otter was found, is full of illegal hunting and fishing activity. There needs to be more supervision, but also the river has to open up to activities such as tourism, which can provide income to a region that's very much in need of it. The importance of seeing this otter here again is that it tells us that nature is resilient. If we can help it, there's hope."

EU imposes new economic sanctions on Belarus over 'hijacked' flight

Washington, May 26 : EU leaders triggered new economic sanctions against Belarus and punitive measures against its national airline as a dissident taken from a "hijacked" Ryanair flight was paraded on the country's television news apparently confessing to crimes against the state. In a summit communique swiftly agreed in Brussels on Monday night, the EU's 27 heads of state and government condemned the forced landing of flight FR4978 in Minsk and called for the immediate release of opposition blogger Roman Protasevich and his Russian girlfriend, Sofia Sapega. Late on Monday, Joe Biden condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the operation to arrest Protasevich, calling it "a direct affront to international norms" and called for his release. He welcomed EU sanctions, adding that his team was assessing "appropriate options". Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, earlier spoke to Belarusian democratic opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya about the "brazen and dangerous grounding" of Protasevich's Ryanair flight and reassured her of US support for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in the country. Sullivan has also "raised our strong concerns" about Belarus's action with his Kremlin counterpart, according to the US White House press secretary, Jen Psaki. The EU statement came shortly after the release of a video in which Protasevich denied reports he had suffered health problems since his

arrest in the Belarusian capital and said he was confessing to inciting mass riots, a charge that carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years. The video, which appeared to have been filmed by police, was Protasevich's first appearance since his arrest. His father, Dmitry Protasevich, said the video comments on Monday seemed to be a result of coercion. "It's likely his nose is broken, because the shape of it has changed and

appeared to have bruising above his right eye. He has not previously said he planned to confess to the charges against him, and several journalists who know him have said they believe he is under duress. Under the measures agreed by the EU leaders, a raft of economic sanctions will be applied against those involved in the arrests adding to those imposed months earlier on nearly 60 Belarusian

security reasons, had "approved the strong actions" proposed by European Council president Charles Michel and that "the text was endorsed very quickly". There was a "strong reaction because serious endangering of aviation safety and passengers on board by Belarusian authorities", the source added. Attention was also focusing on Monday evening on Russia's role in the forced landing

flight with Bolivian president Evo Morales on board in 2013 and Ukraine grounding a flight in 2016 as his foreign ministry issued a statement describing the EU's response as "shocking". EHU has said Sapega had also been detained by the Minsk investigative committee on "groundless and made-up conditions". She was preparing to defend her master's thesis in Vilnius, the university said. Russia on Monday confirmed that it had made contact with Sapega. According to the BBC Russian service, she managed to write a text message to her mother with just one word: "Mama". Ryanair's chief executive, Michael O'Leary, said he believed that agents of the Belarusian KGB were travelling on the plane. O'Leary's remarks were the first official confirmation of reports that four other passengers had disembarked in Minsk after the emergency landing, driving speculation that Protasevich was being shadowed by the security services before the plane was forced to land. O'Leary said he believed it was the first time such an incident had taken place with a European airline. Arriving in Brussels, Ireland's taoiseach Micheál Martin had said the "forcing down" of the Ryanair plane had been "appalling reckless and unacceptable" and that he would encourage fellow leaders to deliver a "very firm and strong response". Belarus's ambassadors across Europe, including in London, Berlin and Brussels, were summoned by their hosts on Monday for a dressing down over Sunday's extraordinary events. Tensions in the region continued to escalate on Monday, however, as Minsk expelled the Latvian ambassador after officials in Riga raised a white-red-white flag in a central square in a show of solidarity with the Belarusian opposition. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy also announced that the country would halt air traffic with Belarus. Minsk has blamed the west for the escalating tensions, calling the accusations over the incident "hasty and openly belligerent". "The situation is being intentionally politicised, and there are baseless accusations and labelling," the Belarusian foreign ministry said in a statement.



there's a lot of powder on it. All of the left side of his face has powder," Dmitry Protasevich told Reuters in an interview in Russian late on Monday from Wrocław, Poland, where he and his wife live. "It's not his words, it's not his intonation of speech. He is acting very reserved and you can see he is nervous," Protasevich said of his son. "And it's not his pack of cigarettes on the table - he doesn't smoke these. So I think he was forced." The father added: "My son cannot admit to creating the mass disorders, because he just didn't do any such thing." In the video, Protasevich, who was dressed in a black hoodie and seated next to a pack of cigarettes, said: "I can declare that I have no problems with my health, either with my heart or with any other organs. [Police] officers are treating me absolutely correctly and according to the law. I'm currently continuing to cooperate with the investigation and am giving a confession to the organisation of mass arrests in the city of Minsk." The opposition journalist

officials, including president Alexander Lukashenko and his son Victor, relating to the crackdown on peaceful protests against last August's allegedly rigged presidential election result. The new sanctions will cover individuals involved in the hijacking, businesses that finance the Belarus regime and the aviation sector. The EU's heads of state and government also called on EU carriers to avoid Belarusian airspace and agreed "to adopt the necessary measures to ban overflight of EU airspace by Belarusian airlines and prevent access to EU airports" in a major blow to the country's national airline. European flights over the country's airspace have already been suspended. Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, said the actions of the Belarus authorities were "without precedent", describing attempts by Lukashenko's regime to explain away the forced landing as a response to a Hamas bomb threat as "totally unbelievable." An EU official said leaders, who had been asked to leave phones outside for

of flight FR4978 in Minsk as the UK's foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, told the House of Commons it was unlikely to have been done without Kremlin approval. Raab described the "reckless and dangerous" arrest of Protasevich and Sapega as "a shocking assault on civil aviation and an assault on international law" as the UK government announced the suspension of the operating permit of Belavia, the country's national airline. The UK is also examining the case for applying sanctions. Asked about possible Russian involvement, Raab told the Commons: "We don't have any clear details on that and I'll be careful on what I say at this point. But as he says it's very difficult to believe that this kind of action could have been taken without at least the acquiescence of the authorities in Moscow, but as I say it's unclear as yet." Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, said the case "should be assessed without any haste and hurry and based on all information available". He pointed to past incidents of Austria grounding a

EU report details role of race and ethnicity in use of 'stop and search'

London, May 26 : The scale of the discrimination faced by people from minority ethnic backgrounds at the hands of European police forces has been detailed in an EU agency report marking the anniversary of the killing of George Floyd by an officer in the US. The findings of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) highlight a general trend in which minority ethnic people are stopped and searched more regularly across the continent, and the particularly stark picture in some European countries. Nearly half (49%) of immigrants and descendants of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Austria were stopped by the police during a recent sample year, compared with 25% of the general population, the report finds. Amnesty International wrote last year that there was "institutional racism within the Austrian police force and other component parts of Austria's criminal justice system". A third of Roma in both Croatia and Greece were stopped compared with 18% and 17% of the wider population. In 2018, the Council of Europe (CoE), the 47-member state strong human rights body, castigated the inadequate response of the Croatian authorities to widespread expressions of racism and xenophobia against Serbs, LGBT people, refugees and Roma. The culture of the Greek police has also been heavily criticised by the CoE. In Spain, just 4% of the

general population reported being stopped by police but that rose to 14% of surveyed immigrants from or descended from north Africa and 32% of Roma. Last year the CoE reported that non-discrimination training for police officers had delivered positive results in Spain but officials found "exceptions concerning ethnic profiling by the police when asking for identity papers on the streets". In the UK, 3% of the general population was stopped by police compared with 5% of people from or descended from sub-Saharan Africa and 10% of Gypsies and Travellers. The Independent Office for Police Conduct last year criticised the Metropolitan police, responsible for almost half of all the police stops carried out in England and Wales, for multiple errors that had

one in three minority ethnic people for their identity papers compared with 14% of the general population, defined as all groups surveyed. Four in five people in the general population said police treated them respectfully, compared with 46% from minority groups. The agency's paper draws on findings from the FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey (2020), EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2017) and its Roma and Travellers Survey (2020). The FRA also found a strong belief among those stopped in the last five years, in almost all of the countries surveyed, that ethnic profiling led to them being stopped. Discriminatory profiling, where race or ethnicity is the police's sole basis for stopping someone, is unlawful across

Europe. In some countries, more than 80% of minority ethnic people surveyed perceived their most recent police stop as an example of profiling. The perception was most common among immigrants and descendants of immigrants from south Asia in Greece (89%) and Roma in the Netherlands (86 %) and Portugal (84%). Michael O'Flaherty, the director of the FRA, said: "Everyone has a right to be treated equally, including by the police. One year ago, the Black Lives Matter protests underscored the need to tackle racism and discrimination that are still all too common in our societies. It is time to rebuild trust among all communities and ensure police stops are always fair, justified and proportionate."



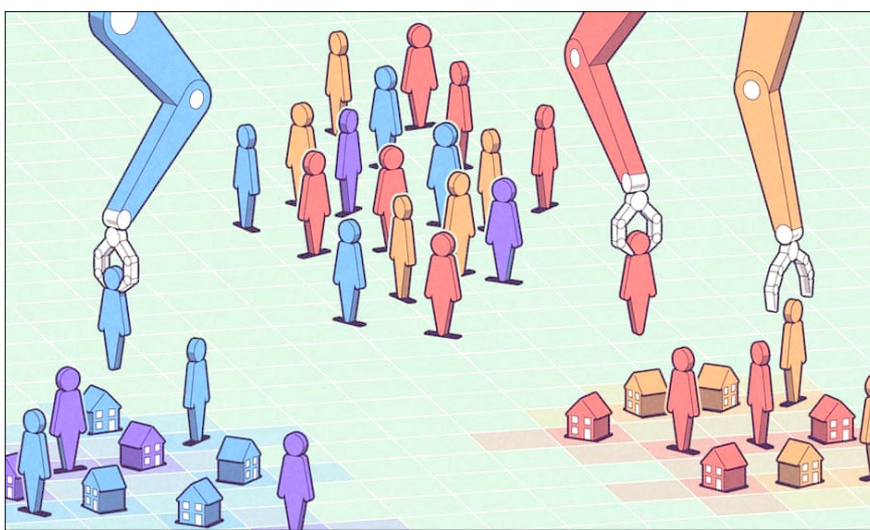
THE ASSAM RISING

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Industrial capitalists switched to fossil fuels

The International Energy Agency (IEA), the world's leading energy authority, laid bare the scale of the challenge in keeping the world on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050: a massive acceleration in renewable energy development and, starkly, no new oil, gas or coal development. None. For as long as coal remained cheapest, the IEA consistently predicted that it would continue to be the dominant energy source in electricity generation. Now that renewables, and solar in particular, generate electricity as cheaply - and often cheaper - than hydrocarbons, the IEA considers a rapid energy transition more achievable. It finds encouragement in the cost of the respective energy types: in economic terms, the IEA's is a "cost-centric" worldview. This cost-centric perspective is understandable. Historians have long viewed the cost of energy sources as an explanation for the world's first great energy transition, from water to steam and coal, during the Industrial Revolution. The consensus among many historians is that England's early industrial capitalists switched to fossil fuels because they were cheaper. But groundbreaking recent research by the political economist Andreas Malm has refuted this orthodoxy. Steam was not cheaper. Industrial capital switched to fossil fuels in the early 19th century not on account of their cost, but because they could make production more profitable. A steam engine, unlike a waterwheel, could be put up more or less anywhere, such as where cheap labour was most abundant. The profit accrued from fossil fuels, not their cost, was the key. Malm's findings raise a crucial question: what if the economics of today's energy transition likewise turn not on, as the IEA presumes, relative technology costs but on profitability? What would this mean for the world staying on the narrow pathway to net zero envisioned by the IEA? One way to approach these questions is to consider the current strategies of the European oil and gas majors, BP, Shell and Total. In the past 15 months, all three have announced plans to transition from being oil and gas companies to "energy companies", and all three are now making investments in renewables as well as hydrocarbon production. For these companies, profit is indeed the pivotal variable, just as it was for Malm's early industrial capitalists. All proposed investments by the oil and gas majors must meet profitability hurdle rates in order to be approved. Cost matters, to be sure, but only to the extent that it influences expected profitability. To understand the economics of the energy transition, we should adopt a "profit-centric" perspective, rather than a cost-centric one. Crucially, all three companies agree that hydrocarbon production in areas such as oil remains significantly more profitable than renewable energy generation. Internal rates of return (IRRs) - the standard commercial measure of an investment's profitability - are around 15% to 20% on hydrocarbons, or higher. Typical IRRs on renewables today are around 5% to 6%, although the majors think they can do better than existing renewables companies and lift returns to about 10%. A big part of the reason for these differences, as the energy economist Nick Butler has noted, is varying degrees of competition. The barriers to entry to the renewables business are much lower than in oil and gas, thus increasing competition and depressing profitability. As a result, all three European majors continue to invest vastly more resources into oil and gas development than renewables development. BP, for example, will start up seven major new hydrocarbon production projects in 2022, with at least three more following in 2023 or later. The notion that these companies - let alone the US oil and gas majors or the national oil companies of the world's petro-states, which have been much more circumspect about renewables than the Europeans - will rapidly cease new hydrocarbon development in the manner called for by the IEA flies in the face of these economic realities. Hydrocarbons reap bigger profits. Taxing carbon emissions through carbon pricing - in the form of cap-and-trade programmes or taxes on emissions - will likely be insufficient to curb new oil and gas development. As the economist Lance Taylor has argued, the prices incorporated in current programmes and proposals are much too low. And in any event, the big oil and gas companies factor carbon taxes into their projections when modelling investment cash-flows, and still find proposed hydrocarbon projects to be highly profitable. Total, for example, assumes a long-term carbon price of \$40 (£28) per ton as a "base case" scenario for project evaluation, adding a "sensitivity analysis" where carbon is priced at \$100 per ton from 2030. These companies also, of course, plan on the basis of different potential commodity prices. Two large recently approved hydrocarbon projects in Angola and Brazil are projected to generate IRRs for Total in excess of 20% at a conservative oil price of \$50 per barrel. Oil is currently trading at comfortably above \$60. If achieving net zero does indeed require halting all new hydrocarbon development and rapidly switching to renewables, it's clear that we'll need a far bolder and more radical approach than relying on market forces and policy measures such as carbon pricing to get us there.

Could England's future be a left-leaning south facing off against a conservative north?



London is changing, and so is the south of England. Whether recent predictions of a lasting drop in the capital's population and emptied-out office districts will come true is still unclear. But something has definitely been happening, for the best part of a year: thanks to Covid and its disruptions, a sizeable number of people are deciding to leave the city and head elsewhere, chasing space, greenery - and, in many cases, the company of like minds. Former Londoners, it seems, have recently set up home as far afield as Devon and Cornwall. Estate agents report relocations to such commuter-belt towns as Broxbourne in Hertfordshire, Reigate in Surrey and Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. At the same time, people seem to be pitching up in and around places associated with a liberal, remain-ish view of the world: Oxford, Brighton, Bath, the more affluent parts of Bristol. In Frome, the Somerset town where I have lived since 2009 and which is now a byword for a broadly Green political outlook and a trailblazing town council, you can hear the endless crashes and clunks of house renovations ordered by new arrivals from the Big Smoke. All of this is accelerating a change that was starting to become clear before the pandemic: in many places once seen as conservative with both a big and small C, signs of a shift towards a different kind of politics. This is part of the explanation for recent English election results that

suggested the mirror image of Tory successes in old Labour heartlands: Conservative losses in such counties as Surrey (where they shed 14 county council seats), Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and West Sussex; Labour's win in the mayoral contest that spanned Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire; and a strong showing for Labour and the Lib Dems in Oxfordshire, where the one-time party of the working class finished first in the well-known proletarian hotbed of Chipping Norton. The same applies to wins for the Green party in East Sussex, Gloucestershire, Suffolk and Kent. For people on the left, this is good news. In the suburbs, the fact that one aspect of the story centres on a long-term move into greater racial diversity should also be a cause for celebration. But as England enters a new age of political polarisation, those endless lifestyle articles about whichever places beyond the capital are now held to have the correct mixture of artisan cafes and organic food markets also suggest other social changes that are much narrower, and introverted: what some people call "clustering". More than ever before, the mobility enabled by affluence and the chance to work from home are allowing some people to put down roots alongside neighbours with similar - or, increasingly, identical - views and values, who live in much the same material circumstances. And after a year of lockdowns shutting us

away in filter bubbles and tight social networks, what may be taking shape in parts of the shires and suburbs threatens something just as monocultural: a kind of economic and political uniformity that might be built on the politics of virtue, but can easily seem inward-looking and intolerant. "London is a machine which sucks in young graduates and then later spits them out into the south east," wrote one economics blogger recently. In plenty of places, any dreams of an educated hipster utopia are rather compromised by justified local resentments about gentrification and rocketing house prices. Old Tory southern strongholds starting to feel the presence of new, left-inclined

people are still a long way from being piled high with sourdough loaves and rainbow flags. Nonetheless, what is happening looks set to deepen the sense of England as a whole being an ever-more imbalanced country. If you want a possible vision of the future, picture a liberal, university-educated middle class concentrated - by choice - in the affluent south, while a reactionary conservatism speaks for more deprived parts of the country, and the tensions that surfaced around Brexit burst forth again and again. In 2008, the American writer and journalist Bill Bishop published a very prescient book titled *The Big Sort*, sub-titled "why the clustering of like-minded America is tearing us apart". He painted a picture of people settling into "extremely homogenous communities - not just by region and state, but by city and town", and set out his anxieties about things that would later explode so spectacularly between 2016 and the beginning of this year. He wrote about "segregation by way of life: pockets of like-minded citizens that have become so ideologically inbred that we don't know, can't understand, and can barely conceive of 'those people' who live just a few miles away". As they stoke the so-called culture wars, the Conservatives are deliberately exacerbating comparable tensions. Meanwhile, Labour is led by people who do not know what to do in response. One thing, though, is clear:

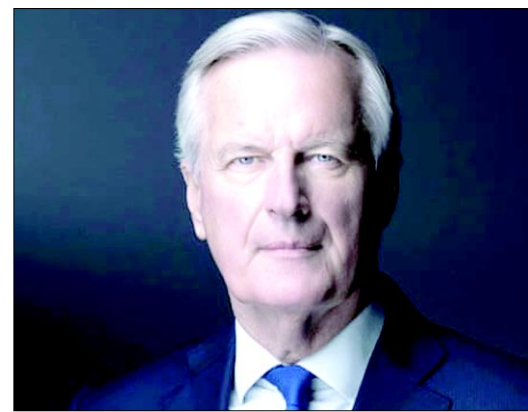
the danger of its recent public paroxysms about the post-industrial north and Midlands, and Keir Starmer's clunky attempts to appeal to these areas' supposed cultural conservatism is that they have emphasised our national divisions and suggested people have to choose a side. For a party that depends on somehow glueing very different elements of the electorate together, this is surely not the cleverest move. That wasn't quite the resounding Conservative election victory it seemed. In parts of the country that are often sneered at, there is an England that feels more inclusive, egalitarian and increasingly diverse: the more successful parts of the new towns built between the 1950s and 1970s, and the starter-home developments that now ring towns and cities. Politicians on the left should sample these places' atmospheres: at their best, they suggest something akin to the writer JB Priestley's postwar glimpses of "an England without privilege ... as near to a classless society as we have got yet". There is also, I think, a conversation to be had about the media. Certainly, if "public service broadcasting" is to mean anything, it should ditch the kind of output that plays up our divisions (think, for example, of the weekly bear-pit that was pre-pandemic Question Time, or the anger that pours forth from radio phone-ins), and rediscover the importance of a kind of social and political reporting that reminds people of how the other half - seen from both sides - actually lives. The *Big Sort* warns of the perils of societies "dividing by economic prospects, by years of education ... and by political persuasion". It insists that in any functioning democracy, we all need to understand that there are lots of people "who aren't just like you. They don't live like you, they don't have families like yours, and they don't think like you. They may not live in your neighbourhood, but this is their country too." Amid shifts and changes that are only just beginning, this is a truth we all need to swallow. If we do not, we risk a future that will be not just bleak, but politically impossible.

There's a time and a place for trees-don't transplant them for our amusement

Agaggle of oak saplings has gathered outside Tate Modern. They were grown by the British artists Ackroyd & Harvey from acorns from the trees that the German artist Joseph Beuys had planted in the city of Kassel in the 1980s, in a "social sculpture" called 7000 Oaks. This temporary installation, the official blurb says, creates "a place for gathering and for rethinking our connections with nature". It takes its place alongside the forthcoming four-week appearance of **Rowan Moore** 400 trees in the courtyard of Somerset House, by the designer Es Devlin for the London Design Biennale, which is also meant to make us reflect on nature and the environment. Plus, there's a temporary wooded hill planned for Marble Arch and the different-but-related craze for putting trees high up on multistorey apartment buildings in Shanghai, Milan and Quito. What these projects have in common is a wish to put trees where they don't really want to be, whether high in the sky or in temporary installations. Many look engaging, but the resources required to move, lift, contain and irrigate the trees, notwithstanding Devlin's and Ackroyd & Harvey's pledges to minimise their projects' impacts, must surely work against whatever environmental messages their designers might want to send. I love a good tree, but in the ground, where its roots can spread, where it doesn't look as if it's waiting for an arboreal Uber to take it somewhere else. Few things make an architecture critic feel older than the news that a building whose inception you witnessed is being proposed for listing as a building of architectural and historic interest.

On immigration, Michel Barnier has joined the race to the bottom

Michel Barnier seems to have ruffled as many feathers in France with his latest comments on immigration as he did in Britain during his stint as EU Brexit negotiator. Positioning himself to run as the rightwing candidate in next year's presidential elections, Barnier told a TV interviewer that he wanted to suspend immigration to France from outside the EU, including family reunions, for three to five years. Immigration, he suggested, was linked to terrorism and was a threat to the stability of French society. He also called for talks with other members of the Schengen group (the 26 European countries that have abolished all passport controls at their mutual borders) to strengthen the EU's external borders. Barnier's remarks caused outrage. But, shocking though they were, the comments are an extreme version of actual EU policy. Politicians of all hues have accepted that freedom of movement inside Europe requires the tightening of restrictions against non-Europeans. "Fortress Europe" is the price of Schengen. As the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, noted in 2016, his hardline anti-immigration stance, "once condemned, despised, looked down upon and



Kenan Malik treated with contempt", is now the EU's "jointly held position". Barnier took the inner logic of that immigration policy and pushed it further than most mainstream politicians have so far been willing to go to demonstrate he is best placed to outflank far-right Marine Le Pen in the presidential elections. It is another example of an observation I made last month about Danish immigration policy: when politicians engage in a race to the bottom, they soon find there is no bottom. They just keep on racing down until they lose all moral bearings.

The Future And Growth Of The Indian Power Back-Up Market



With the government's initiatives to expand electrification rates all across India, technological developments, and overall economic growth, the energy demand has skyrocketed. After fulfilling the needs of electricity, relying on uninterrupted power to run critical systems has become mandatory.

So, as a result, the Indian Power Backup Market is also spreading its roots in the economy. By the year 2023, the Indian Power Backup Market is presumed to cross INR 500 billion.

Power Backup Market can be broadly segmented into three fields: 1) Diesel Generators, 2) UPS and, 3) Inverters

The Diesel Generator occupies 25% of the Indian Power Backup Market and shows CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 8.1%. The telecom industry is the critical driver for diesel generators, occupying more than 40% of the installed base. The construction and hospitality industries come next.

The UPS market occupies 20% of the Indian Power Backup Market, showing a CAGR of 11.97%. Growing investments and the rapid development of the IT sector have contributed to the boom in the UPS market. Inverters occupy almost half of the entire Indian Power

Backup Market, showing a CAGR of 9.33%.

Indian inverter market is expected to reach INR 280 Billion by 2023. Demand and growth in the inverter market can be attributed to the requirement for power backup solutions across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. Considering the advantages provided by inverters, they are no more luxury products; they become necessary. Based on inverter type, central inverters represent the most prominent segment, holding the largest market share. Prime reasons are the advantages offered by these inverters: high efficiency, low cost, credibility, and easy installation. String inverters and others follow central inverters.

Talking about the advancement in technology, trends regarding inverter and UPS systems shift towards solar-based solutions. Solar-powered inverters come with a separate solar charge controller to regulate the power from solar pan-

els. And the UPS system is equipped with two inbuilt chargers - the grid charger and solar charger, to provide an instant power supply during power failures.

Nowadays, IoT (Internet of Things) has raised expectations of enhanced intelligence from inverters and UPS systems. Rather than being standalone devices, these systems operate in close connection with an intelligent network. IoT systems alert consumers about impending problems in advance, enabling preventive maintenance and eases ease in operations. Plus, the third-party maintenance feature allows maintenance services 24/7 via remote monitoring. With such elevations, inverters today are added with attractive looks and intelligent features like intelligent connectivity and an app that shows the status of the inverter, battery status, remaining backup, etc. ZunSolar aims to capture this vast inverter

market in the coming years. ZunSolar has brought forth many solar products, including several solar combos, at a very affordable range to compete in this market with a focus on price and quality. The main objective is to liberate the common man with humble backgrounds, residing in villages and small towns from the huge electricity bills and provide light to every household. The government's initiatives to expand the electrification rate in India, coupled with technological developments, are further expected to positively influence the Indian inverter market in the coming years. We are hoping to serve this market for years to come

About The Author
Pranesh Chaudhary
Founder and CEO - ZUNROOF TECH
Pranesh Chaudhary is the Founder and CEO of ZunRoof Tech Private Limited, India's leading Home-tech startup company

that has pioneered to fulfill the supply and demand of electricity. Pranesh founded the company in 2016 with his long-time close friend Sushant Sachan, the Chief Research Officer at ZunRoof. Pranesh being an expert in Direct to customer domain and Sushant with expertise in the solar field, married two of their respective strengths to solve two problems: demand and supply of electricity by building a marketplace for solar rooftop installations and an IoT-based automation solution. Prior to founding Zunrooft, Pranesh had worked at the Essex Lake Group, London and Capital One, Bangalore as a Management Consultant. He has acquired years of experience in the domains of Risk Analytics & Management, Marketing & Acquisitions Strategy, Customer Segmentation, Expense Re-engineering and Operations Management.

Pranesh Chaudhary
Founder & CEO ZunRoof Tech Pvt Ltd

Fino Payments Bank's merchant network gives push to Covid-19 vaccination drive



Guwahati, May 25 : In addition to providing access to banking services, Fino Payments Bank's merchant outlets across the country aim to play a critical role in pushing the Covid-19 vaccination drive by helping people register online for vaccination. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and medical experts recommend vaccination for all as it is one of the best ways to protect self and others from Covid-19. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, a person can register for COVID-19 vaccination in advance by logging into the Co-WIN portal (www.cowin.gov.in) or AarogyaSethu app. While a few on-spot registrations are available, online is recommended for hassle-free experience. By helping the technologically challenged and people with no smartphones, Fino merchants

join the millions of healthcare personnel and scores of volunteers in the country that are providing selfless service to the affected families. Fino merchants are in the neighbourhood and always ready to help - Hamesha! To find the nearest Fino merchant point, people can click on the URL <https://fino.lalong.in/> or can scan the QR code. Atul Trivedi, Senior Divisional Head, Fino Payments Bank said, "Majority of the people in rural areas, especially senior citizens and women, are clueless about online registration leading to either delay or avoiding vaccination. They need assistance and as responsible citizens our merchants are ready to help. People can approach Fino merchants with their Aadhaar card and get the required registration done. The prevailing humanitarian crisis warrants such small acts of support on the ground to improve the effectiveness of the vaccination drive." Fino merchants will access the Co-WIN portal from their smartphones either directly or through FinoMitra or BPay apps. To complete the registration process in the portal, merchant will provide mobile and Aadhaar number of the person who sought help. An OTP gets generated that needs to be filled in the required field resulting in an SMS message indicating successful registration. People have the option to choose the vaccination centre and time slot. All one needs to do is show up at the vaccination centre to get the dose.

E-Courts: Supreme Court's digitalisation vision will ease access to justice

Mumbai, May 26 : The Covid-19 pandemic continues to necessitate relooking of traditional processes, and the preparation for increasing technology adaptation in service delivery. Citizen-centric services that have been disrupted or perhaps irreversibly altered have required a recalibration. Access to justice is a key citizen need that requires a futuristic approach to enhance efficiency, equity, and ease. Though NITI Aayog has indeed brought out more targeted indices to track climate actions such as under SDG-13 (climate action) of SDG India Index. Data central to effective climate action Ensuring the same rights: The govt must work on allowing same-sex marriage, can amend the Special Marriage Act to stave off religious backlash Technology will play a major part in ensuring these parameters see visible improvements. This is why the recently released draft vision document for Phase III by the Supreme Court of India's eCourts Committee ('Vision') is a progressive and transformational roadmap for how technology and justice can be intertwined and optimised. Chaired by Justice DY Chandrachud, the Vision is a positive step in bringing to the forefront the need for technology and technology-augmented processes to enhance justice delivery for those who need it the most. The Vision adopts a holistic approach, with checks and balances, principles and values, and, above all, a willingness to make technology a key driver to solve several of the issues before us today. It essentially provides a platform from which policy and implementation blueprints can emerge, involving 360-degree stakeholder participation. The nature of what 'digital' entails has been reimagined, i.e., the adoption of digital has been taken several notches above a mere replication of paper processes in the digital format. This allows innovation and downstream benefits of real-time big data to accrue to all who are involved with delivery of justice in India. This context helps optimally approach how the Vision can transform the delivery of justice to each and every individual touched by it. This article focuses on some key aspects which would greatly enhance efficiency through technology, checks and balances in adoption and integration of technology. A key NITI Aayog reform, and focused upon in the Vision, is Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). The NITI Aayog established a committee chaired by Justice (Retd) AK Sikri to formulate an action plan for ODR in India. Members of the committee include several secretaries of the government of India. The goal is to put in place a report and an action-plan that enables ODR in a sustainable framework now and adapts to become an option of first recourse for several categories of claims in a dynamic fashion. The report will be released shortly, and it has received the support of Justice Chandrachud as well as several other esteemed members of the judiciary, both current and former. Other meaningful areas that the Vision looks to address include the simplifying of procedures to help eliminate or simplify repetitive and routine pre-digital era processes by adopting digital technology to improve efficiency. Also addressed are the creation of a foundational digital infrastructure and capabilities to facilitate potentially infinite numbers of additional

services/solutions. It looks towards putting in place a new institutional and governance framework including by the establishing of what will eventually become a National Judicial Technology Council in the longer term. The Vision categorises dispute mitigation, containment, and resolution, and maps them to technology inputs. Dispute mitigation, containment, and resolution together have been predicated on four key build-



ing blocks: a set of core values, a whole-of-system approach, a focus on adoption of technology by users, and a robust governance framework. Each of these components will require technological integration with different institutions. The key goals and strategy prioritise the creation of a core digital infrastructure that can enable the development of services for dispute containment and resolution by the judiciary. The Vision lays emphasis on the importance of guardrails and processes. There is, therefore, extensive focus on principles, be they of integrity, accountability, transparency, procurement, or interoperability. These lay an extremely strong foundation for an effective governance framework. The ideas propagated in the Vision can be enhanced with stakeholder participation and ownership. Adoption benefits of the vision are manifold, and

impact each stakeholder group. Benefits for citizens include more optimal scheduling mechanisms, online digital filings, and different mediums of hearings, thereby increasing timely access to courts from anywhere. For lawyers, seamless filings, service of summons remotely, availability of identical digital case files as the court, better scheduling, digital hearings and e-filings are just some of the benefits. Judges could ben-

efit from greater data, information and decision-making support that aids management of case-flow. A unified digital platform will allow courts to track the progress of cases, from the court of original jurisdiction through appellate courts, and greater access to information and research tools. For the judicial and legal system, benefits could include better data visibility on types and classes of cases that create most caseloads and how they proceed; this will enable more targeted intervention and resource allocation by the judiciary. Progressive and disruptive changes in justice delivery can alter the course of access to justice in an unprecedented way. The Vision has key components that can act as building blocks for ensuring ease of access to justice for the common man, augmented by efficiencies made possible by wide technology adoption.

Govt weighs fresh stimuli, relief package to soften Covid-19 blow

Mumbai, May 26 : The government has initiated discussions on the need for the next round of relief measures to soften the blow of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the severe second wave and near-Pan India lock-down have led to vigorous calls for more succour to lift economic activities. However, given the limited resources and the fact that the government has already rolled out "massive stimulus" last year and announced more steps in the Budget for FY22, any package this time, if approved, could be "smaller", an official source said. But it could still be a "meaningful intervention", he said. "Preliminary discussions have started," he added. The targets were set at a meeting chaired by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray (CM) to review the preparedness for the kharif season starting from June. Maharashtra raises kharif crop output estimate with increase in sowing area On May 1, the government had slashed IGBT rate to 12% from 28% on import of oxygen concentrators for personal use till June 30. GST Council to review compen-

sation estimate, cut taxes on Covid vaccines, drugs The Prime Minister's Office and the finance ministry have kept a close eye on the Covid situation as well as on the requirement of further steps to stimulate growth. "The government hasn't closed its door on further relief measures. But the necessity,



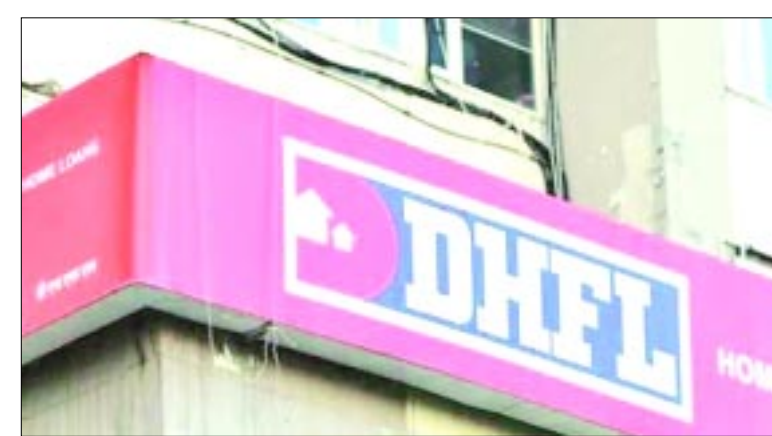
timing and the nature of any such intervention is yet to be decided," said another source. Sectors like tourism and aviation, and small and medium businesses that have been hit hard are expected to be among the key beneficiaries. Last year, the government had announced a Rs 21-lakh-crore relief package initially to offer breather to both individuals as well as businesses. Later, by November 2020, it offered more succour, including Rs 65,000-crore extra fertiliser subsidy in FY21, Rs 18,000 crore for PM Awas Yojana (Urban) via additional allocation and extra budgetary resources, and its decision to bear 24% EPFO con-

tribution for eligible staff/units for 2 years. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had then said that the total steps taken were worth Rs 29.88 lakh crore (15% of GDP), which include RBI measures worth `12.71 lakh crore. Currently, the government is closely monitoring the capex programmes, including that

ing another loan moratorium. Speaking at an online discussion organised by The Indian Express and Financial Times in April, Sitharaman had said she was "monitoring the economy in a very detailed fashion on an everyday basis". The second Covid wave has hit industrialised states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi, among others, and forced them to announce local lockdowns to contain infections. This has disrupted economic activities there. While daily fresh Covid cases dropped below two lakh on Monday for the first time since April 14, the total cases remained as high as 2.69 crore. As many as 3,511 patients died in the past 24 hours, with states scrambling to get vaccines. The severity of the second wave has prompted many agencies to trim their growth forecasts for India. Recently, global rating agency Moody's on Tuesday slashed its India growth forecast for FY22 to 9.3% from 13.7%. S&P, too, expects growth slipping to 9.8% under a "moderate" scenario from 11% it forecast in March. Barclays on Monday cut its India growth forecast by 80 basis points to 9.2% for FY22. In its latest monthly bulletin last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the biggest toll of the current second wave is in terms of a demand shock (loss of mobility, discretionary spending and employment, besides inventory accumulation), although aggregate supply is less impacted. The RBI had in April (before the full fury of the Covid resurgence) pegged the FY22 growth rate at 10.5%.

DHFL resolution: NCLAT stays NCLT order on promoter Wadhawan's offer

Mumbai, May 26 : The DHFL resolution has been in process since November 2019 when DHFL became the first financial services company to be taken by the lenders to NCLT. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Tuesday stayed the May 19 order passed by the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which had directed the administrator of Dewan Housing Finance (DHFL) to consider the settlement offer made by its former promoter, Kapil Wadhawan. Wadhawan is currently in jail in an alleged bank fraud case. Though the appellate tribunal fixed June 25 as the next date of hearing, and agreed to hear the pleas made by the committee of creditors (CoC), DHFL's RBI-appointed administrator and the Piramal Group, which have challenged the Mumbai NCLT order; it said that this case will not act as an obstacle for passing the order relating to the resolution plan of the successful bidder. Thermax Q4 net profit zooms 175% at Rs 107 crore. The company will reimburse the amount that the employee has claimed but was not covered by medical insurance. Arcelor to provide support to families of staff succumbing to Covid-19. It appears appropriate to us that till we decide the appeal, the impugned orders should be stayed," a vacation bench of NCLAT, comprising the



officiating chairperson, justice chairman A I S Cheema, said. The bench observed that it was "unable to appreciate the hurry imposed on the administrator and CoC to consider the second settlement proposal (by Wadhawan)". "We find that there are serious issues which are being raised (by the appellants) and which need consideration," it said. "Here the matter had proceeded to the stage where even resolution plan had been approved and was before adjudicating authority. There would be no end if such reversals are allowed. There is no dispute regarding the fact that resolution plan has already been approved and is before the adjudicating authority. Without deciding the same, the present order has been passed," the NCLAT observed. The NCLT's order had put a spanner in the entire resolu-

tion process, as the lenders had in January voted in favour of Piramal Group's Rs 34,250-crore resolution plan, which was also approved by the RBI on February 18. The lenders had subsequently taken the proposal to the NCLT for the final approval. The DHFL resolution has been in process since November 2019 when DHFL became the first financial services company to be taken by the lenders to NCLT. Wadhawan had made an offer in the past also but the lenders had refused to consider it based on legal advice since his eligibility to make a bid under Section 29A of IBC was doubtful. The troubled mortgage lender has admitted claims of `87,120 crore, with State Bank of India (SBI) being the lead creditor. Bondholders have claimed Rs 45,550 crore while financial creditors have sought Rs 41,342.23 crore from it.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Introduces An Innovative Retirement Solution With Increasing Regular Income Option

Guwahati, May, 2021: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has introduced an innovative retirement solution by combining two variants of its popular 'Guaranteed Pension Plan', which offers a guaranteed return on investments. This solution provides customers with increasing regular income that doubles after five years and triples after the 11th year, thereby shielding them against the rising cost of living. In recognition of the innovative and industry-first features offered by the Company's 'Guaranteed Pension Plan', it has been voted by consumers as 'Product of the Year - Retirement and Pension Plans' category. Product of the Year (POY) is the world's largest consumer-voted award for product innovation in their respective categories. Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance,

said, "We are delighted that consumers have voted Guaranteed Pension Plan as 'Product of the Year'. We believe, the industry-first features of this product resonated very well with consumers and is a testimony of our approach to developing innovative products. It is imperative that customers plan for their retirement and the solution offered by the 'Guaranteed Pension Plan' enables customers to receive increasing regular income and lead a financially self-sufficient retired life." The pandemic has made customers appreciate the importance of financial planning, and this is especially so for life after retirement. The customer-centric retirement or annuity products offered by the Company have enabled it to grow the annuity business segment by 120% in FY2021. Annuity products enable customers to plan for their retirement and are

available in two variants i.e. Immediate and Deferred Annuity. The Immediate Annuity option enables customers to start receiving regular income immediately by paying a one-time premium. On the other hand, the Deferred Annuity option gives customers the flexibility to start receiving income in the future; for instance closer to their retirement. Customers have the option to defer the start of their income for a maximum period of 10 years. Longer the deferral, higher would be the income. ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan, is the Company's flagship annuity product and offers industry-first features such as the early return of purchase price from the age of 76 years or on turning 80. It also includes others such as return of purchase on death or upon being diagnosed with specific critical illnesses or permanent disability due to an accident. About

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company ICICI Prudential Life is promoted by ICICI Bank Limited and Prudential Corporation Holdings Limited. The Company began operations in fiscal 2001 and has consistently been amongst the top private sector life insurance companies in India on a Retail Weighted Received Premium (RWRP) basis. The Company offers an array of products in the Protection and Savings category which match the different life stage requirements of customers, enabling them to provide a financial safety net to their families as well as achieve their long-term financial goals. The digital platform of the Company provides a paperless onboarding experience to customers, empowers them to conduct an assortment of self-service transactions, provides a convenient route to make digital payments for purchasing and mak-

ing renewal premium payments, and facilitates a hassle-free claims settlement process. On March 31, 2021, the Company had an AUM of ₹ 2,142.18 billion and a Total Sum Assured of ₹ 20.30 trillion. ICICI Prudential Life is listed on both the National Stock Exchange (NSE) Limited and the BSE Limited.

Disclaimer

Except for the historical information contained herein, statements in this release which contain words or phrases such as 'will', 'expected to', etc., and similar expressions or variations of such expressions may constitute 'forward-looking statements'. These forward-looking statements involve a number of risks, uncertainties and other factors that could cause actual results, opportunities and growth potential to differ materially from those suggested by the forward-looking statements.

Contd. From Page 1

'How Can a Sick Person Attend

UAPA by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and granted bail by an NIA court in July 2020. According to KMSS members, the four's family members were also questioned by the police at their respective residences. They were not shown any papers or warrants by the police, their organisations claim. The Wire spoke to Manas Konwar of SMSS and Shrinkhal Chaliha of Bir Lachit Sena. Konwar said, "It was around midnight when the police came to my house and questioned my family. They showed up without any proper warrant or papers. When we asked them on what grounds they have shown up at our homes, the police were not able to give any reasons. The four of us were picked up and taken to Simaluguri police station. We were detained for the entire night. We kept asking the police why they did this. Instead, they said we cannot do any agitation. We said that agitation is our democratic right and they cannot stop us. It is clear that Himanta and the BJP are so scared that they have to resort to this. They were afraid that we may protest against what Sarma said on Akhil." He further added, "The police went to every house of those who are workers and members of KMSS, SMSS and other organisations. Today the entire Sivasagar town has been cordoned off. Police and security personnel are at every nook and corner of Sivasagar town." Chaliha was arrested and jailed last year and his house was raided by the CID for his alleged role in the anti-CAA protests. He said, "The police had also come to my house, but I was not there. In fact, the police arrived at my place first. Then they went to others' houses. This is a textbook fascist ploy to curb democratic angst. The police also arrived at KMSS state joint secretary Dhariya Konwar's house, but he was not there." The episode and particularly Sarma's comments were criticised by academics, mental health experts, civil society and social media users. Sarma said, "Regarding a person whom doctors have been treating at GMCH [Gauhati Medical College and Hospital] for four months, I am told that he is not in a sound state of mind. He is getting treatment due to psychological issues because of his emotional imbalance. The question is how can a sick person be seated inside the assembly?" If he is okay, then according to law, he should be in jail and if he is sick then he should be in a paid hospital cabin. Who will take this decision? Gogoi said the speaker should write. I say why should the speaker write to a sick person? The speaker has sought our comment and we have said a sick person cannot be exposed. He is no doubt sick and that is why he is at GMCH." The above is The Wire's translation from the Assamese original. However, Sarma said the phrases "psychological issues" and "emotional imbalance" in English. A video of his speech is below: He continued, "On May 21 he came near me. I asked why. We all have made a decision to follow COVID-19 protocol. He did not even spare a single table (implying where the MLAs were seated) that day. He was going around from one table to another. For a moment I wondered whether is he there to spread COVID-19." On Tuesday evening, DY 365, an Assam TV channel, interviewed one of the doctors treating Gogoi, Purujit Choudhury. Choudhury told the news channel that Gogoi has been undergoing treatment at GMCH for multiple ailments since his COVID-19 diagnosis last year. "Several departments are treating him, including gastroenterology, neurology, neuro surgery, psychiatry, ENT, cardiology etc. He also has lower back pain. He also has been developing psychiatric problems...severe sleep disturbances...depression. He thinks about his son and wife and is worried about them. Besides that, he has high uric acid and kidney stone and second degree piles. Whether a patient is jailed or not we do not discharge them until we provide complete treatment," Choudhury said. A leading academic in a Facebook post cited the Mental Health Care Act, 2017, and how Sarma may have gone against it. Political science professor Akhil Ranjan Dutta wrote, "The determination of a person's mental illness can alone never imply or be taken to mean that the person is of unsound mind unless he has been declared as such by a competent court. Even if a person's mental illness is identified, such a person cannot be called 'mentally ill' until the authorised court announces it." Section 19 of the Act states that, "Every person with mental illness shall, - (a) have a right to live in, be part of and not be segregated from society..." A mental health expert told The Wire as much. Requesting anonymity, the psychiatrist also said, "Sarma made his comments on World Schizophrenia Day. It was ironic. Sarma was mocking someone with mental issues. This sets a very bad example. It was an egregious statement by a chief minister, and especially when many people are coping with mental health issues during the pandemic. Every person with mental health problems has the right to confidentiality. Sarma has transgressed provisions of the Mental Health Care Act, 2017, with this comment."

Four-time Assam MLA dies

for four times. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condoled the death and tweeted, "A dedicated social worker, committed politician and deeply loved, his absence shall be sorely missed." Hagrama Mohilary, who leads the BPF, wrote on Facebook that the death "has left a deep sense of regret in our hearts". "It is a personal loss for me. Since many years we have shared our political journey together and worked together for a good governance. Together we had more dreams to fulfill for our region. His contribution for our society is immense and cannot be measured. He will be always remembered as people's leader," Mohilary said.

Subodh Kumar Jaiswal

Director General of Police before being called on central deputation again. Accelerate your career with UGC-recognised BITS Pilani MBA in Business Analytics While serving in Maharashtra, he led the investigation into the Telgi stamp paper scam case before it was taken over by the CBI. He then headed the State Reserve Police Force, following which he joined the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad. Subodh Kumar was the front runner for the post of Delhi Police Commissioner after the retirement of Amulya Patnaik, incidentally, his batchmate. The veteran officer headed the Maharashtra State Intelligence Bureau at the time of the Mumbai terror attack of 2008 and worked closely with US agencies in the aftermath of that incident. It was also involved in the investigation into the Elgar Parishad and Bhima Koregaon violence cases before they were transferred to the NIA. Jaiswal also has a long stint with the Intelligence Bureau and the country's external intelligence agency, R&AW. After taking charge of CBI chief, Subodh Kumar will look after the case of 100 crore extortion allegations by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Parambir Singh, 1988 Batch IPS. He is believed to be holding crucial information regarding the ongoing case of 100 crore 'vasooli' being probed by the CBI. His fellow officer Rashmi Shukla had provided him with some crucial information with the documentary evidence, because of which the Maharashtra government initiated an inquiry against her.

COVID-19 worst crisis humanity

citizens. He said that there is now a better understanding of the pandemic, and described vaccines as absolutely important to save lives and defeat the virus. "We now have a better understanding of pandemic which strengthens our strategy to fight. We have the vaccine which is important to save lives and defeat the pandemic," he said. The PM added that "India is proud of our scientists who have worked on the COVID-19 vaccines." "In the last year, we have seen several individuals and organizations rise to the occasion and do everything possible to reduce suffering. The generous contribution of equipment and materials made by the Buddhist organizations, followers of the Buddha dharma from the world over," PM Modi said on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. The Prime Minister made these remarks while delivering the keynote address on the occasion of "Virtual Vesak Global Celebrations" on Buddha Purnima.

Sputnik V-makers have agreed

cases of black fungus or mucormycosis so far, adding that there is a shortage of Amphotericin-B injections used in its treatment. Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated a drive-in #COVID19 vaccination centre at Vegas Mall in Sector 12 of Dwarka today. pic.twitter.com/xx6dZF8YY3 He urged the Central government to procure COVID-19 vaccines by Moderna and Pfizer which he said are suitable for children. Earlier on Monday, Kejriwal had made a similar appeal to the Centre. "We've spoken to Pfizer, Moderna for vaccines, and both the companies have refused to sell vaccines directly to us. They have said that they will deal with the Government of India alone. Appeal to the Centre to import vaccines and distribute to the States," he told.

Special grand jury to investigate

his probe to issue subpoenas and obtain documents. That panel kept working while other grand juries and court activities were shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic. The investigation includes scrutiny of Trump's relationship with his lenders, a land donation he made to qualify for an income tax deduction and tax write-offs his company claimed on millions of dollars in consulting fees it paid. The new grand jury could eventually be asked to consider returning indictments. While working on that case, it also will be hearing other matters. The Post reported that the grand jury will meet three days a week for six months. Trump contends the investigation is a "witch hunt". "This is purely political, and an affront to the almost 75 million voters who supported me in the Presidential Election, and it's being driven by highly partisan Democrat prosecutors," Trump said in a statement. Vance's office declined to comment. The new grand jury is the latest sign of increasing momentum in the criminal investigation into the Republican ex-president and his company, the Trump Organization. Attorney General Letitia James said last week that she assigned two lawyers to work with Vance's office on the probe after her civil investigation into Trump evolved into a criminal matter. James, a Democrat, said her office also is continuing its civil investigation into Trump. She did not say what prompted her office to expand its investigation into a criminal probe. In recent months, Vance hired former mafia prosecutor Mark Pomerantz to help run the investigation and has been interviewing witnesses, including Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen. Vance declined to run for reelection and will leave office at the end of the year, meaning the Trump case is likely to pass to his successor in some form. An election next month is all but certain to determine who that will be. Trump said in a statement last week that he is being "unfairly attacked and abused by a corrupt political system". He contends the investigations are part of a Democratic plot to silence his voters and block him from running for president again. In February, the US Supreme Court buoyed Vance's investigation by clearing the way for the prosecutor to enforce a subpoena on Trump's accounting firm and obtain eight years of tax returns and related documents for the former president, the Trump Organization and other Trump entities. The documents are protected by grand jury secrecy rules and are not expected to be made public. Vance's investigation has appeared to focus in recent weeks on Trump's longtime finance chief, Allen Weisselberg. His former daughter-in-law, Jen Weisselberg, is cooperating with both inquiries. She has given investigators reams of tax records and other documents as they look into whether some Trump employees were given off-the-books compensation, such as apartments or school tuition. Allen Weisselberg was subpoenaed in James' civil investigation and testified twice last year. His lawyer declined to comment when asked on Tuesday (May 25) if he had been subpoenaed to testify before the new grand jury. A message-seeking comment was left with Jen Weisselberg's lawyer. ALSO READ: We have to act...racism has long torn us apart: US President Joe Biden on first death anniversary of George Floyd.

Cyclone Yaas: Landfall

lakh people have been evacuated from regions that are likely to be affected by Cyclone Yaas in Eastern India, just a week after Cyclone Taukta claimed at least 155 lives on the west coast. Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has pressed its choppers into service and deployed its personnel to assist the NDRF in the relief and rescue operations after Cyclone Yaas makes landfall in the afternoon on Wednesday. According to reports, a C-130 and two An-32 aircraft belonging to the IAF airlifted nearly 102 passengers and 4.5 tons of cargo from Arakonnam to Kalaikunda. Another C-130 aircraft airlifted 62 passengers and 6.8 tons of cargo from Lilabari to Kolkata, the IAF said. In addition to that, 2 IAF An-32 aircraft have been deployed for airlifting 41 passengers and 4 tons of cargo from Lilabari to Panagarh. 1xC-17 & 3xC-130 airlifted 40T of #HADR eqpt & 246 personnel of @NDRFHQ from Guwahati, Jamnagar & Pune to Bhubaneswar. The IMD had earlier said that Cyclone Yaas is likely to make landfall by noon on Wednesday with a wind speed of about 130 to 155 kmph. The weather office added that it currently lay centred over northwest Bay of Bengal. We are expecting 'very severe cyclonic storm' Cyclone Yaas to make landfall by noon today with wind speed of 130-140 kmph gusting 155 kmph." Umashankar Das, senior scientist at the IMD, Bhubaneswar was quoted. He added, "(As of 6:45 am) The cyclone lay centred over northwest Bay of Bengal near latitude 20.8°N and longitude 87.3°E, about 40 km east of Dhamra (Odisha), 90 km south-southwest of Digha (West Bengal) and 90 km south-southeast of Balasore (Odisha)." People in Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand woke up to strong winds and heavy rain on Wednesday morning and braced for the cyclone. The IMD had earlier informed that the cyclone is very likely to reach near the north Odisha coast close to Bhadrak's Dhamra port by the early morning of May 26. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has urged the people living in the coastal regions of Odisha to cooperate with the local administration and shift to cyclone shelters. Over 11.5 lakh people were evacuated from vulnerable places in West Bengal ahead of the cyclone, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee informed on Tuesday, adding that she will stay at the state secretariat 'Nabanna' on May 25 and May 26 to monitor the cyclonic situation and relief work. Meanwhile, two persons were electrocuted and at least 80 houses were damaged in Hooghly and North 24 Parganas districts due to strong winds and heavy rainfall on Tuesday at the onset of Cyclone Yaas. As many as 38 long-distance South-bound and Kolkata-bound passenger trains have been cancelled from May 24 to 29. The Indian Navy, too, has ramped up rescue and relief operations to minimise damages. As part of the preparation, two Navy Diving Teams and five flood relief teams comprising of specialized Navy personnel with associated equipment and inflatable boats, have been deployed.

IMA, allopathy doctors upset

theory. In a tweet, he said, "As part of the conspiracy to convert the entire country into #Christianity, #Yoga and #Ayurveda are being maligning by targeting @yogishiramdevjee. Countrymen, wake up now from the deep slumber otherwise the generations to come will not forgive you." Meanwhile, the Chief Medical Officer of Haridwar has also condemned Baba Ramdev's statement on allopathy and said that action should be taken against him. He further said that action against Ramdev will be taken if any direction comes from the state government. Indian Medical Association on Wednesday slapped Yoga guru Swami Ramdev with a Rs 1000 crore defamation notice for his controversial remarks about allopathy, scientific medicines and their use in treating COVID-19. The defamation notice to Baba Ramdev has been issued by the Uttarakhand chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) - the apex body of Indian doctors. It may be recalled that the IMA had earlier raised strong objections to Baba Ramdev's controversial remarks and demanded strict action against him. IMA state unit, President Dr Ajay Khanna said that a letter has been sent to the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary in this regard. "In the letter, it is written that there is a lot of resentment among the IMA doctors against the statement of Baba Ramdev. The Union Health Minister has also sent a notice to Ramdev on the same stating that the statement is considered incorrect", Dr Khanna said. He added that the state government should take strict action against Ramdev immediately. A defamation notice is also being sent to Ramdev on behalf of the IMA, informed Dr Ajay Khanna. "In addition to a defamation case that will be filed soon, an FIR will also be lodged, if the government did not take concrete action on the same", he said. After courting the controversy, Baba Ramdev has withdrawn his statements on allopathic medicine. He has also received a strong-worded letter from Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan who called his remarks "inappropriate". "We do not oppose modern medical science and allopathy. We believe that allopathy has shown immense progress in surgery and the lifesaving system and served humanity. My statement has been quoted as part of a WhatsApp message that I was reading during a meeting of volunteers. I am sorry if it has hurt anyone's sentiment," Ramdev mentioned in his letter to the Union Health Minister in Hindi. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) had on Saturday sent a legal notice to yoga guru Ramdev over his alleged statements against allopathy and "defaming" scientific medicine.

Baba Ramdev gets Rs 1000 crore

the IMA, informed Dr Ajay Khanna. "In addition to a defamation case that will be filed soon, an FIR will also be lodged, if the government did not take concrete action on the same", he said. After courting the controversy, Baba Ramdev has withdrawn his statements on allopathic medicine. He has also received a strong-worded letter from Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan who called his remarks "inappropriate". "We do not oppose modern medical science and allopathy. We believe that allopathy has shown immense progress in surgery and the lifesaving system and served humanity. My statement has been quoted as part of a WhatsApp message that I was reading during a meeting of volunteers. I am sorry if it has hurt anyone's sentiment," Ramdev mentioned in his letter to the Union Health Minister in Hindi. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) had on Saturday sent a legal notice to yoga guru Ramdev over his alleged statements against allopathy and "defaming" scientific medicine. However, the Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust has denied allegations by the IMA that Ramdev has misled people by making "unlearned" statements against allopathy and defamed scientific medicine. "IMA brings to the notice of our Health Minister, a video circulating in social media portraying, the celebrated Yoga Guruji saying that 'modern allopathy ek aisi stupid aur diwalia science hai' (modern allopathy is a stupid and failed science)," the association said in its statement. In Ramdev's defence, the Haridwar-based Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust said, Yoga Guru was reading out a WhatsApp forwarded message in the video that has gone viral on social media.

One lakh appointment to state's youths within a year: CM Dr Sarma

NAGAON, May 26: The state government will initiative to appoint one lakh unemployed youths of the state just within one year and for this massive initiative, the state government will need Rs 3600 cores per annum, Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma said here while addressing a press conference at Mahamrityunjaya temple campus this evening. CM Dr Sarma said, finance committee led by state finance minister Ajanta Neog will submit a report within a month in this regard. He indicated it too that those posts were lying unnecessarily in various offices of the state machinery would be shifted to other offices where workload were comparatively higher. Dr Sarma said that a special meeting on security of wildlife during the possible floods in Nagaon, Karbi Anglong, Sunitpur, Biswanath and Golaghat district, will be held tomorrow at Kaziranga National park itself. Earlier, CM Dr Sarma also held a meeting with the heads of the district administration at the temple campus and took stocks from the district heads about various issues. Dr Sarma was accompanied by his wife Riniki Bhuyan, BJP MLAs - Jayanta Malla Boruah, Rupak Sarma and Jitu Goswami during his first trip to Mahamrityunjaya temple as a chief minister.

Second Anniversary of Youth Organisation ' Obhigyota '

Golaghat, May 26: Under the able leadership of a very talented, young student from Golaghat Vikrantjit Saikia, a youth organisation was formed in Golaghat on May 26 in the year 2019. The organisation was named as 'Obhigyota' and which works for human resource development across the state. Today this organisation celebrated its second Foundation Day cum anniversary. Founded in Golaghat the organisation now has spread across the state and even it has members in different states of the country. 'Obhigyota' has been working for the development of the Assamese youth and aims to contribute more towards its goal of providing a platform to everyone regardless of their caste, creed, gender identity etc. This organisation has organized more than twenty five events till now with the help of its more than hundred members. These events were organized under its three main programmes namely Obhigyota Knowledge Hub, the School Leadership Program and the 365 plants program. The organization organized North East's First ever Policy Reviewing Competition under its newly launched project 'Xonadhan Vol 1'. Mock parliament, plantation drive, interactive session for students, fundraiser for Assam flood victims are some of remarkable events of the youth organisation. The Founder and CEO of 'Obhigyota' Vikrantjit Saikia greeted and congratulated all his members on the second anniversary of the organisation and stated that this organisation will do more for the student community and to the society in the upcoming days.

Marwari Yuva Manch Gets Ambulance

Golaghat, May 26: Marwari Yuva Manch Bokakhat Branch gets an Ambulance as an aid from local MLA and state Agriculture Minister Atul Bora. The Ambulance was provided by Numaligarh Refinery Limited under its CSR Scheme. The Ambulance was received by senior member and former Zonal Vice president (Zone C) Shrawan Goenka. Zonal Project Co ordinator Prabhat Nimodiya, Branch Head Vikash Gautam, Secretary Santosh More, vice president Nitin Jallan, treasurer Nikhil Choudhury, Assistant Secretaries Gautam Nimodiya, Abhishek Agarwalla and Tushar Agarwalla were present in the program. Marwari Yuva Manch Bokakhat Branch has been offering its service to the society by taking several programmes. Minister Atul Bora had appreciated the work of the organization and thanked NRL authorities as well as local administrator.

MLA Visits Covid Care Centre

Golaghat, May 26: Today MLA of Khumtai LAC Mrinal Saikia visited the Covid Care Centre at Khumtai Model Hospital. The MLA met with the doctors and other medical staff working in the Centre. He also visited the patients and took stock of the treatment being given to them. Later Mrinal Saikia offered money from his own for refilling of Oxygen cylinders for the Covid patients and for fuel expenditure of Ambulance.

KRSS hailed the new AHSEC Chairman

North Lakhimpur, May 26: Koch-Rajbonshi Sangram Samiti (KRSS) hailed Rukma Gohain Baruah, a son of Lakhimpur, the Principal of Lakhimpur Post-Graduate Training College, as he is newly appointed as the Chairman of the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC). In a complimentary message sent to the media today, KRSS Central Committee Vice-president Rupjyoti Dutta, All Lakhimpur District KRSS President (I/C) Bikash Dutta, Vice-president Hemanta Koch, Mintu Borah, General Secretary Nitul Saikia and Publicity Secretary Bhabananda Rajkhowa expressed hope that under the leadership of Rukma Gohain Baruah who is a grandson of the first President of Asom Sahitya Sabha Padmanath Gohain Baruah, a good orator, writer, eminent educationist and a mentor of KRSS, the AHSEC will strongly forward the educational and intellectual scenario of the state and Assam will be able to get a position among the top five states in the country.

Flybig begins direct flight operations between Guwahati and Pasighat

Guwahati, May 26: A flight of the private airliner Flybig started the direct flight services from Guwahati to Pasighat under the RCS-UDAN scheme. Airport Authority of India (AAI) officials said that a flight of the private airliner Flybig started the direct flight services from Guwahati to Pasighat under the RCS-UDAN scheme of the central government. A water cannon salute was accorded to the flight at Pasighat. This is the second flight service to Pasighat from Guwahati after Alliance Air had started direct flight services between Guwahati-Pasighat in 2018, an RCS-UDAN route. Commercial operations of flights from the newly developed Rupsi Airport in western Assam began earlier this month under the RCS-UDAN scheme.

Liverpool set to sign Ibrahima Konaté after going cold on Ozan Kabak deal



London, May 26 : Ibrahima Konaté, pictured right, is considered by Jürgen Klopp and Liverpool to be a better signing at £35.5m than the £18m it would cost to make Ozan Kabak's permanent. Liverpool look set to complete a £35m move for the RB Leipzig defender Ibrahima Konaté with Jürgen Klopp deciding against a permanent transfer for Ozan Kabak. The France Under-21 international, who turned 22 on Tuesday, has been a long-term target of Liverpool and, having qualified for next season's Champions League, Klopp has been given the green light for the deal. The club are on the verge of triggering the release clause of £41m (£35.5m), which must be paid in one lump sum. With Liverpool now set on signing Konaté on a five-year contract, Kabak will return to Schalke following the expiry of his loan deal. The 21-year-old was signed in January, along with Preston's Ben Davies - who failed to make an appearance for Liverpool in the final four months of the season - as cover for the injured centre-

backs Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joel Matip. All three are expected to be fit for pre-season and, following the impressive form of Nat Phillips, Liverpool are looking to bolster their defensive ranks at the end of a campaign that highlighted the lack of squad depth. The news will come as a blow for

Schalke who were relegated from the Bundesliga this season. They are keen to offload Kabak and had offered Liverpool an option to buy the defender for £18m. Leipzig - on the lookout for a replacement for Konaté - and Leicester have already been linked with a move for the Turkey international. The 20-year-old Rhys Williams, who made 19 appearances for Liverpool and finished the season as Phillips' regular partner, is likely to be sent out on loan to a Football League club following a successful spell at non-league Kidderminster earlier in his career. Meanwhile, one player leaving Anfield permanently - Gini Wijnaldum - looks set to sign for Barcelona after his agent held talks at the Camp Nou. The midfielder, who will depart Liverpool on a free transfer, has consistently been linked with Barça and is on the verge of signing a three-year contract. He will link up with Sergio Agüero who will play his final game for Manchester City on Saturday in the Champions League final.

Southgate's desire for 'versatility' boosts Alexander-Arnold's Euro 2020 hopes

Liverpool, May 26 : Gareth Southgate has opened the door to including Trent Alexander-Arnold as one of four right-backs in England's final squad for Euro 2020 and has insisted he still has a good relationship with the Liverpool defender. Alexander-Arnold, controversially dropped for the World Cup qualifiers in March, has a chance of making it to this summer's finals after he was included in a provisional 33-man squad Southgate, who has picked a large squad because of injury concerns and the involvement of key players in the Champions League and Europa League finals this week, did not rule out picking the 22-year-old, suggesting that his place in the squad does not necessarily depend on one of Kyle Walker, Reece James and Kieran Trippier dropping out. The England manager, who has until next Tuesday to whittle down his squad to 26, instead raised the prospect of picking all four right-backs because of their versatility. The noises around Alexander-Arnold were positive and Southgate, who dismissed concerns that Harry Kane will be distracted by the uncertainty over his future at Tottenham, denied that the Liverpool player will definitely miss

out if James and Walker come through Saturday's Champions League final between Chelsea and Manchester City unscathed. "It's not that straightforward," Southgate said. "Everyone sees these as four right-backs but there's a lot more to all of those players.



We need versatility, we need competition for places and we are still unclear on certain injuries. Trent is very much in contention. "People think I don't think Trent is a good footballer. That just isn't the case. He has indirectly come in for some criticism and I felt the need to communicate more with him than anyone else over the past couple of months but I think his performances have been

very good. I'm a little bit surprised by some of the things that have been written because people just don't know those communications that have gone on. But that is credit to Trent that he has kept that to himself." Southgate, who suggested that Liverpool's Jordan

disappointed. The England manager hinted at frustration over the lack of communication coming out of United regarding Maguire. "At this moment in time, Harry might play tomorrow night or he might be out for two months. I just don't know. I understand that from Man United's point of view," Southgate said. England, who play warm-up games against Austria on 2 June and Romania on 6 June at the Riverside Stadium, are also sweating on Kalvin Phillips after the Leeds midfielder suffered a shoulder injury against West Brom last Sunday. Southgate, who has lost the Burnley goalkeeper Nick Pope to a knee problem, hinted at White, James and Alexander-Arnold as midfield options. Preparations have not been ideal. England will be without their United contingent against Austria and players from City and Chelsea are unlikely to face Romania. Yet Southgate's task now is to cut seven players. Sheffield United's Aaron Ramsdale is fighting with West Brom's Sam Johnstone over the third goalkeeping spot. White and Godfrey remain likely to miss out. With Jesse Lingard listed as a midfielder and potentially reliant on Henderson or Phillips failing to prove their fitness, it is likely Mason Greenwood, Ollie Watkins and Bukayo Saka are fighting over one place in attack. Jack Grealish and Jadon Sancho are expected to make the final cut. A player named in the final squad can be replaced, subject to Uefa approval, before a team's first game on the grounds of injury or illness. However Southgate, who omitted Danny Ings, Tammy Abraham and James Maddison, raised a doubt over Grealish after saying that the Villa playmaker's workload will need to be managed carefully following his return from injury. The Newcastle assistant Graeme Jones will replace Allan Russell, the striker coach, on Southgate's backroom staff.

Manchester United's Edinson Cavani a natural-born winner on a hot streak

Manchester, May 26 : Veteran Uruguayan has scored nine goals in his last 10 games and will give Villarreal plenty to worry about in Wednesday's Europa League final in Gdansk. Edinson Cavani celebrates his brilliant goal against Fulham at Old Trafford last week. The 34-year-old will be staying at United for another season. When Edinson Cavani's 40-yard finish arched over Fulham's Alphonse Areola 10,000 fans inside Old Trafford were wowed by the latest evidence of the bargain free transfer the Uruguayan has proved in a debut English season. The scintillating ninth strike in his last 10 appearances came last week. Now, as Manchester United take on Villarreal in Wednesday's Europa League final, they have a first A-list centre-forward since Zlatan Ibrahimovic five years ago, and a player who is hot at precisely the right time. The Cavani factor in United's tilt at continental glory is highlighted when comparing his numbers with those of Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood. Part of a quartet whose performance graph is measured (primarily) in goals, the 34-year-old from Salto is the master supreme who offers a lesson to his juniors while making the trio fight for the two other available places in attack (when the currently unfit Martial is available). Cavani arrived in October with 341 club goals since signing for Palermo in 2007 and zero experience of the Premier League, whereas Rashford and Martial were in a sixth season on these shores, Greenwood in his third. Yet from the moment El Matador registered a maiden United strike - in the 3-1 win at Everton on 7 November (in his fifth appearance as a substitute) - the class showed. Cavani has since scored 15 times, including in three consecutive matches twice across April and early

May. In the Europa League semi-final against Roma he contributed two goals in each leg. Sir Alex Ferguson had a shrewd eye for a deal - think Henrik Larsson, a 13-game loanee in 2006-07 - and Cavani is evidence that Ole Gunnar Solskjær shares that trait. As the No 9 who sports the famous No 7 previously worn by Cristiano Ronaldo, Bryan Robson and George Best, Cavani has



burned through defences at the rate of 129 minutes for each goal, far ahead of Rashford, who has needed 192, Greenwood (254), and Martial (346). Only Bruno Fernandes - a playmaker - is anywhere close, at 159 minutes for his 28 goals, which is United's highest tally. Cavani's count places him third - Rashford has 21 (in 4,033 minutes) - and his five assists equal those from Martial and Greenwood, who have played 2,419 and 3,048 minutes respectively, to the Uruguayan's 2,062. Beyond these statistics is how Cavani has brought the rarefied air of a natural-born winner to United's dressing room. A bulging CV shows six Ligue 1 championships with Paris Saint-Germain, a 2011 Copa América

triumph with Uruguay for whom he has 51 goals in 111 internationals, plus the 200 goals that makes him the French club's record scorer. Fernandes and Harry Maguire also have teak-tough mentalities but Cavani is the clear victor in any game of show-your-medals. Ole Gunnar Solskjær (right) knows a bit about scoring for Manchester United in European finals

too, and his signing of Cavani is increasingly looking like a masterstroke. Ole Gunnar Solskjær (right) knows a bit about scoring for Manchester United in European finals too, and his signing of Cavani is increasingly looking like a masterstroke. Before Villarreal walk out at the Gdansk Stadium Unai Emery's tactics talk is sure to mention the requirement to somehow stop a man who, following United's draw with Fulham, Solskjær instructed the rest of his team to watch in terms of how "he plays the game". After two victories in their past five outings United will be relieved to have a predator whose form is arguably the best in the land and who carries the

aura of all elite finishers. A chance, half-chance or a keeper off his line from 40 yards: Cavani is the killer defences struggle to stymie. Emery can ask his Villarreal team to halt Cavani as they did Arsenal in the second leg of the semi-final at the Emirates, but doing so could be impossible. A player fined £100,000 and handed a three-match ban for an Instagram post in which he wrote "gracias negro" in November (he apologised, and the club backed him) and who seriously considered returning to South America this summer is now a United totem who, to Solskjær's relief, has performed a U-turn and signed for another year. He is key to United's hopes on Wednesday and to the culture Solskjær builds in which vaulting ambition centred around a club-first ethos is the main tenet. As Cavani says: "I think that if you set yourself targets, if you really want something, if you focus on something that you really want to achieve for yourself and for your side, you can achieve it. You can improve, you can grow as a player, you can be even better." Our long years have passed since United last hoisted a trophy. When Cavani's teammates look across at him at kick-off on Wednesday they will see a footballer who knows how to turn potential into the rare metal of success. The young hopeful who grew his hair out to mimic his childhood hero, Gabriel Batistuta, and who was a playmaking midfielder until the age of 15, can look back at a career driven by supreme self-determination. Cavani has confessed to wishing he could be just another guy. He is not, of course, but this humbleness is as invaluable a lesson to colleagues as the pursuit of excellence. His presence alongside them is precious - nearly as much as the goal threat he carries.

Brooks Koepka shows profane disdain for rival DeChambeau in leaked video

London, May 26 : The fractious relationship between two of the world's best golfers, Brooks Koepka and Bryson DeChambeau, appeared to hit an entertaining new low during last weekend's US PGA Championship. Leaked video of an unaired Golf Channel interview hit social media on Monday night, and appeared to show the contempt Koepka holds for his rival. Before the start of the interview, which took place after Friday's second round at Kiawah Island, Koepka can be seen staring at someone off camera and rolling his eyes. Once he starts answering a question from Golf Channel reporter Todd Lewis, DeChambeau walks past and a comment appears to be uttered in Koepka's direction. Koepka closes his eyes in frustration then says: "I fucking... I lost my train of thought hearing that bullshit. Fucking Christ." The interview



breaks off and Lewis chuckles before saying: "We're going to enjoy that in the TV compound." Koepka flashes a weary smile and says: "I honestly wouldn't even care." Koepka carded a one-under par round on Friday and ultimately finished the tournament in second place behind Phil Mickelson. DeChambeau ended the championship nine shots off the pace. The bad blood between DeChambeau and Koepka goes back several years. In January 2019, Koepka was one of several golfers to criticise DeChambeau for slow play. The animosity stepped up last year when DeChambeau, famous for his work in the gym,

From Telfer to Erasmus: how rugby coaches inspire players to greatness

London, May 26 : Rugby is primarily a game of deeds, not words, but there are some stirring exceptions. Fifty years ago this month, for example, a group of players sat in the Park Lane hotel in London, waiting for the wine waiter to refill their glasses and for their perceptive, thought-provoking coach to give his keynote address. "I



want each one of you to be your own man," said Carwyn James, issuing what amounted to a pre-tour sermon to his soon-to-be-immortalised 1971 British & Irish Lions squad. "Express yourself not as you would at the office for the next three months but as you would at home." "I don't want you Irishmen to pretend to be

English, or you English to think you are Celts, or for Scotsmen to be anything less than Scottish to the core." If the sinews remain unstiffened, how about the impassioned words of Jim Telfer, which bungee jump off page 219 of a compelling new book, This Is Your Everest, by Tom English and Peter Burns, about the fabled 1997 Lions tour of South Africa. "This is your fucking Everest, boys," growled Telfer, addressing the semi-circle of forwards sat in front of him in Cape Town. "Being picked for the Lions is the easy bit. To win for the Lions in a Test match is the ultimate." Every bit as powerful was his timeless payoff. "Nobody's going to do it for you. You have to find your own solace, your own drive, your own ambition, your own inner strength because the moment's arriving for the greatest game of your fucking lives." Some claim this kind of stuff is mostly outdated, that

modern rugby players need little extra stimulation, that less is more before big games nowadays. Maybe, for some, it is. But as every successful director of rugby knows, the aspiring coach who fails to connect emotionally with their flock will struggle to win consistently. To quote the former athletics coach Frank Dick: "Coaching requires strength both in technical skills and people skills. No matter how strong you are in the technical, without the people you will be ineffective." In the frequently pre-programmed, homogenous modern game the value of coaches who refuse simply to follow the herd has rarely been higher. Dipping into this newspaper's archives (James was once a Guardian columnist) it is fascinating to revisit some of the Welsh guru's thoughts on how best to play rugby and, crucially, the open-mindedness needed to prosper. "The most telling of any pre-match team-

talk consists of just three words: 'Think! Think! Think!'" he wrote. He was similarly ahead of his time in skewering supposedly useful innovations. "This new midfield 'crash-ball' is disaster - hunks of manhood with madness in their eyes, battering-ram bulldozers happy to be picked off on the gain-line by just-as-large hunks from the opposing side. For what? Just to do it all over again." The equally great David Foot, who also graced these pages for years, once penned an inch-perfect essay on his good friend that appeared in his outstanding book Fragments of Idolatry. How about this for a description of Carwyn's voice. "It was musical and sweetly tuned, too calm, one would have thought, for the biting winds of an exposed touchline. That voice, fashioned by the hymnal, was rarely raised in rebuke at the expense of a player...." Or this, about the coach's ability to converse with equal facility about

literature, the arts or politics. "He loved talking, philosophising, paying homage to genius, whether he saw it at the time as Beethoven or Phil Bennett. It is probably true to say that Carwyn saw rugby, for all its physical whims, as a cerebral game." The brawling and blaspheming did not interest him. He encouraged his teams to play with their heads, to think what they had to do, to reject stereotyped notions and the temptations to opt for caution (and boredom). "Take a risk or two, make a few mistakes. As long as you are adventurers, I won't mind." Telfer's style was appreciably different: more direct, more confrontational but no less motivational. It is instructive to be reminded in This Is Your Everest that, as a teacher, he had a keen appreciation of the power of silence in a group setting, regardless of the players involved. "Often in team talks I would say: 'Sit and think about what you are going to do here today."

Egan Bernal riding for any other team

London, May 26 : Were Egan Bernal riding for any other team but Sir Dave Brailsford's Ineos Grenadiers, the talk now would be whether he will start the Tour de France on 27 June, assuming - as seems highly likely - that on Sunday he wins the Giro d'Italia, a race that he and his colleagues have had a total stranglehold since day nine. There is no arguing with the Colombian's lead on Tuesday's rest day of 2min 24sec

Geraint Thomas, Tao Geoghegan-Hart and Richard Carapaz. At every turn since the Giro left Turin, Bernal has stamped his strength on the race, looking arguably stronger than he did in winning the 2019 Tour de France. There have been three significant uphill finishes, at Ascoli Piceno, Campo Felice and Monte Zoncolan; he gained time in all three, winning at Campo Felice and finishing in

with consistency apart from Caruso, who has finished three times in the top 10 at Grand Tours but has never troubled the headline writers in a 14-year professional career. Yates rode relatively poorly - by his own admission - in the first two weeks, looked promising at Monte Zoncolan on Saturday, but crumbled in the high mountains on Monday. While the Frenchman Romain Bardet and the Russian Aleksandr Vlasov can still hope for the podium - from different ends of the experience spectrum - Carthy can, as of now, hope to achieve a second Grand Tour podium finish in the space of two races, following his third place in the Vuelta last year. To a man, the sprinters had voted with their feet and quit the Giro by last Saturday, because there is not a single flat stage for them in the final eight days of racing. There are, however, plenty of chances for the top 10 to be reshuffled in the next few days, and for bad weather to give the organisers sweaty palms. There was controversy over Monday's decision to cut out two mountain passes due to wet weather and cold, but the organisers probably wanted to avoid a potential repeat of last year's strike over racing in difficult conditions. There are three more summit finishes, on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, although crucially there are only two passes over 2,000m altitude, both on Saturday, the day before the final flat time-trial into Milan. At the back of all minds at Ineos, however, will be one single memory: Chris Froome's against-the-odds victory for the team's previous incarnation as Team Sky in 2018, evidence if it were needed of how a stage race can seem lost, yet turn upside down on a single mountain.



over home hope Damiano Caruso and 3min 40sec over the Briton Hugh Carthy, just as there has been no getting around the collective strength of Ineos, marshalled by the world time-trial champion Filippo Ganna since the start in Turin on 8 May. Bernal's victory is not guaranteed, but it looks inevitable. Most squads would look at the possible headlines, weigh up the PR benefits, and embrace the chance of sending a Giro d'Italia winner to attempt the mythical double in July, no matter how unlikely Tour victory might be following a Giro win. But not Ineos. Their line-up of galacticos means they can afford to keep Bernal at home in July rather than risk aggravating the back problem that put him out of last year's Tour and they can still field three former Grand Tour winners:

the top four at the other two. On the demanding stage across the dirt roads of Tuscany on day 11, he again left the other contenders trailing, and it was the same picture on Monday's truncated Alpine stage into Cortina, where he made a point of winning in the pink leader's jersey. The pattern has been constant: at each key moment, Bernal has gained seconds rather than minutes over the likes of Caruso, Carthy and the other big favourite Simon Yates, who lies a disappointing fifth going into the race's final phase. It has been inexorable if not drama worthy of the likes of Hinault or Merckx; reminiscent of the incremental way Chris Froome structured several of his Tour de France wins. None of the other favourites has put Bernal under anything that resembled pressure, and none has ridden

WNBA coach suspended after making comment about Liz Cambage's weight

Melbourn, May 26 : The coach who made an "inappropriate and offensive" comment about Liz Cambage's weight during a WNBA game has been fined and suspended after the Las Vegas Aces star accused him of disrespecting her. Australian Cambage, a three-time WNBA All-Star, took to Instagram after the Connecticut Sun's 72-65 win over the Aces on Sunday night to post a series of videos about the incident involving Sun head coach Curt Miller. "If there's one thing about me, is that I will never let a man disrespect me. Ever. Ever. Ever," Cambage said the post. "To the coach of Connecticut, I'm sorry little sir man I do not know your name. But the next time you try to call out a referee trying to get a call being like, 'Come on, she 300 pounds', I'm going to need you to get it right, baby, because I'm 6ft8in. I'm weighing - I just double checked because I love to be correct and give facts -



I'm weighing 235 pounds and I'm really, very proud of being a big bitch, a big buddy, big Benz baby." "So, don't ever try to disrespect me or another woman in the league," Miller, who did not refute the comments made by the 29-year-old Cambage, was handed a \$10,000 fine and suspended for the Sun's next game against the Seattle Storm on

Tuesday. "During last night's game, while arguing a call with an official, I made an inappropriate and offensive comment in reference to Liz Cambage's height and weight," Miller said in a statement on Monday. "I regret what I said in the heat of the moment and want to sincerely apologise to Liz and the entire Aces organisation. I understand the gravity of my words and have learned from this." Cambage said she had no problem with trash talk between players on the court, but called Miller's comments "protected abuse because we can't do nothing back. It's just crazy to me." She is in her fifth season in the WNBA, having returned to Australia last year to play in the WNBL during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the WNBA, she has career averages of 16.6 points, 7.6 rebounds and 1.6 blocks in 121 games (93 starts). Miller is in his sixth season coaching the Sun, who are off to a 5-0 start.

The Bard of the West Country': tributes to David Foot, who has died aged 92

London, May 26 : David Foot was renowned for his cricket writing and crafted biographies on the Somerset batsman Harold Gimblett and Wally Hammond. Photograph: Stephen Pond/NewsTeam International Tributes have been paid to the sports-



writer David Foot, the doyen of West Country sportswriters who has died at the age of 92. Born in 1929 in the village of East Coker, Foot began his lifelong love affair with journalism in 1945 when he became a trainee copy boy on the Western Gazette. He moved on to the Bristol Evening World and began reporting on cricket but also turning his attention to Bristol City and Rovers. During a varied writing career Foot was also a theatre critic and a feature writer but will perhaps be remembered most

fondly for his appreciation of cricket. He was a regular contributor to the Guardian, reporting from around the grounds on cricket and football while notably crafting some of the most memorable obituaries of sporting greats. Foot was also known for his books, including biographies on the Somerset batsman Harold Gimblett and Wally Hammond. They were two publications another former Guardian writer Frank Keating described as "imperishable classics in cricket's canon". The Cricket Writers' Club, announcing his death, described the prolific author Foot as "a wonderful writer and a kind, generous friend to so many". The Guardian's rugby correspondent Robert Kitson said: "Never a better West Country sports-writer - or a kinder man." The former Guardian cricket writer David Hopps tweeted: "I was proud to work on the Guardian with David Foot, eager to chat with him, happy to drink with him, grateful to laugh with him, enchanted to read him. The Bard of the West Country. 'Don't call me that,' he'd say with a twinkle.

Pep Guardiola pays tearful tribute to departing Sergio Agüero

London, May 26 : Pep Guardiola broke down in tears when paying tribute to the departing Sergio Agüero after the striker's 389th and final domestic Manchester City appearance at the Etihad Stadium. Agüero scored twice in a breathtaking substitute appearance in City's 5-0 win over Everton and an emotional Guardiola was left wiping his eyes during an interview in which he also used the f-word, forcing Sky Sports into an apology. "We love him so much," City's manager said of Agüero. "He's a special person. He's so nice. He helped me a lot ... We cannot replace him, we cannot. There are many players in this club - Joe Hart, David Silva [are others] - who helped us to be this club. We have his legacy. He showed his quality in 30



minutes." Agüero's goals extended his record for City to 260, and he finished on 184 in the Premier League to pull ahead of Wayne Rooney at Manchester United for the most in the competition for one club. He has agreed to join Barcelona until 2023. "It's my last [home] game but I'm so happy," Agüero said. Guardiola acknowledged his decision last November to sign a contract to 2023 may have had a positive impact on the team. "Maybe we showed the next season we are the same people, we are working together," he said. "And maybe they realised: 'OK, with this fucking manager we stay next year,' and that is why we keep running, keep fighting, keep trying to play good games." The next challenge for City is Saturday's Champions League final against Chelsea. Guardiola described the occasion as a "dream come true" for the club and said he would consider using Agüero. "He has something special, Sergio, and of course he is ready if we need him to help us win the Champions League."

Southgate's England have enough depth not to burn out Grealish

London, May 26 : The Aston Villa attacker's fitness must be handled carefully, especially as England have options in the likes of Bukayo Saka. Jack Grealish has excelled in his most recent England games and impressed for Aston Villa after injury but Gareth Southgate revealed right now 'he cannot train on consecutive days'. The biggest concern for Gareth Southgate is that, even in areas where England possess an embarrassment of riches, some of his jewels risk starting Euro 2020 without their shine. It is evident he feels his planning has, at least to some extent, been conducted in the dark because of the lack of clarity over certain players' conditions and, given the remorseless intensity of tournament football, some of the decisions he faces over the

next week may be less straightforward than he would like. While Trent Alexander-Arnold occupied much of the attention during the media briefings Southgate gave after naming his preliminary squad, his outlining of the difficulties surrounding another of England's more lavish talents was eye-catching and did much to explain why he has chosen to hedge his bets with bloated numbers. Jack Grealish would walk into most on-lookers' 26-strong selections on a given day and his place in Southgate's affections is hardly dissimilar; he has rebounded encouragingly from three months out, keeping up with the pace in two starts and two substitute appearances during Aston Villa's league run-in, but England require another level still. "I don't see him

as an injury doubt," Southgate said. "I see a realistic view in terms of 'where can we get to from where he is in the space of two weeks, in terms of 90 minutes, 90 minutes, 90 minutes?' We risk breaking him.



We can't overload him, so we've got to manage that really correctly for his welfare, as well as for performance." Grealish's shin injury was, as Southgate pointed out, attributable to overload and it is a problem that risks appearing across the board given the burdens a

coronavirus-addled schedule has imposed over the past year. "Can these guys go for six 90 minutes? Very unlikely I would say," he said of Grealish and England's other fitness doubts. "[Grealish] is not able to train on consecutive days for example, and he hasn't had a high training load going into those matches. There are elements of risks that brings." He suggested Jordan Henderson, whose own status remains a concern, may be better cut out for duty at this point even though he has not played since 20 February. These are significant admissions given that, even though Uefa granted larger squad sizes for precisely this purpose, wriggle room remains limited if things go wrong. European Championships often reward durability and pragmatism: there is little room for sentiment

and, given England's depth in most positions, arguably scant need to cross the fingers with maybes. Southgate gave little indication that players beyond the 26 who, presumably, have made the final cut in his head can play themselves into contention for reasons beyond fitness issues. That would appear unlikely given there will be no chance for side-by-side assessment with the dozen participants in European finals before next Tuesday. But other scenarios are plausible. What if Grealish needs standing down from some components of the coming days' training, while Bukayo Saka meets Southgate's demands at full throttle? Grealish offers England's attack a unique drive and insistence, but Saka would hardly present a step down in quality and his versatility could yet be vital.

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