



The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

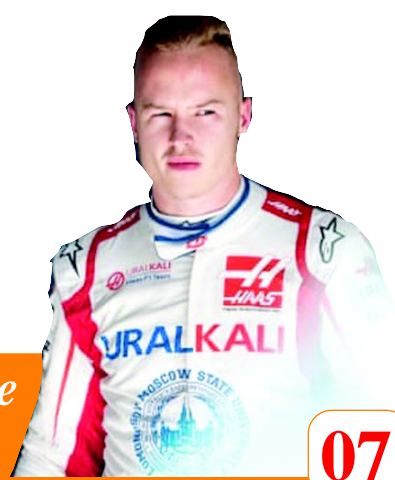
Vol. No. VI ■ Issue No. 103 ■ RNI-ASSEN/2014/58385 | GUWAHATI ■ SATURDAY ■ MAY 29, 2021 | PAGES 8 ■ PRICE RS. 7.00

If lockdown easing goes awry, it has nothing to do with Johnson's ...

04

Nikita Mazepin may be Russian but he is the perfect American anti-hero

07



NEWS IN BRIEF

Lockdown in Itanagar

Guwahati, May 28 : The Arunachal Pradesh Government has extended the lockdown in Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) for seven more days. The decision to extend the lockdown in ICR was taken as COVID-19 cases in high numbers have continued to emerge from the State Capital on a daily basis. Lockdowns in Tawang, Upper Subansiri, Lower Subansiri, Namsai, Lohit and Anjaw would also continue for another seven days. This was informed by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu. With this extension, the lockdown which was supposed to end on May 31, will now remain in force till June 7. The decision to extend the lockdown in ICR and several other towns and districts of Arunachal Pradesh was taken during a meeting of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) on Friday.

Lovlina faces defeat

Guwahati, May 28 : Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain faced defeat to Uzbekistan's Navbahor Khamidova in the semi-final at the ASBC Asian Boxing Championships in Dubai. Arjuna Award winner boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69 kg) is from Assam's Golaghat district. The 23-year-old boxer won bronze medal at the 2018 AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships and 2019 AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships. She won gold at 1st India Open International Boxing Tournament, New Delhi and silver medal at the 2nd India Open International Boxing Tournament in Guwahati. Besides Lovlina Borgohain, another world boxer from Assam, Shiva Thapa has also stormed into the semi-final of the 2021 Asian Boxing Championship in Dubai.

Lockdown extended

Guwahati, May 28 : The decision to extend the lockdown in Nagaland was taken by the High-Powered Committee on COVID-19 of the State Government. Lockdown has been extended in Nagaland keeping in view the rising cases of COVID-19 in the State. The decision to extend the lockdown in Nagaland till June 11 was taken by the High-Powered Committee on COVID-19, on the basis of the advice given by the State Health Department. Also read : Rahul Gandhi holds PM Modi responsible for COVID-19 second wave, says right vaccination strategy must to avoid more waves" The High-Power committee, GON, has decided to extend the Lockdown in Nagaland till June 11, 2021, on the basis of the advisory given by the Health & Family Welfare Department," informed spokesperson and adviser of the HPC - Mmholnimo Kikon via a tweet.

Assam to increase NRL's capacity from existing 3 MMT to 9 MMT by 2024



Guwahati, May 28 : The Numaligarh Refinery (NRL) would increase its capacity from the existing 3 million metric tonnes (MMT) to 9 MMT, besides bringing 6 MMT crude oil to Assam from Odisha, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Thursday. Sarma said that after NRL brings the crude oil from Paradeep in Odisha through pipeline, it would be refined in Assam and then the oil would be exported to Bangladesh, Myanmar and other Indian states. He said the crude oil from Paradeep would substantially raise the capacity of the three refineries in Assam - Bongaigaon, Guwahati and NRL. Earlier, Assam's crude oil used to be sent to Barauni, but now 6 MMT crude oil would come to the state. Sarma said

Contd...Page 6

GP Singh visits Assam-Nagaland Border to submit report

Guwahati, May 28 : After the unprovoked firing by Naga miscreants on Mariani MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma sent Special DGP G P Singh to Disoi Valley to investigate the whole incident. DGP Singh on Friday visited the site along with the SPs of Assam and Nagaland and reviewed the whole situation. Speaking to News Live DGP G P Singh said, "After the incident took place I was asked by CM Sarma to come here and investigate the whole matter. A case has been already going on in the Supreme Court regarding the Disoi Valley land

encroachments. We had an extensive discussion on encroachment by people of Nagaland in the reserve forest in violation of protocols of the Supreme Court. Nagaland

Contd...Page 6



First dose Covaxin, second dose Covishield in Silchar

Guwahati, May 28 : In a bizarre turn of events one person identified as Gananath Bhattacharjee a teacher with Pranabananda Vidyamandir at Silchar in Cachar district of Barak Valley witnessed a messy situation at Durgashankar Pathashala-one of the government registered vaccination centres where he was about to be inoculated with Covishield despite taking Covaxin as the first jab. "I was literally surprised. Immediately I brought this matter to the notice of centre officials and they rectified it," Bhattacharjee said. This is indeed a very shocking incident. However,

Northeast Now has learnt from highly placed sources that such incidents have also happened in the past at this vaccination centre. "I have not received any such complaint on this issue," Joint director in-charge of Cachar health department Dr B J Deb Sikdar said. However, when asked about the preservation system of vaccines in these centres the doctor said, "Actually I am not in charge of these vaccination centres. These

centres are being monitored by district immunization officer. But I can tell you so far I have not received any adverse report from these vaccination centres." In hindsight it also needs to be mentioned here

Contd...Page 6



Modi announced a financial assistance of ? 1,000 crore to Cyclone Yaas-hit states



New Delhi, May 28 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi today announced a financial assistance of ? 1,000 crore to Cyclone Yaas-hit states - Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand - for immediate relief activities. The announcement came after the Prime Minister took aerial surveys in Odisha and Bengal to assess the scale of

damage. The centre has assured all help for restoration and rebuilding of the infrastructure in the affected areas. An inter-ministerial team will visit the states to assess the full extent of damage, said the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister also announced ? 2 lakh each for the families of each of those who died in cyclone-related incidents. A sum of ? 50,000 would be paid to those injured in such incidents. Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has said that her state has faced losses to the tune of ? 15,000 crore. Notably, the central

Contd...Page 6

India to vaccinate all citizens against Covid-19 by December 2021, says Union minister Javadekar

New Delhi, May 28 : Union minister Prakash Javadekar said on Friday all Indians will be vaccinated against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) by the end of this year as he criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for saying that only 3 per cent of India's population is inoculated. "The health ministry last week made it clear that within December the nation will produce 216 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines which means that at least 108 crore people will be able to get their jabs. So, Rahul Gandhi should understand that India will vaccinate all by December 2021," Javadekar said during a press conference. Earlier in the

day, Rahul Gandhi criticised the Centre during his press conference and claimed the current pace of its vaccination drive will further lead to multiple waves of Covid-19 and India will be able to vaccinate everyone only by May 2024. The Wayanad parliamentarian's

Contd...Page 6



Centre creating 'artificial scarcity' of COVID-19 vaccines to benefit Bharat Biotech, SII, says AAP

New Delhi, May 28 : The AAP on Friday (May 28) alleged that the Centre is creating "artificial scarcity" of COVID-19 vaccines to benefit Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India, a charge termed by the Delhi BJP as "unfounded". Addressing a press conference, AAP spokesperson Atishi said the government's vaccine drive has stopped in

schools and this is the case throughout the country while in private hospitals, vaccination is still going on at different rates. India is currently using mainly two made-in India jabs? Covishield manufactured by the Serum Institute and



Covaxin of Bharat Biotech and Russian-made Sputnik V at a smaller scale to inoculate its population. "This is big racket. At government centres where vaccination was given free to the youth, vaccines are in shortage there, while vaccinations are going on at higher prices at hospitals,"

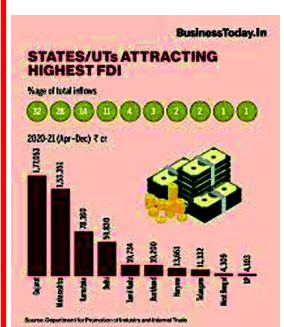
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Gujarat receives highest FDI in FY21 Maharashtra ranks second

New Delhi, May 28 : Gujarat receives highest FDI for fourth consecutive year. With a 37 per cent share, Gujarat saw \$30.23 billion worth FDI in 2020-21. India recorded highest FDI growth among major economies despite Covid-

19 impact. India has attracted the highest ever total FDI (foreign direct investment) inflow of \$81.72 billion during the financial year 2020-21, recording a 10 per cent rise on a year-on-year basis, shows the commerce and industry ministry's latest data. Among states, Gujarat received the highest FDI at 37 per cent of the total equity inflows. Maharashtra and Karnataka had the second and third highest flow at 27 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. Gujarat has bagged the top spot in terms of

Contd...Page 6



Sputnik V Covid vaccine to be rolled out at ?1,195 in Apollo hospitals

New Delhi, May 28 : On Thursday, Apollo Hospitals said they will start administering Sputnik V from the second week of June. The group has completed administering one million vaccine doses across 80 locations in India, and will prioritise frontline workers, high-risk population, and corporate employee, an official said. Apollo Group of Hospitals has announced that it will start administering the Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V, across its hospitals in India from the second week of June, at an estimated

price of ?1,195 per dose. "We will be charging ?995 for the vaccine and ?200 would be administration charges," an official of the Apollo



Group said. On Thursday, Apollo Hospitals said they will start administering Sputnik V from the second week of June. In a statement, Executive Vice-chairperson Shobana Kammeni of the Apollo Group of Hospitals said that the group has completed administering one million vaccine doses across 80 locations in India, and will prioritise frontline workers, high-risk population, and corporate employees. Giving details on ramping up their vaccination programme,

Contd...Page 6

India will be hit by multiple Covid waves unless we get our vaccine strategy right : Rahul Gandhi



New Delhi, May 28 : Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday said that India will be hit by multiple Covid waves if the government failed to get its vaccine strategy right. "Lockdown helps in fighting coronavirus. But lockdown, social distancing, wearing masks are temporary strategies to fight the Covid-19. Getting

people fully vaccinated is the only way to eradicate coronavirus from the country," Rahul Gandhi said in a virtual press conference on Friday. "Get your vaccination strategy right, don't give chance to Covid virus to mutate. If we don't get it right, there will be third, fourth and many waves in the country," he said. "The

government does not understand the nature of what they're fighting. Understand the dangers of mutation of this virus. You're creating a liability for the whole planet. Why? Because you are allowing 97% of the population to be attacked by the virus as only 3% are vaccinated." Rahul said. Bring the country together. Shut

Contd...Page 6

CM reviews implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission CM directs to draw up maintenance policy for water supply projects



Guwahati, May 28: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma took a comprehensive review of the central government's flagship scheme "Jal Jeevan Mission" with officials of

the Public Health Engineering Department in a meeting held at his office conference room at Janata Bhawan today and stressed on ensuring sustainability of the water supply

schemes which are being implemented under the mission. Noteworthy that Jal Jeevan Mission is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India. The Chief Minister while saying that pipes laid for water supply by the department very crucial for sustainability of the mission, directed to revisit the implementation framework of PHED schemes and draw up a maintenance policy clearly specifying the type of items to be used, implementation strategy and operational mechanism for the assets to be created under the Mission. Further saying that overground water channels used for piped water supply schemes keep changing leading to disfunction of many schemes, Chief Minister Sarma also asked to carry out scientific study prior to execution of schemes apart from doing quality control study. The CM also asked to immediately recruit the manpower necessary for success of the Mission besides adopting innovative ways to make the PHED schemes sustainable. He also directed to convene zonal meetings with contractors to facilitate them for speedy implementation of schemes. PHED and P&RD Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Additional Chief Secretary S Abbasi, Principal Secretary to CM Samir Kumar Sinha, Commissioner & Secretary PHED Akashdeep and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

NGO Provides Masks, Sanitizers and PPE Kits

Golaghat, May 28: Today MLA of Khumtai Mrinal Saikia has taken an initiative under which a Fund Collection Centre was set up at Khumtai where funds were collected for Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Huge response from the people of Khumtai as well as other parts of Golaghat was seen in this program. A leading organization from Golaghat Prayash Development Society offered masks, sanitizers and PPE Kits in the program. President of Prayash Development Society Partha Pratim Rajput along with some of his associates today went to Khumtai and handed over masks, sanitizers and PPE Kits to MLA Mrinal Saikia for CM Relief Fund. Several other organizations and individuals also offered cash and other stuff in the same.

AJYCP distributes face masks

Biswanath Chariali, May 28: The Jamuguri regional committee of Assam Jatiyabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) had distributed face masks in various areas of Chengamari on Friday. Biswajit Kalita, president of Tezpur district AJYCP, Pranjal Bora and Nirmal Das, president and secretary of Jamuguri regional committee

of AJYCP along with other office bearers had distributed face masks in the villages of Chengamari including Nonkey Chengamari, Gouripur, Nagda, Jaisiddhi etc. The student body also talked with the local people and briefed about the necessary precautions to be taken during this pandemic.



Effect of Covid in Education Sector : Memorandum Submitted by Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti

Golaghat, May 28: The ongoing Covid pandemic situation has badly effected the education sector and the student community has to suffer a lot. All the educational institutions are still closed and examinations from school board to university level are in a state of uncertainty. Though the online classes are being taken but these cannot be termed as proper alternative. As such Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti Golaghat District Unit today met the Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat and submitted a memorandum where several suggestions and demands were mentioned regarding

the present scenario of education and problems faced by the students. Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti in its memorandum to the DC demanded that a special committee should be formed taking Doctors, Educationists etc to discuss about conducting HSLC and HS exams as early as possible, the proposal of conducting HSLC exam with any three subjects is opposed by the organization as it will hamper the students to pursue higher studies and therefore the SMSS demanded to withdraw such proposal, many students belonging to economically backward families cannot afford

a smartphone for online classes and therefore the government should provide them smartphones, health insurance for all students should be done, number of examination centres should be increased for conducting HSLC and HS exams, the dates of HSLC and HS exams should be announced before one month of commencement of the exams so that the students can get enough time to get prepared. With all these demands the memorandum was submitted by Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti Golaghat District Unit President Satyabrata Saikia and Secretary Jyotisman Bora

State Employees To Contribute One Day's Salary To The Chief Minister's Relief Fund

Guwahati, May 28: In view of severity of the Covid-19 pandemic, majority of the service association of Assam have requested the Government for auto-deduction of one day's salary for the month of May, 2021, which will be directly credited into the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, Assam (SBI Account No. 35969660230 IFSC SBIN0010755, Assam Secretariat Branch). The IAS and ACS Associations have also decided to contribute two day's salary to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the same for which provision has been made in the finassam

portal. The Governor's Secretariat, Health & Family Welfare Department and Hon'ble Gauhati High Court and its sub-ordinate courts are exempted from this contribution. All DDO's are requested to take necessary action as per the provisions made in the finassam portal. If any employee is not willing to make such contribution, upon his/her written submission to the concerned DDO, such deduction may not be resorted to and Treasury officers shall not raise any objection in passing the bills. All Treasury officers shall ensure strict compliance of the above.

Curfew Champion For Animals

Guwahati, 28 May : In the prevailing uncertain situation caused by the deadly COVID-19 second wave every day we are receiving negative news of death or diseases of both human as well as animals. JBF (Just Be Friendly), being a social sector organization working for animal welfare since 2003, appreciates and supports the ones who came forward to help the infected or isolated people during this hard time. Similarly, JBF is trying its best to help the innocent suffering animals of Assam primarily in and around Guwahati. Since the recently imposed curfew from the beginning of May JBF team has been feeding thousands of street animals of different locations of Guwahati. Additionally, to spread this noble activity in every corner of the location reaching every suffering animal JBF has been providing food to volunteers and animal lovers to feed the street animals of their respective localities. Other than that, JBF has been spreading informative awareness through social media campaigns regarding false news of human-animal transmission of COVID-19 and requesting people to put a water or food bowl outside their premises for the strays of their respective localities. Here it is necessary to mention that JBF is one of such only organizations that have provided food to street animals



during the first wave strike of COVID-19 last year as well. As per the statement of the Chief Functionary of JBF Dr Sashanka Sekhar Dutta, JBF is and will be ready to help the suffering animals in every possible way in coming days as well. He also added that the organization is pleased to collaborate with any animal lover or volunteer interested to help the suffering animals in need.

Special discussion on historic Patharughat held

SIPAJHAR, May 28 : A special discussion on historic Patharughat peasants revolt against British imperialism in 1894 and on going Government's construction works of Peasants martyrs Project at martyrs field at Patharighat was held under the auspices of Patharu Samannaya Gosthi. Dr Ram Chandra Deka, Advisor of the Gosthi and Vice-principal, Sipajhar College presided over the discussion meet. It may be mentioned here that Dr Paramananda Rajbansi, MLA, Sipajhar LAC has asked the Patharu Samannaya Gosthi to organise such meet. Addressing the meet Kulendra Nath Deka, secretary, Darrangi Kala Kristi Unnayan Sangha, kamala Kanta Deka, secretary, Nandanik Sahitya Chora, Manik Chandra Deka, President, Patharughat branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Sahabuddin Ahmed, Subject teacher, Patharughat Higher Secondary School, Padma Kumar Das, Retired Head master, Patharughat High School, Pabitra Pran Deka, secretary, Digawaj Aikya Mancha, Bhushan Chandra Deka, Young social activist and Ittaf Ali, teacher while discussed on the various aspects of the topic offered several sugges-

tions on this regard. The written suggestions were sent by Akhil Ranjan Bhatta, leading writer and lecturer, Dipila Anchalik Mahabidyalaya, Bhargab Kumar Das and Lakhyadhar Saikia, journalist. The discussion meet was specially attended by Jial Haque, Former President, Patharughat Regional unit of All Assam Students Union (AASU), Ajmal Hussain, Gaon Burha, Debananda Das, Karmeswar Bhuyan, Narayan Kumar Deka, Abdul Rezek, Sajis Alam, young social activist and Journalist Kan Ali Hazarika. The meet has strongly urged upon the Government to take necessary measures to build the Patharighat Peasants Martyrs Field as one of the world heritage site. The meet also pays tribute to leading intellectual, former President Assam Sahitya Sabha Late Homen Borgahain. Satram Deka, Former secretary Darrang Zila Sahitya Sabha has discussed on the life and contributions of late Homen Borgahain while delivered Commemorates lecture on this occasion. Mostak Hussain, secretary, Patharu Samannaya Gosthi moderated the programme of the discussion.

Python rescued

Hojai, May 28: Sensation prevailed as a 15 feet long Python snake was spotted at South Kumrakata Village in Hojai on Friday. As per information, a soon as, Hojai Forest Department got the information, the forest guard reached the spot and took Python in their custody and later on released in a forest area. Reportedly, the villagers saw the big size snake on a tree, without wasting time they immediately informed the forest department and rescued the snake. "It is our responsibility to protect the wild animals as they are very significant for ecosystem.", a Villager said.

High level flood preparedness review meeting

'Slew of initiatives augur well for Kaziranga National Park', says Forest Minister Suklabaidya
Guwahati, May 28: Environment and Forest Minister, Parimal Suklabaidya said the slew of initiatives taken for protection of rhinos and other animals in Kaziranga National Park will herald better days for the world famous national park. In a statement here on Friday, Minister Suklabaidya said the various initiatives taken at a high level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma at Kaziranga National Park on Thursday will help safeguard and protect the rhinos and other animals from flood, poaching and accidents. Exuding optimism, Suklabaidya said the holding of a high level meeting by Chief Minister Sarma with senior officials of the Forest department and DCs and SPs of the adjoining districts in which the areas of KNP and Tiger Reserve fall is a harbinger that better days are ahead for the UNESCO world heritage site. The Minister said that the Chief Minister gave the go ahead for preparing a comprehensive plan, including a new special task force, equipping the forest personnel with sophisticated weapons, satellite phones and advanced training, ramping up infrastructure and creating highlands for safety and security to the animals from annual flood, poaching and road accidents. "A series of instructions have been given by the Chief Minister for the KNP and Tiger Reserve at a high level meeting on Thursday. Short and long term plans are in the pipeline to protect the wildlife of Kaziranga National Park from flood, poaching and road accidents. And these steps augur well for the national park," he equipped. Suklabaidya said that the Chief Minister has assured of all help and assistance to safeguard the wildlife of KNP and TR. He said that the Chief Minister has accorded approval for raising the ration allowance of the forest personnel from Rs.830 to Rs.2000 per month. It is worthwhile to mention that during Suklabaidya's tenure as Environment and Forest Minister in the previous regime, rhino poaching had come down drastically drawing encomiums from the Supreme Court, which asked the state governments to take Assam as a role model for protection of wildlife.

CM visits DRDO's 300 bed COVID hospital at Sarusajai Sports Complex

Dispur, May 28: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today visited Sarusajai Sports Complex in the city and took stock of ongoing construction of the 300 bedded COVID hospital being

set up by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) there for COVID patients. Later talking to the newsmen, the Chief Minister informed that Assam Government had signed an MoU with DRDO to set up a 300 bed COVID hospital with 100 ICU beds and 200 beds with oxygen facility. DRDO is expected to hand over the facility to the state Government in the first week of June, he said. The Chief Minister thanked DRDO for completing the project in short time and said this facility would greatly augment the COVID treatment infrastructure. Exuding confidence that COVID positivity rate and death rate would soon come down in the state, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said that 5 lakh people in Kamrup Metro have been vaccinated so far out of the target of 12 lakh. Likewise, direction is given to conduct COVID inoculation at a fast pace in cities like Dibrugarh, Tinsukia etc where positivity rate is high, he added

Gorkha body thanks CM

Biswanath Chariali, May 28: A delegation of All Assam Gorkha Student Union (AAGSU) led by Arjun Chetry, president of the student body called on the Chief Minister of Assam on Thursday and submitted a memorandum regarding various issues of the community. Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma had listened to the burning issues of the community briefed by Dr. Khagen Sarma, former education secretary of Assam Nepali Sahitya Sabha and assured all sorts of help from the government's end. During the discussion, the team briefed about the D Voters issues, land issues, educational problems etc. Acting on one of the educational issues, the CM instantly ordered the introduction of an MA course in the KKHSOU (Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University). Similarly, within 24 hours of the meeting, the Registrar of the state open university had formed an expert committee for preparation and finalization of curriculum and syllabus and PPR for MA in Nepali programme consisting nine members. Arjun Chetry, president of AAGSU and Dr. Khagen Sarma, former education secretary of Assam Nepali Sahitya Sabha thanked CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for the quick action on behalf of the community.

MISSING INFORMATION



The above is photograph of Miss Moina Begum (21 Yrs), D/O. Mostak Ali, Vill-1 No. Naharbari, PS -Mazbat, District- Udalguri who has been missing since- 13/04/2021 from her home

This refers to Mazbat PS GDE No-586 Dtd: 29/04/2021 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 66 Dtd. 01/05/2021

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person :

1. Complexion	-	Swarthy
2. Age	-	21 Years
3. Height	-	5 Feet
4. Built	-	Medium
5. L/Known	-	Assamese/Bengali & Adivasi
6. Wearing apparel	-	Churidar

All out efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 8134852559/9859427622 (Cell phone).

Sd/-
Superintendent of Police,
Udalguri, Assam

Janasanyog/D/591/21



Students of Linhai Road Primary School learn about industry robot technologies at Cangzhou Laser Industry Park in Cangzhou,

Italian cable car brakes 'tampered with', say prosecutors

Milan, May 28 : The emergency brakes on a cable car that crashed in northern Italy on Sunday, killing 14 people, had been "tampered with", prosecutors said as three people were arrested on charges of suspected involuntary manslaughter and negligence. The three, including the owner of the firm that manages the Stresa-Mottarone aerial tramway near Lake Maggiore in the Piedmont region, are alleged to have made a "conscious gesture" by "tampering" with the emergency brakes in order to "avoid disruptions" to the cable car service, Ansa reported, citing the chief public prosecutor, Olimpia Bossi. The cable car system had "anomalies" since resuming service in late April, it said. "The [cable car] had been travelling in that way for several days and had made several trips," Bossi said. The two others detained include the director of the tramway's management company, Ferrovie Mottarone, and the operational chief. The cable car had been carrying 15 people on the 20-minute ride between the resort town of Stresa and Mount Mottarone. It was a few metres from its destination when it plummeted 20 metres into the woods below, shortly after midday on Sunday. A five-year-old boy who is in intensive care at Regina Margherita hospital in Turin was the sole survivor of the tragedy, believed to have happened when a lead cable broke and the emergency brakes failed to activate, causing the cabin to hurtle backwards before falling. On Wednesday, doctors said the boy had opened his eyes and was recovering from sedation. The child's parents, who are Israeli nationals resident in Italy, his younger sibling and his great-grandparents were all killed. The other victims, including a six-year-old boy, were Italian and one man who was born in Iran and lived in Rome. The service had resumed on 25 April as Italy eased coronavirus lockdown restrictions. Technical checks were done, including a check on 3 May to "remedy inefficiencies", but they had not been "decisive" in resolving issues, investigators said. In order to avoid delays to the service, a device that deactivates the emergency brakes was kept in place. Had the emergency brakes activated, they would have held the cabin steady after the cable snapped. The move was made "in the belief that a cable breakage could never have happened". The system, which opened in 1970 and is owned by the local authorities, was closed in 2014 for major renovation works carried out by the Alto Adige-based Leitner di Vipiteno, before reopening in 2016.

Belarus president calls backlash against plane incident a 'planned provocation'



London, May 28 : Alexander Lukashenko has made his first public remarks defending his grounding of a Ryanair flight last week, accusing the west of launching a "hybrid modern war" against Minsk and calling the backlash over the incident a "planned provocation". Addressing a session of parliament, Lukashenko also appeared to suggest the plane could have been shot down because it was flying over a nuclear power plant when it was diverted by the Belarusian government, which appeared to have concocted a bomb threat and scrambled a Mig-29 to ensure the plane landed. Lukashenko has appeared unrepentant over the arrest of Belarusian journalist Raman Pratasevich and his girlfriend, Sofia Sapega, despite the threat of sanctions from the west over what has been called "air piracy" and an "act of state terrorism". Filmed confessions by Pratasevich and his

girlfriend were clearly given under duress, family members have said. On Tuesday evening, Sapega appeared in what supporters have compared to a hostage video, confessing to running an anti-government Telegram account that could threaten her with more than a decade in prison. In the video, released via pro-state Belarusian media on Tuesday evening, Sapega, 23, gave an apparently memorised confession in which she admitted to running the Black Book of Belarus, which revealed personal details or "doxed" Belarusian riot police in an effort to "name and shame" them. "I'm also the editor of the Telegram channel Black Book of Belarus that publishes personal information about employees of the interior ministry," she said. The video was later leaked to pro-state media. The channel, which opposition leaders have said was an effective means to combat police brutality against protesters last year, has angered the government of Lukashenko and led to embarrassing scenes of police officers running from protesters to avoid having their masks torn off. Pratasevich helped

run the popular Nexta Telegram account during the mass protests against Lukashenko. He has been accused of extremism and calls to incite mass riots. Sapega, a Russian citizen, was not known to have played any role in the Belarusian protests and her mother said that her daughter had "simply showed up in the wrong place at the wrong time". Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, a leader of the Belarusian opposition operating in exile from nearby Lithuania, said that Sapega was under "psychological pressure". Lukashenko's comments to parliament on Wednesday were his first defending the grounding of the Ryanair flight. "Whether or not there was a bomb, if I was informed there was a terrorist on board the plane, I would immediately give the order to have the plane land," said Lukashenko. During the speech, he said a bomb threat had come from someone in Switzerland, omitting previous claims by his transport ministry that the threat had been sent by members of Hamas (a Hamas spokesman has denied any connection to the incident). He blamed the west for launching a "hybrid modern war" against Belarus, calling his country a "test range" for launching the west's conflict with Russia. "They've moved on from preparing revolts to suffocating us," said Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994.

Survivors and bereaved seek answers after 21 deaths in China ultramarathon

Beijing, May 28 : Loved ones and fellow competitors of 21 runners who died in extreme weather during an ultramarathon in north-west China are seeking answers and accountability, as further accounts emerge of survivors' harrowing experiences. Twenty-one runners died on Saturday when below-freezing temperatures, hail and high winds hit the race track: a 100km stretch of mountainous trail about 3,000 metres above sea level, in the Yellow River Stone Forest tourist site near Baiyin city. A further eight people were injured. Among the dead were elite runners, including the 31-year-old record-holder, Liang Jing, and the Paralympian Huang Ganjun. Six runners were rescued by a local shepherd who sheltered them in a nearby cave, including at least one unconscious man, Zhang Xiaotao, whom he carried in from the track. The shepherd, Zhu Keming, has been hailed as a national hero for saving their lives. The high-level central commission for discipline inspection is investigating the circumstances surrounding the tragedy, in which survivors sheltered in caves, waiting hours to be rescued after they were stranded mostly between the second and third checkpoints. The mayor of Baiyin, Zhang Xuchen, said on Tuesday 161 family members of the victims had arrived in Gansu province. More than half had settled compensation arrangements, reportedly of about \$150,000, but some families had rejected the payments, saying the authorities had given no explanation for the deaths, which involved "human error" as much

as natural disaster. Some observers have questioned the lack of mandatory cold-weather gear other than an emergency blanket in the race's equipment list, particularly for such a remote, high-altitude event. China News Weekly also quoted local rescue personnel saying they had struggled to locate people in the inaccessible terrain, before finding four competitors in a cave later that night, three of



whom had died. On social media, Luo Jing, a well-known Chinese athlete and mountaineer, warned others to take their own safety seriously, suggesting the high death count was at least partly attributed to inadequate preparation for the surprise extreme weather. "Because I have experienced many dangers in mountaineering before, I understand that my safety must be in my own hands," Luo said. "Trail running is the same as mountain climbing. You have to make plans for the worst case every time, and don't pin your hopes on others!" She said her life was saved by having warm clothing with her, and having enough time to

descend. Another competitor said there had been no forecast of the extreme weather, and while it was cold the sun was shining when she began the race. She said conditions worsened when she was between the second and third checkpoints, a treacherous, steep and technical part of the trail that involves climbing and does not allow for any supplies to be left at the third checkpoint. "There is nowhere to

rest and you can't stop on the exposed mountains ... But on this day, the problems were magnified." Luo said she grew cold and tried to take shelter, but her emergency blanket was torn to shreds by the wind. She began to show signs of hypothermia so she decided to retire, sheltering with others in a cave. "It is easy to go up the mountain and difficult to go down, especially this kind of very steep terrain." The runner said she was "lucky to make a timely decision at the last moment", and the sheltering group were told they had to make their own way down or wait longer for rescue. She later heard stories of runners passing by

Court orders Royal Dutch Shell to cut carbon emissions by 45% by 2030

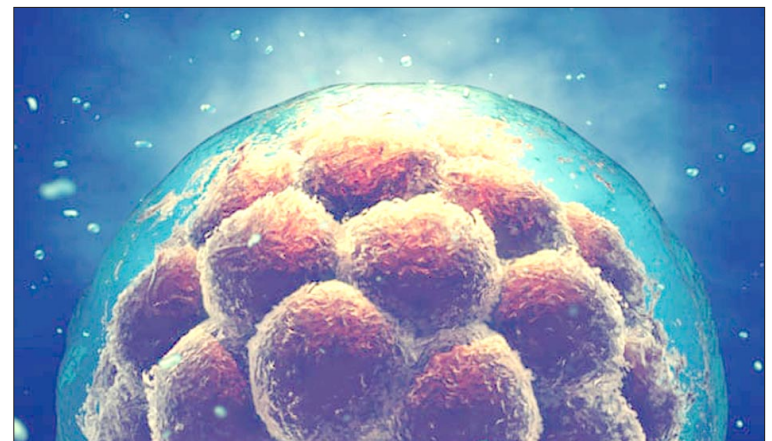


London, May 28 : A court in the Hague has ordered Royal Dutch Shell to cut its global carbon emissions by 45% by the end of 2030 compared to 2019 levels, in a landmark case brought by Friends of the Earth and over 17,000 co-plaintiffs. The oil giant's sustainability policy was found to be insufficiently "concrete" by the Dutch court in an unprecedented ruling that will have wide implications for the industry. The Anglo-Dutch company was said to have a duty of care to reduce emissions, and told that its plans should be brought into line with the Paris climate agreement. "The court orders Royal Dutch Shell ... to reduce its CO2 output and those of its suppliers and buyers by the end of 2030 by a net of 45% based on 2019 levels," the court said. "Royal Dutch Shell has to implement this decision at once." Shell, which can appeal the judgment, was the ninth biggest polluter in the world in 1988-2015, according to the Carbon Majors database. The company had raised its targets in April to reduce its relative CO2 emissions by 30% by 2035, and by 65% by 2050 compared with 2016. But lawyers for the plaintiffs successfully argued that these targets were insufficient, as such relative changes could be achieved simply by investing in renewables at the same time as expanding fossil fuel investment. Friends of the Earth Netherlands further argued in the case, dubbed "the People versus Shell", that the energy company had been aware for decades of the damage it has inflicted and was acting unlawfully by expanding its fossil fuel operations. It was claimed that the Anglo-Dutch company was breaching article 6:162 of the Dutch civil code and violating articles 2 and 8 of the European convention on human rights - the right to life and the right to family life

- by causing a danger to others when alternative measures could be taken. Shell had argued that there was no legal basis for the case and that governments alone are responsible for meeting Paris targets.

London, May 28 : The ban on growing human embryos in the lab beyond 14 days has been relaxed by an international body of experts, paving the way for research that could help to unpick issues ranging from why recurring miscarriages occur to improving IVF. The decades-old rule is laid down in the law in a number of countries, including the UK and Australia, and was previously stipulated in guidelines from the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR). These guidelines set out standards that are used by scientists, journals and research bodies around the world, and can also influence policymakers. But the ISSCR has relaxed its stance, saying embryos may be cultured beyond 14 days, provided a robust, specialised review of the proposed experiments is undertaken - with the research deemed scientifically justifiable with no suitable alternatives - and there is broad public support and local regulations permit it. Specialised review is already required for research involving embryos up to 14 days. "We want there to be no doubt: this is not a green light for groups to go ahead with extending human cultures

Time limit on lab-grown human embryos is relaxed by experts



beyond 14 days. It would be irresponsible and in many jurisdictions it would be illegal to do so," said Prof Kathy Niakan, of the University of Cambridge and Francis Crick Institute, who was involved with the development of the guidelines. "The guidelines are a call to proactively engage in a two-way dialogue with the public to review the 14-day limit of human embryo culture." When the 14-day rule was introduced it was difficult to culture human embryos beyond about five days. But science has advanced: in 2016 researchers

revealed they had managed to keep human embryos alive and active for 13 days. Scientists say that being able to study embryos beyond 14 days could bring a wealth of benefits, from validating the use of clumps of human cells to study early embryo development to aiding efforts to judge the safety of techniques such as mitochondrial replacement therapy, and providing new insights into recurring miscarriages and congenital abnormalities. "You can also make the ethical argument that given the importance of this [14-28 day] period to human development, we have to understand this - it is sort of unethical not to understand what is going on in our early development," said Robin Lovell-Badge, the chair of the ISSCR guidelines taskforce and senior group leader at the Francis Crick Institute. The team added there would no longer be a "hard stop" in terms of days beyond which the culture of human embryos is prohibited, although the further researchers want to develop human embryos, the tougher it will be both technologically and to gain approval. The ISSCR guidelines cover other areas of research including the use of genome editing techniques with human embryos and work involving the development of chimeras, whereby human cells are introduced into embryos of other species. Daniel Brison, a professor of clinical embryology at Manchester University who was not part of the taskforce, said culture of human embryos beyond 14 days would require a change of law in the UK, but a change "undoubtedly has scientific and clinical merit". Dr John Appleby, of Lancaster University, agreed. "Relaxing the 14-day rule is a good idea. It is essential to the ethical progression of science," he said. But Brison stressed the importance of engaging with public opinion, noting the 14-day rule was introduced in the 1980s because it is the point in human development when individual identity is assumed because the embryo can no longer split into twins. "As scientists it is essential that we are seen not to be changing this rule simply because we now have the technical ability to work beyond 14 days, but instead because we can demonstrate that the public support the aims of the research," he said.

ASSAM ROOFING LIMITED				
CIN: L26953AS1972PLC001381				
Regd. Office: Bonda Narang, Guwahati - 781026, Assam				
Tel: (033) 2248 0016 (3 lines); Fax: (033) 2248 7604				
E-mail: info@assamroof.com Website: www.assamroof.com				
RESULT OF POSTAL BALLOT				
Pursuant to the provisions of Section 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with rule 22 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 approval of the shareholders were sought by the mean of Postal Ballot (in Physical & Electronic Form) for delisting of the Equity Shares of the Company from the Calcutta Stock Exchange Limited in terms of Security and Exchange Board of India (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2009 and considering amendments as and when made. As specified in the Postal Ballot Notice dated 15.04.2021 read with the Special Resolution and Explanatory Statement attached thereto.				
Mr. Bhagrat Pasari, Director of the Company has announced the results of the Postal Ballot process on the basis of the report dated 27.05.2021 submitted by the Scrutinizer Mrs. Ekta Goswami appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.				
Details of the Postal Ballot received in Physical & Electronic mode and the results are as follows:				
Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Shares		
		Promoters	Public	Total
A	Postal Ballot with ASSENT - Physical	0	50	0
B	Postal Ballot with ASSENT - Electronic	659200	0	659250
A+B	Total Postal Ballot with ASSENT in physical and electronic mode	659200 (11 Nos)	50 (1 no)	659250 (12 Nos)
C	Postal Ballot with DISSENT - Physical	NIL	NIL	NIL
D	Postal Ballot with DISSENT - Electronic	NIL	NIL	NIL
C+D	Total Postal Ballot with DISSENT in physical and electronic mode	NIL	NIL	NIL
Note: The terms "Public Shareholders" and "Promoter Shareholders" have the same meaning as assigned to them under Securities and Exchange Board of India (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2009.				
Accordingly, the Special Resolution as set out in the Notice dated 15.04.2021 was declared as Carried Unanimously.				
Place : Kolkata				
Date : 28.05.2021				
				By Order of the Board

THE ASSAM RISING

VOL. NO. VI, ISSUE NO. 103 SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2021

Misinformation could cause real harm

Like viruses, false information spreads through networks. In March 2020, more than a quarter of the top Covid-19 related videos on YouTube contained misleading claims and those had more than 60m views worldwide. The World Health Organization's Covid "myth-busters" page counters ideas such as the notion that eating garlic protects you against infection. But how many people believe such claims? University of Cambridge researchers found in an online survey that about 15% of UK respondents thought it was more reliable than not that "the coronavirus is part of a global effort to enforce mandatory vaccination", while 9% supported "the new 5G network may be making us more susceptible to the virus". They found the most important factor linked to resilience to misinformation was numeracy. While we are fully aware that correlation is not causation, it encourages the idea that greater "data literacy" in the population could help bring some critical awareness of the dubious claims circulating on social media. In the meantime, research has shown that an effective strategy is to vigorously "pre-bunk" misinformation - essentially inoculating people against fake news by getting in the warnings first. Nevertheless, we should be cautious about accepting claims about what theories people believe. Another survey made headlines when it found that one in five people agreed with: "Jews have created the virus to collapse the economy for financial gain." However, that survey used an imbalanced scale: there were four options to agree and only one way to disagree. "Acquiescence bias" means some people like to be agreeable and some just want to get through the survey quickly. A subsequent survey with a balanced response scale still found 11% support for this statement. Falsehoods may have real adverse consequences. The Cambridge researchers found that a one-point increase on a seven-point scale of susceptibility to misinformation was correlated with a 23% (17%-28%) decrease in intention to get vaccinated and the recent surge of the Indian variant is linked to areas of low vaccine uptake. Trusted community leaders and healthcare workers have the vital task of countering claims that could be contributing to this threat. The proliferation of misinformation on social media platforms is faster than the spread of Corona Virus Diseases (COVID-19) and it can generate hefty deleterious consequences on health amid a disaster like COVID-19. Drawing upon research on the stimulus-response theory (hypodermic needle theory) and the resilience theory, this study tested a conceptual framework considering general misinformation belief, conspiracy belief, and religious misinformation belief as the stimulus; and credibility evaluations as resilience strategy; and their effects on COVID-19 individual responses. Using a self-administered online survey during the COVID-19 pandemic, the study obtained 483 useable responses and after test, finds that all-inclusive, the propagation of misinformation on social media undermines the COVID-19 individual responses. Particularly, credibility evaluation of misinformation strongly predicts the COVID-19 individual responses with positive influences and religious misinformation beliefs as well as conspiracy beliefs and general misinformation beliefs come next and influence negatively. The findings and general recommendations will help the public, in general, to be cautious about misinformation, and the respective authority of a country, in particular, for initiating proper safety measures about disastrous misinformation to protect the public health from being exploited.

If lockdown easing goes awry, it has nothing to do with Johnson's Modi operandi, OK?



When the prime minister stood up in February and unveiled his roadmap out of lockdown for England, he promised it would be "cautious but irreversible" - your clearest indication that it would at some point feature a signature lack of caution, which in turn could herald some truly incendiary reversals. While we settle in for a couple of feverish weeks awaiting the data on the Indian variant, a recap. Yesterday, on the very day people were allowed back inside the pubs, they were already being told not to get drunk in them, and strongly encouraged to remain outside enjoying May's seasonal charms. (I'll have a pint of lager with a hailstone top, please.) Yesterday, on the very day people were permitted to travel again - with countries arranged into green, amber and red lists, as long advertised

Marina Hyde

- Matt Hancock explained that people should definitely not travel to amber list countries. Then why are they permitted to? Is our travel policy some kind of dare? It's all about individuals using their common sense and taking responsibility, apparently. Which, I think you'll agree, means so much more coming from a government that let at least 20,000 - TWENTY THOUSAND - people enter the UK from India just in the period Johnson was delaying imposing his travel ban. Was that not a moment for common sense, and indeed caution? It seems not. Instead it was a moment for bunching people up in six-hour queues in the fresh April air of the Heathrow arrivals hall. Instinctively, the renewed ubiquity of Hancock feels ominous. No one has had to come out and take more body

blows for the team during this pandemic than Hancock, and even seeing his face now produces the Pavlovian sense that some shit is heading inexorably towards a fan. Hopefully it will be Zeno's shit - like the philosopher's paradox, always halving its distance to the fan but never actually making contact with it. But to listen to the various government lines, it is almost as if the pre-blame game is already afoot. Yesterday, a minister briefed Politico's Playbook: "The risk is that a small number of idiots ruin it for everyone else." Well quite. It IS only a small number of idiots - but unfortunately, they all work in Downing Street. This government is blessed with lower numbers of vaccine-hesitant citizens than almost anywhere else in the world that doesn't enforce jabs at gunpoint if necessary; and however wrong/infuriating/selfish you think those refuseniks are - and I have a lot of sympathy with people's frustration - factoring them in is part of the equation. Plus, it is potentially a profoundly smaller part of the equation than what happens at the border. When the vast majority of the country is observing a lockdown, the big remaining levers to pull belong to the government. Among those who dutifully abided by every edict there will be utter fury if it turns out that all their sacrifice was undone at the border, which - spoiler alert - is not actually controlled by "a few idiots" in Bolton. Covid experts warn against foreign holidays, so why is

Boris Johnson so keen? Thousands and thousands of people have entered the UK every single day of the pandemic, and the wisdom of that has veered between "an acceptable risk" and "the number one mistake" at various different stages. But once the vaccine rollout roared into gear, it was clear that giving ourselves the longest head start against outside variants was the best course of action. A temporary closing of borders to gain a bigger cushion wouldn't exactly have been an unpopular policy. People spent much of this latest lockdown absolutely fuming at pictures of influencers, the Beckhams, and various other super-rich types going about their holidays while everyone else wondered how it was "essential travel". That more than 20,000 passengers were allowed to enter from India when Johnson was dithering/angling for a photo op with Narendra Modi was the farthest possible point from common sense - and countless people said it at the time. The absurdity yesterday even drew an interjection from Dominic Cummings - the only person to break his silence more frequently than Prince Harry - who judges our border policy to be a "joke". High praise indeed. You'll note we have spent rather a lot of the past 14 months being told to "take responsibility" and "use common sense" by a government serially incapable of either. If it does all go tits up, they'd better hope the terrible weather continues well past "freedom day" on 21 June. At least hailstorms aren't rioting weather.

What links cybercrime, terrorism and illegal trade? Dark money

In March, the government published its review of all the threats facing this country, and how it would respond to them, from hostile autocracies and cybercrime to terrorism and trade. Running through the pages of this huge and complex document, like lead through a pencil, is one consistent vulnerability: dark money. No matter who you identify as our adversaries - mafia groups, al-Qaida, whoever - they all hide their wealth in the shadows of the financial system: by obscuring ownership with shell companies, or using dodgy banks, or by holding wealth in the form of physical assets, such as fine art. And shining light on those shadows will

expose their secrets and help make us all safer. It will also make us more prosperous: more than 2,200 acts of fraud are reported every day in Britain. Those crimes cost us billions upon billions of pounds, and often most affect older and vulnerable people. So last week's Queen's speech was important. How would the government tackle the threat it had identified? Well, here is

Oliver Bullough

qualified with the usual "when parliamentary time allows". However, the problem wasn't just that the government was refusing to make new commitments; it was actually dropping old ones. In the previous Queen's speech, in December 2019,

tions downwards before the speech, insisting Johnson's top priority was to repair the damage caused by Covid-19. And it's true that many of the proposed measures in March's review were



the government promised to force the owners of the UK's 100,000 offshore-owned properties to declare their identity, a step that would help to rip away the cover that kleptocrats have long used when buying their boltholes in Belgravia. That promise has since evaporated; and the long-delayed plan to impose order on Companies House, the place British and foreign fraudsters alike use to register their dodgy shell companies, is no nearer adoption either. Of course, there is a huge amount of Covid-related damage to focus on, but the idea that the government was stopped from tackling dodgy money by this overwhelming priority is absurd. Johnson found time to promise that people would only be able to vote with photo ID, to introduce freeports, to "protect freedom of speech" in universities, and to limit judges' ability to review the government - all of which are unrelated to the pandemic, but are also solutions to problems that barely exist, if at all. In my opinion, freedom of speech is under threat, but not from right-on students excluding rightwing speakers. Instead it is from wealthy people using British courts to shut down investigations into their wealth. Catherine Belton, a journalist, is currently being sued by four different Russian billionaires and Rosneft, the largest state-owned oil company in Russia, over her book Putin's People. I don't know what the truth of the allegations are, but the prospect of facing this kind of threat deters journalists from writing about the super-rich. Neither this issue nor the tracing of the billions possibly lost to fraudulent claims of Covid relief featured in the Queen's speech. The government is storing up foreign policy problems. In restricting access to voting and justice, and in creating freeports - regulation-free zones for businesses to do what they like - Johnson is moving in precisely the opposite direction to the United States, where Joe Biden's White House has promised to prioritise the battle against kleptocracy and illicit money. Johnson's government did intend to piggyback on the Biden agenda last month with a new sanctions regime, promising to target the assets of corrupt officials. Some were delighted at how enthusiastically the plan was welcomed in Washington, but in reality the scheme is a cherry on a non-existent cake.

Cameron, Alexander, Osborne, Clegg: how the austerity 'quad' sold their souls



It was excruciating. To watch a former British prime minister before a committee of MPs last week trying to explain away his aggressive lob-

bying of ex-colleagues on behalf of Greensill, which has since collapsed into insolvency, was as humiliating as it was distressing. That we are citizens of a country whose former leader can behave in such a way is shocking. He claimed that lobbying for Greensill was consistent with a commitment to public service. Really? Worse was the glaring mismatch between the former puritan apostle of austerity - we are all in this together - and the compromising of such values. And not only him. In varying degrees, the other three

Will Hutton

country had to accept numbing austerity, despite the servicing of public debt being at 300-year lows. The resulting devastation of communities and public services were important causes of the strength of the Leave vote and now the stubborn pockets of Covid in those areas stricken by a decade of cumulative and unnecessarily deep cuts. If you want to try to defend policy mistakes of such magnitude, tread carefully when you leave office. But Cameron personifies a fundamental Tory frivolousness about both the consequences of power and how it is exercised. A famous critic of lobbying in opposition, when it came to legislation the proposals were thin, with always the possibility of executive discretion to put them to one side. In this vein, when Alexander, having lost his seat in 2015, wanted to become vice-president and corporate affairs director of China's newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the prime minister's advisory committee on business appointments simply suspended any waiting period. Supporting the AIIB was, after all, government policy. For incredibly, the naive British government had taken a small stake in the AIIB, a front for China's ambitious belt-and-road initiative (BRI), as part of the ill-fated

their new lives are consistent with their old and thus the credibility of what all politicians say as they vie for support. Our democracy is the weaker. The devastation of public services is an important cause of the stubborn pockets of Covid in those areas stricken by a decade of deep cuts. If Cameron's glibness and lack of judgment are now obvious to all, they were also on display when he embraced the proposition after the financial crisis that, because the threat of debt was allegedly existential, the country had to accept numbing austerity, despite the servicing of public debt being at 300-year lows. The resulting devastation of communities and public services were important causes of the strength of the Leave vote and now the stubborn pockets of Covid in those areas stricken by a decade of cumulative and unnecessarily deep cuts. If you want to try to defend policy mistakes of such magnitude, tread carefully when you leave office. But Cameron personifies a fundamental Tory frivolousness about both the consequences of power and how it is exercised. A famous critic of lobbying in opposition, when it came to legislation the proposals were thin, with always the possibility of executive discretion to put them to one side. In this vein, when Alexander, having lost his seat in 2015, wanted to become vice-president and corporate affairs director of China's newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the prime minister's advisory committee on business appointments simply suspended any waiting period. Supporting the AIIB was, after all, government policy. For incredibly, the naive British government had taken a small stake in the AIIB, a front for China's ambitious belt-and-road initiative (BRI), as part of the ill-fated

Cameron-Osborne drive for the UK to be China's bridge to the west. But the BRI, as Alexander must know now if he did not then, is overt 21st-century Chinese quasi-colonisation via debt. Seventy signatory countries, in exchange for Chinese soft loans to build infrastructure, essentially agree to kowtow to Chinese foreign policy. What Alexander does and how much he is paid are opaque, but part of the AIIB's mandate is to shape applicants' projects so they can receive BRI funding. Alexander, in short, is facilitating a China that is suppressing Uyghurs and Hong Kong alike, with international protest limited because BRI signatory countries want the continuing flow of Chinese funds. Cameron also had eyes on China as a career move, becoming co-chair of a planned UK China Investment Fund in 2017. But with his reverse Midas touch, the fund never got off the ground and he is spared another public embarrassment. Osborne's pursuit of riches is to be made away from prying eyes. He is now to become a full-time member of the private, Mayfair-based boutique investment bank, Robey Warshaw, which, with 13 staff and three partners, has earned a reputation for being the secretive but successful go-to adviser on mega-mergers. The skill is to help bidders navigate delicate issues of regulation, intellectual property, security and competition, like those involving SoftBank's bid for the hi-tech company Arm or Shell's merger with BG, two great British companies extinguished by takeover. Over the last five years, the three partners have pulled in cumulative net profits of £187m. Doubtless Osborne will be using his mobile phone to good effect, if with a great deal more discretion than his old boss, to sustain that level of super-profitability.

Bumla Pass

Located at the Indo-China border, around 37 kilometers from Tawang, at around 15,200 ft above sea level is situated the Bum La Pass that presents a beautiful view of the Tibetan plateau. The road is of immense historical importance for the Sino-Indian War battle of 1962 that took place between the armies of India and China, for the latter had invaded the former.

The border had manifested the appealing creation of the nature, often covered with heavy snow throughout the year and one of the most off-beat passes in the world. Bumla Pass was the passage used by Dalai Lama to escape from Tibet and to enter India. It also has the beautiful Sangetsar Tso Lake, also called the Madhuri Lake, making it a photographer's delight.

Witnessed to be one of the fiercest battles ever during the 1962 War. While the Battle of Rezang La during the 1962 War and Shaitan Singh's bravery during that is well known, equally heroic is the feat of Subedar Joginder Singh, who took down 50 Chinese, at Bum La pass before being captured by them. Much like Rezang La,

Bumla Pass was another tale of courage under fire, where a vastly outnumbered Sikh Regiment, held on till the end against a much larger Chinese army, and Joginder Singh's defiance is the stuff heroism is made of. Joginder served on the Burma front during WWII, and when India became independent fought in the 1st Indo-Pak war of 1947. In 1954, India recognized China's claim over Tibet, as per the Sino-Indian agreement. In 2006, Bumla pass was re-opened to traders for the first time in 44 years in addition to postal workers from each country.

Bumla Pass is best visited from the month of May to October. A special permit is required to visit the pass. Due to heavy snow fall most of the time this place remains closed. However, the highlight of Bum La Pass is that along with being a treat to the eyes, it also instantly evokes a feeling of patriotism. That's because you can see the soldiers standing at the border in the distance, tirelessly protecting the country in nerve-racking weather conditions.

Sankha Subhra Devbarman

ASCI issues final Guidelines for Influencer Advertising on Digital media, launches ASCI.Social platform

Mumbai, May 28 :The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) today unveiled the final guidelines for influencer advertising on digital media. The draft guidelines initially were issued in February and feedback from all stakeholders - advertisers, agencies, influencers and consumers - was sought. To ensure a collaborative process and expert inputs, ASCI tied up with Big Bang Social, a leading marketplace for social storytelling, to get India's leading digital influencers' views on board. The guidelines will be applicable to commercial messages or advertisements published on or after June 14, 2021. The guidelines make it mandatory for influencers to label the promotional content they post. As digital media consumption becomes the norm, the distinction between content and promotional advertisements becomes critical. The marketing landscape is transforming, and influencer marketing has become mainstream. Therefore, consumers have a right to know what content has been paid for by brands and the guidelines intend to bring this transparency to influencer marketing. Since 'Influence equals action' is a reality now - consumers today not only buy products and services endorsed by influencers, but they also buy into the brand stories they create. Thus, these guidelines safeguard the interests of consumers, influencers, marketers, and the advertising industry. When the draft guidelines were shared, they sparked vigorous conversations

within the influencer community and among other stakeholders. We received feedback from more than 25 different stakeholders over two months, some of them included industry associations like IAMAI, IBHA, advertisers like PepsiCo, P&G, Nestle, HUL, Tata, Star, we also received comments from voluntary consumer organizations. Dolly Singh, Vishnu Kaushal, Ayesha Billimoria, Aanam C. Scherezade Shroff Talwar aka Sherry Shroff, Raghav Meattle, Varun Duggirala and more. ASCI took note of all feedback, concerns and suggestions to arrive at the final guidelines. Subhash Kamath, Chairman, ASCI, said: "We received an overwhelming positive engagement and feedback from influencers and others for the draft guidelines, as well as suggestions to finetune and clarify some points. After extensive discussions, we are now launching the final guidelines that balance the interests of consumer, influencers, agencies, advertisers and all other stakeholders. I urge everyone to follow the ASCI Code and the guidelines and be part of this change promising transparency and responsibility." One of the key questions raised was how ASCI would monitor potential violations of these guidelines. For this, ASCI has identified a French technology provider, Reech. Manisha Kapoor, Secretary General, ASCI said "The Reech Influence Cloudplatform uses Artificial Intelligence to identify lack of disclosure on posts of a commercial nature on social media.

Mumbai, May 28 : Share Market News Today | Sensex, Nifty, Share Prices LIVE: Domestic equity market benchmarks BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 were trading over half a per cent higher on Friday, on the back of positive global cues. Nifty hit an intra-day record high of 15,455, crossing the earlier level of 15,431.75 touched on February 16 this year. BSE Sensex was hovering around 51,450. ONGC, Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Titan Company, State Bank of India (SBI) were among top Sensex gainers. Stocks of Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's Lab, M&M, Nestle India, Bajaj-Auto among others were top index laggards, capping the gains in Sensex. Barring Nifty Pharma index, all the sectoral indices were trading with gains. Nifty Bank index gained nearly one per cent, while Nifty Metal index was top gainer, up 2.53 per cent. After nearly eight months, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will chair the 43rd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting via video conferencing at 11 am in New Delhi on May 28, 2021. The meeting will be attended by MOS Anurag



Thakur besides Finance Ministers of States and UTs and Senior officers from Union Government and States. The GST Council is required to meet once in every quarter. The last meet was held on October 5, which then got extended and ended on October 12, 2020, to finalise contours of borrowings by states to meet shortfall in tax revenues. An important trend in the market is the outperformance of midcaps (up around 24% YTD) vis-a-vis the Nifty (up around 10% YTD). Another trend is the increasing preference for value over growth as reflected in the sharp rise in PSUs like SBI, IOC & Coal India while the likes of HDFC Bank and Kotak Bank remain subdued. Such rotations happen during a bull run. Weakness in frontline private banking stocks may be used to accumulate them since these well-capitalised banks will continue to grab market share from the weaker players, particularly from weak PSU banks. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. For Nifty, 15300-15100

will act as immediate support now. While on the higher side, 15600-15700 are the levels to watch out for. Sameet Chavan, Chief Technical Analyst, Angel Broking Important here to note is that the INDIA VIX is presently hovering around its lowest levels of recent times. Persistent low levels of VIX denote complacency of market participants. This may see volatility spiking at some time going ahead. This may also mean some modest corrective moves in the immediate short-term. So, it is best and prudent to wait for confirmation of a breakout at the present moment. Milan Vaishnav, CMT, MST, Consulting Technical Analyst and founder, Gemstone Equity Research & Advisory Services Nifty hits record highs today. However, from a technical perspective, it is testing of a double top resistance and not a breakout as yet. A breakout will occur only when the 15450-15500 levels are taken out convincingly. Resistance going on from here are 15800 and 16100 -- supports 15250 and 15000

for an immediate couple of weeks. Milan Vaishnav, CMT, MST, Consulting Technical Analyst and founder, Gemstone Equity Research & Advisory Services Technically, Nifty's trend has remained firm ever since the index broke above the neckline of a bullish Head and Shoulder pattern, earlier this month. The key pivot to now keep an eye on is the former record high, 15431. If the index sustains above that level, it is likely to continue its march higher towards 15800-16000 levels in the days ahead. On the downside, the immediate support now lies at 15180. Abhishek Chinchalkar, CMT Charterholder and Head of Education, FYERS Nifty has continued its ascent and has risen to a record high in the early morning trade today, underpinned by strong cues from the Asian markets. Broader markets too have started the day on a positive note, with the Midcap 100 index rising to its life-time high and the Smallcap 100 index rising to its highest level since January 2018. Abhishek Chinchalkar, CMT Charterholder and Head of Education, FYERS Gold prices were trading lower in India on Friday, following weak international trends. On Multi Commodity Exchange, gold June futures were trading Rs 151 or 0.31 per cent down at Rs 48,430 per 10 gram, as against the previous close of Rs 48,581. Silver July futures were also trading weak, down Rs 325 or 0.45 per cent at Rs 71,394 per kg. Silver futures ended at Rs 71,719 per kg in the previous session. In August last year, gold had hit a record high of Rs 56,191 per 10 gram in India.

ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan voted Product of the Year

Shillong, 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

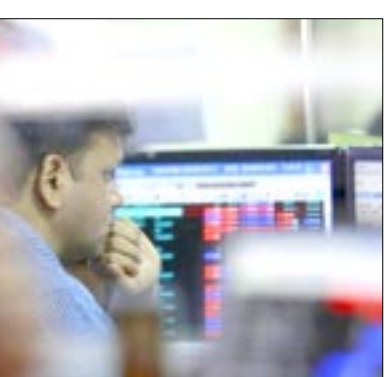
specially so for life after retirement. The customer-centric retirement or annuity products offered by the Company have enabled it to grow the annuity business segment by 120% in FY2021. Annuity products enable customers to plan for their retirement and are available in two variants i.e. Immediate and 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 pri-

vate 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 making 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. Jurisdictions we are or become a party to, the future impact of new accounting standards, our ability to implement our dividend policy, the impact of changes in insurance regulations and other regulatory changes in India and other jurisdictions on us. ICICI Prudential Life insurance undertakes no obligation to update forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date thereof. This release does not constitute an offer of securities.

Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Eicher Motors, IPCA Lab, UCO Bank stocks in focus

Mumbai, May 28 : Investors will keep tabs on last leg of corporate results for stock-specific action, ongoing COVID-19 vaccination pace, oil prices, rupee movement and other global cues. Nifty futures were trading 51.50 points or 0.33 per cent higher at 15,465.50 on Singaporean Exchange in early trade on Friday. This signals a positive opening for BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 on the last day of the week. Today, 43rd GST Council meet will remain in focus, which will be headed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman via video conferencing. Investors will keep tabs on the last leg of corporate results for stock-specific action, ongoing COVID-19 vaccination pace, oil prices, rupee movement, and other global cues. "Technically Nifty is poised towards an up move to lifetime high of 15431 and 15500 zones while on the downside support exists at 15200-15150 zones. Hopes of further stimulus by the government is bolstering investor confidence," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. M&M, Glenmark Pharma: A total of 96 companies including Mahindra & Mahindra,

IPCA Laboratories, Max Healthcare Institute, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, Central Bank of India, Indian Bank, Sumitomo Chemical, GMM Pfaudler, Hinduja Global Solutions, and Ujjivan Financial Services, will announce their January-March quarter earnings on May 28. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Sun Pharma Q4 net profit zooms over twofold to Rs 894.15 crore NSE Nifty 50, Bank Nifty, IT sector, stock market Nifty may hit 16,400 by Sept, Bank Nifty may soar 11% to 38,600; Check ICICI Direct's top stock picks. Infosys: Infosys co-founder S D Shibulal on Thursday picked shares worth Rs 100 crore of the firm through an open market transaction. Shibulal purchased more than 7.22 lakh scrips at an average price of Rs 1,384 per share, BSE block deal data showed. The total transaction value stood at Rs 100 crore. UCO Bank: UCO Bank on Thursday reported a



nearly five-fold year-on-year jump in its net profit to Rs 80.03 crore for the fourth quarter of FY21, from Rs 16.78 crore in the same period previous fiscal, as its operating profit grew 26% y-o-y. Sun Pharma: Drug major Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Thursday reported an over two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 894.15 crore for the quarter ended March 2021, mainly on account of robust performance in the Indian market. Eicher Motors: Eicher Motors reported a 73 per cent jump in consolidated PAT at Rs 526.14 crore in January-March quarter of FY21. The company had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 304.28 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal.

Direct Mutual Fund Vs Regular Mutual Fund: Save in lakhs by choosing the right option!

London, May 28 : All the features of the direct plan like the investment objective, asset allocation pattern, risk factors are the same as the regular plan except for a lower expense ratio. Once you have selected the mutual fund scheme in which you want to put in a lump sum amount or start SIP, you have two ways to invest in it. The two options available to investors in all kinds and categories of mutual fund schemes are - Regular plans and Direct plans. Ever thought, how different they are and how to make a choice between them? Both, Regular Plan and Direct Plan are options available within the same scheme. The only difference between Regular Plans and Direct Plans is in terms of the cost or the charges. All the features of the direct plan like the investment objective, asset allocation pattern, investment strategy, risk factors, facilities offered, and the load structure will be the same as the non-direct plan except for a lower expense ratio. Even the portfolio for the direct and the regular plan scheme is the

same. **Mutual Fund Vs Stock**: Four reasons for choosing mutual funds over buying stocks. Top small-cap funds, small-cap mutual fund schemes, doubled investment, meaning, returns, best funds, comparison. Over 100% returns in small cap MF schemes in 12 months - Should you invest now? This is how it matters. Every MF scheme has its own expense ratio (ER) or the total expense ratio (TER) representing the total cost that the mutual fund house or the AMC has to incur to run the scheme. Of the several different cost-heads, an important one is the distribution expense or the commission paid by fund house to the intermediary, the mutual fund distributor. The ER is charged to the NAV of the scheme on daily basis. Lower ER will mean, lower charges will eat into the NAV and thus reflect a higher return to the investor. Under the Direct Plan, the distribution expense is left out and only the other expenses are taken into account while calculating the ER. Therefore, in the case of the Direct Plan, the

ER is low compared to Regular Plan. The difference in TERs between regular and direct plans can range from 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent. Over a longer period, on comparing returns of mutual fund direct plans vs regular plans, the direct plans can help you save a sizeable amount in terms of cost. Since ERs of regular plans are higher than those of direct plans, the direct plan NAV will be higher than the regular plans. Simply put, the value of your investment after you buy units will always be higher in a direct plan compared to a regular plan of the same scheme. Now let's run numbers and see how much of savings is possible by saving 1 per cent of ER. Assuming, you invest Rs 5,000 every month for 15 years, a 1 per cent difference in ER will mean a saving of nearly Rs 1.34 lakh, if the growth happens at 8 per cent per annum. One has to visit a specific fund house individually to invest. While applying for the direct plan, one has to mention 'direct' in the agent code section. There are many fintech platforms offering access to invest in direct plans as well. What's more, even your existing investments including lump sum and SIPs in MF may be switched to a direct plan of the same scheme, subject to any exit charges. Before you go direct, ensure that if buying and managing MF portfolio suits you without an intermediary, then only invest through the direct plan and reap the benefit of lower costs. Going direct would keep you away from the services of the intermediary.



Govt examining Pfizer request for indemnity for supplying Covid-19 vaccines to India

Mumbai, May 28 : The government and the company are working together for the earliest possible import of the vaccine, Paul said. "We are looking at what their expectations are from the government and they are looking at what our expectations are from them," Paul said. Paul rejected suggestions that the Centre was not doing enough to buy vaccines from abroad. The government is examining Pfizer's request seeking indemnity and liability protection for its Covid-19 vaccine. The central government is in discussion with the global vaccine maker to bring its vaccine to India. Shobana Kamineni, executive vice-chairperson, Apollo Group of Hospitals, said: "We would like to thank the Union and state governments and the vaccine manufacturers of Covishield and Covaxin for their support." Apollo Hospitals completes administering 1 million vaccines across 80 locations. The Centre had already invested around Rs 700 crore in this facility. A recent attempt to find a private partner to

run the IVC has also not succeeded, as there were no bidders for it. Tamil Nadu seeks Centre's vaccine making unit on lease. Dr Vinod Paul, member, health, Niti Aayog, and chair of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19, said the government was examining this request and a decision on this would be taken in the larger interest of the people and on merit. "This is under discussion, but there is no decision as of now," he added. "They have requested indemnity to all the nations, including the country of origin, the US and practically every country to indemnify the liability," Paul said at a media briefing of the ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) on Thursday. Pfizer has sought indemnity and liability protection in its agreements with other countries, which gives the firm legal protection from any claims linked to any ad-

verse event after use of its Covid-19 vaccine. Pfizer has indicated availability of a certain volume of the Covid-19 vaccines, which can be made available starting July 2021. The company has also shown interest in making the vaccines available for India. The government and the company are working together for the earliest possible import of the vaccine, Paul said. "We are looking at what their expectations are from the government and they are looking at what our expectations are from them," Paul said. He said the process was that they have to come into India and apply for licensure.



Contd. From Page 1

CM reviews Orunudo

directed to complete all necessary works at the earliest for launch of Re-SVAYEM in BTR within June. Under Re-SVAYEM scheme, seed money and working capital support of Rs. 50 thousand in two tranches will be provided to identified members of enterprising groups of BTR for undertaking economic activities or for expanding their existing businesses at the grassroots level. These schemes couldn't be launched in BTR earlier due to elections in BTAD and then general elections. DCs of four districts of BTR apprised the Chief Minister about the statistics of beneficiaries, current status of schemes etc. Handloom and Textiles Minister U.G. Brahma, Urban Development Department Minister Ashok Singhal, BTR Chief Pramod Boro, MP Dileep Saikia, Political Secretary to the Chief Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah and senior officials were present in the meeting.

Assam to increase NRL's capacity

that the capacity of NRL would be increased from the existing 3 MMT to 9 MMT by 2024 and the Central government has given the necessary approval for this purpose. He said the Assam government's stake in the NRL would be augmented from the existing 12.35 per cent to 26 per cent, for which it would have to invest Rs 2,187 crore. Set up in upper Assam's Numaligarh, the NRL was commissioned as per the provisions of the 1985 Assam Accord, signed after six years of Assam agitation launched to eject "illegal immigrants" from the state. Sarma said that currently the Assam government has been getting Rs 500 crore from the NRL as royalty and after its capacity enhancement, the royalty would be Rs 1,500 crore annually. "We have to increase our non-tax revenue. Assam can survive on its own earnings for four months. Hence, we have to depend on the share of central taxes, various central sector schemes and royalty from oil and gas." We should keep on boosting oil and gas companies for the betterment of the future of Assam. Oil and gas companies are contributing a large amount to Assam's economy," he said.

GP Singh visits Assam-Nagaland

representatives have been strongly advised to disengage from the area immediately. "Singh also added, "On Sunday there should be a meeting with the SP and magistrate including all the officials regarding all the issues of Disoi Valley land encroachments. I have asked them to come up with a solution as to how to deal with the situation. A case has been registered by MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi against the miscreants that should be investigated by the SP of both the states immediately". "Inputs about encroachment and violation of Supreme Court orders would be reported to the Government of Assam formally by DC and SP immediately. In the next 48 hours, we need to submit a report of the investigation to enable the government of Assam to take lawful recourse. The Nagaland SP and Magistrate have agreed to abide by the Supreme Court orders for now and after the meeting, we will decide the course of action," said GP Singh.

India to vaccinate all citizens

press conference led to a war of words between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after he held Prime Minister Narendra Modi responsible for the damage caused during the second wave of coronavirus pandemic in the country. "He is responsible for the second wave of Covid-19," Gandhi said. The Congress leader also called PM Modi an 'event manager'. Javadekar also attacked Rahul Gandhi for using the word nautanki or drama in Hindi during his press conference. The Union minister said that using such terms while the nation faces a crisis is akin to insulting the efforts of the government to contain the pandemic. "India has administered 20 crore vaccines so far and ranks second in terms of jabs administered. If Rahul Gandhi is indeed worried about vaccination rates, he should concentrate on how Congress-governed states are conducting their respective vaccination drives. Those states have not been able to vaccinate people aged between 18-45 years even though quotas were assigned to them," Javadekar added. Javadekar, who is the Union minister of environment, information and broadcasting, also took a jab at Gandhi over a document, which the BJP claims was made by Congress in a bid to defame PM Modi and attack the government over its handling of the second wave of Covid-19, an allegation which Congress has denied. "Vaccines are being produced and by December 216 crore doses will be administered, but one thing is clear and one does not require proof that the 'toolkit' is created by you," Javadekar said. Javadekar also said that the Covid-19 vaccination programme is robust and will successfully vaccinate every citizen.

Sputnik V Covid vaccine

Kamineni said, "In June, we will do a million every week and double that in July. We are on track to complete 20 million jabs by September this year." India is moving towards vaccine sufficiency as inoculations with the Russian vaccine Sputnik V began in the country earlier this month. As reported earlier, India and Russia are planning to manufacture around 35-40 million doses every month that will start from August or September. On May 24, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) and Panacea Biotech, one of the leading pharmaceutical producers in India, had launched the production of the Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine. Sputnik V got approval from the Subject expert committee (SEC) for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA), making it the third COVID-19 vaccine to get clearance in India. India has become the 60th country to authorise the use of the Russian vaccine against coronavirus. It is now approved in countries with a total population of 3 billion, or 40 per cent of the world's population. Under the Centre's liberalised vaccination policy, the private sector hospitals have earned a crucial role as they can directly procure the doses from manufacturers and administer them to the eligible beneficiaries. The beneficiaries, however, need to register themselves for the jabs through the CoWin platform. Sputnik V was registered in India under emergency use authorization procedure on April 12 and vaccination against coronavirus with the Russian vaccine started on May 14. Earlier, while highlighting the Sputnik V progress, deputy chief of mission Roman Babushkin, told ANI, "Sputnik V is one of the vaccines which is included in the Indian mass vaccination drive and it speaks for itself. This company (Panacea Biotech) is one of the Indian partners which the Russian Direct Investment Fund and is developing a business partnership. The preliminary schedule is gradually is to reach 850 million doses in India per year. We know that there is interest from other business partners and even state governments, all these proposals we are studying very carefully." Talking about the status of the single-dose vaccine 'Sputnik lite', the Russian envoy had said promotion in India and distribution would be very helpful.

Centre creating 'artificial scarcity'

she alleged. She further questioned the Centre over not giving emergency approval to more vaccines. "Many vaccines are being approved across the world. Pfizer vaccine has been approved in 85 countries, Moderna vaccine has been approved in 46 countries and J&J is approved in 41 countries." Then why these three vaccines were not given emergency authorisation. If WHO can approve them, why can't India? This clearly shows that the Centre has created this artificial scarcity to favour Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech," she alleged. She further said these two companies do not have manufacturing capacity but the Centre has not approved more vaccines. "The Centre created such an artificial scarcity that states have to buy from them only. The Centre should respond to this," she said. Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said Atishi's allegation is unfounded as scarcity has not been created by the government. Atishi should know that SII and Bharat Biotech don't stand to gain by the scarcity because scarcity means the entry of foreign manufacturers. Creating scarcity and putting general people at discomfort is the speciality of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, he claimed. "He spoke on hospital beds scarcity which forced people to pay hefty fees to private hospitals, he spoke of oxygen scarcity and we saw oxygen mafia loot, we saw black marketing of Covid medicines as he spoke of medicines shortage," Kapoor claimed.

Gujarat receives highest FDI

the highest FDI for the fourth consecutive year now. With a 37 per cent share, Gujarat received a total FDI of \$30.23 billion in 2020-21. Almost 94 per cent of the investment that came in Gujarat during 2020-21 was in the computer hardware and software sector, the state statement said. The state accounts for 78 per cent of the country's total FDI inflow in this sector. The latest data available on the department for the promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) for the April-December 2020 period shows Gujarat bagging a lion's share of Rs 1.77 lakh crore FDI. The state-wise FDI inflow data for the January-March quarter is not available on DPIIT yet. Maharashtra managed to rake in Rs 1.53 lakh crore FDI, while Karnataka stood third with investment worth Rs 78,160 crore. Delhi bagged fourth place and attracted foreign direct investment worth Rs 59,830 crore during the April-December period. Tamil Nadu and Jharkhand, which were placed on the seventh and eighth spots, attracted investment worth Rs 19,734 crore and Rs 19,200 crore, respectively. Haryana bagged FDI worth Rs 13,661 crore; Telangana Rs 11,332 crore; West Bengal Rs 4,309 crore; and UP Rs 4,103 crore. In terms of year-on-year growth, FY20 recorded a 20 per cent rise in FDI, while in FY21 the FDI growth was hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic but still managed to clock in 10 per cent growth. In terms of top investor countries, Singapore is at the top with 29 per cent, followed by the US (23 per cent) and Mauritius (9 per cent) for the FY21. Construction (infrastructure) activities, computer software and hardware, rubber goods, retail trading, drugs and pharmaceuticals and electrical equipment have recorded more than 100 per cent jump in equity during the FY 2020-21 as compared to the previous year. Out of the top 10 countries, Saudi Arabia was the top investor in terms of percentage increase during FY21. It invested \$2,816.08 million in comparison to \$89.93 million reported in the previous financial year. The US and the UK also recorded 227 per cent and 44 per cent increase in FDI equity inflow on a YoY basis in FY21. As per a report released by UNCTAD, the global FDI collapsed in 2020, falling 42 per cent from \$1.5 trillion in 2019 to an estimated \$859 billion. The FDI saw such a low level in the 1990s and it's even 30 per cent lesser than the global foreign investment seen after the 2008-09 global financial crisis. In the year 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic ravaged major economies, countries like the UK, the US, Germany, Italy, Russia, etc., were among the most hit nations with a drop in FDI. Despite worse economic conditions due to the impact of Covid-19, India recorded a positive growth of 13 per cent in the year 2020, which is the highest among all major economies.

Modi announced a financial

government had provided ? 1,000 crore in advance to West Bengal to deal with the devastation caused by Super Cyclone Amphan last May. PM Modi had a 15-minute meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Kalaikunda Air Base in Bengal's West Midnapore district to assess damage caused by Cyclone Yaas. Later, the Chief Minister skipped the review meet called by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister then took aerial surveys of regions affected by Cyclone Yaas, which caused devastation across South and North 24 Paraganas, Digha, East Medinipur and Nandigram districts of the state. Earlier in the day, PM Modi met Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneswar; after which he conducted an aerial survey of affected districts in that state. Yaas made landfall on the north Odisha coast - about 20 km south of Balasore - on Wednesday with 130-140 km per hour winds and 150 km per hour gusts. At least three people died as Yaas hit Odisha. A fourth person died in Bengal's Digha town. On May 19, after surveying the Cyclone Tauktae-hit Gujarat, PM Modi announced an assistance of ? 1,000 crore for immediate relief work. The move prompted protest from the NCP, a partner in the Maharashtra coalition government, that claimed that six states, including Maharashtra and Goa, suffered losses due to Cyclone Tauktae, but the Centre announced financial assistance only for Gujarat.

First dose Covaxin, second

that about 1000 doses of Covishield vaccines were wasted at Silchar Medical College & Hospital (SMCH) in the first week of January, 2021. Such sort of gross anomalies have been happening over here. Unfortunately the local administration seems to have not learnt any lessons. Rather it would be apt to say that the administration is still continuing to follow a sort of 'easy go' approach. Meanwhile, Bhattacharjee had offered a suggestion to all those who will be going for their second jab. "Please go through the cruet. Get confirmed with the vaccine that you are supposed to take," Bhattacharjee observed.

India will be hit by multiple Covid

the space for viral spread. Stop the lies. Vaccinate extensively. The central government and PM Modi are directly responsible for so many deaths in India, he said. "PM is responsible for second wave of virus, it is a result of his 'theatrics', lack of responsibility," the former Congress president said. Rahul Gandhi accused the government of lying about the Covid death numbers. "India's death rate is a lie. The government should tell the truth. Lying about death is helping coronavirus. It's gone past politics, it's about saving people's lives," he said. Rahul also accused PM Modi of being an event manager. "The PM does not understand strategy. For him, everything is an event."

Chief Minister holds meeting with representatives of tea bodies Meeting decides to increase daily wage of tea workers by Rs. 38



Guwahati, May 28: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today held a meeting with representatives of Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha and other tea bodies and discussed issues pertaining to wage fixation. The meeting decided to hike the daily wage of tea workers by Rs. 38. With this hike the tea workers in Brahmaputra Valley would get Rs. 205 from the existing Rs. 167 and tea workers of Barak Valley would get Rs 183 from the existing Rs. 145. The meeting held at Assam Administrative Staff College this evening decided that in view of the long pending demands of the different tea bodies, the wage of the tea workers would henceforth be hiked to Rs. 205 and Rs. 183 with retrospective effect. The tea workers will get the increased wage with effect from 23 February of the present calendar year. It may be noted that earlier the government hiked the daily wage by Rs. 217. However, the decision could not be implemented following court order. Therefore, the government after threadbare discussion with the tea bodies following the demands of the tea workers decided to hike the daily wage to Rs. 205 and Rs. 183. True to the government's commitment and for the welfare of the tea garden workers the government would raise the remaining Rs. 12 after initiating consultation with stake holders and exuded confidence that an acceptable solution will be found out very soon. Minister Industries and Commerce Chandra Mohan Patowary Minister for Tea Tribe Welfare Sanjay Kisan, MP Pallab Lochan Das, MLA Rupesh Gowala, President Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha Paban Singh Ghatowar, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, several other representatives of the tea groups and other senior officials were present at the meeting.

RKM Distributes Relief Materials to Fire Victims of Kombo Tarsu Mobuk

Aalo, 28 May : A Relief Team from Ramakrishna Mission, Aalo visited Kambo Tarsu Village and distributed various relief items to five members of a family. It may be recalled that one house was completely gutted and property lost in the fire accident that occurred on 19th May last. The team visited Kambo Tarsu Village and interacted with Shri Yajom Diyum and his family on 22nd May last. Blanket to 3 persons (Male-2 and Female-1), Sweater 3 persons (Male-2 Female-1), Shirt to 6 persons (Male-4 Female-2), Pant to 6 persons (Male-4 Female-2), Coat to 3 persons, Handi to 1 person, Plate to 3 persons, Bowl to 3 persons, Big Spoon to 2 persons, Big Bucket to 1 person, Small Bucket to 1 person and Mug to 1 person were distributed on the spot.

Teachers engaged in the fight against Covid 19

Biswanath Charilal, May 28: The primary and the secondary teachers of Biswanath district have been engaged in the fight against the COVID 19 by the Biswanath district administration. The state government has banned the inter-district movement to check the community spread of the deadly disease since last week. A temporary shed was made near the Dekorai River at Nagsankar that separates Sonitpur and Biswanath district where police personnel, medical teams undertake medical procedures. This time, the district administration has engaged the teacher's community of the district to note down the details of the private vehicles and passengers plying on the route. Expressing their happiness to be a part of the fight against the Covid 19, the teacher's community thanked the district administration.

Total Cases of Covid Positive Crosses Five Thousand in Golaghat : 163 New Cases and 3 Dead Today

Golaghat, May 28: The total number of Covid positive cases from April 1 till today has crossed the mark of five thousand in Golaghat district. Today 163 new cases of Covid positive were reported in Golaghat and with these cases the total number of Covid positive cases reached 5054. However at present there are 1467 Active cases of Covid positive in the district. Today three persons succumbed to Covid. The deceased have been identified as Sanjib Singh (35) from Numaligarh, Devicharan Mirdha (60) from Missamora, Rangamati and Arun Jena (60) from North Goronga TE. With these three deaths the Covid death toll rises to fifty eight in the district. Meanwhile today two Containment Zones were withdrawn by the administration. At present there are four Active Containment Zone s.

Review Meeting, Field Visit by Golaghat DC

Golaghat, May 28: Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat Manavendra Pratap Singh today reviewed the COVID19 situation of Dhansiri Sub division at the conference hall of SDO(C) Office, Sarupathar. Rahul Javir Suresh, SDO (C), Amit Hojai, SDPO and Dr P. K. Ganju, SDM and HO along with all Magistrates, HO's and BDO's were present at the meeting. The DC also visited the Covid Care Centre at Bhagwan Tea Estate, Sarupathar and took stock of the arrangements and facilities provided to the patients in the Centre today. Further Deputy Commissioner Singh visited the Covid Care Centre at Uriamghat, Sarupathar along with Rahul Javir Suresh, SDO (C) & Dr P. K. Ganju, SDM & HO, Sarupathar and interacted with the discharged COVID patients. He also randomly called some of the COVID patients of Sarupathar and took stock about their health.

Illegal saw mill demolished at Barpeta

Guwahati, May 28: One illegal band saw mill at Baravita village in Barpeta district has been shut down and the machines seized after forest personnel conducted a raid here on Friday. The illegal saw mill was operating under the Bahari Beat, Barpeta Road Range. As soon as the forest personnel detected the illegal saw mill, they raided and seized the machines. Some logs were also seized. No arrest was made.

Vaccination Drive Continues in Golaghat

Golaghat, May 28 : The Covid Vaccination Drive is going on in different places in Golaghat. Today hundred persons from the age of forty five years and above were given Covishield Vaccines at Mini Primary Health Centre of Dakshinhengara in Golaghat. In this vaccination drive Medical Officer Dr Rupam Pathak, MPW Debo Pratim Kakaty, Ranjit Kunwar SI, Lab Technician Devojit Lahon, ANM Kunja Chetia, Dipika Gohain, Arpana Karmakar and Champak Barua were appreciated by the people for their friendly nature. The team even helped in Registration process through Mobile and giving necessary information.

Online spiritual discussion, speeches and interaction program

North Lakhimpur, May 28: On the occasion of Budha Purnima, an online spiritual discussion, speeches and interaction program was held under the aegis of Nih:Shreyas, a prestigious study circle of Lakhimpur district yesterday evening from 7 p.m. to 8-30 p.m. through Google Meet App. The program started with Paramatma Vandana by the president of Nih: Shreyas Gitacharya Purandar Baruah. The objective of the program was explained by Indrajit Kakati. Jitu Dutta lectured on the significance and relevant of Budha Purnima which was followed by a special speech by Gitacharya Purandar Baruah on the topic "Spiritual effort and the importance of prayer for health security, increasing spiritual calamity and universal welfare in present day scenario". Then, an interaction was held among the participants which was anchored by Indrajit Kakati, Sumanya Kashyap from Delhi and Jitu Dutta. Dwipen Baruah gave an special announcement about the next meeting of Nih: Shreyas. The program ended with Paramatma Vandana and Kalyan Mantra by Gitacharya Purandar Baruah.

Drugs mafia injured, 9mm pistol and ammunition seized at Nagaon

NAGAON, May 27: During an operation, Nagaon police injured an illegal drugs mafia with bullet this evening at Nagaon Herapatty area when the drugs mafia pointed the police personnel with his illegal arms for fleeing from the scene. According to sources, the injured drugs mafia has been identified as Mansur Ali. Police subsequently recovered one 9mm pistol and four rounds bullets and four containers with full of suspected heroine from his possession, sources added. The injured drugs mafia was immediately admitted to Nagaon civil hospital for treatment. Sources claimed that the drugs mafia Mansur Ali when saw police personnel during the surprise operation at Herapatty area this evening, Mansur Ali pointed to police personnel with his illegal 9mm pistol and police personnel led by ASP Dhruba Bora immediately retaliated with bullets too at his leg for surrender. As a result, the drugs mafia Mansur Ali sustained bullet injury on his leg and surrendered to police. Finally, police were able to arrest him on the spot. Police later on seized one 9mm pistol, four rounds of bullets and four containers with full of suspected heroine from his possession on spot, sources added.

Japan expected to extend emergency Covid measures less than two months ahead of Olympics



Tokyo, May 28 : Japan is expected to extend emergency coronavirus measures in Tokyo and several other regions by about three weeks, according to officials, as the country struggles to rein in a fourth wave of infections less than two months before the Olympics. The state of emergency - the third in the capital since the start of the pandemic - was called in late April and was originally due to end on 11 May, but was extended until the end of this month, as restrictions on businesses failed to make a dent in infections. Infections have fallen in Tokyo in recent days, but the daily caseload is still too high to justify an end to the measures, according to medical experts, while hospitals are contending with a record number of critically ill Covid-19 patients. There is also evidence that people are lowering their guard after weeks of restrictions, according to the economy minister, Yasutoshi Nishimura, who is overseeing the country's virus response. "In Osaka and Tokyo, the flow of people is starting to creep up, and there are concerns that infections will rise," Nishimura said Friday at the start of a meeting with government health experts. The prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, who has described the situation as "highly unpredictable," was expected to announce the extension in Tokyo, Osaka and seven other prefectures later in the day. While Japanese authorities do not have the legal powers to impose European-style lockdowns, the measures currently in place are the toughest yet. Restaurants and bars face fines if they refuse to stop serving alcohol or to close at 8pm. A cap on attendance at

sports events and concerts, and requests for people to avoid unnecessary outings and travel are also expected to stay in place. On Thursday, Tokyo reported 684 cases, 159 fewer than a week earlier, and 11 deaths, metropolitan health officials said. Despite the decrease, the head of the Tokyo Medical Association, Haruo Ozaki, said daily cases in Tokyo needed to be brought to below 100 to prevent another surge during the Olympics. "I believe there is a need to extend the state of emergency until that figure is reached," Ozaki told reporters this week, according to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper. "Unless the figure is brought down to that level, there will be a major rebound in new cases in July and August, when the Olympics are to be held." Japan has recorded about 735,000 Covid-19 infections and 12,759 deaths - one of the worst death tolls in the region - since the start of the pandemic. Only about 6% of its population has received at least one vaccine dose since its troubled rollout began in mid-February, and most people will still be unprotected during the Olympics. Signs that more contagious variants are spreading in Japan, coupled with vaccination delays and pressure on medical staff, have triggered calls for the Tokyo 2020 Games to be cancelled. The government, organisers and the International Olympic Committee [IOC], however, insist that every precaution has been taken to ensure a "safe and secure" Games. The IOC has vowed to go ahead with the event even if the host city is still covered by emergency restrictions. In an interview this week, Dick Pound, a senior IOC member, said: "Organisers have now changed gears and they're in the operational part of it. Barring Armageddon that we can't see or anticipate, these things are a go." This week the head of a doctors' union in Japan warned that the Games, due to open on 23 July, could lead to the spread of Covid-19 variants.

Nikita Mazepin may be Russian but he is the perfect American anti-hero

London, May 28 : The classic American sports villain knows many forms. Bill Laimbeer was the Detroit Pistons' elbow-throwing rabble-rouser. Bill Romanowski was the Denver Broncos' late-hitting loogie spitter. Mike Tyson bit off a guy's ear. And now there's Nikita Mazepin, the Formula One racing driver who's fast tracking as an all-time foil too. Doubtless, Mazepin's inclusion in this rogue's gallery will strike some as harsh given that this is the 22-year-old Muscovite's maiden season driving for Haas, the tanking backmarker representing the United States. But for those of us fans who have watched him over the past five grands prix, his early work reads like hacky Russian literature - slow and meandering. Last weekend at Monaco marked the first time he outqualified teammate Mick Schumacher - but much of that was down to Michael's boy ringing up about a half-million dollars' worth of damage sliding his car into a Casino Square exit barrier. During the race itself Mazepin proved the lesser enemy to the circuit's boundaries in Monaco, where the prospect of witnessing an overtake on the principality's narrow streets becomes ever more fantastical as modern Formula One cars grow longer and wider; his biggest crime last Sunday was running wide of track boundaries, a point of contention that most of the drivers have been reckoning with all season. Prior to that, though, the driver - who'd earn the nickname "Mazepin" for a string of unforced wipeouts - was on quite the downward spiral. Earlier this month at the Portuguese Grand Prix, Mazepin earned his first points penalty for five blue flags - the international sign for make way for the much faster driver behind you. One of those drivers was Sergio Pérez, who was in a desperate fight to keep the lead for his Red Bull team when he ran up against the aggressively obstinate Russian - forcing the Mexican to abandon the pass and lock his brakes to avoid a collision. After an immediate investigation, race stewards slapped Mazepin with a five-second ticket, even though he was already a minute behind the field at the time of his transgression. Pérez's assessment of Mazepin over his team radio, however, was much blunter: "Fucking idiot." Last month at Imola, Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi called Mazepin a "jackass" and "honestly, so stupid" after the Haas rookie interfered with the Italian's final qualifying run. (Mazepin's response: "The track is just not big enough for all of



us.") A week later in Catalunya, Mazepin ruined Lando Norris's qualifying session, dooming the McLaren driver to a ninth-place start. Naturally, Mazepin picked up another points penalty and was docked a grid spot for this blue-flag foul. But since he qualified dead last for the race and his team remains scoreless on the season, it's fair to not only wonder if the punishment fits the crime but if it also emboldens the criminal. Mercedes principal Toto Wolff seemed to wrestle with exactly this paradox during the Spanish Grand Prix. Late in the race, Lewis Hamilton, in the lead, was bearing down on Mazepin, who was bringing up the rear with his elbows out yet again. "Blue flags!" Wolff barked to race director Michael Masi over the radio. "This guy makes us lose the position!" In a championship where words are terse and delivered in coded sequences, this was an astonishing disclosure that, to the well-trained ear of ex-driver Jolyon Palmer, nonetheless sounded like more fodder for Mazepin's antagonist arc. But Mazepin isn't just a bad boy. He's a pay driver. His father, Dmitry, a billionaire chemicals and fertilizer monopolist who's cozy with Vladimir Putin, tried to buy Force India after the team was put into administration in 2018. But after Canadian motors magnate Lawrence Stroll beat him on that deal, Dmitry reportedly bought his boy a seat with Haas late last year. Earlier this month the two scions nearly came together during qualifying for the Spanish Grand Prix, with Stroll flipping Mazepin the bird in an irony too rich even for this sport. After all, Stroll himself was written off as a rolling traffic cone before rounding into a more than competent midfielder - proof that money can at least nurture racing talent, if not buy it outright.

But the elder Mazepin may well be writing checks that can't be cashed by his boy, who surely would be out of a seat if his last name were Hamilton or even Raikkonen. (Worse, this even more damning video of him quibbling with engineering instructions in the middle of the Monaco GP makes it look as if Mazepin lacks the most basic open-wheel driver knack for high-speed multitasking.) And yet: Mazepin jumped to F1 despite a checkered junior career that includes a ban for throwing a punch that left a rival with a black eye and a swollen jaw. That Haas would take risks was in some ways inevitable given owner Gene Haas's dubious past and his cash-strapped F1 team's dalliance with fizzy drinks sponsor Rich Energy. It was hardly a surprise when, four months after Nikita's signing was announced, Dmitry's potash fertilizer conglomerate Uralkali followed as a title sponsor and redressed the Haas livery in the colors of the Russian flag - which Nikita notably cannot race under because of the recent rulings against the country's systemic doping practices. (Wada is said to be investigating the Haas color scheme.) Ever since, Haas has had to defend itself against rumors of a total Mazepin takeover. So it figured that when an Instagram story surfaced of Mazepin groping a woman's breast after the Haas signing, that the driver didn't suffer much beyond having to deliver a public apology (the woman later said they are friends and it had been a joke, although she later unfollowed him on Instagram after posting a MeToo hashtag). In fact, to watch him do his part in F1's We Race As One PSA for inclusion and justice is to witness a deeply entitled white man who could not give less of a damn.

Thomas Tuchel: inside the mind of an obsessive with the winning touch

London, May 28 : Christian Heidel laughs as he remembers a story that sums up Thomas Tuchel's obsessive attention to detail. "We were in a training camp in Austria and had a match against Olympiakos," Mainz's sporting director says. "Thomas was looking closely at the lawn. He was measuring the height, sniffing the grass. He was so thrilled about this pitch that he wanted me to transfer the groundsman to Mainz. The next day the groundsman called me and said: 'I heard that we're going to have some talks about a contract.' The deal didn't happen but it shows what a perfectionist he is." Heidel, who gave Tuchel his break when he put him in charge of Mainz's first team in 2009, is not the first person to marvel at the Chelsea manager's quest for perfection. Hans Komm, who taught PE at the German's Simpert-Kraemer high school, remembers a gifted sportsman who possessed a surprisingly bright tactical mind for a teenager. "You could see it when he swapped the players on his team around during a volleyball lesson in order to win," Komm says. "He showed great discipline when there was an important goal to achieve. I never saw him drink alcohol. He was very friendly. But he sometimes talked to his friends in the last row or had to be told off when he juggled the volleyball with his foot." Tuchel, who grew up in the small Bavarian town of Krumbach, was the best footballer in his class and helped his team win the German Schools Championship in Berlin in 1987. He starred for TSV Krumbach and appeared to be on the right path after joining FC Augsburg in 1988. Yet difficulties were on the way. A slow but intelligent defender, Tuchel was

released by Augsburg in 1992 and struggled at Stuttgart Kickers. He joined SSV Ulm in 1994 and the picture briefly looked rosy when the third-tier side appointed Ralf Rangnick as manager three years later. Rangnick, described as the father of modern German football, opened Tuchel's eyes to positional play. Yet when Ulm were promoted to Bundesliga 2 in 1998, Tuchel's joy was limited by a chronic knee injury that forced him to retire at the age of 25. The man who leads Chelsea into the Champions League final against Manchester City on Saturday had to adjust his ambitions, studying for a business



administration degree and working as a barman in Stuttgart. It was never going to last. Heidel describes Tuchel as a "footballaholic" and says he knows no one with a better understanding of the game. Andreas Rettig, Augsburg's sporting director when Tuchel became their Under-19s coach in 2005, talks of a demanding individual "100% convinced" in his ideas. "He thinks about football 24-7," Heidel says. "Every training has to be perfect. He plays the game in his head beforehand. He needs everything to go according to plan, especially tactical discipline - where the players are standing, where they have to go. This makes it very hard to play against teams coached by Thomas." Tuchel was offered a way back into football when Rangnick, who had become Stuttgart's manager, asked him to manage the Under-15s. "He was the first coach I had at a professional club," Andreas Beck, the former Germany international, says. "It was another level." Beck is not surprised when he sees Tuchel erupt during Chelsea's games. Playing for the 47-year-old can be exhausting and working with him difficult. Before arriving at Chelsea in January, Tuchel was known for his combustibility. He made few

friends when he managed Borussia Dortmund from 2015 to 2017 and although he was successful at Paris Saint-Germain, winning a domestic treble last season, he was fired on Christmas Eve after falling out with Leonardo, the sporting director, over transfer policy. "It's important for Thomas to be part of all the decisions," Heidel says. "He's not the type of coach where you can give him 10 to 12 players and say: 'Roll with that.' Everybody is lucky that he usually wins more games than he loses. If there is a loss, it's almost like physical pain. He's very emotional. He can blow up at players because he's so eager to

win. But he's also someone who will hug them afterwards." Although Heidel says there were some awkward moments when Tuchel reached the end of the road at Mainz in 2014, the pair are on good terms. "Thomas is a good guy, believe me," Beck says. Tuchel, who was mentored by the late Hermann Badstuber, coached Beck again after moving to Stuttgart's Under-19s in 2004. "He built a very tight relationship with the players," Beck says. "It felt like not just a player-coach relationship. We were like brothers. Other players felt it - Mario Gómez, Sami Khedira, Adam Szalai." He appreciates people who are willing to suffer. Then he feeds you with information and energy. You don't get sweets from him just because you are nice. You have to do something for compliments. He once said: 'The moment I don't criticise you, you know something is wrong.' Although Tuchel led Stuttgart to the Under-19 title in 2005, the club tired of his personality and chose not to renew his contract, opening the door for Augsburg to hire him. "He was clever enough to say: 'I will do this for poor money, but you have to support me in my education as a coach,'" Rettig says. "He did not have the full Uefa licence. We made

an agreement. It was six and a half months in Cologne. It was very demanding on him, but he wanted to invest in his education." Tuchel was taught by Erich Rutemöller, the former head of training for aspiring coaches at the German Football Association. "He understood the science of training, sports medicine, physiology and psychology," Rutemöller says. "He was already a very good student. He was pretty quiet. He was watching and listening. And he was smart. He knew what to do and how to get along with different participants. But he was not the big guy in the lectures." Yet Tuchel was making his presence felt at Augsburg. "He had problems with referees," Rettig says. "After we got penalties for his behaviour from the Bavarian Football Association, I told him he had to pay the fines himself. He said: 'OK, I am responsible for my behaviour.' It was not a question of money for him. It was a question of ambition. He wanted to win. He did not think about saving a few Euros by being calmer." Tuchel wanted to learn. "When I was at Hoffenheim with Rangnick, Thomas invited me over to Augsburg," Beck says. "He asked for information about Rangnick. He wanted to know all about our innovations." An identity was forming. Tuchel was promoted to first-team coach of Augsburg II and played dashing football. Yet Rettig sensed frustration. "At this level there was a gap between his ideas and the quality of the players," he says. Keen for a new challenge, Tuchel became Mainz's Under-19s coach in 2008. Heidel, who had seen Jürgen Klopp inspire Mainz before joining Dortmund, had never met such an interesting coach. He took note when Mainz won the Under-19 title in Tuchel's first season, beating Dortmund in the decisive game. "I watched with Jürgen," Heidel says. "After Jürgen said: 'There were 10 better players for Dortmund but they lost against one better team.'" Heidel gambled, asking his 35-year-old novice to become Mainz's manager at the start of the 2009-10 season. Tuchel was shocked. Mainz had just won promotion to the Bundesliga but his impact was instant. His team took the breath away: tactically flexible, fast and organised. "You felt stressed because of their players," Beck says. "You didn't know how to play against them. They were so sharp. You could not guess which team would play. They always had a new plan."

Zinedine Zidane's departure from Real Madrid seems to suit both parties

London, May 28 : "One day I'm in, one day I'm out, then I'm a bit in, then we draw or lose and I'm out again," Zinedine Zidane said. That was early February and it is also part of the reason why, almost four months later, he really is out. On Thursday morning, around 10.30, the Real Madrid manager drove into Valdebebas. By the time he drove back out two hours later, he was officially the former Real Madrid manager. Again. He had told some players the night before, around the time footage appeared of the Santiago Bernabéu on fire. The statement from the club confirming his departure was released just after midday. It was polite without being especially effusive and only 102 words long. There are no plans for a press conference or a farewell; the club's media chose to turn the page, the statement followed by studied silence. The only player Zidane could say goodbye to in person was Lucas Vázquez, undergoing his rehabilitation at Valdebebas. The statement was short but it had said enough, the key message delivered: this was his decision, not ours. He had chosen to leave; all they could do was respect that. And then not mention him any more. This is the third time Zidane has walked away: once as a player, twice as a manager. Each time the decision was unilateral, each time he was under contract and each time he waived any salary still due. That is a lot of money. "I'll make it very easy for the club," he said earlier this month. But that is not to say it is only about him or that he hasn't felt pushed to the



door. These are not decisions taken in a vacuum, the club complicit in creating the conditions that see him leave. Nor are they surprised: Madrid have known this was coming for some time. Although they do not welcome the idea that someone else defines what happens next, they had prepared for it too. A search had begun for a replacement that they were optimistic would conclude with Max Allegri signing only to find that the Italian may have other ideas. And so to other candidates, such as Antonio Conte and Mauricio Pochettino, or so they hope. Then there's Raúl, coaching the B team. Zidane has been talking like a man more out than in for a while, publicly and privately. He recently denied reports he had told the players he was going before the end of the season - "why would I say that now?" he protested - but that was certainly how some of them had interpreted his words. In the media, too, the hints have been increasingly heavy and the questioning ever more

insistent. But this isn't recent. At some level, it was there the moment he came back as coach in March 2019, not entirely convinced of anything except that somehow he had to. Before that even: when he walked out at the very top in May 2018, a three-times Champions League winner, it wasn't just because he could, because it was a hell of a time and a way to go. Upon his return, he was in a position of authority but that was never going to be eternal. Not even winning guarantees that. "I've been locked up for two weeks, as if I was in a cage, and I feel like a fight," Zidane said in February, and so he went and found one. He had tested positive for Covid-19 and isolated at home, watching his team struggle. Out of the cup to third-tier Alcoyano, out of the Super Cup against Athletic Bilbao and seemingly out of the league, they had also been on edge in Europe, defeated twice by Shakhtar Donetsk and facing the prospect of not getting through the group for the first time.

Villarreal's glory is a tale of redemption, vindication and disbelief

London, May 28 : The greatest victory of all belonged to everyone, a whole team effort. So often said, this time it was true. Gerard Moreno, Dani Raba, Paco Alcácer, Alberto Moreno, Dani Parejo, Moi Gómez, Raúl Albiol, Francis Coquelin, Mario Gaspar, Pau Torres, Gerónimo Rulli: by the time

my family in the stand behind the goal. "I didn't really think; it would be worse to think. I would just give it everything I had. I was just thinking, Just go in, just go in' and it went in." Rulli smashed it as if taking a goalkick, the ball rising hard into the top-left corner. "I was getting ready to take another one," Moreno

the trophy. Foyth, war wounded. Parejo and Coquelin, sold by Valencia and celebrating. Trigueros, the qualified teacher with another story to tell his class. Yeremi Pino, the youngest Spaniard to win a European trophy. Gerard Moreno marking his goal with a "get vaccinated" gesture. And there was Torres, the kid who had joined Villarreal at the age of five and whom United now want, the kid from the town of Vila-real who was in the stands crying when Juan Román Riquelme had his penalty saved in 2006 in the Champions League semi-final against Arsenal. Before the game, Emery had urged them to do it for "Pau's town" and now they had. For the whole of Spain, perhaps. After the semi-final, Roig had described European football as three Englishmen and one little Spaniard still standing and that was a theme to which many of them returned. "We're Spain's team a bit now," said José Manuel Llaneza, who for so many years ran the club. At a time of doubts, a concern that the Premier league is eclipsing them, there will be five La Liga teams in the Champions League next season. Asked what the secret was, Unai Emery, who had stepped on to the podium, shaken hands with Alex Ferguson and collected his fourth Europa League winners' medal, said: "We watched 17 Manchester United games. It's work, that's all it is." They hadn't practised penalties though. And if they had, it's not as though they would have got all the way down to Rulli. Emery recalled a player at Almería, the first top-flight club he coached, missing in a friendly despite endless practice. "Penalties are not a lottery but they are the moment," he said. "And the players were fabulous." "There are no words for this," Parejo said. "My family will be watching me on television." Others had made it to Gdansk. A little more than 2,000 fans were there. For the past year they have been at the Cerámica stadium only in cardboard form, a ground full of cutouts. In the directors' box, Marcos Senna, the club's former player who is now their ambassador, had almost lost his voice. "Qué fuerte! Qué

fuerte!" he kept saying, which was almost all he could say, smiling in disbelief, shaking his head. Incredible! Senna had waited a long time for this and it was about his generation as well, the men who had made this club what it is. Llaneza, the managing director who oversaw the sale in 1997 and then led them into a new era, could hardly believe it. "We like to suffer, eh," he said. "So many things go through your head. I'd like to send an embrace to everyone in hospital everywhere." Bruno Soriano, the former captain was there. And Santi Cazorla, who played for the club in three spells. This, they agreed, was a thorn finally removed from their side. Riquelme was watching on television in Argentina. Now penalties, another Argentinian, had taken them to victory. "I want to send him a hug," Rulli said. "This has taken a weight off Román's back," Senna managed to say. Villarreal's Juan Román Riquelme has his penalty saved by Jens Lehmann in their 2006 Champions League semi-final. One person who wasn't there was the man who most should have been: Fernando Roig, the president who bought Villarreal in 1997 and built this. He had tested positive for Covid a fortnight ago after having the first dose of the vaccine. He was negative again, two PCR tests proving it, and had been allowed to land in Poland. He had been at the final training session the night before, but on Wednesday Uefa's medical committee said that he did not fulfil the criteria and turned him away. "I don't understand it," he said. "He should have been here, the poor thing." Albiol said. The first call Roig took was from his son, the Villarreal CEO, on the pitch at full-time. "We'll get back and give you a hug," Senna said looking down the screen. From his home, Roig spoke to the television channel he had watched the game on. "How was it?" he was asked. "Terrifying," he replied. "I had to come back. It was the team that had to play, not me." Tonight it is 23 years and two days since our first promotion to the first division and I am very, very happy. When they get back to the airport at three or four in the morning, I'll be there waiting for them."



Villarreal had won their first trophy every player on the pitch had scored and it wasn't just them either. It was everything and everyone; a town of 50,577, the smallest to have a European title and, then, at the end of it all a single man standing there alone, trying not to think about it. After 98 years of history, 24 years under the men who changed the club for good, 21 seasons in the top flight, 14 years in Europe and four semi-finals at which they fell, always halted at the gate; after 120 minutes, two goals and 20 penalties, every one put away, it came down to this. To their goalkeeper. Their second-choice goalkeeper. Rulli has been given the opportunity in Europe and was maintained against Manchester United despite doubts as to whether, having taken Villarreal to a place they had never been, Unai Emery would turn to Sergio Asenjo instead. Now, late on Wednesday, he had one shot to make history. Well, two: the one he would take and the one he would face. Twenty outfield players had scored, leaving Rulli and David de Gea, fate in their hands and at their feet. "I had never taken a penalty before," Rulli said. "I was annoyed because I had got my hand to the three or four of the penalties but not saved any of them. And I could see

said, thinking it was time to go back round. He had scored the opening goal of the match, the opening goal of the shootout and now he was going to have to do it again. Manu Trigueros though had other ideas and it turned out he was right. When Rulli saved, Trigueros turned to a teammate and said: "It's over." And, so at last, it was. De Gea's penalty went to Rulli's left and everyone went wild, the goalkeeper diving to save. Suddenly there was yellow everywhere, although as Marca's nice front page put it: "It's not yellow, it's gold. They had done it and like this." "I've never seen anything like it," Parejo said. Albiol said: "The last time I took a penalty was in infantil, the under-13s." This was the second time he had won the Uefa Cup. The last time was 17 years ago. Moreno's teammates were about to find out how much that chunk of iron weighs and he was right, they were losing their heads. He would have been happy just to watch this final from the bench, to make a bad year a great one; instead, he had come on to play a key part. There were lovely stories everywhere, redemption and vindication. Gaspar, the captain who has played more games for the club than anyone else, coming on and lifting

Former England winger Karen Carney humbled by Hall of Fame award

London, May 28 : The former England winger Karen Carney said she felt humbled after she was unexpectedly whisked to Wembley to be inducted into the National Football Museum Hall of Fame in front of family, friends and representatives from her former teams on Thursday. "I didn't know anything about today so I was really, really surprised," said the 33-year-old. "We got to the stadium and I still couldn't see anyone because they were all hiding. It was pretty cool." With 144 caps Carney is England's third-most capped player behind Fara Williams and Jill Scott, having made her international de-

but in 2005 at 17. Having said as a child she wanted to play for England she picks out her first cap as a career highlight. From there she competed at four World Cups and



four European Championships. She also played for Team GB at the London Olympics in 2012. "Being an Olympian is something I really cherish," she said. "Winning the quadruple with Arsenal, because we're the only team to have done that, winning the FA Cup with my local team Birmingham as well... I've been really lucky. But the first cap, that was pretty cool." At Wembley Carney was presented with her award by Rachel Yankey, a former teammate and fellow Hall of Fame member. "She's an icon and pioneer

and legend in her own right on and off the pitch," Carney said. "Over the years she's been a mentor and almost like a family member. My mum pushed me out of the way, said: 'I want to have a photo with my daughter' and pulled Rachel in. That's what she means to us." Carney is the 19th female player inducted into the Hall of Fame and the first since Alex Scott in 2019. Judges voted unanimously to include her "in recognition of her outstanding football career, her involvement in advancing women's football and her overall contribution to the game on and off the field", a statement from the National Football Museum said.

Naomi Osaka's media snub is a big loss for tennis

London, May 28 : Towards the end of last season, not long after players had returned from lockdown, the Frenchman Gaël Monfils continued to embrace his newfound hobby on the streaming website Twitch. After retiring from a match in October, he decided to skip his mandatory post-match press duties in favour of inviting French journalists to conduct the press conference online for his fans. The journalists were left with a choice - attend the press conference on terms dictated by Monfils or potentially miss out. In the end, those who did attend discussed with him his biggest news of the year: he was shutting down his season. On Wednesday, Naomi Osaka announced on social media that she would not be attending press conferences during the French

Sharapova. "I had the opportunity to interview Donald Trump on his LA golf course," said the male journalist. "He said that Maria's shoulders were incredibly alluring and then he came up with this incredible analysis: that you were intimidated by her supermodel good looks." "The greatest source of friction in Osaka's press conferences has historically been her win over Williams at the 2018 US Open. Osaka clearly knew nothing about Williams's game penalty during the match, yet it was all anyone could ask her for weeks after her first slam title. Four months later, after she won the Australian Open, she was understandably irritated by the first question of her winning press conference. "Apparently you're unable to win a slam without some drama," said a male journalist. Years



Open. Her decision for not attending her tour-mandated press conference was markedly different to Monfils's. She cited the mental health effects of her press interactions: "I've often felt that people have no regard for athletes' mental health and this rings very true whenever I see a press conference or partake in one." "Billie Jean King's generation tirelessly courted the media as they promoted women's tennis. Yet as the sport has professionalised those close relations eventually became sterile interactions in press conferences. The shift continues and, with the rise of social media, prominent athletes now recognise the power they hold, the direct access they have to their fans, and that they no longer need the media. The environment in the tennis press is unique. It is a global sport that is relevant each year but relatively niche for the rest. There is a core of international tennis reporters from around the world and tournaments also absorb local journalists. It means that any given press conference includes a vast array of different characters from different countries and with different motivations when they ask a question. The results are not always pretty. The last time Wimbledon was held, in 2019, British No 1 Johanna Konta's losing press conference became an even bigger story than her stellar run to the quarter-final when she said a male journalist was patronising her. During one of the first events after the hiatus, one journalist appeared on a Zoom press conference inexplicably shirtless. Few sports will ever be able to boast an interview question as horrific as when Serena Williams, at the 2018 French Open, was asked if she was ever intimidated by Maria

on, there is still a tendency to pit Williams and Osaka against each other. It is not difficult to see where resentment may fester. What is interesting is Osaka's stated reason for not attending press conferences is actually due to questions related to her matches. "We're often sat there and asked questions that bring doubt into our minds and I'm just not going to subject myself to people that doubt me," she wrote. Press conferences are often not enjoyable for athletes and speaking to a player after losses and devastating moments requires sensitivity and tact that is sometimes lacking. But ultimately, journalists asking questions about difficult subjects are not trying to sabotage her. There has been little reason to doubt Osaka over the past year considering she has won the last two slams she entered. However, she has recently struggled on clay, losing in the second round of the Madrid Open and in her first match at the Italian Open. Her ability on the surface has been a constant point of discussion in recent weeks and it will likely be similar on grass, where she also has limited experience. Meanwhile, tension will continue to rise as the Olympics approaches. By not speaking with the press, it rather seems like she is protecting herself from the pressure to come. Ultimately Osaka is free to do what she likes. But it is a shame. While some players understandably protect themselves by offering as little as possible, she is one of the more forthcoming and insightful speakers and her rapport with the media is better than most. The last time she did suffer a devastating major loss, her 2020 Australian Open third-round defeat to Coco Gauff, the press conference was handled well by all and she was endearing and emotionally mature in defeat.

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