

The Assam Rising

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Pijush Hazarika visits embankments

Guwahati, June 13 : Assam water resources minister Pijush Hazarika on Sunday visited the embankments in Dibrugarh district and inspected the ongoing repair works. The minister, accompanied by water resources officials and local MLAs visited Burijan, Rohmorja, Bogibee and Dehing Jera and took stock of the embankment repair works and directed the officials to carry out erosion-control works on a war footing. Hazarika said embankment construction and repair works have been accelerated across the state. He directed the officials to end all the embankment repair works by the month of May every year. The minister said only temporary and emergency works should be carried out during the rainy season. "To get rid of the flood problem, I have directed the officials to conceptualise and build embankments in a scientific manner."

Gas explosion in Hubei

Beijing, June 13 : At least 12 people were killed and more than 100 people injured in a gas explosion in China's Hubei province on Sunday. As per reports, the condition of 39 people is critical. As of 12 p.m. (local time), rescue workers found 150 people from the blast site in the city of Shiyan and rushed them to hospitals, reports Xinhua news agency. The accident took place in a residential community in the city's Zhangwan district at 6.30 a.m., trapping a large number of people. China: 12 killed, over 100 injured in gas explosion in Hubei province. The exact number of casualties is still being verified as the search and rescue is underway.

Piyong Temjen

Guwahati, June 13 : Noted Hindi scholar and litterateur from Nagaland Padma Shri Piyong Temjen Jamir passed away at Dimapur on Sunday after prolonged illness. Padma Shri Piyong Temjen Jamir was the principal of Rashtra Bhasha Hindi Training Institute Dimapur and made immense contributions to popularise Hindi in Nagaland. He also helped Naga folklores and literature reach the rest of the country through Hindi. Piyong Temjen Jamir was conferred Padma Shri in 2018 and many other awards for his contributions in the field of literature and education. Nagaland Governor RN Ravi and deputy chief minister Y Patton have condoled Jamir's death. In a condolence message to Padma Shri Jamir's wife Pangertula Longkumer, Governor Ravi said Jamir will go down in history for his contributions in the field of literature and a humanist intellectual, who believed in universal brotherhood of mankind.

Assam govt tells fully vaccinated employees to join office from Monday



Guwahati, June 13 : The Assam government on Sunday asked all its employees who have received two doses of Covid-19 vaccine to join offices from Monday even as a partial lockdown across the state will be in force. Govt asked

all its employees who have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine to join offices from Monday even as a partial lockdown across the state will be in force. The General Administration Department Commissioner and Secretary M S Manivannan

issued an order and said the decision has been taken for the smooth functioning of the government offices. "In order to ensure smooth functioning of government offices, all the employees of Government of Assam who have received both the doses of COVID-19 vaccine are hereby directed to attend office from 14/06/2021 regularly," he added. The order further said that the eligible employees should follow all Covid-related protocols issued by the government while joining the work. "This has the approval of the competent authority," Manivannan said. On June 4, the Assam

government had extended the partial lockdown imposed due to the surge of COVID-19 till June 15. The curfew was imposed from 1 pm to 5 am with a total ban on movement of individuals. All shops and commercial establishments close down at 12 noon on all days. All inter-district transport services and movement of people to and from other districts are suspended. The odd-even formula for plying of vehicles is in force across the state.

Rajnath Singh approves budgetary support of nearly Rs 499 crore for innovations in defence sector



New Delhi, June 13 : Rajnath Singh approves budgetary support of nearly Rs 499 crore for innovations in defence sector. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved budgetary support of nearly Rs 499 crore for research and innovation in the defence sector for the next five years. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved budgetary support of nearly Rs 499 crore for research and innovation in the defence sector for the next five years. The Defence Ministry Sunday said the

funds will be used to provide financial support to nearly 300 start-ups, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and individual innovators with a larger goal of ensuring self-reliance in the defence sector. The scheme is in sync with the government's push to cut imports of military hardware and weapons and make India a hub for defence manufacturing. "Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the budgetary support of Rs 498.8 crore to Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)-Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) for the next five years," the ministry said in a statement. It said the iDEX-DIO has the primary objective of self-reliance and indigenisation in the defence and aerospace sector. The ministry said the iDEX

framework and establishment of the DIO by the Department of Defence Production (DDP) is aimed at creating *Contd...Page 6*

Microfinance Loans Of ? 12,500 Cr Outstanding In Assam: Ashok Singhal



Guwahati, June 13 : Minister for Guwahati Development, Urban Development and Irrigation Department Ashok Singhal said that a sum amount of Rs 12,500 crore of microfinance loans are outstanding in Assam till March 31 this year. The amount includes both principal and interest, the Cabinet minister said while addressing the press on Friday. Notably, twenty-six lakh customers

having 45 lakh bank accounts have taken loans from 40 lenders. Moreover, 53 per cent of the total outstanding amount of Rs 12,500 crore was lent by banks, followed by 22 per cent by Non-Banking Finance

Companies (NBFCs) and microfinance institutions, 26 per cent by small finance banks and 16 per cent by regular NBFCs. According to the data shared by the minister, 19.10 lakh customers *Contd...Page 6*

No Indian should be excluded from NRC list: Ranjeet Kumar Dass

Guwahati, June 13 : Dass has said the state government won't accept the exclusion of any Indian citizen from the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was published in August 2019, and urged the Supreme Court for re-verification the NRC. In an exclusive interview with India Today TV, Dass claimed a large number of "illegal Bangladeshis" have been included in the NRC list and genuine Indian citizens have been left out. The Assam government is ready to spend money for NRC re-verification process, he said. "We urge the Supreme Court and the Centre that there should be 20 per cent re-verification of the NRC in the bordering districts and 10 per cent in other districts. We urge the apex court to give the authority to the



Assam government to conduct the re-verification process, because the Assam government is for the people, of the people and by the people and the people have elected the government. If there will be same result after re-verification then it will be okay," Dass said. He further said that the cost of each "Hindustani" is around Rs 1200-1300 crore. "Being a

Hindustani, if their name doesn't appear in the NRC, then it is not acceptable. Name of every Hindustani should be there in the NRC list and every intruder's name should be deleted," Dass said. The Assam BJP president also held previous NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela responsible for the omission of Indian citizens from the final NRC list. "The NRC list was pub-

lished on August 31, 2019 and we said on August 27 that there are many anomalies in the NRC process. Prateek Hajela had threatened the government officers who were engaged in the NRC process not to reject any documents. But the government officials told us that various documents of many people whose names were appeared in the list are doubtful documents. The people had submitted the newly printed birth certificates, they had no document while they appeared in the first, second hearings and submitted a new document during third hearing," he said. "Prateek Hajela had instructed the government officials that don't write doubtful document and if you write, then you will have to *Contd...Page 6*

Madhya Pradesh to inoculate around 5000 Pakistani refugees in Indore



Indore, June 13 : About 5,000 Pakistani refugees from the Hindu Sindhi community living in Madhya Pradesh's Indore will be administered COVID-19 vaccines on Sunday (June 13), an official said. The representatives of the Pakistani refugees from the Hindu Sindhi community had recently requested the ad-

ministration for anti-coronavirus inoculation. District Immunization Officer Dr Praveen Jadia told, "This demand has been accepted following the state government's approval. These Pakistani refugees will now be able to receive anti-coronavirus jabs at the city's vaccination centres by *Contd...Page 6*

Elections In Jammu And Kashmir? Sources Say Centre May Begin Dialogue

Srinagar, June 13 : The Centre is likely to begin dialogue with the political parties in Jammu and Kashmir to initiate the political process and restoration of statehood, sources have said. While there has been no formal invitation yet, the Gupkar Alliance or PAGD, the seven-party amalgam formed to help restore the special status of Jammu and Kashmir -- has indicated its willingness to join talks. The

National Conference has said it might join the delimitation process. Jammu and Kashmir was placed under President's Rule after the BJP ended its alliance with Mehbooba Mufti in June 2018. There has been no political process since. In August 2019, the Centre ended the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir granted and bifurcated it into two Union territories. There was an expectation that the state elections would *Contd...Page 6*





Children run with the kites in colors of Russian flag to celebrate the Russia Day in Moscow.

How did a £120 painting become a £320m Leonardo ... then vanish?

London, June 13 : The National Gallery is facing controversy over its role in the tangled story of how the world's most expensive painting emerged from obscurity before being sold for a staggering £320m, only to vanish again from the public eye. The gallery exhibited the *Salvator Mundi* in its Leonardo da Vinci exhibition a decade ago when it was an unknown work with doubts about its attribution, restoration and ownership. The criticisms are voiced in a major film documentary that lifts the lid on some of the murkier dealings of the art market. Professor Bernd Lindemann, the then director of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, tells the film-makers: "I was surprised to see the painting in the exhibition at the National Gallery. It is a problematic painting, and I think it's not the role of serious museums to present a painting which is so heavily discussed." The Gemäldegalerie, which has one of the world's most important collections of European paintings, was among the owners of public and private collections contacted by the painting's former owners - a consortium of dealers - who were struggling to find a buyer. In the documentary, *The Lost Leonardo*, Lindemann recalls the approach, and that he was unimpressed that the picture had been so extensively reworked by a restorer. "One day I got a telephone call. It was a dealer and he said he has something which could be interesting for the Gemäldegalerie. That was the painting. Most of the painting is a remake and this was, for me, the argument to say, 'No, this is not a painting for the Gemäldegalerie'." The National Gallery unveiled the painting in its 2011 Leonardo exhibition. Although there is an unwritten rule that public galleries should not display pictures that are available for sale, one of the former owners has insisted that it was not for sale when the show was announced. Hanging an unknown picture in such a prestigious institution would have done wonders for its market value. The painting's whereabouts cannot be traced earlier than 1900, when it was sold as the work of Leonardo's follower Bernardino Luini for £120. When it was purchased in 2005 by dealers Alexander Parrish and Robert Simon for \$1,175, it was seriously damaged and Dianne Modestini began work on a restoration programme that was so extensive that it lasted from 2005 to 2017. It went on to sell at Christie's New York for a record-breaking \$450m (£320m) in 2017, only to disappear without trace. Doubts about it only intensified, with the Louvre in Paris later downgrading it to the work of a lesser contemporary hand. The documentary, released in cinemas later this year, explores how the painting's planned inclusion at the Paris Louvre's 2019 blockbuster exhibition was cancelled. In an interview, Jacques Franck, a Leonardo expert, recalls writing to President Macron, warning that the Louvre should not show it as a true Leonardo.

Opposition forces Orbán into U-turn over Chinese campus plan in Budapest

Budapest, June 13 : Protests against the construction of a Chinese university in Budapest have energised the Hungarian opposition ahead of elections next year, and forced the government into a rare U-turn. Outrage at plans to build a campus of Shanghai's Fudan

University is about whether we will be a free nation," city mayor Gergely Karácsony told the crowd, which was thousands strong. Protesters carried signs saying "Hungarian money for Hungarian universities" and "We will not be a colony". It was a show of strength that apparently alarmed the government.



University became a rallying cry for the opposition, drawing thousands to protest in defiance of government regulations. Protests of more than 500 people are illegal, on Covid prevention grounds, although huge crowds can gather at football matches. So organisers planned multiple small protests across Budapest, which came together outside parliament, in Kossuth Square. The project has allowed opponents of prime minister Viktor Orbán to turn the nationalist rhetoric he has deployed so successfully in recent decades against his own government. "The Fudan University

issue is about whether we will be a free nation," city mayor Gergely Karácsony told the crowd, which was thousands strong. Protesters carried signs saying "Hungarian money for Hungarian universities" and "We will not be a colony". It was a show of strength that apparently alarmed the government. Overnight they pivoted position, to offer a referendum on the Chinese university, but said it would be held only after the general elections. "This is a novel situation. It's the first time that any Chinese investment has become a high-level political issue in Hungary," said Péter Krekó, analyst at thinktank Political Capital. "The government seemed to be pretty committed to go along with this project, until it saw it could be an electoral issue." He said the government has a track record of pausing controversial ideas until they feel less politically vulnerable, in this case after the election. "It's pretty sure that if they are re-elected they will re-implement it," he said. District mayor Krisztina Baranyi, who last year enraged conservatives by installing

Jerusalem, June 13 : Benjamin Netanyahu is due to be ousted from office on Sunday by a new Israeli government formed with the primary aim of dethroning the country's longest-serving leader. A motley grouping of politicians, including former Netanyahu allies turned foes, have set aside bitter differences to put an end to the prime minister's historic run in power. If successful, it will also break a political stalemate that has seen four snap elections in the country since 2019. "The political establishment in Israel is embarking on a new path, after two and a half years of irresponsibly drifting from one election to the next, after 12 years in which one person drew all the political oxygen from the room," wrote Nahum Barnea, a columnist for the country's leading daily, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, last week. Opposition chief Yair Lapid's new government is set to be voted on in the Knesset on Sunday afternoon, where he hopes to clinch victory with a razor-thin majority of 61 out of 120 seats - barring any last-minute surprises. Under a power-sharing agreement, Lapid will not be sworn in as prime minister immediately. Instead, far-right politician Naftali Bennett, whose support was seen as vital to the coalition's success, will become Israel's leader for a two-year period, after which he will hand over to Lapid for the second half of a four-year term. Bennett is a religious nationalist and strong advocate for the settler movement in the Palestinian territories. He

will lead an unlikely assortment of eight parties, including the anti-occupation and dovish Meretz but also parties led by other hawkish figures on the right, such as the Moldova-born settler Avigdor Lieberman. Critically, the coalition includes Arab Islamist members of parliament, who joined for the shared aim of dethroning "King Bibi", as Netanyahu is known. In doing so, the United Arab List, which is made up of Palestinian citizens of



Israel, will become the first party from the country's sizeable Arab minority ever to join a government. The party's leader, Mansour Abbas, is seen as a pragmatist and said he had secured guarantees from hard-right coalition partners for greater rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel, including on discriminatory housing policies, as well as several billions of pounds for infrastructure in Arab areas. A coalition deal, finalised on Friday, showed the new government would focus mostly on economic and social issues, such as passing a state budget and building new

hospitals, rather than risk an internal fight by trying to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, Bennett will have executive powers as prime minister to further solidify the occupation. Crucially, agreements suggested the new government could advance legislation that would limit any prime minister to eight years in office, potentially putting paid to Netanyahu's plans for a future run for office. In power for a total of 15 years - from 1996

to 1999, and then since 2009 - Netanyahu has been desperately attempting to scupper the deal by his opponents, which could threaten not only his political life but his freedom, too. The 71-year-old is fighting three corruption cases on fraud, bribery and breach of trust charges, which he denies. If he were to go into the opposition, he might be denied parliamentary immunity. Netanyahu's efforts to split the fragile coalition are likely to continue even once it takes power - a move that could lead to another snap election and potentially save his career. In a week of indignation

Sold! Bidder pays \$28m for spare seat on space flight with Jeff Bezos

London, June 13 : Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin has sold the spare seat of the company's 20 July New Shepard space rocket blast-off for \$28m, the company announced on Saturday. With 20 active bidders starting at \$4.8m during the 10-minute auction, bids escalated in the final three minutes of the sale. Initially, some 7,600 people registered to bid from 159 countries, the company said. The winner, whose identity has not been announced, will join the Amazon founder Bezos and his brother Mark on the flight. The 11-minute, automated flight - the company's 16th but first carrying humans - will lift off from Van Horn, Texas. The capsule will carry as many as six passengers, though the company has not yet revealed who else will be onboard. Last week, Bezos, who will step down as Amazon's chief executive officer 15 days before the flight, posted on Instagram: "Ever since I was five years old, I've dreamed of

traveling to space. On July 20th, I will take that journey with my brother. The greatest adventure, with my best friend." The trip comes amid increasing competition between the some of the world's wealthiest men. Blue Origin is vying with Elon Musk's Space Exploration Technologies and Richard Branson-backed Virgin Galactic Holdings Inc to offer trips to space, with Branson's Virgin craft also expected to launch passengers soon after from a space centre near Truth or Consequences in New Mexico. Bezos, who has been spending about \$1bn a year from his Amazon fortune to fund Blue Origin, has compared space tourism to the barnstormers whose stunt flying enlivened the early days of aviation. Passengers, the company has said, must



be between 5ft and 6ft 4in tall, weighing 110-223lb. They must also be able to climb seven flights of stairs at the launch tower in less than 90 seconds and sit strapped in the vehicle for as long as 90 minutes without access to a lavatory. Further, they should be able to withstand gravitational forces of as much as 5.5 times the person's normal weight during descent and three times the weight for as long as two minutes on ascent.

New Israeli coalition government seeks to put an end to the Netanyahu era

leading up to the vote, Netanyahu accused Bennett of betraying rightwing voters by joining a coalition of what Netanyahu describes as weak Jewish "leftists" and Arab politicians he paints as a potential fifth column. Speaking to the local Channel 20 TV station last week, Netanyahu alleged: "They are uprooting the good and replacing it with the bad and dangerous." He added: "I fear for the destiny of the nation." His supporters have held angry rallies outside the homes of lawmakers joining the new government, and several members of the incoming administration have been assigned bodyguards. Some Israelis have drawn comparisons to the anger that led to the insurrection at the US Capitol in January or, closer to home, incitement before the assassination of former Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin by a far-right nationalist in 1995. Netanyahu's Likud party sought to calm mounting fears by stating on Twitter in English: "There is also no question about the peaceful transition of power." The new coalition has been broadly supported within the Israeli press. "Never in the history of this country have rightists, leftists, centrists and Arabs agreed to stake out common ground, together in government, in the cause of the greater Israeli good," wrote David Horovitz, editor of the *Times of Israel*. Among Palestinians, Netanyahu's departure has been welcomed. But there is little optimism around a government led by Bennett, a former leader of a Jewish settler group in the West

Bank. Meanwhile, Netanyahu's political demise will also see the departure of Jewish ultra-Orthodox politicians, who have become deeply entwined in the prime minister's political bloc. Coalition chief Lapid, and his foe turned ally Lieberman, are both staunch secularists. They have run election campaigns on reducing the power of ultra-Orthodox factions, who have long maintained expensive state stipends that allow religious communities to study rather than work. Netanyahu embodied dishonest, divisive demagoguery. If he's gone, good riddance. Facing the prospect of losing office along with their patron, ultra-Orthodox politicians have launched tirade after tirade against the new government, warning that it threatens the Jewish state. "This leftwing government is going to visit a spiritual Holocaust on the Jewish people, right here in the Land of Israel," United Torah Judaism lawmaker, Meir Porush, said last week. Another parliamentarian from the same party, Moshe Gafni, focused his ire on Bennett, who, while expected to become Israel's first Orthodox prime minister, was branded by Gafni as a traitor focused on power. Gafni called Bennett "wicked" and urged him to remove his kippah skullcap, which is seen as a sign of Jewish devoutness. "Israel has become debased," Gafni claimed. "We will shout to heaven and earth over the behaviour of this man who is supposedly a religious man but who was looking for this all along."

Onlookers extinguish flames after man set alight outside Perth church

London, June 13 : Perth detectives are investigating reports a man was set alight outside an inner city church. Police say the 68-year-old suffered significant burns after he was approached by another man on Beaufort Street in Highgate around 5pm on Saturday. Moments later he was on fire while the other man left the scene. Police say a number of people assisted the victim, pouring water over him to extinguish the flames. He was rushed to Fiona Stanley hospital by St

John Ambulance for treatment of burns to his face, upper body and hands. According to 7NEWS, emergency crews arrived at a soup kitchen outside the church after the man was doused in petrol and set alight. A witness in the kitchen at the time told the network bystanders were able to bundle the man into a shower before ambulance officers got there. Detectives say they want to speak to anyone who witnessed or has information regarding the incident.



Artists perform during an event on the occasion of the China's Cultural and Natural Heritage Day in Lhasa

117 fresh COVID cases detected at Nagaon

NAGAON, June 13: 117 fresh COVID cases were detected on Sunday here at Nagaon, taking the total cumulative active COVID cases in the district to 2862 while 365 people who were undergoing treatment in hospital as well as at homes after being affected by the virus, were recovered from the infection of the virus today, sources added. Sources claimed that among those who tested positive today, 53 were immediately admitted to hospital as well as other COVID Care Centres set up at various places in the district, while the rest were put under home isolation. Rapid Antigen Test was conducted on 5782 people today while RT-PCR Test was conducted on 23 swab samples, sources further added. However, no COVID ca-

Massive Social Service held, Temporary Post Mortem Shed Constructed at CHC Mechuka

Aalo 13 June : A massive Social Service which was over due due to Covid-19 situation was conducted by the District Medical Officer and her team at community Health Centre Mechuka on on 11th June last. On the occasion temporary shed for Post Mortem Shed was also constructed on Self Help basis. The Medical fraternity has also extended its thank to the Superintendent of Police for providing cements and CGI sheets from his side. The Health department has been doing wide range of activities in this border district from time to time motive each other and other stakeholders with the limitations they have as the new district of the state.

Kickboxing in Olympic Agenda

Guwahati, June 13 : The WAKO (World Association of Kickboxing Organizations) Kickboxing has been accepted as full sport by the Executive Board Meeting of International Olympic Committee (IOC) held on 10th June 2021 in Switzerland. It indicates a likelihood of WAKO Kickboxing finding a place in the Olympic Games. In a press release, the WAKO Kickboxing had already found a place as an official sport awarding medals and certificates from 2nd Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games of Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) after demonstration event in Macau, China in 2007. On the otherhand Asian Kickboxing Confederation (in short WAKO Asia) is the only body which is recognized by OCA, informed Dinesh Gogoi, President, Central Committee, of Assam Kickboxing Association (AKA) in a release, founder general secretary of AKA Biswajit Kakoti introduced this sport before 19 years back with rules and regulations of WAKO Kickboxing in an entire state of Assam.

Golaghat Girl Chayanika Sabhapandit will Get Financial Aid from Chief Minister

Golaghat, Jun 13: On June 7 Edition of 'The Assam Rising' a special story of Chayanika Sabhapandit, a bright student and professional singer from Golaghat was published. Chayanika Sabhapandit has started to sell vegetables in front of her house as her family's financial situation is not well. Being a Masters student at Cotton State University in Guwahati and a singer Chayanika Sabhapandit has set an example for the youth by engaging as vegetable vendor. Now receiving this news state Chief Minister has decided to give her an amount of fifty thousand rupees from Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Local MLA and state finance minister Ajanta Neog will visit Chayanika Sabhapandit's home and will give the financial aid.

MLA of Bokakhat and state Cabinet Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Atul Bora today attended a meeting at Bokakhat

Bokakhat, June 13 : The meeting was held at Bokakhat Bidhan Parishad office of the AGP in Bokakhat. Minister Atul Bora interacted with the party activists and appealed all the members of Asom Gana Parishad and its sister organizations to work together to make the Bokakhat LAC as one of the leading and developed constituencies in the state. Today in the meeting many youths formally joined the AGP in presence of Atul Bora. Bora also thanked the people of Bokakhat for showing their love, care and support in the assembly elections and electing him as their MLA for the second term.

MLA, Sipajhar along with the officers of Lok Nirman Dept visit Dhalpur



SIPAJHAR, June 13 : Keeping the objective following the announcement of Chief Minister of Assam, Dr Himanta Bishwa Sharma to turn historic Dhalpur area into a place of tourist attraction the MLA, Sipajhar LAC, Dr Paramananda

Rajbansi along with the high level officers of Lok Nirman Department of Government of Assam has visited the Dhalpur as part of the preliminary field study of the construction of the Manikut of the temple, boundary wall of the covering the entire

sualties have been reported till filing of this report, sources said. Meanwhile, 'Kolongpar Byabosai Sanstha' in association with District Health Department under special supervision of BJP's senior leader, Jugal Sarma today organized a massive vaccination programme at hotel star at Maruwaripatty where the Sanstha smoothly vaccinated more than 300 businessmen as well as their employees of Nagaon stadium market, Nagaon mission market and other commercial establishments at Maruwaripatty area in the town, a release added.

CM visits the family of late academician Sampurnananda Talukdar at Pathsala

Guwahati, June 13 : Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the family of late academician and noted social worker Sampurnananda Talukdar at the latter's residence at Pathsala in Bajali district today. The Chief Minister while offering floral tribute at the portrait of the late academician during his visit also interacted with the family members and conveyed his deep sympathy to them. P&RD Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, BTC Chief Pramod Boro and Bhabanipur MLA Phani Talukdar were also present during the visit of the Chief Minister. Later talking to media persons, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said that late Sampurnananda Talukdar was a renowned academician and dedicated social worker who made significant contributions to the socio-academic life of Bajali. He was an important leader of the Assam movement and was always committed to the cause of public welfare. Chief Minister Sarma also said that late Talukdar played a key role in the creation of Bajali district and setting up of Bhattadev University.



Statement of APCC President Sri Ripun Bora on micro-finance loan waive U-Turn of BJP Government

Guwahati, June 13 : APCC President and Rajya MP Sri Ripun Bora reacted sharply to the U-turn of the BJP Government poll promise to waive the micro-finance loan of women debtors in Assam. Earlier the BJP had made a U-Turn on the increase of daily wage of the tea garden workers and now they are doing the same with the women of Assam who had voted for the BJP in the hope that good days will come as the then Finance Minister Sri Himanta Biswa Sarma had himself made the promise through various platforms during the election. In the year 2019 when Congress party had voiced its demand in the Assembly that a law to regulate the various micro-

financing institutions that have violated RBI regulations should be implemented but the then Finance Minister Sri Himanta Biswa Sarma did not pay heed to this grave problem at that time. It is only after a lot of pressure from opposition that a resolution to this effect was passed in the Assembly in 2020. Now the Committee that has been formed under Minister Ashok Singhal to look into the modalities for loan waiver has put forward various conditions which would not benefit the women debtors at all as expected. The Government has made it mandatory that those women whose family monthly income is less than Rs 1 lakh will be waived and those

above Rs 1 lakh will not be able to avail loan waiver. Thus those families whose monthly family income is (100,000÷12=8333.34) Rs 8,333 only, they will be able to avail of this loan waive facility. But today even if we calculate Rs 300/- as daily wage of a tea garden worker then excepting the women tea garden workers none other women will be able to get the loan waive. If the women tea garden workers free essential commodities is added to their daily wage, then they will also be denied the loan waive with this cap of the Government. This means a lot many women who had got trapped in the micro-finance scam would not be able to get out of it because of

this condition. The condition also extends to those families who have four wheelers and apprehension is rife among people now that perhaps those who have refrigerators may also not get the loan waiver ! But many people buy four wheelers to make ends meet and many buy refrigerators for shops by taking loans. Some even use micro-finance to pay off EMI's as stop gap arrangements. Will such families not be included? Now there is another condition that Government will only waive loans of those micro-financing institutions that have followed RBI guidelines. Now the question arises how many such micro-financing institutions that follow

RBI guidelines are actually existing? And if such institutions are actually flourishing under the very nose of the Government what was the BJP Government doing all these years? Do they know what rate of interest the financial institutions were charging? By allowing these financial institutions to illegally make profit by flouting RBI guidelines what did the Government gain? Has it been reflected upon? The total micro-finance outstanding loan is Rs12000 crore and a Government that has been floundering on economic front both at the Centre and State made those promises of loan waiver just to get votes from the women of Assam. And the people

Indian Poet called on 7th India Day Festival in Moscow

Guwahati, June 13 : Eminent poet and India of Ministry of Tourism, Gov-Subhra Devbarman has been invited India Day Festival in Moscow, Russia held from the 12th to 15th August this year also the programme will National Cultural Centre 'SITA'. It India Day is the celebration of is one of the largest festivals in lion people attended this festival the Indian culture and heritage with and Indians in Russia. Every year person in India as Chief Guest for Sankha Subhra Devbarman has Although Shri Devbarman is bit tival due to on going global some strict conditions laid by movement, he expresses his hap- the organiser for inviting him as international festival which he con- recognition in an acclaimed inter-



Regional Director for North East ernment of India, Shri Sankha as the Chief Guest in the 7th India Day Festival in Moscow, Russia held from the 12th to 15th August this year also the programme will National Cultural Centre 'SITA'. It India Day is the celebration of is one of the largest festivals in lion people attended this festival the Indian culture and heritage with and Indians in Russia. Every year person in India as Chief Guest for Sankha Subhra Devbarman has Although Shri Devbarman is bit tival due to on going global some strict conditions laid by movement, he expresses his hap- the organiser for inviting him as international festival which he con- recognition in an acclaimed inter-

Drive against illegal cutting of trees continues

Guwahati, June 13 : In the continued drive against illegal cutting of trees, a vehicle loaded with sal logs was detected and seized at Khilamara area in Rongjuli Range under Goalpara Forest Division during wee hours on Sunday. Forest personnel of Dhupdhara Beat of Rongjuli Range as per direction of Forest Range Officer, Salim Ahmed, Rongjuli

Range seized the vehicle loaded with sal logs. In another incident, a magic carrier bearing registration No AS 10C 6510 loaded with teak sawn timbers was detected at Salgoi by the forest personnel of Duhalia Range headed by Incharge of Duhalia Range under Karimganj Forest Division at around 4 am on Sunday.

63 cases, one more die in Lakhimpur

North Lakhimpur, June 13: One person died of Covid-19 and 63 new cases were detected in Lakhimpur district on Sunday. The total active cases have increased to 4736, though 109 patients were discharged today. With this, the cumulative positive cases have increased to 139255 so far and 3549 patients have been discharged from April 1 in the district. The deceased person

died of Covid-19 in the district today is Rejina Begum (65) of Dhakuwakhaniya village under Panigaon Police Station. She died in Lakhimpur Medical College Covid Care Center.

Dreaded dacoit held with 9mm pistol at Nagaon

NAGAON, June 13: Nagaon police led by DSP (District Special Branch) arrested one dreaded dacoit from Shilangani Amtola, on the outskirts of the town today. Police also seized 9mm pistol and other ammunitions from his possession on spot, sources added. According to sources, the arrested dacoit has been identified as Kuddush Ali. He was involved in various cases of robbery in the district for over years and was arrested earlier in 2020. But being released on bail from jail, he again took the same profession, sources further added.

Scribe donates to CM fund

Biswanath Chariali, June 13: Like other organizations and individuals, senior scribe of Biswanath Chariali Ratan Bhuyan had handed over a cheque of rupees two thousand to CM's relief fund to combat Covid 19 through Biswanath MLA Pramod Borthakur on Sunday. The event was also attended by Niranjana Hazarika, Jattar Singh along with others.



Millions of Peruvians joined together to deliver a telling blow

Peru's presidential election has been settled by the slimmest of margins, but it signals a momentous change. When all the votes from the second-round run-off on Sunday 6 June were finally counted, the socialist Pedro Castillo, former head of the main teacher's union, held a razor-thin lead of about 60,000 votes - 0.34% - over Keiko Fujimori, candidate of the right and daughter of former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori. She has now launched accusations of fraud, demanding that as many as 200,000 votes be nullified. It may take several days for her legal challenges to be heard, and she is clearly still hoping to overturn the result - though the prospect is unlikely. The fact remains that millions of Peruvians joined together to deliver a telling blow to the political and economic model that has dominated the country for the past three decades. The electoral drama in Peru was in that sense a generational reckoning, comparable to the recent upheavals in Chile and Colombia. But it was also the product of the specific political crises Peru has endured in recent years. Since 2018, the country has had two presidents impeached and removed on charges of corruption and one hounded from office by a surge of protests. The sleaze and dysfunction of the established parties was one of the factors that enabled Castillo's shock breakthrough in the first round of voting in April. Until then he was known mainly for leading a protracted teacher's strike in 2017, and his party, the avowedly Marxist-Leninist Perú Libre, had no seats in Congress. With only 19% of the vote, he finished first in a crowded field of 18 candidates. Combining redistributive economic policies with socially conservative views, for instance on same-sex marriage, Castillo looks, dresses and talks like the population of Peru's long-marginalised interior provinces. Fujimori, by contrast, is the arch-insider, having been one of the most powerful players in Peruvian politics for more than a decade. She has run unsuccessfully for president twice before, in 2011 and 2016, and heads the Fuerza Popular party, which held the majority in Congress from 2016 to 2020. The 13% she scored in April, though a remarkable drop from the 40% she secured in the first round in 2016, was still enough for her to scrape through to the run-off. The second-round campaign at once dramatised and deepened Peru's stark socioeconomic, political and cultural divides. First, it drew attention to the gulf separating the more prosperous coast from poorer highland regions, which have a larger indigenous population. Castillo, who is from the northern mining region of Cajamarca, drew his support overwhelmingly from the highlands, which saw few of the benefits of the boom years of the 2000s and early 2010s. The Lima-based elite's attitude to such disparities is perhaps best captured by a phrase Fujimori let slip during a presidential debate held in rural Cajamarca in early May, when she complained of having "had to come all the way here". (She said afterwards this was a reference to the difficulty of the journey.) A second crucial fault-line separated Keiko Fujimori's supporters from those determined to reject the authoritarian legacy of her family's dynasty. Alberto Fujimori, in power from 1990 to 2000 and currently serving a 25-year sentence for corruption, claims credit for defeating the Maoist Shining Path insurgency and imposing macroeconomic discipline on the country. However, these measures were implemented through harsh anti-democratic means: in 1992, Fujimori suspended the constitution, and the following year wrote a new one granting himself even greater powers. His decade in office was marked by abuses that scar the country to this day, including extrajudicial killings, the forced sterilisation of as many as 270,000 women and colossal corruption. Widespread rejection of this legacy proved enough to block Keiko Fujimori's path to the presidency in 2011 and 2016. But in 2021, faced with a candidate from the radical left, she was able to mount a scaremongering campaign. In Peru, leftist candidates and parties are routinely denounced as "terrorists", tarred by association (however fictional) with the Shining Path, or with Cuba or Venezuela. Fujimori conjured these spectres to bring liberals, centrists and the centre-right into the fold. ("Do you want to live in Cuba?" asked a billboard in Lima before the 6 June vote.) Many prominent figures who had previously opposed her - including Nobel prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa, who had run for president against Fujimori's father in 1990 - joined the chorus against Castillo, as did most of the Peruvian media. Trailing by several points in early May, Fujimori steadily closed the gap. But not quite enough. While she did well along the coast, Castillo piled up huge margins in the highlands. This included astonishing victories in the regions most deeply affected by the armed conflict of the 1980s and 1990s: he won 83% of the vote in Ayacucho and 89% in Puno, for instance. The suffering and economic dislocation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was a third crucial factor in the election, turning longstanding structural inequalities into immediate matters of life and death. By May 2021, Covid-19 had taken an estimated 180,000 lives in Peru, giving the country the highest per-capita fatality rate in the world. Not surprisingly, Castillo's election platform begins by declaring health a basic right and denouncing the neoliberal model's abject failure to provide for Peru's citizens. It also contains ambitious plans to hold a referendum on drafting a new constitution, to nationalise key natural resources, and to overhaul the agricultural sector, favouring peasant smallholders over giant agro-exporters. Yet as the closeness of the contest suggests, Castillo faces formidable obstacles to implementing any of his agenda. It will no doubt encounter stiff opposition from entrenched elite interests and coastal middle classes hostile to the left. Then there is the highly fragmented composition of the Congress, in which Castillo's party holds only 37 of 130 seats. The riven geography of the vote also points to a profound political polarisation that will make coherent policymaking difficult. For all that, the outcome of the election in itself offers some cause for optimism. After several years in which the right seized hold of the agenda in Latin America, Castillo's win will raise the hopes of the region's left. For Peru, it holds out at least the possibility of a future beyond the demoralising corruption and life-threatening disparities of the neoliberal model.

India can become a leader in sustainable aviation fuel - with feedstock and solar power

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought global systemic challenges like climate change to the forefront. If not tackled in a timely manner, it will be the cause of greater disruptions than we have witnessed from the pandemic. Nation-states need to build resilience and continue raising awareness towards sustainable living to protect our ecosystems and our economies. The humbling situation in India due to the pandemic has reinforced the need to critically examine the relationship between resilience and sustainable development in particular in the country's megacities. India's transition towards clean, affordable and renewable energy can better prepare the country to resist global shocks. But the fifth-largest economy in the world has a far way to go. It relies on extensive energy consumption, which stands at 910 MToe - which in turn, translates to roughly a rise of 20% every five years since 1990. According to the International Energy Agency, India will experience the largest increase in energy demand through 2040 of any country in the world. Moreover, according to an air quality report by IQAir, 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India. While India has succeeded in reducing its emissions to GDP growth ratio, it has not yet achieved a full decoupling, thus India needs to significantly accelerate its progress to date in delinking economic growth and environmental degradation. The good news is that today, technology exists to convert garbage, used cooking oil or agriculture residues into valuable inputs that can be used, for instance, to make Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) for airplanes the world over. Aviation emissions and waste are two major issues that will need to be resolved in the coming years, and SAF presents an opportunity to address them both. SAF is a cleaner fuel produced from sustainable feedstocks derived from various types of waste, by-products of agriculture, or power-to-liquid using hydrogen technology. From a similar molecular structure and chemical properties to traditional fossil jet fuel, SAF has the added advantage of being able to be dropped into existing aircraft systems without any technical change or investments. In fact, all aircraft today can handle the current maximum certified blend of 50% SAF - and more than 330 000 flights around the world have been powered by it. SAF is for now two to five times more expensive than fossil fuel, but costs will come down with volume, and the transition to cleaner fuels would



 **Sonum Gayatri Malhotra**

contribute substantially to solving climate change. SAF can be 100% less carbon-intensive over its life cycle compared to conventional fuels. The "Deploying Sustainable Aviation Fuels at Scale in India" Report is a Clean Skies for Tomorrow Publication, a result of The World Economic Forum driving a coalition of private and public organisations in India that have contributed analysis on technology pathways and feedstocks availability and sustainability for the ramp up of SAF production in India. The report demonstrates that SAF is the most achievable and effective pathway to reducing aviation's lifecycle emissions in the immediate future. It also proposes key methods, cost-sharing models, and economic and environmental benefits for accelerating the SAF industry in India, and shows how advancing this industry would have compound effects in the management of waste and prevention of crop burning from farmlands, the latter of which has become a huge contributor to the pollution levels in Indian cities that are far beyond safe limits. First, infrastructure must be created to produce fuel from the raw materials of garbage, used cooking oil or agriculture residues. Secondly, a supply chain must be put in place to purchase residue from farmlands and household waste to provide fodder to various facilities to produce fuel. This will benefit the management of household waste and promote recycling - as well as generate 120 000 jobs and enhance grassroots prosperity. In fact, the research demonstrates a 10% blend of SAF on all domestic flights would require almost 360,000 tonnes of SAF.

That will accelerate significant macro-economic opportunity throughout the value chain, unlock market forces and drive green innovation. As a starting point of 10% SAF blend, India can achieve cleaner skies with less-open air crop burning, create 120,000 new jobs and catalyse efficient waste management systems that will have significant societal benefits. It would also represent a leap towards self-reliance that would add \$2.7-2.8 billion to India's GDP by 2030. The aviation industry has been hit hard by COVID-19, but the sector has started to recover - at least domestically. In the coming years, India's aviation sector is expected to grow in double digits, and pandemic aside is still likely to expand to become the third-largest air passenger market by 2030. Given the expected growth in domestic travel, decarbonising the aviation sector is essential for India to remain committed to its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The 2015 Paris Agreement excluded the international aviation sector due to difficulties of attributing emissions from complex international supply chains to individual countries. As a result, the International Civil Aviation Organization member states designed the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) with an initial target of achieving carbon-neutral growth for the sector from 2020. While over 88 states have agreed to pilot the CORSIA scheme from 2021 - 2023, India is currently working with its own national targets for the aviation sector to remain compliant with its NDCs and move towards carbon-neutral flying. To achieve its target and become the glo-

bal leader in low-carbon aviation fuel, India must develop a robust roadmap to examine low-carbon solutions for aviation. The aviation sector is among the most organised sectors globally, with strong public-private cooperation. Developing countries such as India are expected to gain immensely from strategically deploying sustainable aviation fuel early on. However, if India doesn't take the first-mover advantage in the utilisation of SAF, India's growing domestic aviation volume inevitably will diminish compliance with its climate change commitments. Support from the government by way of aviation-related and climate-conscious policies and incentives would accelerate efforts to make India net-zero in aviation by 2050. The Indian National Policy of Biofuels has been very clear in supporting feedstocks that do not conflict with food supply, ensuring land use concerns are accounted for. Fostering a SAF industry would not only reduce emissions in aviation, but it would also combat air pollution from crop burning, create numerous green jobs, improve farmers' incomes and help solve waste management issues. Turning waste into fuel is critical to combatting climate change. In each case, a critical life cycle analysis (LCA) of feedstock and production pathways should be undertaken. Technologies should be evaluated both on LCA and economic logic to ensure as level a playing field as possible, including factors such as land-use change and biodiversity implications. This will avoid the recurrence of legacy issues such as those seen in the early, unsustainable overproduction of palm oil for biofuels, or of widespread *Jatropha* planting even in agro-climatic zones that were not appropriate for this tree species. Instead, native oil-bearing trees and locally adapted short gestation crops can be encouraged to strengthen and diversify supply chains in a sustainable manner. The transition from our reliance on fossil fuels will not be easy - with decisions and compromises that will challenge the path in the beginning like many transitions made before this one. But commitment to net-zero transition campaigns is growing globally, and companies are making bold commitments to climate action. It is essential therefore for governments and policymakers to harness this private sector momentum and put us on a pathway to achieve emissions reductions across the supply chain - bringing fuel suppliers, airlines, airports and distributors along - to make aviation sustainable.

Second wave has abated and I have lost my wife. It is time I thanked these strangers

The second wave of the coronavirus pandemic is now ebbing but the loss of April and May is irreparable. My wife had tested positive for Covid-19 on 10 April 2021, hospitalised on 15 April, and was put on ventilator support on 27 April, on which she remained till her last breath on 24 May. During this distressing phase, there was helplessness in all corners. As is the case of many citizens who lost their loved ones. Pain amplifies to see your loved ones dying alone, with no one around to hold their hand during their final moments, reduced to a vegetative state, they never got a chance to share their last wish. No one can ascertain if death came as a relief from the suffering or as a final punch of pain. During these difficult times, our faith in humanity never failed, thanks to many strangers who helped like if they were god-sent angels. The trauma faced will never allow many of us to be the same again. While my wife was grappling with the virus, I, to whom she had devoted her life found myself incapacitated. All I could do was to see her die bit by bit. The so-called effort made to arrange money, medicines and praying rather than begging the almighty to spare her life in the end proved futile. On 20 April, doctors asked us to arrange for remdesivir. I called up all chemists, hospitals, drug distributors of various companies, chief medical officer, DM's office among others, but all in vain. After much struggle, I was told that the medicine was available in Delhi but to my horror multiple chemists refused as my wife was admitted in Noida and their orders were to give medicine only to Delhiites. A couple of days later, a similar story played out in Noida where a dealer refused to give remdesivir to a patient admitted in Delhi because of the 'DM's order'. It is difficult to explain the mental state, trauma and pain when you are denied a lifesaving drug because of such unbelievable orders. Frustrated

and desperate, I turned towards black marketeers but as luck would have it, no 'help' came from them either. As a last-ditch effort, I turned to social media. To my surprise, there were enough commoners who came forward to help. In fact, I was able to arrange four vials of the drug from different people and they refused to take a single penny. On 30 April, I was asked to arrange for plasma and yet again it was a commoner who came to our family's rescue and donated. The experience was the same while arranging other medicines such as moi-stir, posaconazole injection, among others. All this support came from people whom I had never met and do not expect to meet in future. They came forward without even an iota of self-interest.

 **Sanjeev Choudhary**

This proves that there are good people around and these angels surface as and when you need their support desperately. God bless them. Despite the pressure, doctors, nurses, and the cleaning staff did a stellar job. I could see a sense of frustration building up in them because of the lack of medicines, oxygen, rest and dealing with patient's relatives. They were fighting a two-front war, one with the virus and the other with anxiety and fatigue, with their hands tied behind. Their contribution is second to none. On 19 April, my wife's oxygen saturation level dropped to 59 [the normal level is supposed to be 95+]. She was sinking and nothing seemed to improve her state. A young doctor struggled for nearly three hours to get her saturation to 88. I was later told that this doctor had come back from rest only because the patient needed undivided attention, which the doctor on duty could not have provided. In another kind gesture, an ICU staff got juice for her, paying from his own pocket. Then there was the nurse who called me at 06:45am on 27 April for me to speak to my wife as her condition deteriorated. This deviation from standard practice could've cost



her the job but she chose her patient over the same day, she was put on ventilator support to never recover. Such medical staff make the hospital journey less painful. I thank all these warriors from the bottom of my heart. On 27 April, I reached the hospital at 07:15am but was not allowed to meet her as the protocol mandated, thus denying me the opportunity to talk to her in person for the last time. The pain of it will remain with me for rest of my life. On 24 May, when she died, I was in the ICU near her lifeless body and could hear two nurses giggling. It was excruciating but I remained silent. Later, I realised that the hospital staff was witnessing death on a daily basis and still had to keep their motivation up to deal with the next patient. The high frequency of casualties had made some of them build a wall around them to cope with the situation. Market forces are cruel and the business of healthcare is part of it. Profit-making continued in the pandemic. When the demand got higher than supply, various private hospitals, like any other business entity, took it as an opportunity. In quite a few cases, hospitals

gave beds to people who could afford it and pay upfront. Hospital staff had their own reasons but it is impossible to negate the fact that getting upfront payment regularly improves the cash flow of any business and hospitals are no exception. The upfront payments left affected families from poor and middle-class drained of their savings even from the people who had the forethought of taking insurance. In cases such as mine, where we lost our loved ones, it was a double whammy. We elect governments to ensure that they take care of the country and the citizens. People in power must manage both governance and politics judiciously. During the first wave, an absolute lockdown brought major difficulties for the middle and poor class. Later, it became evident that the lockdown was not a well-thought-out exercise. However, many of us stood by the government as the intent and messaging was right. Just before the second wave hit India, the West was taking every step possible to ramp up vaccine production whereas our leaders lectured the world on India's victory over the pandemic. Every minister and government institution hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership.

Covid Disruption: PC shipments under cloud as economic activity down



Mumbai, June 13 : "In addition, OEMs prioritising fast-moving markets, such as the US and Western Europe, and diverting the bulk of their inventory to these markets, has further aggravated the situation. For most of this year and next, India will suffer from supply issues," Aithal explained. Besides, Aithal noted that India could soon become a major manufacturing hub for PCs, as the government has extended its production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for smartphone manufacturing to the PC industry. Even as the first wave of Covid infections propelled India's personal computer (PC) market to achieve record sales, the deadly second wave now threatens to disrupt the dream run. Market research firm Canalys fears that the domestic industry could face severe supply constraints in the current calendar year as well as in 2022. "Measuring true demand in India is extremely difficult," Canalys research analyst Ashweej Aithal pointed out, adding the second wave has been ruthless, claiming many more lives and livelihoods than the first wave. CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said traders across the country will observe June 14-21 as E-Commerce Purification Week. CAIT urges Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to direct CCI to initiate probe against Amazon, Flipkart, Microsoft to launch Xbox TV app and standalone xCloud streaming stick. "For PCs, the entire channel has been paralysed, and despite healthy demand from consumers and businesses alike, fulfilling orders was the primary issue once again. Channel partners that have not been able to pivot to online sales have seen a huge portion of their business slip during the pandemic," he added. "In addition,

OEMs prioritising fast-moving markets, such as the US and Western Europe, and diverting the bulk of their inventory to these markets, has further aggravated the situation. For most of this year and next, India will suffer from supply issues," Aithal explained. On the brighter side, the surging demand for PCs led to the entry of new vendors such as Nokia and Vaio, who have launched new notebook models and plan to use their strong brand names to tempt customers. The market also saw an exceptional rise in gaming PC sub-category. Shipments of 'gaming-capable' machines grew almost 65% Y-o-Y as the pandemic gave rise to a need for new forms of entertainment, given movie theatres, theme parks, pubs and restaurants were closed for much of the year, he noted. Besides, Aithal noted that India could soon become a major manufacturing hub for PCs, as the government has extended its production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for smartphone manufacturing to the PC industry. "Manufacturers are expected to get incentives for laptops manufactured and priced above Rs 30,000 (\$400) and tablets priced above Rs 15,000 (\$200). Canalys expects most ODMs and OEMs to take advantage of this route, as the long-term outlook for India is still strong. While the commercial sector remains a key focus, PCs in education and for consumers are future hotspots," he added. During Q1 2021, India's PC shipments, including tablets, grew 72% Y-o-Y to reach 4 million units, comprising 517,000 desktops, 2.5 million notebooks, 930,000 tablets and 43,000 workstations. Almost all categories grew well, mainly due to a poor Q1 2020, when supply was hit due to pandemic restrictions in China. Notebooks (including mobile workstations) were the major growth driver, as shipments grew 119% over Q1 2020. Tablets also had one of their biggest quarters since 2016, with 52% year-on-year growth. Desktop shipments fell 6% to 517,000 units due to a fall in popularity for the form factor.

From automation to gamification, why mobile advertising is here for a dynamic future

Mumbai, June 13 : Media company dentsu's 2021 forecast on Global Ad Spend predicted major growth for mobile ad spending across the world with the Indian market estimated to have almost doubled its mobile ad spend between 2019 and 2020. As brands compete to grab customer attention in an increasingly crowded marketplace, the space of digital marketing is witnessing rapid evolution and path-breaking shifts. Increasing penetration of smartphones and mobile devices has entailed the need for multi-pronged advertising strategies that can attract consumers on the go. The Covid 19 pandemic has further accelerated the shift towards digital advertising while shrinking traditional ad spends on TV and print media. Media investment company Group M's recent report on adex projected a 23.2 per cent growth in adspends in 2021, with digital spend forecasted to grow the most. The league, even though split into two parts this year, is still expected to draw advertiser interest. Brands rethinking ad strategies. Adopting new strategies to reach out to the audience through video content has been at the top of every content creator's priority list in recent years. How meta-tagging and machine learning are helping shape the video industry. This ecosystem will grow exponentially in the time to come, we are already seeing this ecosystem grow from obscurity into delivering performance driven campaigns for advertisers. This ecosystem delivers both the reach and frequency that the advertiser wants and also ensures transparent customer engagement. Within the digital marketing space, it is mobile advertising that is increasingly garnering a lion's worth of mindshare among marketers. Backed by growing penetration of smartphones and 4G data including the upcoming 5G ecosystem, mobile is emerging as the preferred mode of media consumption, making mobile outreach central to digital advertising strategy. As mobile increasingly assumes the space of a primary digital device for accessing the Internet, marketers are looking

at mobile marketing as the primary driving factor. Interestingly, mobile ad spends globally is estimated to have overtaken desktop adspends for the first time as late as in 2018. As mobile marketing continues to take centre stage in the strategies of digital marketers, mobile ad spends are witnessing a continuing surge ever since. Media company dentsu's 2021 forecast on Global Ad Spend predicted major growth for mobile ad spend across the world with the Indian market estimated to have almost doubled its mobile ad spend between 2019 and 2020. With over 500 million Indians using smartphones, an overwhelming majority of the consumer is today making their purchasing decisions through mobile devices. Mobile apps - from social media, to e-commerce to gaming - remain the space where an overwhelming majority of the consumer time is spent. Evidently, marketers are devising new creative and technology-backed strategies to upend their mobile advertising game. In app advertising, customer engagement through gamification, creatives that seamlessly fit into publisher content and increased use of automation are key trends driving mobile advertising into the future. Mobile marketing automation is increasingly helping brands customise and personalise their ad campaigns and enable them to achieve better customer segmentation and targeting. Robust marketing automation platforms are therefore a key to an effective app marketing future. While traditional marketing automation platforms used on desktops are effective in gathering elementary customer information

such as browsing habits, purchase preferences etc, mobile marketing automation platforms go a step ahead and enable marketers to automate communication with consumers. So, once aligned with your requirements, an automated mobile marketing platform will continue to collect user information, complete its identification and consumer segmentation and follow it up with continued notifications, emails, product recommendations and in app messages. As brands aim to generate mobile-specific content and engagement strategies, mobile marketing automation allows them to optimise consumer campaigns, communicate in real time, improve their ROI and ensure effective consumer engagement and retention. With banner and display ads increasingly having lesser effect on consumers and ad blocking becoming a common phenomenon, native advertising has emerged as a more reliable and effective way of consumer outreach. Much like desktop native advertising, mobile native advertising is also becoming a preferred choice for marketers. Native advertising helps create a communication campaign that blends seamlessly into the publisher's content. The in-feed and organic nature of native ads makes them appear more trustworthy for consumers. Moreover, being as close to the app's visual appearance, they neither disrupt nor jar the consumer eye. Native ads therefore inordinately lead to more leads, purchases and better ROI. The future of mobile advertising is therefore shifting towards native advertising trends. There is no dearth of

gaming fans online. So, when your mobile advertising strategy adopts features of gamification, it is bound to attract more eyeballs and clicks as compared to traditional ads. Gamification is essentially a strategy of incorporating features of game playing into advertising or marketing content. For example, a content promoting an educational tool may ask viewers to participate in a quiz to grab their attention, improve engagement and offer rewards. This is a tacit strategy rather than an in-your-face ad campaign to engage consumers with your brand and increase brand recall and loyalty. As marketing strategies evolve, gamification of mobile advertising is fast catching up as a phenomenon. While mobile websites and mobile apps have many similarities, there are key differences that make in-app advertising more lucrative for brands. Firstly, dramatic growth of mobile apps means that an overwhelming majority of people are spending their time in-app while using mobile devices. A mobile app trends report by analytics platform Adjust reported a rise in app installs by 31% yoy in the first quarter of 2021. So, the average daily time spent on apps is much more than the time spent on mobile websites. Secondly, a number of features of mobile apps makes in-app advertising more effective. An in-app environment does not depend on cookies and is better at collecting user information and data, enabling advertisers to generate more personalised campaigns and achieve better consumer targeting. The ability to track location through apps further adds to the accuracy of marketing strategy. This tracking accuracy also allows programmatic buying to be more accurate and effective. Thirdly, in-app advertising invariably achieves a higher click-through rate. No wonder, the demand for in-app advertising is expected to grow dramatically. According to a market analysis by Grand View Research, the global in-app advertising market was projected to grow at a CAGR of 19.4% between 2019 and 2025.



FAME-II electric 2-wheeler discount policy: Ather, Ola, Okinawa upbeat about demand

Mumbai, June 13 : The news that electric two-wheeler makers can give a discount of almost 40 per cent of their scooter or bike value has definitely lifted the sentiments of buyers as well as manufacturers. The amendments to the FAME-II electric vehicle policy was rolled out on Friday and manufacturers have lauded the efforts in adopting EV mobility in the country. This scheme also favours electric rickshaws as well as buses but the details of these have to be worked out. We have got the reaction of the electric vehicle manufacturers on the changes to the FAME-II policy. "The revision in the FAME policy, increasing the subsidy by 50% per KWh is a phenomenal move. Sales of electric two-wheelers have grown despite the pandemic and with this additional subsidy, we expect electric two-wheeler sales to disrupt the market, and clock 6 million+ units by 2025. Ather Energy already has plans to expand distribution to 30 cities in the next 6 months and this increased subsidy will help accelerate consumer demand, immensely. The Government's continued support to drive adoption of EVs, with a keen focus on locally built electric two-wheelers will make India the manufacturing hub of EVs." The decision to extend the FAME II scheme will be incremental to push EV adoption in the country. The FAME subsidies have helped EV manufacturers to build efficient and advanced vehicles in the last three years. However, the strict stipulations of the scheme have limited the OEMs to avail its benefits. Given the slow uptake of EVs, the relaxations and revisions in the scheme will ensure OEMs can continue to offer the vehicles at a subsidized cost and cultivate a larger market for electric vehicles. "Electric vehicles (EVs) are costlier than traditional vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE). This revolutionary step by the Govt. to subsidize electric three-wheelers, two-wheelers, passenger vehicles and buses will provide the much-needed impetus in faster adoption, thus helping greatly in building up the ecosystem of EV's in India. We



at Omega Seiki Mobility strongly support this initiative. It is a major incentive for Make-in-India local manufacturers like us, enabling us to bring more and more EVs of various segments to the country. This will notably make India a significant player in the EV Industry." "We welcome the govt's continued support to EVs. Sustainable mobility solutions are very important for the future and TVS is investing significantly behind this. The improved incentives for electric two-wheelers will increase penetration and

continue to avail subsidy." "The recently announced modification in the FAME India Phase 2 scheme will prove to be a game changer. The increase in financial incentive will further help in boosting adoption of products in the category and is a reinforcement of government's commitment and intent for the EV industry. We are very pleased with this development as Revolt plans to reopen booking and further expand into newer markets. Such interventions coupled with the ongoing focus on infrastructure develop-

ment can accelerate the growth of the sector immensely." "I welcome the government's amendment to the FAME II subsidy. The incentive of Rs.15,000 per KWh will help make electric 2 wheelers affordable for many more consumers. I believe India has the potential to lead the world in sustainable mobility and become a big market as well as a global EV manufacturing hub. Our Ola Futurefactory will be coming online soon and we will be aggressively pricing our range of electric scooters. With yesterday's policy incentives, we will be able to accelerate the global transition to sustainable mobility even faster." "The electric vehicle segment in India has immense potential to generate a lasting impact on the ecosystem of automotive sector despite being in a nascent stage. As per GfK Automotive Syndicated Monitor 2020 Study. More than half of the surveyed respondents

agreed that the key purchase drivers would be the availability of advanced technology, eco-friendly nature and fuel efficiency. The recent announcement by the government is expected to further motivate the customers to adopt electric vehicles. There are various factors which is driving this shift in preferences, however, low operating costs of EVs and soaring fuel prices motivate buyers to consider more fuel-efficient alternatives. The increasing levels of awareness on EV technology among young consumers is likely to accelerate the growth and adoption of EVs across product segments. "It's an important and admirable decision taken by the government, a move that will bring down the prices of electric two wheelers nearer to the IC vehicles and remove one of the biggest blockade of the high sticker price of electric two wheelers. A City Speed electric scooter with a range of 100km/charge will now cost less than 60000 and a high-speed scooter with a range of 80km will come nearer to the price tag of Rs.1 lac. Together with the other important factors like extremely low running cost, low maintenance and zero emission, such price levels will surely spur a substantial demand of electric two wheelers. We believe the time has come for mass adoption of electric two wheelers and such initiatives coupled with a mass awareness campaign by the government and easy terms financing by public sector banks will bring us closer to the target of 30% of the two-wheeler market becoming electric in 5 years." "The E2W industry is once again experiencing a positive sentiment and a high level of interest from the Government of India. The government of India's revisions to FAME-II subsidies is a welcome step that will only add zeal to the adoption of electric vehicles. Lowering the prices of electric scooters in the country will really help to persuade more riders to switch from a combustion-engined model to an electric one. We have always emphasized the importance of creating an ecosystem for EV mobility, and this new revision to the FAME II scheme is an important step in that direction."

ICICI Prudential Life announces Bonus

Shillong, June, 2021: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced an annual bonus of ₹867 crore for all eligible participating policyholders for FY2021. The bonus declared is the highest ever by the Company till date and is also 10% higher than the bonus announced in the last fiscal. All participating policies in-force as of March 31, 2021 are eligible to receive this bonus and will be added to the policyholders' benefits. A total of 9.8 lakh participating policyholders will benefit from this, taking them closer to their long-term financial goals. Bonus is the share of profits generated by the Company's participating policyholder's funds which are added to their guaranteed maturity benefits, thus enhancing the corpus. This is the 15th consecutive year the Company has declared a bonus, underscoring its customer-centricity and long-term investment approach to deliver superior risk-adjusted returns to policyholders. The stringent investment philosophy of the Company has ensured zero defaults in its portfolio since inception and across market cycles. As of March 31, 2021, 96.8% of the fixed income portfolio is invested in sovereign or AAA rated paper. Mr. N S Kannan, Managing Director & CEO, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "We are delighted to announce that the annual bonus for FY2021 is the highest ever in the history of the Company. What gives us special satisfaction is the fact that it coincides with the 20th anniversary of our operations. It demonstrates our customer focus, resilience and ability to navigate through the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. What drives us in this challenging environment is the commitment to our vision of building an enduring institution that

serves the protection and long-term saving needs of our customers with sensitivity." The Company's entire range of traditional long-term products provides customers with safety of capital and steady returns and the life cover provides the much required financial security to the family. Lakshya, the Company's innovative participating product, caters to the diverse needs of customers ranging from long-term wealth creation to specific income requirements at different life stages. About ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company ICICI Prudential Life is promoted by ICICI Bank Limited and Prudential Corporation Holdings Limited. The Company began operations in fiscal 2001 and has consistently been amongst the top private sector life insurance companies in India on a Retail Weighted Received Premium (RWRP) basis. The Company offers an array of products in the Protection and Savings category which match the different life stage requirements of customers, enabling them to provide a financial safety net to their families as well as achieve their long-term financial goals. The digital platform of the Company provides a paperless onboarding experience to customers, empowers them to conduct an assortment of self-service transactions, provides a convenient route to make digital payments for purchasing and 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.



Contd. From Page 1

CM directs police to unearth cause

family at this time of their distress. Later talking to media persons, the Chief Minister said that he visited the family to personally take stock of the incident. He informed that IGP in charge of BTR and SP Kokrajhar have been asked to do an expeditious investigation to unearth the cause of death of the two minor girls. Further saying that women safety always remains top priority of the Assam government; the Chief Minister averred that atrocity in any form against poor too shall not be tolerated. BTC Chief Pramod Boro and Kokrajhar East MLA Lawrence Islary were also present during the visit of the Chief Minister.

Microfinance Loans Of ? 12,500 Cr

have borrowed from one lender, 5.08 lakh from two lenders, 1.54 lakh from three lenders and 60,000 from more than three lenders. Further, the minister said that only those loans will be waived off which were taken before December 31, 2020. He said those with a family income of Rs one lakh, paying income tax, owning four-wheelers or any other such guidelines set by the RBI will not be considered for the waiver of loans. Mr. Singhal who is heading a committee to assess the financial situation for fulfilling the government's commitment for waiving microfinance loans, was quoted as saying in an agency report, "The chief minister had directed us to prepare a package to provide relief to maximum poor women who had taken loans and are facing immense miseries," Singhal said. The norms of these loans were primarily that a woman cannot be a member of more than one Self Help Groups (SHGs) and not more than two NBFCs should lend to the same borrower. The minister asserted that RBI regulations have been violated and action will be taken against the lenders who have breached the norms of the legal framework as most of the loan beneficiaries are not aware of the terms and conditions.

Rajnath Singh approves budgetary

an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in the defence and aerospace sector. "The scheme, with budgetary support of Rs 498.8 crore for the next five years, is aimed at providing financial support to nearly 300 start-ups/MSMEs/individual innovators and 20 partner incubators under the DIO framework," the ministry said. It said the DIO will enable the creation of channels for innovators to engage and interact with the Indian defence production industry. "The scheme aims to facilitate rapid development of new, indigenised and innovative technologies for the Indian defence and aerospace sector to meet their needs in shorter timelines," it said. In the last couple of years, the government has unveiled a series of reform measures and initiatives to make India a hub of defence manufacturing. Last August, Defence Minister Singh had announced that India will stop the import of 101 weapons and military platforms like transport aircraft, light combat helicopters, conventional submarines, cruise missiles and sonar systems by 2024. A second negative list, putting import restrictions on 108 military weapons and systems such as next-generation corvettes, airborne early warning systems, tank engines and radars, was issued this week. In May last, the government announced increasing the FDI limit from 49 per cent to 74 per cent under the automatic route in the defence sector. India is one of the largest importers of arms globally. The government now wants to reduce dependence on imported military platforms and has decided to support domestic defence manufacturing. The ministry has set a goal of a turnover of USD 25 billion (Rs 1.75 lakh crore) in defence manufacturing in the next five years that included an export target of USD 5 billion (Rs 35,000 crore) worth of military hardware.

SC lawyer Upamanyu Hazarika

community in the state to go for "decent family planning" to stop the population explosion. He said that such an explosion of the population may invite conflict. "This statement coming at this point of time is very strange and contrary to facts. If birth control was the sole means to restrict population growth, there was no need for the 6-year-old Assam movement, NRC, etc. The statement is factually erroneous," said Hazarika. "It is relevant that the explanation trotted out by the chief minister is the same as given by late Tarun Gogoi in 2012 when he had stated that the demographic change in Assam is due to higher birth-rate among migrant Muslims and not due to infiltration." Hazarika also criticized Goswami for his remarks on the report of the Clause 6 committee of the Assam Accord.

No Indian should be excluded from

go to the Foreigners' Tribunal. The officials told us that, if we accept this NRC then the people of Assam will face a huge problem, it will threaten the Assamese culture, language, genuine Indian citizen will become foreigner," he added. He also alleged that a large number of documents, submitted by suspected people whose names are listed in the NRC, are forged. Dass claimed that out of 19 lakh people whose names were left out from the NRC list, maximum are genuine Indian citizens. "Not a single Hindustani name should be deleted. If needed, the Assam government is ready to spend the money which will be spent in the re-verification process. If some anomalies are detected during 20 per cent re-verification process, then there should be 100 per cent re-verification in place," Ranjeet Kumar Dass said.

Madhya Pradesh to inoculate

showing their passport as the identity card," he said. Jadia estimated that about 5,000 Pakistani refugees are living in Indore and most of them are settled in the city's Sindhi Colony area. "We are administering anti-COVID 19 doses to all adults on humanitarian grounds. Last month, we had vaccinated a Dutch citizen who had come to Indore for some work," he recalled. Indore district, which is the worst hit by the pandemic in Madhya Pradesh, has so far recorded 1.52 lakh COVID-19 cases including 1,370 fatalities, according to officials. About 13.53 lakh people were administered the first dose of the vaccine in the Indore district while 2.35 lakh people had received both doses.

Elections In Jammu And Kashmir

be held in tandem with the national elections in 2019, but the Election Commission negated it, citing an administration report that said there was a security risk. Today, sources told that the government "may initiate engagement process with the political parties and may discuss statehood and elections". National Conference patriarch and Gupkar Alliance chief Farooq Abdullah said they are not averse to dialogue. The Alliance, formed in August last year, has been inactive for over six months over internal differences. But on Wednesday last Farooq Abdullah visited People's Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti at her home and had a discussion with her and other Gupkar alliance members. Indication of a possible dialogue with Kashmiri leadership has come in the wake of US Congressional hearing in which a top Biden administration official said that the US is encouraging the Indian Government to take electoral steps in Kashmir. "Kashmir is one area where we have urged them to return to normalcy as quickly as possible, including we've seen some steps taken: The release of prisoners, the restoration of 4G access, things of that nature. There are other electoral steps we'd like to see them take and that we have encouraged them to do and will continue to do so," Dean Thompson, Acting Assistant of State for South and Central Asia said during a Congressional hearing. The Centre had held local bodies elections in the Union Territory in December in which the Gupkar Alliance won more than 100 seats and the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 74 seats. The Congress has won 27 seats. The alliance said the polls were a referendum on the scrapping of Article 370, as cited by the BJP, but the results were indications that the people have rejected the scrapping of Article 370 and the BJP narrative on it. The Gupkar Declaration was signed on August 4, 2019, after an all-party meeting at the Gupkar Road residence National Conference patriarch Farooq Abdullah. It marked a resolution of attending regional parties and the Congress to protect Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status and fight against any move to dilute it.



Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma interacting with the family members of late MLA of Gossaigaon Majendra Narzary at the latter's residence at Gossaigaon on Sunday

Delta Variant Can Infect Despite Covishield, Covaxin Doses: AIIMS Study

New Delhi, June 13 : The 'delta' variant of COVID-19 - the version first detected in India in October last year - is capable of infecting people even after they have received both doses of the Covaxin or Covishield vaccines, according to separate studies by AIIMS (Delhi) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). It is important to note that neither study has been peer-reviewed as yet. The AIIMS study suggests the 'delta' variant - which others, including one by British health authorities, say is between 40 and 50 per cent more infectious than the 'alpha' version first reported from the UK - is likely behind the majority of breakthrough infections in India. The AIIMS-IGIB (Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology) study was based on an analysis of 63 symptomatic patients who

reported to the hospital's emergency ward complaining of high fever persisting for five to seven days. Of these 63 people, 53 had been given at least one dose of Covaxin and the rest at least one dose of Covishield. Thirty-six had received both doses of one of these vaccines. 76.9 per cent of infections by the 'delta' variant were recorded in people who had received a single dose, and 60 per cent in people who had received both doses. Data from the NCDC-IGIB study indicated that breakthrough infections due to the 'delta' variant seemed to affect people who took Covishield. This study showed 'delta' breakthrough infections in 27 patients who had taken that vaccine, with the infection rate at 70.3 per cent. Data from both studies indicated the 'alpha' variant is also proving resistant to Covishield

and Covaxin, but not as significantly as the version first reported from India. Both studies also indicated that while the vaccine's protection against the 'delta', and even 'alpha', variants may be reduced, severity of infection in each case appeared to be unaffected as a result. This is in line with scientists' views that there is, as yet, no evidence the 'delta' variant is causing a greater number of Covid-linked deaths or more severe infections. The AIIMS-IGIB and NCDC-IGIB studies, however, appear to contradict a joint investigation by the National Institute of Virology in Pune, the ICMR and Covaxin manufacturers Bharat Biotech. That study, which has also not yet been peer-reviewed, indicated Covaxin offers protection against both the 'delta' and 'beta' variants. The 'beta' variant was first discovered in

South Africa. Last week a government study by scientists from the NCDC and the Indian SARS COV2 Genomic Consortium indicated that the 'delta' variant was behind the second Covid wave in India. At the peak of the wave - in early-May - over four lakh new cases were reported every day. Experts have urged the government to increase the pace of vaccination across the country in anticipation of a third wave of infections. So far nearly 24 crore doses have been administered. India has reported over 2.9 crore COVID-19 infections so far, of which around 12.31 lakh are active cases and around 3.53 lakh are deaths. This morning the country reported around 92,000 new cases in 24 hours as it limps back to normalcy after a devastating second wave of infections.

Himanta Sarma Asks Immigrant Muslims To Control Population

Guwahati, June 13 : Himanta Biswa Sarma said today that "social menaces" like land encroachment can be solved if the immigrant Muslims follow family planning. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma touched a raw nerve today saying "social menaces" like land encroachment can be solved if the immigrant Muslims follow a family planning norm and control their population. The Bengali-speaking Muslims of central and lower Assam are considered immigrant Muslims from Bangladesh. In the last assembly polls, the BJP's narrative has been to protect the indigenous communities of Assam against them. Immigrant Muslims comprise around 31 per cent of Assam's 3.12 crore population and are a deciding factor in as many as 35 of the 126 assembly seats. "We have already enacted a population policy in the last assembly session. But particularly we want to work with the minority Muslim community to reduce the population burden. Social menaces like poverty, land encroachment, have their root in the population explosion. If we can control the population, we can solve several social problems... if the immigrant Muslims can adopt a decent family norms -- this is my appeal to them," he added. Encroachment cannot be allowed on forest and temple lands, the Chief Minister said. "But I understand that it is due to high growth of population. I understand the pressure on the other side. Where will the people stay?" Mr Sarma said, adding he would like to work on this issue with all the stakeholders, including organizations like Badruddin Ajmal's party AIUDF and the All Assam Minority Students' Union or AAMSU. "If the population explosion continues, one day even the Kamakhya temple land will be encroached upon, even my house will be," he added.

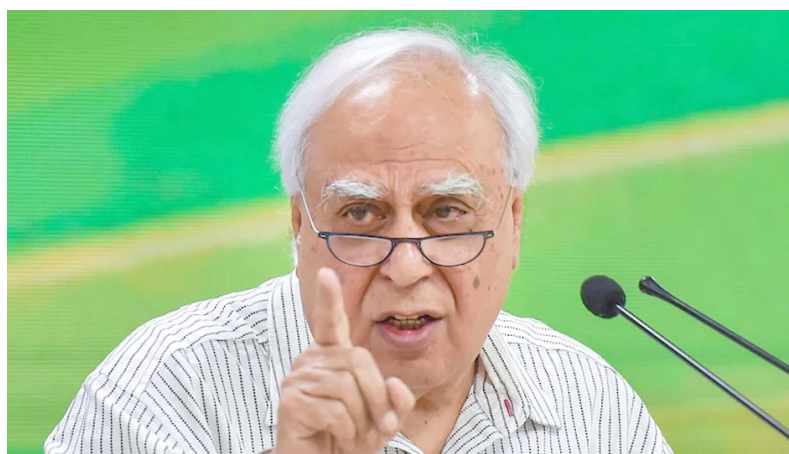
Nirad Saikia passes away

North Lakhimpur, June 13 : Nirada Saikia, a resident of Lechaigaon under Panigaon Police Station of Lakhimpur district, died of post-Covid-19 complications at her own residence today at about 1-30 p.m. She suffered from Covid-19, but later cured from it after doing treatment in Dibrugarh. She leaves behind two sons, Lakhimpur district BJP General Secretary Dula Saikia and AJYCP leader Bhupen Saikia, two daughter-in-laws and a host of relatives. She was a very popular and pious lady. Her death cast a pall of gloom in the area.

'Flight risk': Dominica High Court denies bail to Mehul Choksi

New Delhi, June 13 : The Dominica High Court has denied bail to fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi in the case of illegal entry into the island country after his mysterious disappearance from neighbouring Antigua and Barbuda where he is staying as a citizen since 2018, local Caribbean media reported. The high court on Friday (local time) gave the ruling by concluding that Choksi was a "flight risk", did not have any ties with Dominica and the court could not impose any conditions which will stop him from leaving the country, news outlet AntiguaNewsroom said. The promoter of Geetanjali Gems and other famous diamond brands in India had fled the country weeks before Rs 13,500 crore fraud in Punjab National Bank (PNB) allegedly involving him and his nephew Nirav Modi surfaced. Choksi, 62, who has an Interpol Red Notice against him, had mysteriously gone missing on May 23 from Antigua and Barbuda where he has been staying since 2018 as a citizen after fleeing from India. He was detained in the neighbouring island country of Dominica for illegal entry after a possible romantic escape-pact with his rumoured girlfriend.

"Over My Dead Body": Congress's Kapil Sibal On Jitin Prasada-Style Switch



New Delhi, June 13 : As the Congress processes Jitin Prasada's switch to the BJP -- a high profile exit that once again exposes the party's deep crisis -- the spotlight is on other members of the "G-23" or group of 23 "dissident" leaders who wrote to Sonia Gandhi calling for sweeping reforms. Kapil Sibal, a prominent member of this club, emphatically ruled out a similar move, declaring it would be "Over my dead body". The former Union Minister, however, seized the chance to send out a message to his party bosses, that it is time for them to listen. He also disapproved of what he dubbed "Prasada Ram politics based on personal gain" rather than ideology. "I don't want to comment on what the party leadership has done or not done.

We have reached a stage in Indian politics where decisions of this nature are not based on ideology at all. They are based on what I now call 'Prasada Ram politics'. Earlier it was Aaya Ram Gaya Ram. We have seen this happening in West Bengal - suddenly people leave because they think BJP is going to succeed... You want to fight elections not on the basis of your convictions towards an ideology but your conviction that 'I might get something personally'. The same happened in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra..." Jitin Prasada, who was close to Rahul Gandhi, quit yesterday after two years of speculation, attacking his party of 20 years with this parting shot: "I have a three-generation connection

with the Congress, so I took this important decision after a lot of deliberation. In the last eight-10 years, I have felt that if there is one party that is truly national, it is BJP. Other parties are regional but this is the national party." Mr Prasada is the second big loss for the Congress after Jyotiraditya Scindia, another former Rahul Gandhi aide who switched to the BJP last year along with a group of Madhya Pradesh MLAs, bringing down the Congress government in the state. The Madhya Pradesh defections, along with back-to-back election losses, spurred Congress veterans like Mr Sibal, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma into shooting off the unprecedented letter that appeared to take on the Gandhis while suggesting collective decision-making and "full-time, visible leadership". Mr Sibal said the Congress desperately needs reforms and the party leadership had to listen. At the same time, it was inexplicable, he said, that a person like Jitin Prasada would join the BJP. "Even if issues are addressed, if a person thinks I am not getting anything, he will leave. Jitin may have good reasons to leave. I don't blame him for leaving the party. I blame him for the reasons he joined the BJP. With what face can he say that now I am embracing an ideology I was opposed to for three decades? And this party that

talks about principled politics, with what face do they take Jitin? People are losing faith in this kind of politics." Speculation is now swirling around Sachin Pilot, who has been demanding a fairer share in the party since his revolt against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot last year. Mr Pilot was persuaded by Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi to end his rebellion, on the promise of a course correction. He recently reminded his party leaders that nothing had changed since. Asked about the Congress's failure to follow through, Mr Sibal said: "Issues were not addressed, that is true. They must be addressed as quickly as possible. We will continue to raise those issues. If the party for some reason tells me we don't need you, I will leave it. I am not in it for myself, but I will never in my life over my dead body join the BJP who I have opposed since my birth as a politician. That's my issue with Jitin Prasada." Pressed on the so-called reforms, he replied: "Don't ask me, ask whoever has to address them. The Congress must become the grand old party that it was. For that we need reforms. We are fighting within the system we have continued to raise issues. If the head stops listening, the organization will decline. All that we want is that the Congress party should listen to us."

Robert Page happy for Wales to 'put tin hats on' in opening Switzerland draw



Rome, June 13 : Robert Page has said his Wales players are happy to "dig a trench and put tin hats on" in their quest to reach the European Championship knockout stages after eking out a crucial point in their Group A opener against Switzerland. Kieffer Moore cancelled out Breel Embolo's second-half header and Page urged Wales to build on the draw when they face Turkey here in Baku on Wednesday.Italy top the group after beating Turkey 3-0 on Friday but Page is adamant his side are in a strong position after surviving a late scare against Switzerland, when Mario Gavranovic's late strike was ruled offside."To get off to a positive start was important for us," said Page, the interim Wales manager. "I've said to the players, that's the foundations now. If we have to dig a trench and put our tin hats on at times we will do it and we proved we can do that as well as play. It feels like a win in the changing room. I am so proud of the players. We got a little bit of luck towards the end but that is the start we are after."Page praised Danny Ward's outstanding display in goal and said he had no concerns about Daniel James frustration's upon being substituted a minute after

Moore's equaliser. Page insisted the Manchester United winger's withdrawal was for the greater good. "I liked the fact he was angry," Page said, after complimenting James on the work he had put in."If players are pleased to come off the pitch, that says they are not interested and don't want to be on there. It is not about keeping individuals happy - at times you have to make difficult decisions. I get his frustration and I have no problem with that whatsoever. He's a great lad and he cares. He wants to play for his country and he wants to play every minute. He gave us everything."The Switzerland manager, Vladimir Petkovic, said he had no regrets over substituting Xherdan Shaqiri after 66 minutes, at which point they led courtesy of Embolo's header. "He showed a good performance but I also thought about the next matches where we need him and I wanted to create more stability in midfield," Petkovic said."We became a little more passive but this is not only our fault because Wales had to risk more and they had to put in a stronger performance. Our opponents showed some excellent qualities."Switzerland now play Italy in Rome on Wednesday.

Gareth Southgate and England have become victims of the blame game

London, June 13 : "These were the new horror days of a nation that was all played out, a nation of riot and yobbery, a nation with a ridiculous government, an economy in a tailspin - England, whatever the hell happened to England?"There is probably some comfort to be found that these words were written three decades ago, coda to another epic tournament, another moment of cultural shift that seemed, at the time, to be oddly bound up with England football.All Played Out, Pete Davies's chronicle of Italia 90, is still the most profoundly brilliant book written about football, Englishness and English football. As Gareth Southgate's players prepare to take their first step into these plague era Euros on Sunday afternoon, a month-long jaunt around the previously borderless entity known as Europe, that opening passage feels like a long sighted nod from the past. Plus ça change. Plus, c'est the same old thing all over again.And so here we go. Welcome to international football in the time of rage and counter-rage, of gestures and jeers, and a team and a manger who have become, against all expectation, profoundly politicised.Southgate has had six days with his squad to prepare for Croatia at Wembley. He has stretched those days to their limits, poring over defensive structure, midfield balance, fine points of personnel and, in a departure from the standard

manager's brief, the precise definition of the concept of "Englishness" and the semiotics of race and tolerance. Graham Taylor called it the impossible job. Graham, old bean, you have no idea.It was inevitable the so-called culture war would invade football's very public oppositions. Everything is polarised, every object has a binary meaning. On one hand masks, Marcus Rashford, performative vaccination and agreeing with the

all, blame the manager.It is a hugely unexpected turn in the life and times of Southgate that he should become an oddly divisive cultural presence on issues that have very little to do with football.Southgate is a son of working-class parents. His playing career was remarkable mainly for its doggedness, for the force of personality that drove him on from the reserves at Crystal Palace to a tournament semi-final with England.That doggedness is a



Duke of Sussex. On the other flags, Jack Grealish, pre-match McCarthyism and agreeing with the Duke of Cambridge. What is interesting is how those chips have fallen. For the first time the England team and manager are decisively and unarguably of the left. For the first time there is a schism between players, manager and the team's core fanbase.At Italia 90, the heavy weather around Bobby Robson's England was centred on the behaviour of the travelling fans, demonised by the Thatcher government as barbaric marauding hordes and a very handy scapegoat for the tensions of the time. Blame football, blame the fans.This time around Boris Johnson was able to speak directly to those supporters (also known as voters) who feel angered by England taking of the knee. Alliances have shifted. Blame football: blame the players. Blame the Marxist millionaires. And above

theme of his second footballing life, too. He felt like an accidental leader in 2016, an in-house fill-in. This has proved misleading over five years of quietly effective revolution. If he feels like an accidental politician too then this current status is also simply a function of character. Southgate has listened to his players and followed his conscience.Now he faces a rare state of jeopardy. From here, at least until England start winning, team selection and tactics will be shot through with these external forces.Kalvin Phillips and Jack Grealish take the knee before the friendly against Romania at the Riverside Stadium - a move which was booed by some fans.These Euros were already a difficult affair. England went into the 2018 World Cup liberated from expectation. Leadership, vibes and the luck of the draw got them to a semi-final. This time around Southgate has

visible strengths in his team, allied with some obvious weaknesses and a difficult draw.He has known for some time that his chances of success, and indeed England's entire summer, are likely to rest on how his team wrestles with high-stake games away from Wembley. Southgate seems convinced his best hope is to play a back three, compress the space in England's own half and have players who press hard from the front.This might seem a contradictory idea. England's defenders are their weak link so let's insert another one into the starting lineup. But this is a matter of chemistry and balance. Plus the opposition also have a say in what happens.Southgate has played his hand so close it is still possible he will continue with the back four England have used in their past five matches. This would allow another attacking presence.It is a choice made easier by the fact Croatia have also evolved, but not in a good way. England have got younger and better since that World Cup semi-final. Croatia are older and weaker. England may well win and in doing so buy some goodwill for Southgate in the race against those free-floating furies.If there is a lesson to be learned from this peculiar intersection of politics and tournament football it is that England did adapt and settle at Italia 90. The fans were more blissed out than enraged. The team found previously hidden depths, thrilling and indeed uniting those who were watching.That summer was joyful, and also transformative, as English clubs were grudgingly readmitted to Europe, a prelude to the boom times to come.Football won't solve your problems. But nothing succeeds like success and if there is a genuine sense of unity out there it is in the sense that everyone, without exception, needs a little escapism, a little collectivism and a reminder that life can also be a source of shared pleasure.

Exeter secure home play-off semi-final as thrilling comeback sinks Sale

London, June 13 : This uniquely demanding Premiership season has seen some remarkable contests but few more extraordinary than this one. Having been a distant second for much of the game 14-man Exeter staged the most stunning of comebacks from 19-3 down and will now enjoy home advantage when these two sides meet here again in next Saturday's semi-finals.Early in the second half Sale had appeared to be on course for a home semi themselves thanks to tries from Byron McGuigan, AJ MacGinty, and Arron Reed. All they needed was a fourth try to secure an all-important extra bonus point, the dismissal of Sam Skinner for a high challenge on the diminutive Faf de Klerk with 25 minutes left having seemingly sunk the home side without trace. Instead, it proved the catalyst for a rousing revival, tries from the outstanding Luke Cowan-Dickie and Stu Townsend and the accurate boot of Joe Simmonds hauling last season's double champions back in front in the final quarter. The hosts duly hung on to clinch second place in the table and ensure the rematch will be staged back in Devon.Sale will also have to overcome the likely absence of the influential MacGinty, who was taken off on a stretcher late in the game, and their feisty hooker, Akker van der Merwe, but Exeter will know they have not won the war quite yet.Before their late renaissance, with their other Lions forwards, Jonny Hill and Sam Simmonds also to the fore, they endured all kinds of problems at the breakdown and Sale will return to the south-west feeling they still have a puncher's chance of making their first Premiership final for 15 years.With Bristol confirmed as regular season champions before kick off after the cancellation of their game against London Irish, however, the decision of both coaches to go full throttle with their selections



ensured this was no meaningless phoney war. There was almost as much power on view as at the G7 summit down the A30 in Cornwall, with appreciably less in the way of kid-glove diplomacy. Despite the presence of three familiar ex-Chiefs in Sale's matchday 23 in McGuigan, Sam Hill and James Phillips, it had the feel of a proper ding dong from the outset on a gorgeous summer's day. Sale, having won their previous eight league matches, made their intent clear inside the opening two minutes, a smart cross-field chip from MacGinty creating good field position before the same player floated a lovely ball to McGuigan to score in the opposite corner.The fast start further underlined their emergence as genuine challengers under the stewardship of Alex Sanderson, even if the early loss of Van der Merwe and flanker Cameron Neild to injury was inauspicious.It made little immediate difference, though, with MacGinty accelerating through a small midfield hole to score their second try after 22 minutes.While Exeter were looking strong at the set piece, the Curry twins were causing plenty of problems on the floor and the departure of openside Jannes Kirsten with a head knock

exacerbated the problem from the hosts' perspective. When Dave Ewers was shown a yellow card for a high tackle on a spinning Simon Hammersley, however, there was some local relief the sanction was not even more punitive.With Sale's suffocating linespeed also denying Exeter the chance to build though the phases the half-time scoreline of 14-3 was a fair reflection of the balance of power, the hairline penalty awarded against the hosts' maul as they drove ominously towards the line a couple of minutes before the interval deepening their frustration.Reed's 43rd-minute try and Skinner's dismissal, however, were to be swiftly forgotten. Back came Exeter, shrugging off their first-half torpor, and Cowan-Dickie's close-range score changed the game.The lively Townsend wriggled over five minutes later and, as at Northampton the previous week, Exeter finished like men possessed. Nine minutes were left when Joe Simmonds kicked a splendid 45-metre penalty to put his team ahead for the first time and leave Rob Baxter, the Exeter director of rugby, shaking his head."It's hard for me to explain really," he said. "But it shows that if we have to stand and fight we're a bloody good side."

Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand: 'I can't praise my players enough'

London, June 13 : The Denmark coach, Kasper Hjulmand, paid tribute to his players after they completed their Euro 2020 group match against Finland despite witnessing Christian Eriksen being given CPR on the pitch shortly before half-time.The players formed a protective circle around their teammate as he was resuscitated, but then, after a suspension of more than an hour and half, agreed to complete the match, once word had come through that Eriksen was awake and talking in hospital."It was a tough night," Hjulmand said. "We are all reminded what the most important thing in life is and that is to have valuable relations. We have a group of players I can't praise enough. I couldn't be prouder of these people who take such good care of each other at such a time where one of my very, very dear friends is suffering."Hjulmand described how the players agreed to wait until they were sure Eriksen was OK, and then chose between the two options they were offered: either to carry on or to return on Sunday at 2pm."There was no pressure from Uefa to play tonight," he said. "We knew we had two options. The players couldn't imagine not being able to sleep tonight and then having to get on the bus and come in again tomorrow.

Honestly it was best to get it over with. Of course you can't play a game with such feelings and what we tried to do was incredible." The national team doctor, Morten Boesen, was one of those who tended to the player on the pitch. "I didn't see it myself but it was pretty clear that he was unconscious," he said. "When I get to him he is on his side. He is breathing and I can feel his pulse but suddenly that changes and as everyone saw, we started giving him CPR."Help came really, really fast from the medical team and the rest of the staff and with their cooperation we did what we had to do. We managed to get Christian back. He spoke to me before he was taken to the hospital for more analysis."Denmark lost the game 1-0, but that was far from being a concern. "All of our thoughts and prayers are with Christian and his family right now," said Hjulmand. "Christian is one of our best players and he's an even better person, so all my thoughts and all my positive energy go out to Christian."The Danish football federation director



Peter Møller said the players had spoken to Eriksen and were "playing the match for Christian". Hjulmand outlined the toll the events had taken on his squad."There are players in there who are completely emotionally finished ... they are holding each other," he said, struggling to hold back tears. "It was a traumatic experience. I said that, no matter what, everything was OK."We had to allow ourselves to show joy and aggression, to make room for the emotions. You cannot play a football match at this level without being aggressive."Hjulmand revealed that the captain Simon Kjær, a close friend of Eriksen's, had to be withdrawn after the restart. "Simon was deeply, deeply affected," he said. "Deeply affected. He was in doubt whether he could continue and gave it a shot, but it could not be done.

Josh Bayliss with final flourish as Bath beat Northampton to seal Europe spot



London, June 13 : As so often these days, in rugby, sport and society, a pesky virus played an unsatisfactorily influential role, but

the Premiership's final day finished with the teams who had started in the top eight remaining there to qualify for Europe.Wasps, Bath and

Leicester were the teams who could have been denied, had they not collected the various points required. Happily, these days are also marked by an abundance of tries, so the various bonus points were duly collected, Bath's in spectacular fashion at the very end of their home match against Northampton, who were already qualified.The virus claimed two matches from the programme, thus messing with the ancient principle that all games in a final round should start concurrently. Gloucester's tie with Worcester had been cancelled earlier in the week, but as the teams in the 11th and 12th, theirs was the most expendable, even if Gloucester retained a mathematical chance of the top eight.But then, on the day, a case of

Covid-19 in the London Irish camp did for their trip to Bristol, which had the doubly unsatisfactory effect of handing Bristol top spot without so much as lacing a boot and nudging Irish into that eighth spot, courtesy of the two points they were awarded as the infected party.Thus they leap-frogged Bath, who now knew they needed a point, rather than just suspecting as much. At the Rec, the hosts never lost contact with that bonus point, even if for stretches of the match it looked as if it might have to be of the losing variety. At various points, they trailed the Saints, for whom Tague Naiyaravoro contributed two tries and a yellow card at a sensitive moment.Sam Underhill responded with a chargedown try

early on, and then an Anthony Watson break laid on a fine try for Taulupe Faletau, but still Bath went in at the break 15-19 down. Jacques du Toit's try early in the second half regained them the lead, but James Grayson rounded off a lengthy passage for Saints on the hour, despite Naiyaravoro's yellow five minutes earlier.A Rhys Priestland penalty a couple of minutes later earned Bath a lead they would not relinquish, rendering their spectacular bonus-point try at the death superfluous, if richly gratifying. Josh Bayliss, one of Bath's numerous back-row forwards of outrageous athleticism, stepped and galloped home from 60 metres, leaving three Northampton three-quarters trailing in his wake, for a 30-24 win that

took Bath into seventh place, in between Leicester and Wasps.Neither of those were quite assured of their place in the top eight, before the whistle blew in Coventry, so they racked up the tries to make sure they garnered the points needed one way or another.The Tigers' continuing resurgence continued with a 38-31 victory on the road, scoring five of the match's nine tries, one of them claimed in an urgent style by Dan Cole, his third Premiership try in 13 seasons and 191 matches. Naturally, it was from very close range. Wasps' four tries in reply, secured by the hour mark, tended to feature more in the way of derring-do, but the second bonus point they secured with a penalty from the last kick of the game merely under-scored their claim on the eighth and final place.

Zak Crawley's confusion is a symptom of England's top-order batting malaise

London, June 13 : It was hot and close when England's openers got out to the middle, headache weather, heavy and oppressive. The team were already in some trouble, 85 runs behind, and it was about to get a whole lot worse. It turned out that slender lead was just about as much as New Zealand needed. Rory Burns, England's one in-form batsman, went first. Burns has been playing so well that he seemed to forget that he was supposed to start all over. He threw a bold drive at the second ball of the innings and sliced it behind to second slip. That sparked a fire that burned through the evening session, as panic, indecision and poor thinking seemed to leap from one batsman to the next. Forget the Ashes, by stumps, English cricket was already reduced to cinders and dust. The third day of the second Test will go down as one of the sorriest they've had in a home Test match in a long time. Zak Crawley was in next. It's worth stopping on Crawley's innings. Not because he is the problem, but because he is symptomatic of it. Crawley was picked to play Test cricket 18 months ago on the strength of his potential. He had a first-class average of 32, but a game that made wise men nod their heads, and shots that left the rest of us purring. Eighteen months later, he's still living off his promise, that one monumental double century against Pakistan at Southampton last summer all the evidence we have that he might become a great Test batsman. Since



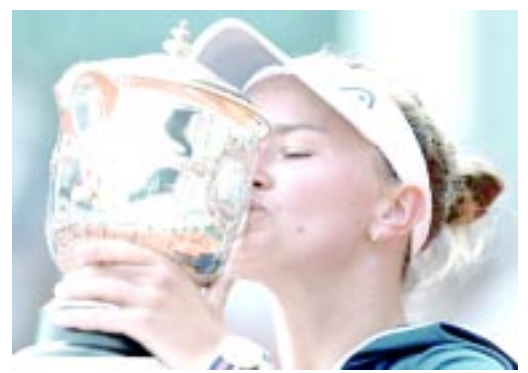
then, he's made it past 20 once in 12 innings. Coming into bat here, he was on a run of 0, 9, 5, 2, 2, 0. Crawley spun his bat in his hand, stooped, settled into his guard. He was muttering to himself, "watch the ball". Matt Henry was bowling. Henry, 29, doesn't get into New Zealand's first team, and has a Test match bowling average in the low 50s. But he's fast, whips the ball off the seam, and he knows how to bowl in England because he's had long, successful spells playing in the county championship for Worcestershire, Derbyshire, and Kent, where he was Crawley's teammate. They have a sense of each other's strengths and weaknesses. Not that Crawley's flaws take much knowing. He'd already got himself out three times in this series chasing the ball outside off stump. So of course the first ball was wide outside off. Crawley left it. The second was too, but the third

was straighter, and he stood tall and tapped it away square for a single. Up in the commentary box, Sky's analysts were watching to see whether Crawley was using a trigger movement. When he made that 267 he'd tapped his front foot before every shot, but recently had stopped doing it. Now he seemed to be in two minds. Sometimes he was, sometimes he wasn't. It was a microscopic detail, a sign of the intense scrutiny he's under, but it was a telling detail because it revealed the confusion in his thinking. This is an old problem, one he should have ironed out some place other than in a Test match. His mentor Rob Key has said that it was a problem for Crawley way back when he was 18 and playing for Sevenoaks. Crawley said then that he couldn't tell if he was moving too much or too little. Key told him to go into the nets, try batting both with and without a trigger movement, and

work out which felt better. Five years later, he still seems to be trying to make up his mind. In the meantime he's struggling. They say a man ought to know his limitations, it feels like Crawley has become overfamiliar with his in these last few months of Test cricket. You could see the hesitation in his choice of shots, he never seemed sure whether he ought to be playing or not, he hit two sweet straight drives down the ground, played and missed at two similar deliveries, left alone a couple more that weren't so very different. Six balls, all much of a muchness, met in three different ways. He'd made it to 17, his second-best Test score since last August, when he got out, lbw, to a ball that Henry angled back into his pads. Joe Root seemed to urge him to take a gratuitous review, which only confirmed what Crawley and everyone else already knew. It was plumb. Crawley wasn't the only culprit. Like Dan Lawrence, Ollie Pope, and James Bracey he comes across as gifted kid trying to scrape by on talent and instinct. They've played too little first-class cricket to understand how to adjust to the challenges of batting in a Test match, have techniques they can't trust because they're all being pulled in different directions by the competing needs of trying to succeed in three different formats, and are growing up in culture that seems to have told them that despite it all, it's enough for them just to back themselves, however unusual or idiosyncratic their methods might be.

Barbora Krejickova beats Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova to win French Open

Paris, June 13 : Over the past two weeks in Paris, Barbora Krejickova has competed in just the fifth grand slam singles main draw of her career, her third as a direct entrant. She has not even made it to Wimbledon or the US Open as a singles player, yet when she finally does she will make her debut in those events as a grand slam singles champion. In a wonderful display of toughness and guile, the unseeded Krejickova



defeated Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, the 31st seed, 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 to win the French Open. After a run that has included one match point saved, numerous battles and ample beat-downs across matches against five seeded players, Krejickova has become the second Czech woman to win at Roland Garros, after Hana Mandlikova in 1981. Few grand slam champions have taken a similar path to Krejickova. Despite reaching No 1 in doubles, winning five women's and mixed doubles grand slam titles and therefore being well known for years, the 25-year-old spent the first nine years of her career outside of the top 100 in singles, including six years stuck in the limbo of the 101-200 ranking spots. "It's something I've always dreamed about," she said. "Winning here my first grand slam doubles title [in 2018], then winning the mixed ones. Now, I was just telling myself it would be really nice if I could get a grand slam in all three categories. I cannot believe it, now it's happening." Having triumphed with craftiness, delicate hands and a vast array of shots, she stands as a reminder of all of the talent that exists outside of the top events, so much of which simply needs the right time and circumstances to thrive. After making two double faults in the tense opening game to lose her serve immediately, Krejickova's game began to flow and she was in full control, weaving her web as she dragged her Russian opponent around the court with her arsenal of angles, sharply redirected backhands and drop shots. From 0-1 down, Krejickova breezed through six games in a row to take the set 6-1. Pavlyuchenkova had been flattened for a set, but after nailing a brilliant forehand drive volley to save break point in the opening game of the second set, she came alive. Throughout the set, she dictated and demonstrated all of her prodigious ball-striking talent as her wondrous backhand

began to sing. After sealing two decisive games with wicked backhand winners, she served for the set at 5-1. As she served out the set, Pavlyuchenkova pulled up with an injury in her left leg. She lost her service game and then took a medical timeout, amusingly easing the pain while she received a massage by snacking on some Haribo gold bears. When she emerged, she had no choice but to minimise her movement and attack, nailing a gutsy cross-court backhand winner to take the set. Both had played excellent tennis in parts, but as the third set began it remained to be seen who would snatch the opportunity. Krejickova did. At the most important intersection of her singles career, the score 3-3, she fearlessly stood on top of the baseline, directing Pavlyuchenkova from side to side. She closed off the game with consecutive winners, backhand and forehand, and soon led 5-3, 15-40 on Pavlyuchenkova's serve. The Russian scuppered both break points and held. This could have been the moment that things fell apart. But throughout this long two-week journey, Krejickova has continually demonstrated her toughness under furious pressure. She did so again by shaking off her nerves to serve out the title. Afterwards, a battered and bruised Pavlyuchenkova reflected on her own progress as she banished many demons by finally passing the quarter-final stage: "I didn't expect that this tournament I'll be in the final," she said. "Again I tell you, physically I wasn't feeling super great, like ready 100%. Still, because of fighting and believing, you can still achieve it." Krejickova is now on a 12-match winning streak after clinching her maiden WTA title the week before the French Open and will be ranked No 15, and the week is still not over. She will play in the doubles final alongside her longtime partner, Katerina Siniakova, as she attempts to become the first player since Mary Pierce in 2000 to do the double in Paris.

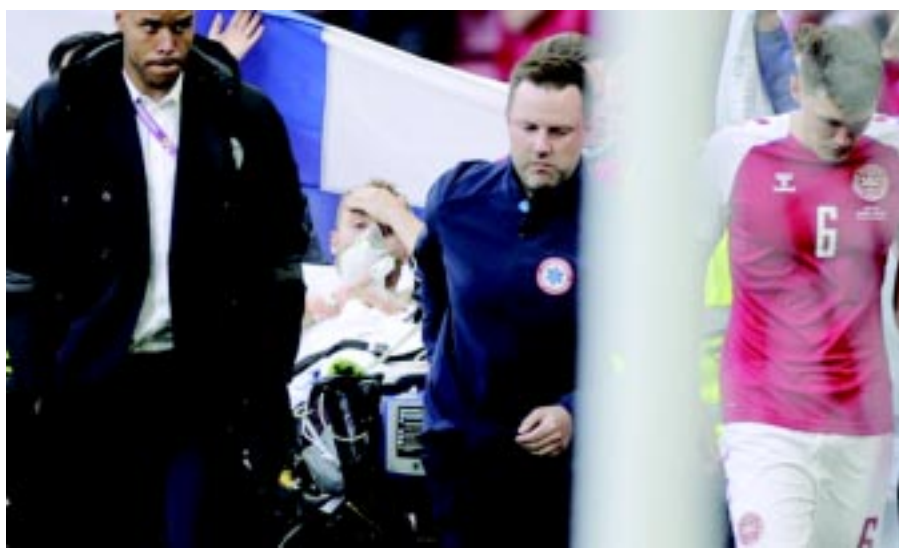
Mack Horton's Olympic title defence turns to dust after failing to qualify

London, June 13 : Mack Horton won't defend his Olympic 400m freestyle title in Tokyo after failing to make the Australian team for the event. Horton finished third in the final at Australia's selection trials in Adelaide on Saturday night. Only the top two - Elijah Winnington and Jack McLoughlin - earned selection for next month's Tokyo Olympics. The opening night of the trials featured Australian records to Emma McKeon (100m butterfly) and Brendon Smith (400m individual medley). But Horton was unable to secure selection at the South Australian Aquatic Centre despite coming almost two-and-a-half seconds inside the qualifying time. Winnington won in three minutes and 42.65 seconds ahead of McLoughlin (3:43.27). Horton, who clocked 3:43.92, is still a chance to earn selection in the 200m freestyle, to be

contested Sunday. Earlier, McKeon broke her own national 100m butterfly record and was on world-record pace until fading in the last five metres. The multi-talented swimmer, who could race as many as eight events in Tokyo, won in 55.93 seconds, bettering her previous Australian record of 56.18. Swede Sarah Sjöström holds the world record (55.48), and McKeon had no idea she was close to that benchmark. "That gives me confidence," she said. "It's significantly faster than what I have been going for the last four years." McKeon, who won four medals - gold and two silvers in relays and a bronze in the 200m freestyle - at the 2016 Rio Olympics, said she was benefiting from the Tokyo Games being postponed a year because of the coronavirus pandemic. "Having that extra year definitely helped."

Christian Eriksen given chest compressions after he collapsed

London, June 13 : Danish international footballer Christian Eriksen was given chest compressions by medics during the Euro 2020 clash against Finland in Copenhagen on Saturday. Eriksen, 29, collapsed face first into the pitch while running to collect a throw-in with no other player near him. His teammates and Finnish players nearby quickly signalled to English referee Anthony Taylor that Eriksen, a former Tottenham Hotspur favourite, needed urgent medical attention. The doctors ran over to Eriksen and, as it became apparent just how serious the situation was, the 16,000-strong crowd in the stadium fell silent. The Finnish midfielder Joel Pohjanpalo had his head in his hands in distress. Thomas Delaney, the Danish midfielder, used his shirt to wipe tears from his eyes. The Denmark players, stepping back to allow the medics access, formed a shield around Eriksen to allow him and the tending medics privacy. A stadium announcer asked fans to stay in their seats until further information could be provided. Eriksen's partner emerged on the pitch where she was consoled by Denmark captain Simon Kjær and goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel. Both teams subsequently left the field with officials holding up sheets to hide the stricken player from view. Eriksen was given treatment for about 10 minutes before being carried off on a stretcher. A Reuters photographer reported seeing Eriksen raise his hand as he was carried away. Experts said the Parken stadium is very close to the Rigshospitalet, one of Denmark's top cardiac units. In a statement Uefa said the player had been "stabilised". The news that Eriksen had been taken to hospital was greeted by the crowd chanting his name - Finnish fans chanted "Christian", while their Danish counterparts replied "Eriksen". The Danish Football Association said later the player was "awake and waiting for more tests". Uefa announced the match had been suspended pending a meeting with



ers and officials. The Football Association released a statement, which read: "Our thoughts this evening are with Christian Eriksen and his family, and all connected with the Danish Football Union." The Welsh FA said their players and staff were "all praying" for Eriksen. Dozens of current and former players posted messages of support for the player, including his Internazionale teammate Achraf Hakimi. "Eriksen Please," tweeted the Moroccan international. Others posting similar tweets for the Denmark midfielder include former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher and Manchester United's former defender Gary Neville as well as current England and Aston

villa forward Jack Grealish. Former Bolton Wanderers midfielder, Fabrice Muamba who collapsed after suffering a heart attack, said poignantly on social media: "Please God." Muamba, whose heart stopped beating for more than an hour, was revived and eventually recovered in hospital after a cardiac specialist in the Spurs crowd ran on to the pitch to assist. David Lammy, the Labour MP for Tottenham and shadow justice secretary, tweeted: "Prayers and thoughts for Danish and Spurs Legend Christian Eriksen. 'We are all rooting for you brother.' A spokesperson for the BBC issued an apology after pictures of Eriksen were broadcast while he received treatment."

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