

# The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Illegally stored fuel

**Guwahati, June 14 :** The Assam police has recovered a huge quantity of illegally stored fuel and stolen iron pillars from Rajabari under Bokakhat Police Station in Assam's Golaghat district. Three persons were also arrested in connection to this. The police had conducted a raid in the area on Sunday and seized about 2,500 litres of diesel, 63 iron pillars and an oil tanker. The accused are being interrogated, said sources. Meanwhile, the police also seized 285 bottles of Indian made foreign liquor along with 3,587 litres of country made liquor from different parts of the district during a raid conducted on Sunday. Three persons were apprehended in this connection. The police also destroyed the seized country liquor.

### 5 sent to jail

**Tinsukia, June :** The police have intensified its investigation into the lynching of a man by an unruly mob at a village in Assam's Tinsukia district. The police have arrested nine persons in connection with the case thus far, five of whom have been sent to jail and four others to police custody for further interrogation. Sarat Moran, a 28-year-old man, was brutally thrashed to death by a mob on mere suspicion of being a cattle thief. The incident took place at Korjonga Borpathar village under Baghjan police station in Tinsukia district on Saturday. Moran was a resident of Kordoguri village in Assam's Tinsukia district. He died at the hospital. The mob allegedly tied the man and started beating him black and blue, suspecting him to be a cow thief.

### Cough syrups seized

**Guwahati, June 14 :** The Assam police has seized 170 bottles of the Codeine cough syrup from Baihata Chariali in Kamrup district. The police conducted a drive against drugs at Baihata Chariali on Sunday during which the banned cough syrup was seized. Police sources said that they will continue the drive against narcotics in the state to root out the drug menace. On the other hand, the Assam police recently seized 1 lakh bags of rice of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) from a private godown at Chhatatabari in Kamrup district. The bags were seized from the godown of a private company located in the Chhaygaon Industrial Area at Chhatatabari during a joint operation conducted by the Assam police in collaboration with the Kamrup district administration. The private company was reportedly shipping the FCI rice to different places including Meghalaya after repackaging it in their brand name.

## The Assam government has started withdrawing Covid restrictions



**Guwahati, June 14 :** The Assam government has started withdrawing Covid restrictions even before June 15 - after which some districts are likely to be allowed to function with little restrictions. All state government employees, who have received the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, have been asked to attend office from Monday. "In order to ensure smooth functioning of government offices, all 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 by following all Covid-related protocols issued by the government," said an order issued by commissioner and secretary to the Assam general administration department, MS Manivannan. The state government may soon withdraw Covid-19 restrictions from several districts which have shown significant decline in the number of new Covid cases. Assam health minister Keshab Mahanta told the media here on Sunday the chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will take a final call after assessing the district-wise Covid scenario. "Our target is to ease the restrictions wherever the Covid situation has improved. Hopefully the chief minister will give his decision soon," Mahanta said. He informed that

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## Global Naga Forum writes to CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

**Guwahati, June 14 :** The Global Naga Forum (GNF) has sought off a letter to Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday seeking him to take note of the history of the Rengma Nagas in Assam even as he works with the proposed Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council (KAATC). "Our fer-



vent hope is that the past sidelining of the historical and political rights of the Rengmas stays in the past, not to be repeated in the present and future," the letter said. The letter signed by GNF convener Chuba Ozukum and co-convener Dr. Rosemary Dzuvichu drew the attention of Sarma to the

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## One Nation One Ration Card to benefit migrants : Centre to Supreme Court

**New Delhi, June 14 :** The central government on Monday (June 14) told the Supreme Court that the 'One Nation One Ration Card' plan would benefit migrants

their existing ration card with biometric authentication, adding that the plan would make food security "portable". The Centre said it is committed to making

States/UTs have been advised through the communications dated May 20, 2021, and May 25, 2021, to avail their requirements of foodgrains through the mentioned schemes, to provide foodgrains to those who are not covered under the NFSA including migrants/stranded migrants, as per locally assessed requirements," the affidavit of the Centre stated. The court was hearing a case relating to the problems faced by migrants during the lockdown. The court last week had observed that all states must implement the One Nation One Ration Card scheme, irrespective of the place where their ration card is registered. "Although the facility of ONORC shall equally benefit all 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries to lift their foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of choice, but it primarily aims to enable

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by providing them access to foodgrains from any fair price shop anywhere in the country. It said that the migrants will be able to use

sufficient foodgrains available to the states at highly subsidised prices, which would help aid them during the COVID-19 crisis. "All the

## AIADMK expels 16 party members for colluding with VK Sasikala

**Chennai, June 14 :** The AIADMK on Monday (June 14) expelled 16 party members including its spokesperson V Pugazhendhi for allegedly colluding with ousted leader VK Sasikala, who has signaled her return to

politics. The party sacked the members who interacted with Sasikala, charging them with anti-party activities. In a statement, AIADMK termed Sasikala's telephonic conversations with party cadre as "drama" and said the party will never destroy itself for the desires of one family. This comes after an audio clip of a phone conversation between Sasikala and one of the party cadres went viral on social media, in which the leader was heard confirming her plans of her return into politics. "Do not worry, I will surely sort out the party things. All be brave, ok. Once

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## Chief Minister holds meeting with three Power Companies

Asks Power Companies to reverse dip in revenue generation; stop power theft and reduce T&D loss

**Guwahati, June 14 :** Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today chaired a meeting with the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), Assam Power Generation Corporation Limited (APGCL) and Assam Electricity Grid Corporation Limited (AEGCL), asked the companies to design modalities for increasing their revenue generation and profits including quality service delivery to the consumers. Holding the meeting with the top functionaries of the three companies at Bijulee Bhawan here today, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma advocated for linking the revenue collection with promotion of qualitative performance and active service delivery



system to the consumers. Expressing his concern over dip in revenue collection and consequent loss, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma asked the Power Companies to work on strategies to plug the reasons responsible for revenue loss. He also asked the power companies to be innovative and look for ways to increase the revenue earnings and profits.

Chief Minister Dr. Sarma while calling attention to everybody during the meeting, stated that some fraudulent consumers adopted dubious methods to save electricity bills causing huge loss of revenue to APDCL. To recover this loss and to pay for power purchase, APDCL is compelled to approach to Assam

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## Students from Assam have moved to the Supreme Court of India seeking cancellation of the board examinations.



**Guwahati, June 14 :** Students from Assam have moved to the Supreme Court of India seeking cancellation of the High School Leaving Certification Examination (HSLC or Class 10) and Higher Secondary (Class 12) board examinations. The plea filed by a group of students states that they are being compelled to appear in the HSLC and HS exams amid a threat to their life. The petition

says: "In the interest of the safety of lakhs of students and their parents it is better to cancel the exams." The Assam government on June 10 said exams will be conducted only if the COVID-19 positivity rate drops below 2 per cent. The two education boards - Board of Secondary Education Assam (SEBA) and the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council

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## Elderly adversely affected by COVID-19, only 19% have health insurance: IIT study

**Chennai, June 14 :** A study by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras has underlined the need for greater government investment in public healthcare to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the elderly. It suggests that the elderly are bound to be adversely affected by COVID-19 norms such as physical distancing, isolation, which can lead to depression and other

issues. According to the study, diabetes, blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases are common in the elderly and those in the lower socio-economic strata suffer more. Mobility issues, dependence on the younger generation amid lockdown etc. affect their access to routine primary healthcare and essential care for other ailments. "Only 18.9% of the elderly had health insurance



and therefore may not be able to bear large expenditure

on health. 27.5% of people aged 80 years or above are immobile and 70% of elders are partially or wholly financially dependent on others" said the study based on the 75th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) 2017-18. Undertaken by Prof V.R. Muraleedharan, Dept of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Madras, and Dr Alok Ranjan, Assistant Prof, Dept of Humanities & Social Sciences at IIT Jodhpur, the NSS survey covered 113,823 households

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## Assam Governor to temporarily shift to Koinadhora



**Guwahati, June 14 :** A prime address in Guwahati for over a decade during Tarun Gogoi's tenure as Assam chief minister, Koinadhora will now have a new resident. Reconstruction and repairs works are in full swing at the Koinadhora premises near Khanapara to accommodate Assam Governor Professor Jagdish Mukhi. The governor house is under maintenance and reconstruction, and so,

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## Assam Artist's Sushant Singh Rajput Image Using 31,000 Nails

**Guwahati, June 14 :** A young artist from Assam's Chirang district has created an image of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput using 31,000 nails to mark his first death anniversary. The artist, a Sushant Rajput fan, called it his tribute to the actor who was found dead at his Mumbai home last year. Saurav Mondal took eight days to complete the image and spent five hours a day setting the nails. Mr Mondal had earlier set a record as an exceptional artist by drawing portraits of Netaji

Subhash Chandra Bose and legendary singer Bhupen Hazarika using his mouth. He took just 7 minutes 55 seconds to make both. Saurav's interest for art began in his childhood. He wanted to be an artist but he had to give up his passion midway after passing school. His name was registered in the Indian Book of Records on December 24. He got a certificate and a medal. He was also invited by the World Records University in the UK to pursue a doctorate

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# Rishi Sunak's billionaire in-laws hit with £5.5m bill in Amazon India tax dispute

**London, June 14** :A joint venture between Rishi Sunak's billionaire in-laws and the internet retailing giant Amazon is in a multimillion-pound dispute with the Indian tax authorities, a Guardian investigation has found. The disclosure adds to the list of legal battles currently involving the joint venture, following news on Friday that India's competition commission has been given permission to relaunch an investigation into Amazon. Small traders claim they are being squeezed out of business by the multinational's selling practices and that the US retailer's £1bn-a-year venture with the chancellor's father-in-law, the technology entrepreneur NR Narayana Murthy, could be bypassing Indian foreign ownership rules. Amazon says it is operating in full compliance with local laws. The emergence of the tax case follows last week's G7 discussions, when the finance

can anyone else compete locally, especially when Cloutail is essentially a box for Amazon's trillion-dollar machine?" Sunak is said to be the UK's richest member of parliament, a wealth largely thought to be derived from the family of his wife, Akshata. Her father, Murthy, founded the tech services firm Infosys and is said to be worth \$3.6bn by the US business magazine Forbes. Murthy also created the venture capital firm Catamaran, a trustee of the Hober Mallow Trust, which ultimately owns the stake in Cloutail and whose beneficiaries are Sunak's parents in-law, the company said. Rashmi Das, an author specialising in Indian e-commerce, said: "The whole structure raises questions if Cloutail is really an asset of Amazon - and if the Murthys are the name lenders. The exact detail of the deal will only be known if the investigation agencies seek details of

India, while both Jindal and Sahay left Cloutail and Prione this spring to return to Amazon in new director roles, according to their LinkedIn profiles. In its letter to the ministry, CAIT said: "Even though Murthy holds the majority of shares, he has allowed the (so-called) former employees of Amazon on the driver's seat of both Cloutail and Prione ... The role of Murthy requires appropriate investigation." CAIT said it continues to press for the ministry to investigate, while Amazon also faces two potential inquiries by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). On Friday, the commission was given permission by a judge to relaunch an investigation into Amazon's selling practices, which will include Cloutail. Meanwhile, the CCI is considering whether a second complaint against Amazon and Cloutail should be investigated. A spokeswoman for Prione, Cloutail, Catamaran and the Murthys said: "Cloutail has not violated any law and is in full compliance with the law of the land in letter and in spirit. The Murthy family has put in the required equity capital in Prione [parent company of Cloutail], commensurate with its shareholding. The allegations are baseless and incorrect. Sign up to the daily Business Today email or follow Guardian Business on Twitter at @BusinessDesk." Cloutail is an independent company that makes business decisions to protect its interests. Cloutail is governed by a board of directors. Catamaran has [a] majority of the directors and therefore controls the board. The members on the board from Catamaran are high-quality professionals with extensive business experience. The details of the decisions and deliberations of the board of Cloutail are minuted and available for inspection by the relevant Indian authorities." A spokeswoman for Amazon said: "Amazon in India has always been fully compliant with all Indian laws. Specifically, our joint venture with Catamaran, as well as our marketplace operations, are in compliance with Indian [foreign direct investment] laws, and that includes Cloutail as a seller." A Treasury spokeswoman said: "Reaching an international agreement on how large digital companies are taxed has been a priority for the chancellor since he took office." The chancellor's consistent position has been that it matters where tax is paid, and any agreement must ensure digital businesses pay tax in the UK that reflects their economic activities. That is what our taxpayers would expect and is the right thing."



ministers of the world's largest economies agreed a global deal designed to make tech companies pay more tax. In India, foreign companies are banned from running an online retailer that holds inventory and then sells the goods directly to Indian consumers online. So, instead, the Amazon.in website is run as a "marketplace", with Indian retailers selling their products via the site in return for a fee to the US giant. One of the largest sellers on Amazon.in is a company called Cloutail, a business indirectly 76%-owned by an investment firm controlled by the Murthy family. The remaining quarter of Cloutail is owned by Amazon. An analysis of the company's accounts and activities by the Guardian shows that Cloutail: Cloutail's most recent accounts state: "The company has received a show cause notice in the current year from Directorate General of Goods and Service Tax Intelligence amounting to INR 5,455 lakhs (£5.5m) along with interest and penalties for service tax-related matters." It is not known precisely what the tax dispute is about. The company said it was contesting the bill, and added: "Since this matter is sub judice, we are unable to comment any further." The annual report further reveals that Cloutail - which only sells via the Amazon platform - paid Amazon fees of £95m last year, almost 10 times more than the Indian business reported in profit. An analysis of Cloutail's accounts conducted for the Guardian by the Fair Tax Foundation also found that "corporation tax contributions are meagre", with £830,000 paid in tax per annum compared with £798m of revenue when averaged over the past four years. In its last financial year, Cloutail paid around £3.4m in cash taxes on revenues of £1.1bn. Paul Monaghan, chief executive of the Fair Tax Foundation, added: "Cloutail's business model would seem to be the same as Amazon's across the globe, but on steroids. We are seeing the usual rapid growth in revenue, but the profit margins are wafer-thin at 0.3% over the last four years - it's practically being operated at cost. How on earth

their shareholder agreements." The Guardian understands that the shareholder agreements between Amazon and Catamaran give the US company the option of buying Cloutail, if Indian foreign direct investment law changes. The clause could land the Murthy family a huge windfall. The questions around the control of Cloutail also prompted the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) to ask the minister of commerce in February to investigate the joint venture to discover why its key personnel have typically joined from Amazon. Former Amazon executives on the joint venture's boards have included: Sandeep Varaganti, chief executive of Prione since April 2018; Rajesh Jindal, finance chief of Prione and Cloutail from September 2018 to March 2021; Sumit Sahay, Cloutail chief executive between February 2017 and April 2021; and Ranjit Babu, Cloutail chief executive since April 2021. All previously held either director or senior manager positions at Amazon

## Christchurch attacks: producer resigns from film They Are Us as criticism grows

**London, June 14** : A producer for a controversial Hollywood film depicting Jacinda Ardern's response to the Christchurch terror attacks has resigned from the project after criticisms that it sidelined Muslim victims. The premise of the film, They Are Us, has also been criticised by its proposed subject, New Zealand prime minister Ardern, who is slated to be played by Rose Byrne. Ardern said on Sunday it felt "very soon and very raw" for New Zealand, and that she was not an appropriate focus for a film about the 2019 mosque attacks. "There are plenty of stories from March 15 that could be told, but I don't consider mine to be one of them," she said. Ardern has reiterated that she has no involvement with the film. The movie was announced by the Hollywood Reporter on Friday, and billed as an "inspirational story about the young leader's response to the tragic events". It immediately came under fire for centring on the leadership of a white woman against the backdrop of the mass murder of 51



Muslims by a white supremacist. Many Muslim New Zealanders criticised the move as "exploitative", "insensitive", and "obscene". A petition to shut down the film's production has gained about 60,000 signatures over the past three days. On Monday, New Zealand producer Philippa Campbell announced that she was resigning from the proposed production. "I've listened to the concerns raised over recent days and I have heard the strength of people's views. I now agree that the events of March 15, 2019 are too raw for film at this time and do not wish to be involved with a project that is causing such distress," she said in a statement released to media. "The announcement was focused on film business, and did not take enough account of the political and human context of the story in this country. It's the complexity of that context I've been reflecting on that has led me to this decision." When the film was announced on Friday, writer and community advocate Guled Mire told the Guardian that the premise was "completely insensitive".



People participate in a dragon boat racing at Qutzi Cultural Park in Miluo City, central China's Hunan Province



Visitors take photos in a lavender farm in Huocheng County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

## Grenfell survivors accuse government of fire safety 'Russian roulette'

**London, June 14** : Survivors of the Grenfell Tower disaster have accused the government of playing "Russian roulette" by failing to fix hundreds of thousands of high-rise homes with similar fire safety defects. Before Monday's fourth anniversary of the fire, Ed Daffarn, a 16th-floor resident, said: "This stuff still littering this country is a recipe for disaster and they can't say they haven't been warned ... If they don't get this stuff off the buildings there will be another Grenfell." Daffarn predicted the 14 June 2017 blaze at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea council block in a community blog eight months earlier

fire that claimed 72 lives by lighting up churches around London in a green glow. There is rising frustration that no one has yet been held civilly or criminally accountable for the disaster and that the government has stalled reform of rights for social housing tenants. "I am incredibly angry we're still in this situation," said Karim Mussilhy of the families group Grenfell United, who lost his uncle Hesham Rahman in the fire. "The fact we are still having to campaign says it all. We are having to campaign for people to be safe in their homes and for better treatment for social housing tenants. Everything has to be fought for." The public inquiry

has in the last year revealed that cladding a n d insulation manufacturers were aware of the risks posed by the materials used on Grenfell but continued to market them. It heard that the council's builders had described tenants who raised concerns about the works as "rebel residents". But the inquiry is not likely to conclude until next year and police investigating possible offences including manslaughter will not formally ask prosecutors for charging decisions until after it has delivered its final report. So far only one arrest has been announced - of an unnamed 38-year-old man in Sussex on suspicion of perverting the course of justice, since released under investigation. "Four years on I fear that those responsible for the fire are going to get away with murder," said Nabil Choucair, who lost six members of his family in the fire. "It's a shame that the public inquiry cannot be stopped and the criminal investigation is completed and prosecutions put in place immediately." Yvette Williams, a spokesperson for the Justice4Grenfell group, which represents bereaved people and the wider community, said: "Not only is there still no clear sense of who is accountable ... but people still have to live in properties deemed unsafe due to cladding of the same kind used on Grenfell Tower." Grenfell United said there was still a "cycle of inaction and indifference". "We hear more damning evidence every week at the public inquiry showing us just how preventable the fire was - had they listened," it said. "Yet four years on, the government is as determined as ever to avoid taking any meaningful action to prevent another Grenfell." In May the government omitted a bill to reform social housing, including the treatment of resident complaints, from the Queen's speech. It said it would "continue to develop reform of social housing regulations and look to legislate as soon as practicable". It was supposed to enshrine in law proposals that the housing secretary promised in November 2020 would give tenants "a much stronger voice and, in doing so, [refocus] the sector on its social mission". The Grenfell community feels a close affinity to the Hillsborough families, whose own 32-year fight for justice came to a bitter close last month with the acquittal of two police officers. "If Hillsborough is to mean anything it means families shouldn't have to fight for three decades to get some kind of justice or closure," said Daffarn. "We have to begin to fear that with no criminal prosecutions in sight, with no meaningful change to social housing, how long are we going to have to wait and what legacy will be delivered in the end?" A government spokesperson said: "We are bringing forward the biggest improvements to building safety in 40 years through our building safety bill and an unprecedented £5bn funding package to ensure residents are safe, alongside important new measures to improve the quality of social housing for residents. Work is already complete or under way in the vast majority of high-rise buildings with unsafe ACM cladding."



that warned: "Only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord." Last month a fire in an east London block still fitted with Grenfell-style aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding caused three people to be hospitalised and dozens treated for smoke inhalation. It spread rapidly up three floors via wooden balconies, whose removal had been delayed by a dispute between the builder and leaseholders over who should pay. Latest government figures show that 217 of the high-rise residential buildings found to have ACM cladding have still not been completely fixed, with works yet to start at all on 36 blocks. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands more flats have left leaseholders facing bills of up to £100,000 each. The government has made £5bn available to help, but MPs estimate the bill is three times higher. The bereaved and survivors will mark Monday's anniversary of the

Justice4Grenfell group, which

No.KDB/BTC/(14 <sup>th</sup> Finance)/NIT-12/2019-20/11461						Dated: 11/06/2021	
SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER							
Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty Five Paise) only with a validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the APWD's printed F-2 forms are invited from the registered contractors of class-II and class-I(A,B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the following works under 14 <sup>th</sup> FC "Excluded Areas" for the year 2018-19 during 2019-2020. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 1.00 P.M. on 25.06.2021 and will be opened on the same date & place at 1.30 P.M.							
Sl. No.	Name of Work	Tender Value	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Paper	Time of Completion	Remarks	
1.	Const. of pavement road with middle drain from near Oil pipe line to Swrang Basumatary Land at Somainapur PM road.	Rs.39,64,909/-	Rs.40,000/- (1% for ST,SC & OBC) & Rs.80,000/- (2% for Gen)	Rs.1200/-	4 Months		
2.	Const. of CC pavement road with a covering RCC drain from Surjya Bargayary to BRPL colony at Sudempuri village.	Rs.48,57,015/-	Rs.49,000/- (1% for ST,SC & OBC) & Rs.98,000/- (2% for Gen)	Rs.1470/-	4 Months		
Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender Papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 16-06-2021 to 24-06-2021 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft /Bankers Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, Payable at Kokrajhar. The Contractor should submit attested copy of latest Registration Certificate, GST Labour License, PAN Card, etc along with the tender. In case office remains closed on tender issuing/receiving/opening date the same will be issued/received/opened on the next working day without further notification. The successful Tenderer has to be submitted 1% (One P/C in case ST/SC/OBC/MOBC) and 2% (Two P/C in case of General) S.D. money against the work in the form of FDR/Bankers Cheque /Demand Draft from any nationalized Bank duly pledge to the Block Development Officer, Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri as mentioned above at the time of allotment of work. After the Tender the Comparative Statement and the Tender papers alongwith other relevant papers will be forwarded to the Director, P&RD, BTC for his kind approval. The Director P&RD, Kokrajhar reserves the right of accepting of tenders paper or outright rejection of the same without assigning any reason thereof.							
						Sd/- Block Development Officer, Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri.	
IPR(BTC)-57/2021							



## Minister Suklabaidya reviews status of Orang National Park

Amenities will be ramped up to increase inflow of tourists

**Guwahati, June 14 :** Minister for Environment and Forest, Parimal Suklabaidya reviewed the status of Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park and creation of infrastructure to increase tourists' inflow. Reviewing the various issues of the national park at a meeting with senior officials of the forest department and DFO, Orang National Park at the conference hall inside the park premises on Monday, Minister Suklabaidya asked the officials to explore every possible avenue to build environment friendly infrastructure so that tourists can put up in the park. "To attract tourists, amenities have to be created, including accommodation inside the park premises," he said, adding that the park with rich flora and fauna would be able to draw tourists in hordes. He directed the officials to come up with eco-friendly structures for tourists' stay. The meeting mulled plans to set up eco friendly pre-fabricated guest house in the land that have come up at the contact point of Dhansiri river on the western side of the park. In this context, Suklabaidya asked the DFO and the Darrang social forestry division to go in for plantation in the new buffer areas that have been added to the park. The Minister said that he along with senior officials of the department would take up the matter with ATDC for setting up guest houses for tourists in and around the park. The issue of encroachment also figured in the meeting. DFO, Sandip Kumar apprised the minister that 15 to 20 families have been served notice to vacate the park land and they would move out shortly. Kumar said the tender process for the bridge inside the park will be completed soon. The Minister while appreciating the initiative to set up anti-poaching camps with towers asked the DFO Kumar to ensure that no poaching takes place in the national park. Presently, there are 40 anti poaching camps with eight watch towers covering an area of 79.28 sq km. Suklabaidya also reviewed the preparedness of the park authorities to deal with impending floods. He asked them to be in vigil and to rescue the wild animals from flood water. DFO Kumar informed that 50 per cent of the park consists of highlands, most of the animals take shelter there and the number of casualty is less. Two speed boats, two motorised boats and 30 country boats are ready to be pressed into rescue operation of wildlife during flooding. PCCF and HoFF, AM Singh and PCCF (Wildlife) Amit Sahai assured the DFO that logistic support would be provided to ramp up the infrastructure in the park to attract tourists. The top officials asked the DFO to free the park from encroachment and to initiate confidence building measures with the local people. They underscored the need for taking steps to ensure livelihoods for the people living in the fringe areas of the park. Sahai asked the DFO to send batch of 15 frontline staff in the age group of 30 to 35 to Mandakata for training in modern weaponry. He directed the DFO to provide deworming medicine as most animals are affected during the monsoon season. The top officials said ex gratia will be sent through DBT to the kith of those killed by elephants immediately. They said the department has prepared a cabinet note following the announcement made by the Chief Minister to raise the ration allowance to front line personnel to Rs.2,000. The Minister also reviewed forest related matters to officials of Darrang district, including creation of new sand mahals along the Dhansiri river after a proper survey. He also reviewed the activities of social forestry division, including plantation of saplings. Officials informed the Minister that 10,000 saplings will be planted and more than 1 lakh saplings are available in the nurseries. The meeting was attended by MLA, Ganesh Limbu, former MLA, Gurujyoti Das, CCF, Hemkanta Talukdar and forest officials of Sonitpur and Darrang districts. The Orang National Park, also a tiger reserve is home to 29 Royal Bengal Tigers (as in 2017), 101 rhinos (as in 2018), deer, pythons and other animals.

## BNI Guwahati launches BNI Greater Assam



**Guwahati, June 14 :** BNI Guwahati launched BNI Greater Assam for the benefit of businessmen and professionals located outside Guwahati. Till now, BNI's presence in Assam was limited to Guwahati only. Now, the business owners of other cities of Assam will also be able to be a part of BNI – the world's best network organization. At the outset, new chapters are being

opened at Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Silchar, Nagaon, Tezpur, Bongaigaon & Shivasagar. Gradually, the chapters will also be opened in other places. The grand online event was graced by Mr Bimal Samal, the District Director of BNI India, Siddharth Garodia, the Executive Director of BNI Guwahati and other members of BNI Guwahati. Business Network International (BNI) is the world's leading 'referral organization' with over 270,000+ members in 10,000+ chapters in over 74 countries worldwide. Members meet weekly to discuss business and support each other's businesses by sharing referrals. On this occasion, a virtual "Talent Hunt Program" with participants from various BNI chapters of Guwahati was also held. The event was truly a night of fun, excitement, and fascination. The performances included singing, music, dance, rap, song, and mimicry by BNI members.

## NRL dedicates 120 Bedded COVID-19 Care Facilities with 20 bedded ICU at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital

**Guwahati, June 14 :** Numaligarh Refinery limited (NRL) has dedicated a full-fledged 120 bedded Covid Care hospital with a 20 bedded ICU facility at Jorhat Medical College & Hospital as a part of its continued support to the Govt. of Assam in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The facility is expected to contribute in providing Covid-19 medical care to the public of Upper Assam as Jorhat is centrally accessible to people of three adjacent districts - Jorhat, Golaghat and Sivasagar. The facility was inaugu-



rated today by NRL MD - Shri S.K. Barua and of MP, Lok Sabha - Shri Topon Kumar Gogoi in the distin-

guished presence; MP, Rajya Sabha - Shri Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, MLA Jorhat - Shri Hitendra Nath

Goswami, DC Jorhat - Shri Ashok Kumar Barman and NRL Director Technical - Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan in Jorhat. Developed at a total cost of around Rs. 7 crore, the COVID Centre is equipped with 100 beds, 20 ICU beds, cardiac monitors, ventila-

tors, nebulizers, oximeters, oxygen concentrators and other furniture items such as bed side trolley, locker, wheelchair etc. The project was completed onwar footing by a task force deputed from NRL with unstinted support from Jorhat District Authority and the Department of Health Services, Govt. of Assam. In addition to building this facility, NRL is extending financial assistance for ICU technicians for a period of 6 months and is also renovating another building to be used as duty room for doctors and COVID wards.

## World Blood Donors Day observed in Hojai



**Hojai, June 14:** Under the aegis of National Medicos Organisation (NMO), Guwahati and in association with Seva Bharati Purvanchal and Hedgewar Samarak Samity, Guwahati jointly, a voluntary Blood Donation camp was organised on the occasion of 'World

Blood Donors Day' at Geeta-ashram campus in Hojai on Monday. Around 20 Units of blood was donated in the camp. Earlier, before the beginning of the camp, a detail deliberation was given on the significance of blood donation. During the programme, social

distancing and hygiene protocol was strictly followed. "NMO is an voluntary organisation, which has been organising health camps, blood donation camps, free medical consultation camps at regular intervals at different parts of the State.," a NMO member informed. Talking to the reporters, Local Legislator Ramkrishna Ghosh said this occasion is like festival. He said such camps are inspiration for others to come forward and donate blood. "Blood donation is biggest donation one can give to the society", said Ashok Kejriwal, Working President, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hojai District Committee. He urged everyone to come forward and donate blood, which can save many life's. On this occasion, Hojai Nagar Sangh Chalak Dr. GC Das, Zila Seva Pramukh Ullasan Kunur and many other dignitaries marked their presence.



Meghalaya- PWD road bad condition

## World Blood Donor Day observed at Narangi Anchlik Mahavidyalaya

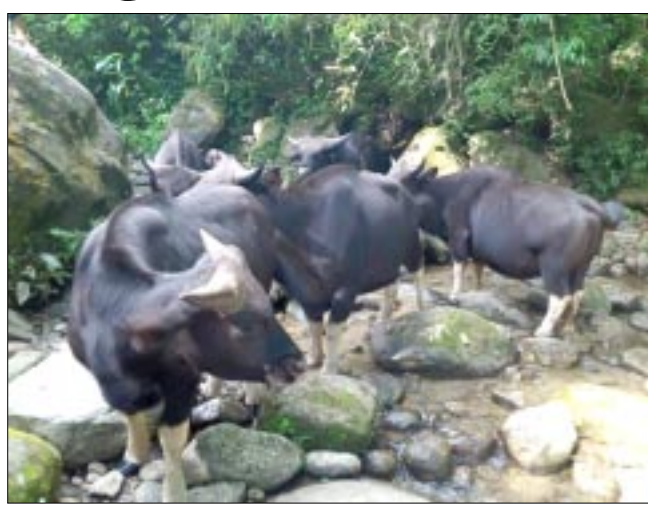
**Guwahati, June 14 :** World Blood Donor Day was organised by Narangi Anchlik Mahavidyalaya NSS Unit in association with Gauhati University NSS Cell on the theme " Give blood and keep the world beating" through a national webinar today on 14th June. Welcoming the guest and participants Mrs Reeta Dutta Hazarika, Principal, Narangi Anchlik Mahavidyalaya said that blood donation is a noble cause and every eligible donor should donate blood. Dr. Ranjan Kr Kakati, Director, Students' Welfare & Programme Coordinator, NSS, Gauhati University Inaugurated the national webinar and in his speech said that everybody should spread awareness about blood donation and need for the safe blood and blood products. Dr Kakati further said during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, blood and plasma donations have managed to save many lives and given hope to people suffering from the virus. Attending as chief guest Sri Dipak Kumar, Regional Director, NSS, NER, Guwahati said that everybody should encourage youth to embrace the humanitarian call to donate blood and inspire others to do the same to boost up national health system. Resource person of the webinar Dr. Kasturi Kalita, In-Charge, blood bank & Transfusion service, Excelcare Hospitals, Guwahati enlightened different positive aspects and technical issues relating to blood donation. Dr Kalita further said every after 90 days a healthy person may donate blood and a single donor saves life of three persons at a time. Dr Lakhimi Gogoi, NSS, PO, NAM coordinated the programme and offered vote of thanks. About 250 participants from different parts of India participated the webinar. Also, Gauhati University NSS Cell has been taking initiative to prepare a database of voluntary blood donors among NSS Programme Officers and volunteers and during the day many volunteers have donated blood in MMC hospital and in their nearby hospitals.

## Humanity Still Exists : Aged Person Comes Forward to Help Covid Patients

**Golaghat, Jun 14:** An aged person who is above the age of sixty years has come up to offer a helping hand to the Covid patients who are undergoing treatment in Covid Hospital. Kailash Agarwalla, a senior citizen and social worker from Titabor in Jorhat has been providing food for the Covid patients. After Jorhat and his hometown Titabor Kailash Agarwalla today visited the Covid Hospital located in the premises of Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital in Golaghat and offered Horlicks, ORS packets, biscuits, butter and drinking water for around 250 Covid patients admitted there. Agarwalla handed over the food items to the Superintendent of Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital Dr Suren Tamuli. It is to be mentioned that Kailash Agarwalla's present health condition is not so well but inspite of this he has taken such initiative for the Covid patients of Jorhat and Golaghat. Such noble work of this senior citizen has been appreciated by all and everyone wishes him a good health

## FMD Poses Threat to Bos Frontalis in few villages in the district

**Aalo, June 14 :** The Foot and Mouth Diseases of mithuns, Bos Frontalis has taken toll of four mithuns and several infected during this month at Gemo Tali village and villagers on search of their mithuns in the dense forest surrounding the villages which are the natural homes of the mithuns. The casualty and deaths cannot be assessed properly as many of the mithuns are said to be untraceable. The villagers are doing their best to collect required medicines from the Veterinary department to save the lives of the treasured animals that are used in marriage, festivity, economy and rituals among the tribal society here. The Yaki Tato village, located near Gemo Tali village too performed traditional ritual to ward off the disease recently and confined themselves to three days lockdown after the rituals. The mithuns transaction, sacrifice, sale are either self-restricted or banned through circulars in such a situation to stop further spread of the



diseases. In olden days the mithuns use to gather at a Sobo Soia (A place where the mithuns used to Congregate at large to quench their thirst from the salty water and lick the stones that too were found salty in taste, in the picture) and it was easy for the owners to visit such place and trace them easily. But with the passage of time these places are hardly found but it has been found to be detrimental in such an epidemic time when mithuns with FMD infection are found together with healthy ones to spread the infection at an alarming rate.



## THE ASSAM RISING

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## G7 will go down in history as another turning

The history of international summits is a tale of missed opportunities. When the US and Europe met in Evian in 1938, with the evidence of Nazi antisemitism stunningly clear and the risk of a looming holocaust all too real, they turned their backs on the truth. In 1990, as the cold war ended, Germany focused on German unification, France on European unification and the US on holding Nato together - and summit after summit lost sight of the even bigger prize, to unite the world by integrating Russia into the international community. The financial crisis of 2009 was the opportunity to do more than prevent a recession becoming a depression; but the failure to rebuild the broken international architecture of economic decision-making led directly to the protectionism of "America first", "China first", "India first" and "Russia first". Now the 2021 G7 will go down in history as another turning point where history failed to turn. Long after this weekend summit is over and the handshakes, photocalls and communiques fade from memory, it will be remembered only for failing to honour Boris Johnson's pre-summit promise to vaccinate the entire world: an unforgivable moral lapse when every three months Covid-19 is destroying 1 million lives. At least 11bn vaccine doses are needed to guarantee all countries the same levels of anti-Covid protection as the west. Without that worldwide coverage, the disease will continue to spread, mutate and return to threaten even the vaccinated. It is an undeniable fact that all of us will live in fear until no one lives in fear. So providing the vaccines is not just an act of charity: it is a form of self-protection, perhaps the best insurance policy in the world. But less than 1% of sub-Saharan Africa has been fully vaccinated. With a population of 1.3 billion, Africa as a whole has received just 41m of the 2.5bn ordered doses. On current trends, says Unicef, it could be 2024 before western levels of vaccination are reached, if at all. The gift of 1bn doses from the richest countries to the poorest is headline-grabbing and welcome. But it falls billions of doses short of a solution and does not answer what Johnson called "the greatest challenge of the postwar era". We need to do for the world what Britain has done for itself: to construct a virtuous circle, starting with guaranteed G7 funding that underwrites the pooled purchasing of vaccines, which in turn generates new manufacturing capacity on every continent. In front of the leaders was a comprehensive delivery plan prepared by ACT-Accelerator - the respected health coalition - to deliver vaccines through Covax, and a burden-sharing formula, proposed by Norway and South Africa, under which G7 attendees would pay two-thirds of the cost. G7 leaders were informed that only half the \$33bn (£23bn) urgently needed for vaccines testing and protective equipment this year has been raised, with at least the same again needed for 2022. Yet, instead of the G7 paying their share, they offered up about \$7bn worth of vaccines. Nor did they solve the immediate emergency. To vaccinate only their most vulnerable 10%, Africa needs 225m doses now. African cases rose by 25% last week, but Britain was able to offer only 5m shots by the end of September, 2% of the required doses, and, with most of the US vaccines arriving later, millions of health workers will remain unprotected even as they risk their lives to save lives. No progress was made either on the demand from 100 poorer countries for the temporary patent waiver that would transfer vaccine technology to them. Just as the G7 left unfilled an embarrassing pre-Cop26 hole in climate funds, it stopped short of another big decision: to use \$100bn of new international money - so-called special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund's reserves - to help low-income countries. Campaigners will now demand that October's G20 step up where June's G7 fell short, but if the world's richest countries sitting round the same table cannot offer more, it is difficult to see how Johnson's promise to deliver "the single greatest feat in medical history" will be met. It was said of early 20th-century British political leaders that they never missed a chance to let slip an opportunity. As the global death toll mounts - towards 4 million and beyond - history will judge today's leaders much more harshly.



**Therese Raphael**

I have been four-eyed since I was 19. My prescription for nearsightedness was so mild, however, that I could manage without glasses if I wanted to. Over the years, my myopia needle moved only slightly, generally hovering around -1.0. A slight reading prescription was added in middle age, introducing me to the joys of varifocal lenses and a new chance to shop for frames. Now my eyes don't know what has hit them. After more than a year of WFH and being glued to a laptop,

desktop, mobile phone or large TV screen for the majority of my waking hours, my vision changed. A lot. The on-again, off-again eyelid twitch (doctors call it myokymia) was an early sign I wasn't giving them enough rest or needed to lay off the caffeine. Then I noticed my glasses no longer brought everything into crisp relief. But I wasn't prepared to learn that my prescription would need to more than double in strength to -2.50 in both eyes - and that my reading sight had also considerably worsened. The optometrist said that kind of deterioration in under two years was highly unusual. Kiran Vyas, the local optician I visited for new frames, tells me he's seeing this more and



## Pakistan's economy can come alive if it addresses the problem of 'dead capital'



Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin recently stated that putting the economy on a higher growth trajectory is the government's top priority, and that plans are afoot to spend a substantial amount of resources on large infrastructure projects to achieve the target. Unfortunately, there is nothing new in this recipe, and as I argued in my last piece (Obsession with infrastructure', April 30) in this paper, it might even end up creating more long-term liabilities. So are there any alternatives that can help propel the Pakistani economy to higher, sustained growth rates? Yes there are, something that the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) panel and team on growth strategy considered while coming up with ideas/strategies to accelerate the economy's growth. It's not the usual document that is centred upon a few trite ideas, but takes stock of issues ranging from civil service to the judiciary's performance, and how they hamper growth. Amongst these ideas, there is a discussion on the concept of 'dead capital'. The term is usually attributed to Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto and his famous book The Mystery of Capital. Briefly put, what De Soto and his team found was that lack of formal rights were turning

productive assets into 'dead capital' as they could not be traded on formal markets. The blame, De Soto argued, lay not with participants of the informal markets (mostly poor people) but with a plethora of stifling regulations that render productive assets 'dead capital'. Before De Soto, Adam Smith articulated in his famous Wealth of Nations that the real wealth of a nation is the potential of a particular productive asset to contribute to the economy. But if such assets are confronted by legal and institutional morass, then they will remain unused and underutilised. A particularly striking, and evident, example in an over-regulated economy like Pakistan's is the way real estate is regulated. The procedures surrounding the use and transfer of physical property are so complex that it leads to the loss of millions of real estate-related transactions, thus turning opportunities into dead capital. Land, for example, remains unsold for decades due to friction created by stringent, archaic regulations. Similarly, investment potential worth billions remains unutilised due to illogical restrictions on vertical expansion. In cities like Islamabad and Lahore, valuable land remains underutilised. A crude es-

**Shahid Mehmood**

timated by PIDE, for example, suggests that changing regulations and allowing for high-rises in just the GOR Lahore (underutilised, prime real estate) area has the potential to generate economic activity worth billions of rupees while generating more than 100,000 jobs. Similarly, extremely valuable land in Islamabad's sectors like G-6 and Aabpara is in the use of government servants. If it is reserved for private, commercial use and vertical expansion is allowed, then there are investment opportunities worth billions to be had. The public sector alone, in the form of various government departments, holds property worth trillions of rupees all over Pakistan without any use, thus constituting 'dead capital' since they can't be used in the process of wealth creation. Even the ones that are in use mostly constitute a non-productive venture, and occupation of prime land for nothing. However, the way such assets are administered in Pakistan, they do constitute exceptional rent-seeking opportunities, which is the primary reason why there are so many departments dealing exclusively with matters related to real estate. Capital, though, is not just physical capital; in fact, in today's world, intellectual capital (ideas, innovations, etc) assumes even bigger importance. People often talk about Silicon Valley and its importance to the US economy. The place is all about ideas and innovation, about intellectual capital. To illustrate, the US government earned \$30bn in 2020 as 'charges' for the global use of intellectual property originating within its borders. Further, a 2016 report by the US Commerce Department (Intellectual Property and the US Economy) found that IP-intensive industries support 45m jobs, plus contribute \$6tr to the US economy. This intellectual capital would be dead if it were not for facilitating business transactions, primarily through

laws (patents, trademarks and copyrights). Like physical capital, a lot of intellectual capital-related business ventures in Pakistan die because the laws required to facilitate them are not present. EMI, a music recording giant, wrapped up its business from Pakistan as losses accumulated due to the absence of IP rights, leading to pirated music. A similar case is that of pharmaceutical products, especially drugs, where patented drugs are easily copied and sold in Pakistani markets, thus limiting the scope of the market for originator brands and proving to be a major detriment to attracting FDI inflows in this important industry. Perhaps most crucially, we need to be cognisant of the fact that GDP is but a summation of mutually agreed transactions that benefit all the parties involved. A simple rule of thumb for any policymaker, therefore, is that to increase GDP we would need to increase and facilitate transactions. On the flip side, the loss of a probable transaction is a 'dead' opportunity. For a country of approximately 220m, there are potentially trillions of mutually beneficial transactions that can considerably change the economic tide. But given the stifling of economic activities through byzantine regulations, beneficial transactions remain subdued, incomplete and at the mercy of inconsistent economic policies. We do not have a monetary count, but it would not be surprising if such a count comes out someday, informing us that our economy's opportunity cost of working under stifling regulations runs into trillions of rupees. In essence, the opportunities that can perpetuate exchanges resulting in trillion-rupee activities are killed, hence turning them into dead capital! It is time, then, to tackle the issue of dead capital seriously. Any attempt at a higher growth trajectory would remain incomplete without it, especially the role of public sector-led regulations that pervade all aspects of our economic activity.

## How Microsoft let Skype lose out to Zoom

Zoom Video Communications Inc., maker of the ubiquitous videoconferencing tool that made a global pandemic less isolating, just reported another quarter of explosive growth. While its business may not continue to soar quite so much, Zoom is well positioned, appears to have a loyal fan base and continues to innovate. It has also achieved a rare corporate feat: It created a product popular enough to become a common verb. To "Zoom" now means "chat by video" - in the same way that to "Google" is to search the web. Yet not so long ago, another product's name stood for videoconferencing: Skype. Although Skype, launched in 2003, has been available nine years longer than Zoom and is owned by tech titan Microsoft Corp., Zoom has effectively left it in its dust. People don't say "I'll Skype you" as often as they say "I'll Zoom you" anymore. How did that happen? It's never easy to pinpoint why a product falls out of fashion, but it often comes down to price, quality, performance and ease of use. If a company is selling something other than a luxury good and it doesn't check those boxes, it's in trouble - even if the company is as rich and powerful as Microsoft. In this regard, Microsoft illustrates how having a head start doesn't matter if you can't maintain the lead. Skype isn't the only high-flying product that Microsoft has fumbled. Two decades ago, Internet Explorer, its web browser, was so dominant and popular that it drew the attention of federal antitrust regulators. In August, Microsoft plans to sunset Explorer, about a month after it does the same with Skype for Business, the corporate version of its

videoconferencing tool. To be sure, Microsoft isn't abandoning web browsing and videoconferencing. Its newer cross-platform web browser for business users, Edge, will absorb Explorer users

**Timothy L. Obrien**



who want to continue using a Microsoft product. A newer video and collaboration tool for businesses, Teams, has proven very popular and will theoretically scoop up Skype for Business enthusiasts. All of this shores up

Microsoft's lucrative business and lessens the number of products orbiting its core software offerings. But the company might not have had to go to the trouble of retooling those products if it had done a better job of managing Explorer and Skype in the first place. In 1985, when Microsoft launched its Windows operating system, it ushered in the personal computer revolution by giving consumers and businesses an affordable, reliable and easy-to-use product. But Microsoft was so tethered to desk-top computers, it failed to recognize how the internet would shake up its business in the 1990s, and how mobile devices would do the same in the 2000s. It neglected to tailor its offerings to those new worlds. "Let's face it, the internet was designed for the PC. The internet is not designed for the iPhone," Microsoft's former chief executive officer, Steve Ballmer, told the Associated Press in 2009. Browsers that played better on the web and smart phones, such as Google Chrome, stole market share from Microsoft. Other browsers that loaded faster, were more secure, made life easier for developers or had better privacy controls also eventually shredded Explorer. A product that, in 2001, controlled about 95% of the global browser market has less than 1% today. (Edge has about 3.4%.) In 2011, when Microsoft acquired Skype for \$8.5 billion, Zoom had just launched and Skype already had 100 million users. By 2014, Skype was popular enough to merit inclusion as a verb in the Oxford English Dictionary. And by 2015, it had 300 million users. But Skype's technology wasn't well-suited to mobile devices. When Microsoft set out to address that problem, it introduced a host of reliability nightmares for users. It gave them further headaches by redesigning Skype frequently and haphazardly while integrating messaging and video functions. By the time the coronavirus showed up, Skype had perhaps 23 million users

*If you don't wear glasses now, you probably will soon. It's screen time pandemic myopia*

more. It's not just adults of a certain age complaining about their eyesight either; far more kids than before are coming in needing glasses, he says. After that visit, I noticed my husband (who has never worn prescription glasses and insists his eyes are fine) holding his reading material out as if it was a selfie stick. I booked a second appointment. It turns out that myopia has been a growing concern during the pandemic, especially among children. A study published early this year in JAMA Ophthalmology, using data from Feincheng, China, reported that myopia in children ages 6 to 13 increased by up to three times in 2020 from the period between 2015 and 2019. On average, children were more shortsighted by -0.3 diopters (the unit used to measure the corrective power of the lens the eye requires). The authors analyzed nearly 195,000 test results from school vision screenings collected over six years. They found that not only does myopia appear to be worsening, it seems to be more prevalent too: Only 5.7% of children were found to have myopia in 2015 to 2019; last year, that jumped to 21.5%. In 2018, 15.2% of seven-year-olds and 27.7% of eight-year-olds had myopia. Those figures jumped to 26.2% and 37.2%, respectively, in 2020. Interestingly, the largest decrease in spherical equivalent refraction or SER, used to measure myopia, was found in the six-year-olds. Since older children were exposed to longer hours of screen time, this suggests younger

eyes are more sensitive. The authors cited their results as the first evidence that home confinement during Covid and reduced outdoor activity is associated with worsening eyesight. They urged caution in interpreting their results, however, since the data didn't provide the exact amount of screen time or close-up work, or the hours of outdoor activity for individual children. Still, the change in 2020 from previous years is striking. The College of Optometrists in the U.K. reported Wednesday that its research found nearly a third of Brits (31%) say their eyesight had worsened during the pandemic - a jump from the 22% who reported the same in June 2020. Myopia is the most common ocular disorder and a leading cause of visual impairment in children. The World Health Organization has warned that prevalence is on the rise - it is estimated to affect 52% of the world population by 2050. If you don't have glasses now, you probably will soon. The pandemic will almost certainly exacerbate this trend. William T. Reynolds, president of the American Optometric Association, notes that the increased use of digital devices is likely to result in a surge in eye strain or other ocular complications. In March, the AOA held an emergency summit to raise the alarm over children's eye health. This has significant implications for poorer regions and the developing world too, since myopia increases the risk of serious (and costly) eye disorders such as retinal detachment, glaucoma and cataracts.



# Federal Reserve may go hawkish in June 16 monetary policy; US dollar index likely to touch 91.50

**Mumbai, June 14 :** During the COVID-19 pandemic, central banks flew their jet and came up with an option of "Helicopter money" to take charge of the dwindling economic situation due to lockdown. It is nothing but an unconventional monetary policy aimed at bringing a flagging economy back on track. Using this tool, they flooded the market with ample liquidity to pull it out of a dip slump. That apart, vaccination drives since the start of 2021 have worked quite well for reopening. The demand returned, but the supply disruption has been observed. This led to soaring commodity prices and so inflation expectations across the globe. Wall Street, stock market Wall Street in control of bulls; Chris Wood says these factors will continue to aid market momentum gold, mex gold, gold price Gold prices fall for 5th straight day ahead of US Fed decision; check MCX gold support, resistance levels Under the given scenario, which central bank will lift off its easing stance? Let's read their minds one by one. Federal Reserve: The market participants have a lot of expectations from 16th June Fed monetary policy. Two key factors which Fed focuses on are inflation and job numbers. The core PCE (Personal Consumption Expenditures) to be the best gauge of inflation rose faster than expected at 3.1% in April as price pressures built in the rapidly expanding U.S. economy. But the job report is still not upto the mark that fed considers for tapering. Apart from this, an interesting observation in the fed's balance sheet suggests something is cooking. Under QE, fed is buying \$120 billion securities & bonds and flowing liquidity in the market. But since April, Fed has come up

with Overnight Reverse Repo-ON RRP (Fed borrows from US commercial banks to control excess liquidity) and pulled out \$8.8 trillion from the market. As liquidity stopped increasing, risk-on asset-equity stopped performing like what it was before April. This can be compared with the 2013 taper tantrum case when along with QE,



the fed had done the same ON RRP and then we had seen the announcement of tapering. Overall, fed is expected to announce tapering, either in June or in August's Jackson Hole meeting or finally in the September meeting. The higher vaccination rate, Biden's infrastructure spending, and stronger economic data will force fed to talk on tapering very soon. Hence, we expect that Fed would be the first central bank (Like 2013) to go hawkish. 2. Bank of England: The UK which has undoubtedly carried their vaccination program extremely well, and has good chances of reopening on June 21; just before BoE revisits their policy on June 24. However, the Indian variant or so-called Delta variant possesses a risk over

its potential to undo some of the country's hard-won progress toward reopening. On the data front, retail sales and the manufacturing number have been above estimates, but growth figures need to pick up well in the upcoming time. In the last meet, BoE had already announced to slow down their bond-buying to £3.4bn a week be-



tween May and August, from the current pace of £4.4bn, but made it clear that this should not be taken as a change in the stance. One MPC member was already turned in favor of tapering, and probably many will join him in the upcoming meet if the economy outperforms and inflation persists above 2% levels. The BoE stands just behind Fed to turn hawkish and do tapering. 3. European Central Bank: The ECB monetary policy which is scheduled to meet this week on 10th June will be a non-event but very exciting. Because since the April meeting, the European countries have done a remarkable job in rolling out the vaccination drive. That has helped them to think over reopening like the US. The economic outlook has

brightened further and inflation forecasts are expected to revise higher. Another interesting element will be the first official quarterly assessment of financing conditions in the Eurozone will be presented. The German bund yield has been in negative territory over the last 2 years, was seen recovering almost 50 bps from 2021 low of -0.60 as recovery is discounting in yield. The ECB could avoid the discussion on tapering, but for that strong reasoning needs to be presented or else doubts on the sustainability of the economy and euro will come under question. Compared to Fed and BoE, ECB still lags in terms of going for tapering as many European countries are still facing higher debt issues and rising rates will also increase their cost of debt. Hence, ECB could stay behind Fed and BoE. Out of 3 central banks, Fed has higher chances of going hawkish once the job market meets the Fed's expectation and inflation sustains well above the fed's targeted levels for a reasonable time. Hence, we expect the US 10-year benchmark yield to resume its uptrend towards 1.80%-2.00% and the US dollar index to move towards 91.00-91.50 levels. After the Fed, BoE has a higher probability of odds to cut down their bond-buying program and turn hawkish but new variant fear looms over reopening, and hence we expect GBPUSD to retrace back below 1.40-1.3950 levels and find stiff resistance near 1.4250 levels. In Europe, ECB still has a long way to go hawkish, as debt-driven countries could not allow to lift-off support system. Hence, EURUSD has limited upside till 1.2250-1.2280 zone and could retrace back upto 1.2000-1.1950 levels over the short term.

## Nissan India announces availability of Nissan & Datsun products through Canteen Stores Departments (CSD)

**Guwahati, June 14:** Nissan India announces the availability of its entire range of Nissan and Datsun products in Canteen Store Departments (CSD). Defence personnel can now avail all CSD approved applicable discounts and offers through CSD Depots across the country. The all-new Nissan Magnite also offers the lowest cost of maintenance at 29 Paise per km. "Nissan is honored to serve our brave defence personnel and is delighted to bring the entire range of Nissan and Datsun products along with the newly launched game changer in the SUV segment, the all-new Nissan Magnite, at the highest value proposition," said Rakesh Srivastava, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India. The process of buying cars for CSD beneficiaries is online, including the selection of vehicle to be purchased, uploading of dealer documents viz. Availability Certificate & Proforma Invoice, customer documents viz. Canteen Card, KYC, payment transfer details etc. till Issuance of Local Supply Order (LSO) being digitized. The address of AFD portal to apply for car purchase: <https://afd.csdindia.gov.in/>. The process of buying of car for CSD beneficiaries is online, including the selection of vehicle to be purchased, uploading of dealer



and customer documents and issuance of Local Supply order (LSO). The address of AFD portal to apply for car purchase: <https://afd.csdindia.gov.in/>. Nissan offers transparent and affordable car services on Nissan's digital platform, Shop@Home, that allows defence personnel to book their desired vehicle online and avail these CSD offers by informing the dealership. Nissan also allows its customers to pay at dealerships after completing the journey online. The Shop@Home experience includes a virtual showroom and virtual test drive, which conveniently provides

the options to personalize the car, evaluate exchange value of existing car, calculate, compare EMIs and apply for finance before booking the vehicle. This smooth experience of online shopping continues to be available for all Nissan prospects and customers. Additionally, Nissan's service network includes the Nissan Cost Calculator, Nissan 'Book a Service' and Nissan 'Pick-up & Drop-off' service. The 'Nissan Roadside Assistance' is also available across 29 states and 1500+ cities along with 24\*7 multi-lingual call centre operational services to help customers.

## LG announces its 'Together We Can Make Life Better'

*Pre-Book Offer campaign  
Exciting deals and assured gifts of upto INR 35000*

**Guwahati, 14 JUNE 2021:**

LG Electronics, India's leading consumer durable brand today announced its latest consumer campaign "Together We Can Make Life Better", offering exclusive deals and assured gifts of up to INR 35000 for consumers. Under this campaign, consumers can prebook and purchase their favorite LG products sitting at home, coupled with easy finance schemes, cashback, and convenient EMI options, valid till 31st July 2021. Keeping safety and convenience at the forefront, LG Electronics has taken measures to help customers pre-book their favourite LG product from the safety of their homes. Consumers can visit the dedicated LG website (<https://www.lg.com/in/buy-from-home>) and register themselves along with the product they wish to buy. LG will also be providing online demo for products, ensuring customers are well informed of their purchase along with cashless payment across various online portals. Once the order has been placed, the product will be delivered at the customer's doorstep followed by a contactless installation. Offers and deals under the - 'Together We Can Make Life Better' program, apply to all LG consumer electronics products. LG will be providing assured gifts of up to INR 35,000 and cashbacks of up to 17.5%. Consumers can pay only INR 1 and take-home LG home appliances with Easy EMI options. Additionally, consumers looking to



upgrade, can benefit from LG's #UpgradeResponsibly campaign and exchange their old TV to get INR 10,000 off on the purchase of a new one. Speaking of the initiative Young Lak Kim-MD - LG Electronics India said - As a consumer centric brand, LG has always kept consumer wellbeing as top priority. Owing to the lockdown, we have witnessed increase in consumers demand to upgrade and equip their homes with the latest technology. Addressing this demand, our latest pre-booking offers will enable consumers to purchase their favourite LG product from the safety and comfort of their homes. We are confident that the latest offers for our diverse range of products, will enable consumers to upgrade and enrich their lives. Customers looking to purchase LG's premium 55 UHD; Nano cell & OLED TV's, can benefit from Special Consumer finance offers, wherein, customers can pay 24% & the balance in 24 easy EMI's (offer valid for select products).

## Aviva India Launches Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima

*A simple term insurance plan that ensures financial security of your loved ones*

**India, June 14:** Aviva Life Insurance, India's most trusted private insurance company, today an-

nounced the launch of Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima, a standard term life insurance plan. The Individual Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Pure Risk Life Insurance Plan is designed to offer affordable financial protection to customers. The plan offers easy to understand features and allows flexibility to the customers to adapt the policy basis their needs to provide financial protection to their loved ones. Aviva's Saral Jeevan Bima plan offers a minimum sum assured of Rs 5 lakhs and a maximum sum assured of up to Rs 25 lakhs for a policy term ranging between 5 - 40 years. The policy also offers customers the flexibility to choose between premium payment term options of regular pay, single pay and limited pay of 5 or 10 years. Another advantage is that customers get to choose from multiple premium payment mode options i.e., annual, semi-annual or monthly payment. Mr. Vinit Kapahi, Head, Marketing Function, Aviva Life Insurance said, "At Aviva, we have always aimed to cease complexity in every endeavour and our focus is to deliver simple, relevant and good customer outcomes every day. Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima is in line with the IRDAI's Guidelines to offer standardised simple term insurance plan with affordable premium. The introduction of this product will cater to the demand of our audience and provide an ease to make an informed choice of financially protecting themselves and their family. This product will not only personify this value but will also play an important role in building trust among the customers." He further added "With this launch, our aim is to expand the term insurance market and increase insurance penetration of India. We are hopeful that Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima will extend adequate financial protection cover at an affordable price for our customers and ensure financial security against uncertainties in life." Some Key Features of Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima are: "Entry age for this plan is up to 65 years and customers can avail insurance benefits from a short period of 5 years to as long as 40 years." The plan offers to choose a life cover amount from INR 5,00,000 up to INR 25,00,000. "Aviva Saral Jeevan Bima allows to pay a single lump-sum premium, or for the initial 5 or 10 years of the policy term or for the entire policy term.



## OnePlus Nord CE 5G: The Core OnePlus Experience, For Less

*A great everyday smartphone that's a little more than you'd expect*

**Guwahati, June 14 :** Global technology brand OnePlus has revealed a new addition to the OnePlus Nord product line: OnePlus Nord CE 5G (Core Edition). The newest member of the Nord smartphone portfolio is built on the core aspects of the Nord experience, delivering powerful features at an even lighter price - all packed into a beautiful design. Nord CE combines best-in-class hardware features, including a versatile 64 MP triple camera system, a 90 Hz fluid AMOLED display, a powerful Snapdragon 750G 5G processor, and improved Warp Charge 30T Plus charging technology. "The OnePlus Nord CE 5G is the next step in our commitment to sharing great technology with the world," said Pete Lau, Founder and CEO of OnePlus. "The Never Settle spirit drives us to provide a better experience

relative to what's available in any price segment. Nord CE is the newest addition to the OnePlus Nord product line that delivers a great everyday experience while maintaining the OnePlus quality that users have come to love." Fast and Smooth Experience OnePlus Nord CE 5G comes with a large 4,500mAh battery, but with improved Warp Charge 30T Plus charging technology,



the battery still charges at the same speed - 0 to 70% in just half an hour. Like all OnePlus devices, Nord CE also adapts to reduce the time spent at 100% battery to maintain good battery health while charging overnight. Nord CE is powered by a Qualcomm® Snapdragon™ 750G 5G Mobile Platform which offers a 20% CPU and 10% GPU boost over its predecessor, thanks to the Kryo 570 CPU and Adreno 619 GPU. The advanced AI Engine also provides users with an incredibly smooth and intuitive experience, from enhanced gaming to improved voice chat. Nord CE comes pre-installed with OxygenOS 11, OnePlus's fastest and most responsive software to date. OxygenOS 11 features significant improvements to beloved features like Dark Mode, Zen Mode, and a new al-

ways on display (AOD). In addition, OOS 11 has been optimized for single-handed operations, thanks to repositioned touch controls and a simple yet bold design.

**Powerful Essentials**

Nord CE sports a powerful triple rear camera setup with a 64 MP main camera with a large f/1.79 aperture that captures crisp, high-resolution images and next-level detail in bright lighting conditions, and a 119° ultra-wide angle lens for enhanced versatility. On the front, Nord CE features a 16 MP camera for capturing great selfies.

Like all OnePlus flagship models, Nord CE comes with Nightscape for a better low-light photography experience. This must-have feature for nighttime shooting takes up to eight pictures at varying exposures and effortlessly weaves them together to produce clearer, brighter, and more dramatic photos. Nord CE also rocks a

6.43" 90Hz AMOLED display that makes everything incredibly smooth and responsive. HDR10+ offers vivid colors to ensure immersive and enjoyable viewing experience.

**Everything Else Users Love About OnePlus**

At 7.9mm in thickness and 170g in weight, Nord CE 5G is the slimmest OnePlus device since the OnePlus 6T. But cutting back doesn't mean subtraction. Extra features have been added to Nord CE, like the 3.5mm headphone jack. Nord CE comes in three colorways: Charcoal Ink, Silver Ray, and Blue Void. The latter features a fingerprint-resist matte finish which reveals a fresh nuance from every angle. Like all OnePlus flagship devices, Nord CE will receive two years of software updates and three years of security updates to keep the phone smooth over time.



Contd. From Page 1

## Chief Minister holds meeting

Electricity Regulatory Commission to increase the rate of energy tariff. The public in general have to bear the brunt of this increased rate in electricity tariff as the resultant load of the loss generated from the defaulting consumers is compensated from the general public. He, therefore, asked the power companies to design modalities and plug the loopholes so that consumers cannot evade electricity tariffs and indulge in fraudulent practices. Dr. Sarma also asked the power companies to maintain extensive vigilance to stop power theft and reduce transmission and distribution loss across the state. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma during the meeting also asked APDCL to prepare a profile of the defaulting consumers. He also asked the companies to make a list of the Cement Companies and other high valued consumers, tally their production or services with GST returns and electricity bills. This exercise will help in bringing in semblance between total quantum of electricity consumed and electricity bills thus paid. Dr. Sarma also emphasised on the need of putting in modern, state of the art technologies for the structural and qualitative development of the power companies to ensure 24X7 uninterrupted and quality power supply to the people of Assam as well the commercial establishments Power Minister Bimal Bora, Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, Principal Secretary to Power Department Neeraj Verma, Managing Directors and other senior officers of the three power companies were present in the meeting.

## The Assam government has started

testing and vaccination has been accelerated in all those districts and towns where the virus infection still remains relatively higher. The current SOP in Assam imposes a 'partial lockdown' -- giving a window period to buy essential items and carry on business activities till noon. The restrictions on inter-district passenger movement through roadways continues to affect normalcy in the state. Curfew is imposed from 1 pm to 5am everyday with a total ban on movement of individuals, except for specified emergencies and people on essential duties. But all shops and commercial establishments close at 12 noon daily. Sources in the health department told TOI that reviving the Covid-hit economy was the primary target for which the state government won't delay withdrawal of restrictions from selected districts. Assam has been the only state where total lockdown was not imposed even during the height of the deadly second wave, mainly to give relief to the daily wage earners and those from the financially weaker sections. A senior health official said the districts that encompass vast rural areas including Majuli, West Karbi Anglong and Charaideo may get the relaxation in the first phase due to lower number of daily cases and active caseload. "Since insignificant number of Covid cases are being reported from a few districts, there is no point of keeping them under partial lockdown measures. Three districts are absolutely safe. Five more districts will possibly come under the safe category this week," he added. The official said the state health department has embarked on last phase of testing during the second wave, to bring out maximum positive cases even from the remotest areas. As an outcome, over 1.5 lakh tests per day have been carried out in the last couple of days. Out of the state's 33 districts, 21 recorded less than 1,000 positive cases between June 3-12, indicating noticeable recovery. During this period, Kamrup (Metropolitan) district registered the highest number of 3,391 cases, followed by Cachar (3,147 cases), Tinsukia (2,512 cases) and Dibrugarh (2,394 cases). From the bottom, West Karbi Anglong had only 137 cases in 10 days, while the corresponding figure for Majuli is 200. South Salmara-Mancachar district bordering Bangladesh has recorded 226 cases during the period. Several tribal inhabited districts in the Bodoland Territorial Region are also showing lesser number of cases and may get the relaxations in the new SOP expected soon.

## Students from Assam have moved

(AHSEC) - will try to hold the exams in mid-July, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said. Class 10, 12 board exams will be held between July 15 and 20 for two to three papers. Male and female students will write the exams on separate dates to ensure social distancing, the chief minister said. The chief minister's announcement to hold exams between July 15 and July 20 created panic among students and parents, the plea states. "The government's statement that Covid positivity rate below 2 per cent has no relevance," it adds. The Covid positivity rate by July 1 must be below 2 per cent for the exams to take place. Otherwise, teachers will promote students with school-based evaluation, Mr Sarma said. He advised students to continue their preparations. On June 8, Assam Education Minister Ranaj Pegu said that the government have decided to hold board exams after discussing the issue with stakeholders. "We will hold the exams with a reduced number of subjects and if necessary, on a reduced number of marks. We are observing the trend of Covid so we might get a window where Covid will be lowest in July and August...we have to complete the exams by August 15," Mr Pegu told. In the wake of the Coronavirus crisis, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) have cancelled their Class 12 board exams. Following the suit, most of the states boards have also called off the final examinations for Class 12 keeping students' safety in check. Assam, being an exception, plans to conduct these exams amid the pandemic.

## Global Naga Forum writes to CM

plight of the Rengma Naga people in Assam. It touched on the modern evolution of the Rengma Naga people in Assam which started in April 1841, and how they consistently sought to assert their historical and political rights over their ancestral lands in Assam. The GNF said it was happy to know that his government, with the recognition of the central Indian government, is actively pursuing conflict resolution with ethnic groups in Karbi Anglong through the creation of KAATC. "We believe that this will have a positive impact on bringing much-needed peace in our region," the letter. The GNF also urged Sarma to recall that the Rengma Nagas in Assam are peace-loving citizens and have not pursued conflict with other ethnic groups under the 'so-called Karbi Anglong areas'. It said the Rengma Nagas in Assam continues to be dependent on the outcome of the ongoing Indo-Naga political dialogue for some way forward in their own journey towards greater autonomy, whether they are integrated with other Naga-inhabited areas under one administrative roof, or through an Autonomous Territorial Council for Nagas in Assam. The GNF reiterated that the need for equity and justice for all groups of people in the present world. It hoped the Assam chief minister will do all in his power to ensure this is true for the Rengma Nagas.

## Elderly adversely affected

and 555,115 individuals. The surveyed were randomly selected from 8077 villages and 6181 urban areas. The results of this study, published in the International Journal Globalization and Health, showed that disparities exist in health status as well as healthcare access of elderly people across the country. Factors such as place of residence, gender, social group, marital status, living arrangements, surviving children, and economic dependence are said to impact healthcare access among the elderly. Missed treatments, unavailability of drugs also pose a major health challenge. Dr. Alok Ranjan is of the opinion that lessons from the current pandemic are to ensure that future adversities are less detrimental to the physical and mental well-being of the elderly. The researchers want to extend the result of this study to a policy. They plan to carry out detailed surveys among the elderly population particularly in Tamil Nadu, especially to design effective rehabilitative care which is almost absent in India's public healthcare system.

## Assam Governor to temporarily

Prof Mukhi will shift to Koinadhora for a few months. A new look is being given to the iconic Koinadhora with painting and civil jobs. All the interiors are being freshly done at a war footing as the deadline for handover is 15 June. Congress's top leader, Tarun Gogoi during his tenure as Assam chief minister stayed for 15 years at Koinadhora. After him, the next chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal chose to stay at the Brahmaputra Guest House at Kharguli Hill, Uzan Bazar from 2016-21. The present Assam chief minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma's official residence is at Dispur MLA campus.

## One Nation One Ration Card

migratory NFSA beneficiaries (mostly labourers, daily-wagers, urban poor like rag-pickers, street-dwellers, temporary workers in organised and un-organised sectors, domestic workers, etc.) who frequently travel in search of better opportunities or for any other reasons, to access the Public Distribution System (PDS) and if they desire, may lift their entitled foodgrains from any ePoS enabled FPS in the country through portability. It is submitted that portability gives that choice, while at the same time enabling the family back home to draw the remainder of the eligible ration," the Centre said. It further said that a total of 32 states/UTs covering around 69 crore NFSA beneficiaries, that is, 86 per cent NFSA population in the country were swiftly brought under the ONORC plan by December 2020. "The integration of the remaining four States and UT of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal is expected to be achieved, it added. The Centre said that the onus on implementing ONORC is on these states.

## AIADMK expels 16 party

the corona pandemic ends, I will come," Sasikala was heard telling the cadre during the phone call. "We will be behind you Amma," the cadre was heard replying to her. AIADMK leader C Ponnaiyan on Saturday claimed that Sasikala is not a member of his party as she belongs to TTV Dhinakaran's Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK). Earlier in March, Sasikala had announced her retirement from politics and issued a statement saying that she will "set herself apart from politics". Meanwhile, AIADMK coordinator O Panneerselvam was elected as Deputy Leader of Opposition in State Assembly and former minister SP Velumani would be the party whip.

## Assam Artist's Sushant Singh Rajput

programme and write a thesis about his art form. Sushant Singh Rajput's death was followed by multiple investigations, which are still going on. He starred in many Bollywood movies, including "MS Dhoni: The Untold Story", based on the life of the cricketer. His last movie was "Dil Bechara", which released last year in July after his death.



Shillong- meeting to discussed on COVID-19

## Humanity Still Exists : Aged Person Comes Forward to Help Covid Patients

**Golaghat, Jun 14:** An aged person who is above the age of sixty years has come up to offer a helping hand to the Covid patients who are undergoing treatment in Covid Hospital. Kailash Agarwalla, a senior citizen and social worker from Titabor in Jorhat has been providing food for the Covid patients. After Jorhat and his hometown Titabor Kailash Agarwalla today visited the Covid Hospital located in the premises of Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital in Golaghat and offered Horlicks, ORS packets, biscuits, butter and drinking water for around 250 Covid patients admitted there. Agarwalla handed over the food items to the Superintendent of Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital Dr Suren Tamuli. It is to be mentioned that Kailash Agarwalla's present health condition is not so well but in spite of this he has taken such initiative for the Covid patients of Jorhat and Golaghat. Such noble work of this senior citizen has been appreciated by all and everyone wishes him a good health

## Centre may renegotiate vaccine prices with SII and Bharat Biotech

**New Delhi, June 14 :** The Centre is likely to engage in renegotiations on the prices of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Serum Institute of India's Covishield. The Indian Express has learnt. A senior government official said the revised procurement price per dose, which is currently Rs 150 for both vaccines, is "yet to be decided under the new system". The Centre is finalising the contours of the pricing, the official said. The Finance Ministry, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr Vinod K Paul, Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech did not respond to queries on the issue. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Centre would buy 75 per cent of doses from vaccine makers, including 25 per cent of the state quota, and give it for free to state governments. This is aimed at facilitating free vaccination for all above 18 years of age from June 21, which is likely to cost the exchequer an additional Rs 15,000 crore as compared to the Budget allocation of Rs 35,000 crore. When the Centre began vaccination in January, it procured 11 million doses of Covishield at Rs 200 each excluding taxes, and about 5.5 million doses of Covaxin at Rs 206 each excluding taxes. However, the prices were later negotiated downwards to Rs 150 per dose. Until April, private hospitals had to procure vaccines through the government, which allowed the Centre to cap the prices at Rs 250 per dose for both Covishield and Covaxin. Even when vaccination was opened to those in the 18-44 years age group, the Centre's procurement price did not change. "It is clarified that Govt of India's procurement price for both #COVID19 vaccines remains Rs 150 per dose," the Health Ministry tweeted on April 24. In April, manufacturers were allowed to fix their own prices for states and private healthcare facilities, following the decision to decentralise vaccine procurement. SII and Bharat Biotech initially priced their vaccines at Rs 400 and Rs 600 respectively for states and Rs 600 and Rs 1,200 respectively for private facilities. Following backlash, the procurement prices for states were revised to Rs 300 per dose of Covishield and Rs 400 per dose of Covaxin. The states, which initially had to compete with private hospitals for vaccine supplies, were later allowed to access an exclusive 25 per cent of the vaccines produced at the revised rates.

## Man Lynched Over Suspicion Of Cattle Theft, 12 Arrested

**Tinsukia, June 14 :** A 34-year-old man was allegedly lynched at Korjonga village in upper Assam's Tinsukia district on Saturday. 12 people in connection with the lynch has been arrested so far. The angry mob lynched the deceased on suspicion of being a cattle lifter. The deceased has been identified as Sarat Moran. As per reports, Moran was rescued by Baghjan police from Korjonga village and shifted to the FRU hospital in Doomdooma where he succumbed to his injuries. As per the statements made by Tinsukia SP Debojit Deuri, the police have apprehended 12 people in connection with the incident and are interrogating them. Several marks of injuries have also been found. A case has been registered under sections 302 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code based on an FIR filed by the family of the victim. "It is not immediately clear whether he was involved in cattle lifting or not. But, earlier the person was arrested in some other cases," said SP Debojit Deuri. According to police, the victim had gone to stay overnight at a friend's house and was caught by villagers on suspicion of being a cattle lifter.

## 'Step up fish production to ameliorate farmers' economic lot,' says Parimal Suklabaidya to FDOs

**Orang, Darrang, June 14:** Minister for Environment and Forest, Fisheries and Excise, Parimal Suklabaidya asked the District Fisheries Development Officer and Fishery Development Officers (FDOs) of Darrang district to expedite the implementation of schemes meant to ameliorate the lot of the fish farmers. Reviewing the different Central and State schemes at the conference hall of Orang National Park, Minister Suklabaidya directed the FDOs to expedite the construction of rearing ponds, finfish hatchery, integrated fish farming, community ponds and livelihood support schemes under PMMSY to augment the production of fish and the income of farmers. "We have to increase fish production and the income of fish farmers through the various schemes meant for their welfare," he quipped. Suklabaidya said the state will have to step up fish production through blue revolution to become self sufficient and to put a halt to fish imported from other parts of the country. He said the state is blessed with innumerable ponds, wetlands and water bodies and fish of different varieties can be reared and bred. "The state has vast water resources potential and this must be harnessed scientifically to the optimum level to attain self sufficiency on the fish production front," he added. The Minister also told the FDOs to see to it that no fish is caught during the breeding season and action should be taken against the offenders. The meeting was attended by Director, Fisheries, Nirmal Kanti Debnath, MLA, Ganesh Limbu, former MLA, Gurujyoti Das, among others.

## Four youths arrested for demanding money forcefully

**North Lakhimpur, June 14:** Four youths from North Lakhimpur have been arrested by the North Lakhimpur police in the last night on the basis of the complain that they had demanded money forcefully from a businessman of North Lakhimpur town. The youths were arrested under the case no.688/21 U/ S 420/387 IPC. In the police complain filed by Prashanta Roy in the North Lakhimpur Police Station on June 12, it is mentioned that four youths of North Lakhimpur Ujjal Bhuyan (a member of a Hindu organization), Milton Zahan, Jijan Baruah and Rajib Singh ( Secretary of Hindu Yuva Chatra Parishad, Lakhimpur district committee) demanded money forcefully from his father Pankaj Roy when he was working at his commercial institution 'Pritam Medical' situated at Chandmari, ward no.14, North Lakhimpur town on May 31. The youths physically assaulted his father as well. Then they took away 82, 000 rupees from the complainer Prashanta Roy, son of Pankaj Roy, forcefully. They even demanded more money from Prashanta Roy. Today, the convicted youths were sent to the Lakhimpur Judicial Court and the court ordered the police to take into custody of the covicts for two days.

## Nirod Hazarika passes away

**Biswanath Chariali, June 14:** Nirod Hazarika (75), former footballer and known hunts man breathed his last at his LB Road residence due to prolonged illness on Monday. Nirod Hazarika born to a well to do family was popularly known as 'Baba Daa' among common people of the greater Sootea area. He was a front line footballer of undivided Sonitpur district. He was the captain of the then Chatia High School (presently, Chatia HSS) football team and had participated in many zonal tournaments and achieved medals. Late Hazarika had represented Sootea Town Club and many other football teams of his time. When animal hunting was regarded as legal, Nirod Hazarika was an eminent huntsman who used to hunt animals riding on the backs of domestic animals. He and his brother MLA Padma Hazarika had played a vital role to save agricultural lands and crops of farmers from wild elephants. His demise was widely mourned in the Sootea area. Individuals including Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika, Biswanath MLA Pramod Borthakur, former minister Prabin Hazarika and many organizations of Sootea had condoled the death. He left behind his wife Urmila, daughter Bornali Hazarika; assistant professor of GMHC, son Kalyan Hazarika; engineer working in UAE along with a host of relatives.

## Golaghat Girl Chayanika Sabhapandit Gets Financial Aid from Chief Minister

**Golaghat, Jun 14:** Chayanika Sabhapandit, a bright student and professional singer from Golaghat has recently on news headlines. Chayanika 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. As such today Local MLA and state finance minister Ajanta Neog visited the house of Chayanika Sabhapandit at Ward No 12 in Golaghat and handed over a cheque of fifty thousand rupees to Chayanika as a financial aid from Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sharma. Offering the aid Minister Ajanta Neog said that it is a small blessing. She appreciated the effort of Chayanika Sabhapandit and wished her a bright future. MLA from Sarupathar Biswajit Phukan was also present in the same.

## National Blood Donor Day Observed

**Golaghat, Jun 14:** Under the aegis of National Medicos Organisation in association with Sewa Bharti Purvanchal, Marwari Sammelan Golaghat, Akhil Bhartiya Marwari Mahila Sammelan and Marwari Yuva Manch National Blood Donor Day was observed today at Gajanand Jallan Sewa Sadan in Golaghat. A blood donation camp was organised at Gajanand Jallan Sewa Sadan premises to mark the occasion of National Blood Donor Day. State health minister Keshab Mahanta inaugurated the blood donation camp in presence of state Finance Minister and local MLA Ajanta Neog, Sarupathar MLA Biswajit Phukan, Deputy Commissioner Manavendra Pratap Singh, Joint Director of Health Services Golaghat Dr Arun Mahanta and Nipon Bora.

## KRSS condoled on Indreshwar Borah's death

**North Lakhimpur, June 14:** Koch-Rajbonshi Sangram Sommittee (KRSS) condoled deeply on the death of Indreshwar Borah, the father of All Lakhimpur District KRSS Chief Organising Secretary Nitul Borah. Rupjyoti Dutta on behalf of KRSS Central Committee, Bikash Dutta, Nitul Saikia, Hemanta Koch, Mintu Borah and Bhabananda Rajkhowa on behalf of All Lakhimpur District KRSS, Rupam Hazarika and Fatik Saikia on behalf of KRSS Kamalaboria Regional Unit and Sidhartha Sankar Hazarika, Debajit Dutta, Ranjan Bikash Dutta and Rituraj Dutta on behalf of KRSS North Lakhimpur town Regional Unit and Mohan Borah and Pramod Borah on behalf of KRSS Pachim Telahi Regional Unit have condoled on the death of Indreshwar Borah. In a condolence message, the KRSS leaders expressed sorrow on Borah's demise and extended their condolence to the bereaved family. Indreshwar Borah, a resident of Kamalaboria near North Lakhimpur town, died on yesterday evening at his own residence at the age of 84. He was a retired Govt. employee and a religious person. He leaves behind his wife, three sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and a host of relatives and well-wishers.



# England up and running at Euro 2020 as Raheem Sterling's strike sinks Croatia

London, June 14 : Football's coming home, according to the fans inside Wembley. We have heard that before and so the usual disclaimers must apply. But this was an encouraging start for England, at the very least: the first time they have won the opening game of a European Championship - at the 10th time of asking. It was a deserved victory, too, against surely the strongest opposition Gareth Southgate's team will face in the group stage. It was an occasion when revenge was in the air, with one or two of England's players recalling beforehand the semi-final defeat by Croatia in the 2018 World Cup. It is hard to see that anything will ever compensate for that and certainly not a win at this stage of a competition. It was more about setting an upbeat tone and, thanks to Raheem Sterling's first tournament goal, England did that. The moment to fire English dreams came as the match rather meandered, a bright start by England having ebbed. Kalvin Phillips, the game's outstanding performer, took a smart ball forward from Kyle Walker in the 57th minute and moved away from Croatian challengers before slipping the perfect pass to Sterling. As throughout, Sterling's movement was excellent and he finished in front of Sime Vrsaljko and past Dominik Livakovic. Southgate's defence had an experimental feel, with John Stones alongside Tyrone Mings for the first time in the middle and Kieran Trippier surprisingly preferred at left-back to Ben Chilwell, who did not make the bench, and Luke Shaw. According to Opta, Trippier had started four games previously in the position, three of them for England this season. It was a move with defensive solidity in mind. Trippier did not get forward on the overlap - rather Mason Mount pulled to the

left when Sterling wandered infield - and neither did Walker from right-back. Yet the defence kept their shape and offered robust protection in front of Jordan Pickford, who was not required to make a serious save. At 1-0 it was



possible to wonder whether Croatia would claw their way back, as they had done at the World Cup, but the equaliser never felt on. Ante Rebic dragged wide when well placed on 66 minutes and the substitute Mario Pasalic thrashed high at the very end. That was pretty much it, in terms of Croatia's threat. On this evidence Zlatko Dalic's team are not as dangerous as they were in 2018. Seven of those who had played for them in the World Cup semi-final started here and, for England, it was always going to be a question of putting pressure on Croatia's midfield three, of not allowing Luka Modric or his sidekicks to play through or in behind them. They succeeded. Southgate's team brought an intensity at the outset, feeding off the energy of the home crowd, which Modric had described as an "unfair advantage". Those in attendance made themselves heard and it was pleasing that loud cheers from the majority all but drowned out the boos of some when the players took

the knee in the fight against racism. That said, there was no escaping the fact that there were boos. England's emergence from the tunnel and the pre-match bellowing of the national anthem were genuinely uplifting moments and



there was almost another only five minutes in when Sterling made a clever run on to a throw-in from the left and fed Phil Foden, who was one-on-one with Josko Gvardiol. Foden darted inside, a flash of quicksilver movement, and he shaped a curler for the far corner. It flicked off Gvardiol's outstretched toe and came back off the upright. Phillips drove England's encouraging opening period, which lasted for 20 minutes or so. There were assured touches from him, strength in the challenge and an ability to move with the ball high up. He also worked Livakovic in the eighth minute when he caught a volley cleanly on the edge of the area after a corner had been half-cleared. England dropped off in the second part of the first half, perhaps feeling the searing temperatures; Southgate's lineup had featured five players who started the Champions League final two weeks ago and had not kicked a ball in competitive action since. Sterling was able to stretch the Croatia defence and the ball over the top

was sometimes on for him. He won a free-kick just before the interval when he panicked Duje Caleta-Car into handling but Trippier could not repeat his execution from the World Cup semi-final, hitting the wall rather than the top corner. Kalvin Phillips' quiet excellence offers England something new and hopeful. Croatia were able to slow the game, which suited them, but England found incision through Sterling and, confidence pepped, they could have gone further in front shortly afterwards. Mount crossed for Harry Kane at the far post and only a last-gasp intervention by Gvardiol denied him. It was not the captain's day. England had largely held Croatia at arm's length in the first half; save for one half-chance for Ivan Perisic after Vrsaljko beat Trippier and Mings missed a clearance. The winger lifted high. Could they continue to do so after the goal? The answer was yes, and with a measure of comfort. Sterling ought to have made the game safe on 74 minutes only to blaze over after Mings had nodded a free-kick back to him. The forward can frustrate with his end product but there is no doubt he gets into positions, that he keeps on coming back. One goal was enough for him and England.

# Saracens crush Ealing to close in on immediate return to Premiership

London, June 14 : Saracens have all but secured their return to the Premiership after a thumping eight-try victory at Ealing Trailfinders in the first leg of the Championship final. They take a 60-point lead back to their StoneX Stadium for next Sunday's second leg which will be a mere formality. With Billy Vunipola to the fore and Owen Farrell imperious, put simply, they dished out a lesson to Ealing and perhaps sent a message to the Premiership sides that Saracens will not be making up the numbers next term. Mark McCall had spoken of the excitement in the camp, of how this was a match of equal, perhaps more, importance than some of their historic European triumphs. Saracens could not afford to miss out on bouncing straight back to the Premiership and accordingly served up a vastly powerful performance that Ealing could rarely cope with. "We've got to be Covid-free next week, god knows what would happen if we're not," said McCall. "Hopefully the scoreline today would dictate that. But we've wanted and waited for this opportunity for many months and we were determined to take [it]. Trailfinders have promotion ambitions of their own so the Rugby Football Union's decision to tell them this week that they would be blocked from



doing so even if they somehow overcame Saracens was, if nothing else, awful timing from Twickenham officials. In reality, next season - assuming the Premiership does further expand to 14 teams for the 2022-23 campaign - is more realistic and there can be little shame in being so out played by a side featuring 12 internationals, including half a dozen British & Irish Lions. "Owen [Farrell] was amazing," added McCall. "He lives for these important matches and significant games. I thought he was magnificent. I thought all the players going on tour were fantastic, physically good, right at it, Billy looked like a player who should be going today." Saracens were 27-0 to the good at half-time, with three tries and an obvious ascendancy. They were dominant in pretty much every facet - too powerful for Ealing in attack and robust enough to keep Trailfinders at bay on the rare occasion they threatened the scoreboard.

# Raheem Sterling brings catharsis to England's sun-kissed reemergence



London, June 14 : And, breathe. It was tight, slow-burn and even a little angry at times. But as the final whistle blew a great rolling cheer came crackling around Wembley's vast open tiers from a 18,497 crowd drunk on sun, drunk on England's 1-0 defeat of Croatia and also, it must be said, drunk. At the end of which England's men have made a surefooted start to their Euro 2020 campaign, beating the most dangerous opponents in their group with strength in reserve and knots in the team still to be untangled. Uefa and the English Football Association will be heartened by the efficient path cut through the logistical nightmare of tournament football in the time of plague. Mainly, though, this felt like a kind of coming out, something sweaty, boisterous and agreeably human after the months of seclusion. At the end England's players returned for a strolling lap of the ground, clapping the people in the seats - a grateful, gentle kind of applause, that drew a bellicose cheer from the flag-draped end behind the Croatia goal. The European Championship is the third biggest global sporting event, behind only the Olympics and the World Cup - hence the pitch-side adverts for those renowned footballing "partners" TikTok, Gazprom and the rest. But in those moments there was a reminder of the more minute, familial aspects of sport as the players waved to friends and relatives in the stands. Babies were

waved, small children hoist. The manager, Gareth Southgate, confined himself to courtly handshakes, and a moment of huddled joy with his staff. But England are under way. And while it is always a mistake to expect too much of a sport that is basically a series of collisions dressed up in a flag and tailed for all it's worth, this really is a likeable group of young English footballers. The weather is set fair. Welcome, with all due caveats and fingers crossed, to the summer of Gareth. The new-build mini-city around the stadium had been soggy and woozy with summer heat from mid-morning. A red and white chequerboard of Croats sang and marched and appeared, quite rightly, intent on maintaining their hydration at all times. Passers-by stopped to stare. Uniformed volunteers scuttled and pointed and eased the pinch-points. "Don't take me home, please don't take me home" rang around every corner, but this is home, or somewhere that might start to feel like it again soon. The whole capital seemed to be blinking in the sun, reduced to a state of double-take by all this colour and light. The pitch was a beautiful spectacle, tournament stripes cut into the lime green turf, the air in the gods shimmering. England's players emerged to the strains of Three Lions (Football's Coming Home). Like Christmas carols or wedding hymns some songs never lose their emotional trigger, no matter how

many times they're overplayed. Maybe it's the melancholy, maybe it's the hope. At Wembley that old plonky dirge felt like a warm draft of something reviving. The anthems were thunderously received, God Save The Queen plus social distancing leaving just enough room for the classic arms-spread gesture from which this must be sung, as though frozen in the Y of the YMCA. The knee was taken to a swell of booing from one end, quickly drowned out by applause and cheers. There was a moment of familiar shamelessness last week as Boris Johnson called, with a wink, for England's fans to show a little respect for the gesture. It is to be hoped Johnson's sudden, and no doubt heartfelt, concern can now be extended into undoing his own role in creating such division in the first place. England started smartly, the Declan Rice-Kalvin Phillips double-pivot in midfield, an object of concern for some who yearn for a more cavalier basic setup, functioning well early on. But with 20 minutes gone Southgate was pacing his touchline, shirtsleeved but still sombre-suited, resembling as ever a careworn off-duty detective about to give a heartwarming speech at a summer wedding. England created openings, chances, glimpses. But Croatia were still compact and unhurried. There were more glimpses of the great Luka Modric, a beautifully balanced figure with a unique and oddly sensual relationship with the ball. Modric is approaching his 36th birthday. He no longer looks like small boy dressed up as a witch. He looks like a small boy's dad also dressed up a witch. At half-time, with the score 0-0, there was a first little wash of anxiety over the home support. With 56 minutes gone England abruptly woke up. It will give Southgate immense pleasure that the two players who made England's opening goal of this tournament were two he was under some public pressure to leave out. Phillips, of Leeds, was part of that two-man midfield pivot, evidence, some would say, of Southgate's roundhead tendencies. But he played brilliantly and also made England's goal here with a drive inside and the perfect nudged pass into the run of Raheem Sterling. Sterling had read the moment, and smashed the ball into the middle of the goal as Croatia's Dominik Livakovic dived out of the way. Sterling still looked rusty and off in his touch at Wembley. But he is simply relentless, entirely unafraid, always ready for more. The sight of England's upright, occasionally embattled No 10 being mobbed at the touchline, drawing great rolling waves of England support down from the upper tiers, was agreeably cathartic. He is also a local lad. Sterling grew up playing games on asphalt and AstroTurf in the shadow of Wembley. At times in the past six months he has looked like a player paddling for the end of the swimming pool, a footballer for whom football has become a painful thing, the bubble-bound grind a little too much. At Wembley that goal, the day, the lap at the end felt like a little taste of something lifting.

# Kalvin Phillips' quiet excellence offers England something new and hopeful



London, June 14 : Something strange happens as you approach Wembley Stadium. It vanishes. The sweeping white arch you've been fixing your gaze on for the last three miles of your journey suddenly disappears behind a forest of fancy new high-rise apartments. The vast edifice that looks like an entrance is actually a business hotel. Somehow, the closer you get to one of the world's most famous stadiums, the less you can see of it. For what feels like for ever, Gareth Southgate and his team have had the satnav pointed at this stadium, this game, this date. Every friendly, every training camp, every hopeful trek to the Amex and Turf Moor,

has been aimed at this point. Croatia. Wembley. 13 June. And yet somehow the closer we got, the less we could see of it. Instead, the prologue to England's biggest home fixture in a generation ended up getting obscured in petty bickering, in pointless arguments over fourth-choice right-backs, in a confectioned war over anti-racism gestures. Perhaps the hardest part of an international tournament is maintaining your focus amid this gauntlet of confusions. And at half-time in this game, England looked as if they had lost themselves a little. As if the noise of the last few weeks had drowned out their thoughts. As if they couldn't see the wood

for the knees. On a baking afternoon, they had started brightly but run themselves into confusing dead ends. Croatia and Luka Modric seemed to have the game on strings. In England's own garden, a familiar setting, a stadium festooned with home comforts and the reassuring motifs of the past, a team featuring six of the players who started the 2018 World Cup semi-final between these sides seemed to be sleepwalking towards a very similar outcome. There are few footballing nations as instinctively nostalgic as the English. And for fans of a certain age, as well as large sections of the media, a lot of the mood music around England this tournament has been instinctively tinged with a yearning for Euro 96 or Russia 2018 to happen all over again. What is Three Lions, after all, if not a wistful lament for the past, a plea for things to be as they once were? But this is not 1996 and Phil Foden is not Gazza and on Wembley Way at 1.15pm there were fans desperately administering nasal swabs to themselves in an attempt to get a negative test in time for kick-off. It is the present that is a foreign country these days. Southgate, for his part, had made his own concession to nostalgia by starting a right-footer at left-back, just for old times' sake.

# Joe Root warns it is 'the wrong time to start panicking' after England are routed

London, June 14 : Joe Root has backed the players whose failures with the bat ushered England towards a crushing Test defeat against New Zealand at Edgbaston, insisting that he must shoulder much of the blame for their disappointing performances and that as a group they have the potential to excel in forthcoming Test series against India and the Ashes in Australia. A series of collective failures, particularly in their second innings - England's average score in five completed second innings this year is 136 - as well as the travails of several individual batsmen, has led to widespread criticism of the group assembled for this series. "From what I've seen from this batting lineup, when the pressure comes on, the

intensity of Test cricket, the scrutiny of it, they can't handle it," Sir Alastair Cook told the BBC. "When the pressure comes they are not handling the mental pressure that you need to do. It is a massive area of concern for me." Root, however, insisted that "every single one of those guys has proven they can score big Test runs" and that an overhaul at this point in the team's development would be counterproductive. "I think it would be the wrong time to start panicking and trying to rip up all the hard work we've done for such a long period of time," he said. "It's something that historically we've done

going into big tournaments and big Test series, and it's made things even worse." The captain's own form has not helped: in his past five Tests, Root has averaged 20.7, including innings of four and an excruciating, 61-ball 11 in this match. His troubles have potentially added to the



pressure faced by less experienced players such as Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope and Dan Lawrence, all 23, and the 24-year-old James Bracey, who had such a painful introduction to the international game in this series. "As the leading run-scorer within our squad currently I feel like I've put a lot of pressure on those guys by not performing myself," Root said. "As a captain you pride yourself on getting big runs and leading from the front, and I've not managed to follow through on that. So I've probably compounded the situation slightly." From my point of view, as Test captain, it's about trying to put in performances and help this

group of players win as many games as possible. There are some very talented players around the country, and very talented players in this dressing room, who have done wonderful things in the Test match shirt. We have had a poor week, a poor series, and have got to front up to that. It doesn't make them bad players. "By the time the India series gets under way at Trent Bridge in August England should be strengthened by the returns of some important players missing from this series, with Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler, Moeen Ali and Chris Woakes among the high-profile names ruled out by a combination of injury, rotation and Covid-enforced quarantine.



# England left trailing on and off pitch by clear-thinking New Zealand

**London, June 14 :** The last time New Zealand won a Test series in England, back in 1999, England's fans crowded the outfield and shouted "what a load of rubbish" and "we're shit and we know we are" at the captain, Nasser Hussain, during his post-match interview. The mood was a little more forgiving this time, not because England were any better - they weren't - but because the opposition were. In '99 the result dropped England to the bottom of the world rankings. This time it pushed New Zealand to the top of them. While England were settling down to the grim business of their postmortem, New Zealand's

bigger fish to fry". Latham was too polite to agree with him, but the truth is this summer England find themselves in the awkward position of being the third-best Test team in their own country. They have just been thrashed by a team who were missing their captain and star batsman, Kane Williamson, their wicketkeeper, BJ Watling, and their senior bowler, Tim Southee. In essence they have been beaten by a Second XI from a country who have barely a quarter as many professional players, run by a board with a turnover around an eighth of what the England and Wales Cricket Board rakes in. Joe Root said he

istrators might take a few notes too. After the match Latham summed up New Zealand's approach as "keep it simple". It is about "guys trying to perform their roles as best they can and always putting the team first," he said, "and trying to go out there and play a brand of cricket that we're proud of as Kiwis." "There is something refreshingly straightforward about it all. Play straight, play late, understand who you are and what you're trying to do, worry about the game in front of you. In comparison, English cricket right now seems over-complicated. One can see it in the bizarrely muddled techniques of their young batsmen, and the stark contrast between how they play and the way New Zealand's more experienced players such as Devon Conway and Will Young went about their work. It is there, too, in the incomprehensible rest-and-rotation strategy that left some of England's best Test match players - Jos Buttler, Chris Woakes, Jonny Bairstow and Moeen Ali - playing Twenty20 cricket this week. Woakes is being rested even though he has bowled only 21 competitive overs in the past nine months, and Buttler has been turning out for Lancashire while the hapless James Bracey flaps around behind the stumps. And it's in the team selection, which left their leading wicket-taker this year, Jack Leach (who has taken 28 in six games while no one else has managed more than 17), plugging away in the nets while Root and Dan Lawrence were filling in for him

bowling part-time spin on a turning pitch. It is there in the schedule, which has left their out-of-form batsmen with exactly two first-class matches before the start of the five-match series against India in August because the rest of the summer has been cleared out to make room for a new competition designed to appeal to people who don't like cricket but might if only it was a slightly different sort of sport from the one it is. All of this seems unnecessarily complex. None of it makes much sense. Latham spoke with simple pride about the set-up back home. "The standard of domestic cricket we have back home allows guys to be challenged at first-class level and then come on to the international stage and perform straight away, and that shows our domestic cricket is in a really strong spot." He makes it all sound pretty straightforward. For the Test side he traced their success back to a decision made by the senior leadership team in the run-up to the 2015 World Cup. "We went through a bit of a change a few years ago," he said. "It was six or seven years ago the leadership group sat down and decided that we wanted to try to play a brand of cricket that was true to us as Kiwis." It's about "trying to enjoy our cricket, enjoy each other's company, and putting the team first, and that's something we still hold true. So for us it's been a massive shift." England could do with one of those too. And the World Cup in 2019 was their opportunity. Only two years later everything seems to be even more messy and confusing.



plan was to take a couple of days to celebrate, then start preparing for the World Test Championship final against India in Southampton next week. As one of their journalists put it in a question to the stand-in captain, Tom Latham, the team "have

thought his batsmen could learn from the way the opposition played their cricket in these past two weeks. They are not the only ones who could benefit from studying the way they are doing things in New Zealand. The coaches and admin-

## Barbora Krejickova doubles up at French Open to make mark on history

**London, June 14 :** Not since the 2000 edition of the French Open, when Mary Pierce followed her poignant, emotional singles revival by victoriously teaming up with the great Martina Hingis in doubles, had anyone done the double, winning singles and doubles titles at Roland Garros. But over the past few days, Barbora Krejickova has made the feat look easy. One day after a life-changing afternoon in her tennis career when she beat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova to win a surprise first singles grand slam title, the Czech returned to the same court with her longtime partner, Katerina Siniakova, and they defeated Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Iga Swiatek 6-4, 6-2 in a match between the two most recent singles champions. Krejickova, 25, will now return to No 1 in the doubles rankings and after contesting 15 matches over the past few weeks and spending nearly 22 hours on court, including a quarter-final finish in the mixed doubles, she may now have a rest. Afterwards, Krejickova affirmed she will have to celebrate her double with some champagne, and some time at home, but Wimbledon is already near. "I'm just really looking forward to playing the next tourna-

ment and every tournament," she said. "Right now, after all of this happened these last two weeks, also last days, I just feel really relieved and relaxed." "I just know that from now on I can really enjoy it because I have pretty much achieved everything I always wanted. Now I can just improve. That's the only thing I can do. Just keep improving as all the guys and all the ladies are doing." The comparison between Pierce and Krejickova underlines the rarity of Krejickova's achievement. Pierce herself was a prodigiously talented player who was competing alongside one of the all-time great doubles players in Hingis. Krejickova is treading a completely opposite route. She was simply returning to the discipline that was her primary source of income, pride and success for so long. Krejickova and Siniakova are unique. Doubles players do not usually reach No 1 at 22 years old, but they were one of the most dominant junior doubles teams in history. They teamed up for the first time at the junior French Open in 2013 simply because they had no one else to play with and they won the whole thing. They went on to win junior Wimbledon and the US Open that year, recording a 24-0 win-loss

record in juniors as a team. By 2018 they had reached No 1 on the WTA, winning the French Open and Wimbledon. For so much of their time together, Siniakova has been the better singles player. While Krejickova struggled to break into

nothing. Eight months ago at Roland Garros, she made her debut and reached the fourth round. Since then, she has established herself in the top 100. She reached the final of Dubai, the WTA 1000 tournament, without dropping a set in March. In Rome a



the top 100, Siniakova easily reached the top 50 in 2016 aged 20, peaking at 31st, and has not left the top 100 since. And yet it is Krejickova who became the sixth consecutive first-time female grand slam champion to be crowned at Roland Garros and the third triumphant unseeded player during this period. She is probably the biggest surprise of all of those surprises but it is also a reminder that chaos rarely comes out of

few weeks ago Krejickova had Swiatek on the ropes, holding two match points before eventually losing 3-6, 7-6(5), 7-5. Then she won her first title in Strasbourg just before Roland Garros began. She arrived in Paris full of confidence in her game and it allowed her game to flow in the good moments, to hold up through the tough ones and to mark her as a grand slam champion in both singles and doubles.



## Novak Djokovic rallies to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in epic French Open final

**Paris, June 14 :** After the sheer willpower and strength it took to topple Rafael Nadal on his surface and his court on Friday, Novak Djokovic was charged with returning to the scene two days later and summoning his prime form once more against the second-best clay court of the season. For a fair amount of time during this match it was reasonable to ask if this was a challenge too far, as his own waning energy and the force that is Stefanos Tsitsipas combined to create a two-set deficit for the Serb. Instead, Djokovic pulled off the type of manic recovery he has made look routine for over a decade, recovering to force five sets and eventually defeat Tsitsipas 6-7 (6), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 and win his second French Open title. The world No 1 has now won 19 major titles and he is within touching distance of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal's joint men's record of 20. Having won the Australian Open this year, he is also halfway to the year's grand slam for the second time in his career. Still, the most impressive achievement is that he has become the first man in the open era to win every major, Masters 1000 and ATP Finals title at least twice. A unique, unparalleled accomplishment. "I couldn't be happier and more satisfied with this kind of scenario in the last 48 hours," said Djokovic. "Probably ranks at the top three all time achievements and experiences that I had in my professional tennis career." With just over 11 years between Djokovic and Tsitsipas, this final had the sixth-largest age gap in the history of men's finals in the open era. Men's tennis today is a tale of battling generations, the young versus the eternal, yet the endings at the biggest tournaments remain the same. Djokovic continues to ask the young challengers whether they can stay with him over five sets in the biggest finals, enduring all those mental and physical battles with everything at stake. So far, they cannot. In a high-quality, volatile opening set, Djokovic saved a set point, then badly failed to serve out the set at 6-5. The defining characteristic early on was Tsitsipas's resilience. From 6-5 up in the tie break, Djokovic slammed down two tremendous clutch returns. Tsitsipas struck a beautifully timed forehand winner off the first, then at 6-6 he recovered with a quality defensive slice before hammering down the winning forehand. As the momentum shifted, Tsitsipas took the set. It was reasonable to expect an immediate response, but it did not come. A languid Djokovic

opened the second set with three unforced errors to fall a break down. As the errors continued, Tsitsipas carried on crushing his heavy, destructive forehand, finishing the set with nine winners to just two unforced errors. But Djokovic has recovered so many times in his career from significant deficits, and during his toilet break between the second and third sets, as he struggled with doubting voices in his head, he took the rare action of speaking to himself aloud: "I told myself I can do it, encouraged myself," he said. "I strongly started to repeat that inside of my mind, tried to live it with my entire being." Both players described him as a new player from that point and he quickly got to work. He slowly began to target the Tsitsipas backhand with loopy topspin and he pounced at 2-1 to break serve in a long, tense deuce game that would transform the match. As Djokovic broke serve, he was fully present and he marched through the set, emerging from it having made just four unforced errors. Tsitsipas took a medical timeout at the start of the fourth set for a massage on his lower back and the roles had been reversed. Djokovic handled his business with unrelenting focus while Tsitsipas sprayed two unforced errors to lose his next service game, to which Djokovic responded by flitting through his games and losing just three points on serve. As the crowd chanted his name and he stared down the prospect of a comprehensive ending, Tsitsipas saved a break point in the opening game of the fifth set. But at 1-1, Djokovic piled on pressure with his return, drawing a backhand error with another looping defensive forehand to break again. Despite trailing throughout the set, Tsitsipas never stopped fighting. Down 2-4, he saved two break points. He forced a visibly nervous, passive Djokovic to serve out the match before drilling a backhand winner to save the first match point. He gave a strong account of his character, making it clear over the fortnight that he has everything he needs to one day make this tournament his own. I'm happy with the way I performed, the way I tried things, even if they didn't work," said Tsitsipas. "I don't think I have regrets. Could have easily cried, but I see no reason for me crying because I tried everything. I couldn't come up with anything better." Just not this time. Two points away from No 19, Djokovic bravely took control of his destiny, striking consecutive winners to conclude aptly one of the greatest tournaments he will ever play.

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