

The Assam Rising

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

1 more Covid19 death

Guwahati, June 21 : One more patient succumbed to Covid19 infection in Lower Assam's Dhubri district, taking the district's death toll to 58 while 32 people tested positive in the last 24 hours. The deceased has been identified as 47-year-old Mukhtar Hussain Mondal, a resident of Bangalpara in Bilaspur town. A total of 1501 samples were tested, out of which 32 samples (including one from West Bengal) tested positive on Sunday. With the new cases, the Dhubri district's total Covid19 positive tally increased to 5,411 on Sunday.

KSA hits back

Guwahati, June 21 : The Karbi Students' Association (KSA) has hit back at the NSCN-IM saying that the proposed Karbi Peace Accord is for all the indigenous people. The KSA was reacting to the NSCN-IM's allegations that the Karbi Accord would "override the interests of the Rengma Nagas who are the legitimate owner of the land". "The KSA would like to say that we regard the Rengmas, Dimasas, Kukis, Garos, Khasis, and all scheduled tribes or indigenous inhabitants living in Karbi Anglong as our own. We don't count them as immigrants. They are the indigenous inhabitants of Karbi Anglong and they have equal rights like Karbis," the KSA said in a statement.

Amarnath Yatra Cancelled

New Delhi, June 21: The Amarnath Yatra has been cancelled for the second year in a row amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier, in view of the evolving COVID-19 situation, registration for Amarnath Yatra was temporarily suspended. The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board had said that the situation is being constantly monitored. The 56-day Amarnath Yatra was due to start simultaneously on both routes from June 28 and culminate on Raksha Bandhan, August 22. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir tweeted: "It's important to save people's lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year's pilgrimage in the larger public interest." "The Yatra will be "symbolic only" but "all traditional religious rituals shall be performed at the Holy Cave Shrine," the Lieutenant-Governor's office said.

Assam Government releases fresh SOPs, districts with high positivity rate 'under close watch'



Guwahati, June 21 : The Assam Government has released a fresh set of SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). According to the new SOPs, districts with high positivity rate will be under close watch. "Districts where the total number of cumulative cases and per day cases are still showing persistently high numbers, especially Cachar, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh,

Sonitpur and Nagaon will be under close watch. In case there is no improvement in the COVID status in these districts, stricter restrictions may follow," the new SOPs read. "In case the test positivity of COVID-19 in any area reaches 5% or more in case of urban areas and 10% or more in case of rural areas in the last one week, District Magistrate will notify such Contd...Page 6

Complete lockdown in some dists if Covid cases rise : CM

Guwahati, June 21 : Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday warned of total lockdown in some districts of Assam if the positivity rate does not go down significantly in those areas. The state government may announce a 10-day lockdown in about six to seven districts this week if the positivity rate and overall cases do not improve. These districts seem to be mainly responsible for prolonging the second wave of Covid-19 in the state. "If Covid cases do not decline within a week, we will be compelled to go for a total lockdown for

10 days," Sarma said in Dibrugarh on Sunday, insisting on district-specific curbs. He warned that wherever in-



fection is not being contained, lockdown will be enforced. "In districts like Biswanath, infection has gone up significantly in the last three days. Assessment of the districts will be done on Wednesday," Sarma added. State health minister Keshab Mahanta said Covid curbs may return to even those areas where the situation is better. "In two to three days, we will get the details of the vulnerable districts and areas where fresh restrictions may be imposed," Mahanta said, hinting that the state cabinet on Contd...Page 6

Moriani MLA Rup Jyoti Kurmi formally joins BJP



Guwahati, June 21: Rup Jyoti Kurmi, who recently resigned from the Congress and as Moriani MLA, formally joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during a function at Gerukamukh in Dhemaji district. Rup Jyoti Kurmi submitted his resignation

letter as Moriani MLA to the Assam Assembly Speaker, Biswajit Daimary, on June 18 and also resigned from the primary membership of the Congress. The Congress also expelled Kurmi from the party's primary membership for anti-party activities. Kurmi

joined the saffron party in presence of Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Kurmi, who has been elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly from Moriani constituency on Congress ticket since 2006, donned saffron on Monday. After joining the BJP, Kurmi said, "The BJP formed the government at the Centre after winning the Lok Sabha election in 2014 and the government came under attack from various quarters. We also criticised the BJP government as the Opposition." Also read: Assam: Rup Jyoti Kurmi quits Congress to join BJP, resigns as Moriani MLA "But the people of Assam have seen the good works, that have been done by the BJP government. So, I have joined the BJP keeping in view of the future," Kurmi said. "Besides, I am also feeling very happy today after joining the BJP. My joining in the BJP party has delayed," he Contd...Page 6

Northeast Frontier Railways to operate special trains from Guwahati to Bikaner



Guwahati, June 21 : The Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR) will operate two special trains between Guwahati to Bikaner and Guwahati Contd...Page 6

Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar arrives in Darjeeling on 7-day visit, shown black flags by Trinamool Congress workers

New Delhi, June 21: West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was shown black flags on his in Darjeeling by alleged Trinamool Congress workers on Monday (June 21). Governor Dhankhar is on a seven-day tour to north Bengal. Dhankhar embarked on a week-long visit to north Bengal from



June 21, within a week of demand by certain BJP MPs for carving out a separate Union Territory for the region. A fresh controversy has also erupted with BJP MP John Barla from Alipurduar demanding that North Bengal be made a Union territory, with party Contd...Page 6

Chief Minister Dr. Sarma reviews flood and COVID situation of Dhemaji district

CM stresses on data collection of flow of water of all rivers to enable district administration to pre-empt flood and save life and property



Guwahati, June 21: In view of the flood situation looming large in Dhemaji district, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today reviewed the flood preparedness of the district administration at the conference of DC office, Dhemaji. During the same meeting he also took stock of the COVID-

19 situation as well as its management strategy adopted by the district administration in Dhemaji in presence of Ministers Dr. Ranuj Pegu and Sanjay Kishan and MLA Bhuban Pegu. Dhemaji being a very flood prone district, the Chief Minister made several directions to Contd...Page 6

International Day of Yoga celebrated at Raj Bhavan

Governor appeals everybody to practice yoga on a daily basis to attain physical and mental well being

Guwahati, June 21: With the rest of the nation, Raj Bhavan, Assam too celebrated International Day of Yoga on a virtual mode at its premises today to promote yoga for well being. Assam Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi and his wife the First Lady Smt. Prem Mukhi along with Raj Bhavan officials took active part in it. Speaking on the occasion Governor Prof. Mukhi said, "Yoga promotes both physical and mental well-being. It is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition to the world as it embodies unity of mind and body. Practice of Yoga can promote the holistic health for every individual". On the occasion the Governor hailed the role of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for proposing Yoga in the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 which was approved by 177 co-sponsoring countries to give recognition to



yoga and celebrate the 21st June as the International Day of Yoga. He also said, "In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, though International Day of Yoga was celebrated following all COVID appropriate behaviour, I hope by next year things will get normal and we shall again celebrate the day with all fervour". The Governor on the occasion, appealed to all not to make yoga simply an annual event but efforts should be made to practice it on a daily basis to attain healthy body, mind and soul. It may be noted that more than 1000 persons were connected on the virtual platform for the yoga session through a link as the whole process was facilitated by Amtron. The yoga session was participated by the officials and members of the Directorate of Sports, Assam Police, Marwari Sammelan Guwahati, Byatikram Group, Hindu Jagaran Manch, All Assam Sikh Youth Association, Kreedha Baharti, Marwari Yuva Manch, CRPF 128 Contd...Page 6

Gauhati University's Aswani Kumar Sharma wins Ganga Quest 2021

Guwahati, June 21: Gauhati University's Aswani Kumar Sharma won the first position of Ganga Quest 2021, the results of which were announced on Sunday. Assam youth Aswani Kumar Sharma won the first position of the online quiz contest in Grade IV. The second and third position winners in Grade IV are Praveer, a self-employed youth from Bokaro City in Jharkhand and Shiva Nigam, a professional at HPCL in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur, respectively. The winners of Grade



III are - Rishi Divya Kirti (first), Class XI, Delhi Public School, Bokaro Steel City, Jharkhand; Vihaan Malik (second), Class XII, Delhi Public School, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh; Shreya Agarwal (third), Class XII, GD Goenka Public School, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. The winners of Grade II are - Ashish Pandey (first), Class X, Delhi Public School Ranipur, Haridwar, Uttarakhand; Hariom Gautam (second), Class X, Dalmia Vidya Mandir, Rajgangpur, Odisha; Contd...Page 6

N.F. Railway celebrated International Day of Yoga (IDY-2021)



Guwahati, June 21 : International Day of Yoga (IDY-2021) was celebrated on 21st June, 2021 throughout N.F. Railway- at headquarters, all divisions and workshops to spread awareness among the masses about the importance of Yoga and its effects upon human health. However, this year due to Contd...Page 6

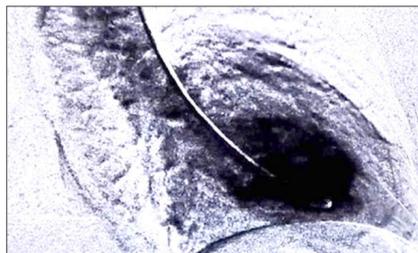


Children cool off at a fountain in Beijing, capital of China

High stress may make 'broken heart syndrome' more likely, study finds

London, June 21 : Two molecules associated with high stress levels have been implicated in the development of broken heart syndrome, a condition that mainly affects post-menopausal women and is usually brought on by severe stress, such as the loss of a loved one. The syndrome, formally known as takotsubo cardiomyopathy, is characterised by weakening of the heart's main pumping chamber and was first identified in 1990 in Japan. It looks and sounds like a heart attack and is consequently often confused for one. Affecting an estimated 2,500 people in the UK each year, the syndrome also carries a risk of complications similar to that of an actual heart attack. It is unclear what causes takotsubo, but sharp spikes in adrenaline caused by acute stress like bereavement, car accidents, earthquakes and even happy events such as weddings are understood to drive loss of movement in part of the heart wall, which then precipitates the acute heart

failure. Two molecules - called microRNA-16 and microRNA-26a - that are linked to depression, anxiety and increased stress levels had previously been detected in the blood of takotsubo patients. Researchers assessed the impact of exposing cells from human hearts (taken from organs that were unsuitable for transplants) and rat hearts to the two molecules. Afterwards, both sets of heart cells were more sensitive to adrenaline, they wrote in the journal Cardiovascular Research. In patients with takotsubo, the bottom of the heart stops beating, and the top of the heart beats more, said the lead study author, Dr Liam Couch from Imperial College London. "Basically, we found the exact same thing happens when we increase the exposure to the molecules [in an experimental setting]. It reproduced exactly what happens in takotsubo, so it made it more likely for the takotsubo to occur." Overall, the findings appeared to link long-term stress and the dramatic takotsubo response to a sudden shock. However, the problem is that it is not possible, for now, to diagnose takotsubo in patients before it happens, making it difficult to test whether these molecules are elevated



in real-life cases, Couch explained. "But if we know someone's had takotsubo, theoretically we can measure these molecules, and then predict if they're likely to have it again, because there's a one in five chance that they could have it again," he said. Joel Rose, chief executive of the charity Cardiomyopathy UK, said the study provided important insights on a less well known and poorly understood form of cardiomyopathy. "It has the potential to improve our understanding of who may be more susceptible to developing the condition and subsequent improve our ability to manage its impact," he said. Further research is needed, said Prof Metin Avkiran, the associate medical director at the British Heart Foundation, to "determine if drugs that block these microRNAs could be the key to avoiding broken hearts".

PM addresses on the occasion of seventh International Yoga Day

Delhi, June 21 : The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has said the despite the pandemic, this year's theme for International Yoga Day - "Yoga for wellness" has raised the morale of people and he wished for health of every country, society and individual and hoped that we will be united and will strengthen each other. He was speaking on the occasion of seventh International Yoga Day, today. The Prime Minister talked of Yoga's role during the pandemic. He said Yoga has proved a source strength and poise for people during this difficult time. He pointed out that it was easy for countries to forget Yoga Day during the pandemic as it is not intrinsic to their culture but, instead, enthusiasm for Yoga has increased globally. Yoga helped people to muster confidence and strength to fight with the pandemic world over. The Prime Minister recalled how frontline Corona warriors made Yoga their shield and made themselves strong through



yoga and how people, doctors nurses took to Yoga to deal with the effects of the virus. He said experts are stressing the importance of breathing exercises like pranayama and anulom-vilom for strengthening our respiratory system. Quoting great Tamil saint Thiruvalluvar, the Prime Minister said yoga goes to the root cause of disease and is instrumental in healing. He expressed satisfaction that globally, research is being conducted in the healing properties of Yoga. He noted studies on immunity through yoga and children doing yoga during

their online classes. He said this is preparing children to fight Corona. The Prime Minister emphasized the holistic nature of yoga and said that it takes care of physical health as well as mental health. Yoga brings us in touch with our inner strength and protects us from all sorts of negativities. Stressing on positivity of yoga, the Prime Minister said "The shift from silos to union is Yoga. A proven way to experience, a realisation of oneness is Yoga." In this regard he quoted Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore "the meaning of our self is not to be found in its separateness from God and others, but in the ceaseless realization of yoga, of union." Prime Minister said that the mantra of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which India has followed since ages, is now finding global acceptance. We all are praying for each other's wellbeing. If there are threats to humanity, Yoga often gives us a way of holistic health. "Yoga also gives us a happier way of life. I am sure, Yoga will

continue playing its preventive, as well as positive role in healthcare of masses" said Prime Minister Modi. The Prime Minister announced that India and WHO took an important step today. World is getting M-Yoga app which will provide many videos of yoga training based on common yoga protocol in many languages. Terming this as a great example of fusion of modern technology and ancient science, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that m-yoga app will help in spreading yoga world over and will contribute to the efforts of 'One World One Health'. Quoting from Gita, The Prime Minister said we need to continue moving on the collective journey of yoga as yoga has solution for everyone. It is important that yoga reaches to every person while keeping intact its foundation and core. Yoga acharyas and all of us should contribute in this task of taking yoga to everyone, said the Prime Minister.

Armenian PM wins snap election as rival alleges fraud

London, June 21 : The party of Armenia's prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, has won 53.9% of the vote in snap parliamentary polls called in an effort to defuse a political crisis after a war with Azerbaijan, official results show. An alliance led by his rival, ex-leader Robert Kocharyan, came second with 21%, according to the results based on ballots from 100% of precincts counted. A winning party or bloc needs to obtain at least 50% of seats plus one and can be assigned additional seats in order to form a government. Pashinyan hours earlier claimed victory based on early results, but Kocharyan's grouping swiftly contested the vote and alleged election fraud. A record four electoral

blocs and 21 parties ran for election on Sunday. The vote has been seen as a two-horse race, with both Pashinyan, 46, and Kocharyan, 66, drawing massive crowds in the run-up to the polls. "The people of Armenia gave our Civil Contract party a mandate to lead the country and personally me to lead the country as prime minister," Pashinyan announced early on Monday. "We already know that we won a convincing victory in the elections and we will have a convincing majority in parliament," he added, urging supporters to turn up at Yerevan's main square Monday evening. Kocharyan's electoral bloc said it would not recognise Pashinyan's

quick claim to victory, which came when just 30% of precincts had been counted. "Hundreds of signals from polling stations testifying to organised and planned falsifications serve as a serious reason for lack of trust," the bloc said in a statement, adding it would not "recognise" the results until the "violations" were studied. Earlier on Sunday evening, the general prosecutor's office said it had received 319 reports of violations. It said it had opened six criminal probes, all of which concerned bribes during campaigning. The vote was being followed by Armenia's Soviet-era master Russia, arch-foe Azerbaijan and Turkey, which backed Azerbaijan in the six-week war over

the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh last year. Despite stifling heat, nearly 50% of about 2.6 million eligible voters cast their ballots, election officials said. Some observers said turnout in the South Caucasus country of three million people was higher than expected. During a campaign marred by polarising rhetoric, Pashinyan had said he expected his party to secure 60% of the vote. Election officials said the vote was conducted in accordance with Armenia's legislation. Kocharyan was himself accused of rigging a presidential election in favour of his hand-picked ally and presiding over a deadly crackdown on protesters in 2008.

Woman to stand trial in France for killing stepfather after years of abuse



Paris, June 21 : On Monday, a French woman, Valérie Bacot, will walk into a court to be tried for killing her stepfather turned husband. She has admitting shooting him dead and believes she should be punished. In her defence, she is expected to tell the hearing at Chalons-sur-Saône in Burgundy how Daniel "Dany" Polette made her life hell from the day he raped her when she was 12, to the day he died 24 years later while prostituting her. Bacot, who had four children with her alleged abuser, will say how she was convinced Polette would kill them all and how everyone knew he was a violent sexual predator but nobody said or did anything. And she will tell how when the children went to the gendarmes - twice - to report the abuse, they were told to go away and tell their terrified

mother to come in herself. She will say she had nowhere to go, nobody to turn to, no money and was so under Polette's control she had no idea how to escape her daily terror of threats and violence. The trial will once again shine a light on domestic violence in France and comes after a week in which three women were killed by former partners in a country that has one of the highest rates of femicide - classed here as the murder of a woman by a current or former partner - in Europe. So far this year at least 55 women have been killed by a current or ex partner in France. In May, Fayard, one of France's best-known publishing houses, published Bacot's story: Tout le Monde Savait (Everyone Knew). The book makes grim reading: 198 pages detailing the relentless misery that began when Bacot, whose alcoholic mother and largely absent father had divorced, was 12 and stepfather Polette forced her to have sex. At the time she says she had no

idea what he was doing and only realised after a biology lesson at school. Polette was jailed for incest in 1995, but was allowed to return to the family home after three years and continued to rape Bacot. "Nobody seemed to find it bizarre that Daniel came back to live with us as if nothing had happened," she writes. "Everyone knew but nobody said anything." Soon he was raping her again. One day she heard her mother say: "I don't give a damn as long as she doesn't become pregnant." At 17 she did become pregnant and Polette installed her in a flat as his wife. Three more children followed, along with almost daily beatings. Bacot writes that she and the children lived in fear of provoking Polette's ire. He broke her nose, hit her over the head with a hammer, arranged for her to have lesbian encounters, which he filmed, and kept her a virtual prisoner. She was not allowed to speak to anyone when she went out shopping and he had his friends and relatives spy on her, she recounts. Then Polette decided he would retire and prostitute Bacot. She recalls her youngest child finding a card Polette had made and asking what "escort girl" meant. Polette pimped his wife in in the back of his Peugeot 806 that he fitted with a

mattress, while spying on her with clients and giving her instructions via an earpiece. He had a pistol, he said, just in case a client turned nasty. If Bacot didn't do what he demanded, he beat her, she told investigators. On 13 March, after she was raped by a client, she took the pistol her husband hid between the car seats and shot him. "This is a woman who has been destroyed and devastated, not just by the lack of maternal love, the rapes, the blows, the denigration, the prostitution but also and above all by the indifference and the omerta of society," write Bacot's lawyers, Janine Bonagguinta and Nathalie Tomasini, in the preface. "From her earliest age she was put through terrible things without anyone, not even those close to her, blinking an eye. They ignored her distress and her ordeal, which could be read on her face. The story of her life is deeply distressing." The case echoes that of Jacqueline Sauvage who became a cause célèbre for campaigners against violence towards women and girls. Sauvage was married for 47 years to a violent alcoholic who she said raped and beat her and her three daughters and abused her son. In September 2012, the day after her son hanged himself, Sauvage shot her husband.

New EU rules would permit use of most polymers without checks, experts warn

London, June 21 : New rules on chemicals to be debated by the EU this week would allow most polymers to be used without further checks, according to a group of scientists. Only about 6% out of about 200,000 polymers would require extensive safety checks under proposals being discussed as part of Europe's Reach chemicals regulations. This is too little, and would allow many common plastics to be used despite valid concerns about their possible future harms, according to a group of 19 scientists who have written to the European Commission. The European Environmental Bureau, an NGO, says exceptions to the safety checks include polystyrenes, which have been linked to lung inflammation in rats; polyacrylamides used in the treatment of wastewater, adhesives and food packaging, which can degrade to the monomer acrylamide, a neurotoxin; polyesters used in textiles, which are sources of microplastics; and polyolefins, also a source of microplastics. A report for the European Commission concluded that some plastics could have harmful impacts if unchecked. The commission said the proposals were at an early stage, and further discussion would take place on Tuesday. A spokesperson said: "This meeting will discuss some technical aspects of how to register polymers, but not yet discuss the final outcome of how polymers shall be registered, and there is no draft regulation available yet." "We have seen the IPCP publication [the letter signed by 19 scientists] and we will, to the extent possible, take the concerns raised into consideration while advancing our proposal. As the commission proposal for the registration of polymers is not yet finalised, we cannot disclose further information or comment on the estimated number of polymers that need to be registered." Bethanie Carney Almroth, an associate professor of ecotoxicology at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and a signatory to the letter, said: "The main goal of the [EU] process should be to ensure a high level of protection of people and environmental health. But our main concern is regarding the lack of data and lack of transparency. There is not enough data to ensure the safety of thousands of polymers in production, even if toxicity has not been demonstrated yet." She said regulators should

abide by the precautionary principle, by which new substances should not be assumed to be harmless, but the onus should be on the producers to demonstrate that they are safe. She added: "Plastic use is pervasive, and [the term] polymers goes beyond plastics to include many more types of products used in numerous applications throughout society. So the question of exposure is significant, and not negligible. There are studies indicating some polymers or their monomers/oligomers can cause negative impacts for



human health, including hormone disruption and cancerogenicity. There are data showing that these effects can occur in organisms in the environment." Ksenia Groh, another signatory, who is group leader of bioanalytics for Eawag, the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, said: "Data about the risks of specific polymers are scarce to nonexistent. Up to now, a transparent, comprehensive data collection on the safety of all polymers has not been carried out. Absence of data does not equal absence of harm. It just means that we don't know ... It's not the public, government, consumers or scientists who should provide this data, but the producer themselves." Dolores Romano, chemicals policy acting manager at the European Environmental Bureau, said the increasing pervasiveness of microplastics in the environment showed that polymers could now be finding their way into our bodies in ways that are more harmful than regulators have anticipated. She called on the European Commission to act. Romano said: "Polymer pollution is out of control. We are exposed to it daily, as they are used in plastic, textiles, cleaning products and even cosmetics. We used to think of plastic pollution as bulky junk massing in the environment. Now we know that it breaks up into a vast cloud of micro- and nanoplastics contaminating the land, water and air, as well as showing up in our bodies."



Palestinian refugee children play in Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip



Vaccine for all- Press Conference addressed by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch Claiming Patent Free Covid vaccine Product

Virtual Bishnu Prasad Rabha Day Observed

Dharapur, June 21 : The Bangara Cluster, under the educational block of Kamrup Rural district organized an online conference on the topic "Song of Bishnu Prasad Rabha" on June 20. The programme was celebrated on the occasion of death anniversary of Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. The programme was started with a Bishnu Rabha Sangeet which was sung by a teacher of Bangara pachanipara MV School named Nagen Chandra Das. Programme was inaugurated by Kamrup Rural District Programme Officer Sangita Goswami. The keynote address of the conference was delivered by special guest Debahuti Saikia, an assistant teacher of Panbazar LP School under the Kamrup Metro district and she was also a resource person of the same district. She spoke lucidly on the theme of the conference and sung various kalaguru's songs. Apart from these, there were also performed Bishnu Prasad Rabha's song and Poem by the students named Jupitora Kalita, Junmoni Baishya, Kasturi Nath and a guardian representative. The Programme was organized virtually because of the ongoing COVID pandemic and the programme was smoothly anchoring by Dipashri Dutta, an assistant teacher of Bangara Talukdarpara LP School. She also described about the Kalaguru's life history. There were par-

icipated lots of teachers, students and parents under the said cluster. The special thanks was given by the CRCC Kabita Das. She was thankful to all participants for their co-operation and participation in the programme.

Several Organisations' observed 'International Yoga Day' in Hojai District

Hojai, June 21: In synchronisation with rest of the World, 7th International Yoga Day was observed by various institutions and individuals in Hojai District too on Monday. Hojai District Sports Association (HDSA) organised 'One hour Yoga Session' at Netaji Subhash Chandra Indoor Stadium. Former MLA of Hojai Constituency and current President of HDSA Shiladitya Deb graced the occasion along with other dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, Deb said, "Yoga is originated from our motherland India, it is a precious gift for a healthy and prosperous life, everyone should take its benefits." Around 100 people did Yoga here maintaining Covid Protocol. On the other hand, Marwari Samellan Hojai Unit organised a Yoga programme at Laxminarayan Temple. Yoga trainer Madan Saha, Kabita Saika and Antara Saika demonstrated different asanas to the members and thereby beautifully explained their significance. Talking to this Correspondent,



Pradeep Sureka and Ramesh Mundra said Yoga should not be restricted to oneday but it should be an integral part of human life. They further appealed everyone to inculcate Yoga in daily life for a positive and stress-free life. Meanwhile, Hojai District Administration also observed the day at Shiksha Bhawan located at Sankardevnagar. With the theme for Yoga Day 2021: 'Yoga for Well Being' which throws light on how Yoga is indispensable to a healthy state of mind and body in these turbulent times of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Students of Sankardev Senior Secondary School and KMK Memorial Academy also observed the day with enthusiasm through a Virtual Meet.

Indian Army Unit Conducted Yoga Day With Local Youth To Instill A Sense of Fitness



Rupai, June 21: Rupai Battalion of Indian Army under Spear Corps observed 7th International Yoga Day on 21st Jun 2021 with utmost vigor and zeal. All ranks of the battalion came together to participate in the coveted event and took a pledge to always remain physically and mentally healthy. As a prologue to the Yoga Day on 21 June, various events like poster making competition, quiz test etc related to Yoga were also organised over a week long schedule. The Youth from NSS also came together to join hands in learning Yoga and participated in the conduct. The event presented them an opportunity to interact with the Army Personnel and learn about life in the services. The complete event was observed while adhering to all COVID protocols.

Plantation Drive at Khanapara Hills

Guwagti, June 21 : A massive plantation drive was carried out by Kamrup East Division of Forests at Khanapara Hill adjacent to Amchang area today. As this season with the onset of monsoon is an ideal time for plantation

it was being carried out for last two days. It was participated by Revenue authorities, Police Authorities and some local people. Variety of local species of more than 550 number of seedlings were planted in the area.

Rabha Divas observed in Biswanath



BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 21 : Like rest of the state many organizations of Biswanath Chariali had observed Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha divas maintaining Covid protocol on Sunday. The Biswanath district committee of Assam Sahitya Sabha in association with Biswanath Chariali branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha had celebrated Rabha Divas at Sahitya Sabha Bhawan, here. The programme conducted by Anjan Bora, secretary of the district committee was attended by Indra Prasad Saikia as an appointed speaker. Kamal Chandra Bhuyan, president of the literary body, offered floral tribute. The programme was also attended by Hiranya Hazarika, Hiren Bora, Hemanta Saikia along with others. The 52nd death anniversary of the music maestro was celebrated by Biswanath district committee of AJYCP in collaboration with Biswanath town committee of AJYCP and Dakshin Chariali branch of AJYCP. The members of

the committee including Diganta Barua, Naser Ahmed, Nihar Saikia, Najir Hussain, Arnab Bora, Jatin Bora offered floral tribute and lit up ceremonial lights in front of the portrait of Rabha. Like rest of the state, many organizations of the greater Jamugurihat had celebrated Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha divas on Sunday. Udayan Kala Parishad, a socio-cultural organization of Samar Dalani had organized an online multilingual poetry circle in connection with Rabha divas on Google Meet platform. Ganga Dhakal, president of Udayan Kala Parishad lit up the ceremonial lamps in the beginning of the programme and forwarded a welcome address. Dr. Chintamani Sarma, principal of Biswanath College graced the occasion as an appointed speaker who had highlighted the life, works and cultural contributions of the music maestro that was followed by a multilingual poetry circle was held with Chhatraman Subba, a known critic in the chair. Poets including Purna Kumar Sarma, Bhuvan Lamsal, Arjun Nirola, Kamal Sarma, Debaki Bhandari, Krishnaneel Karki, Pragya Devi, Dakhina Gajurel, Puja Acarya, Puspa Dahal, Dr. Chinatamani Sarma and Anjan Baskota read out self composed poems in Assamese, Nepali, Hindi and Bangla languages. Ganga Dhakal offered a vote of thanks.

Maha Abhiyan on Covid-19 Free Vaccination Launched in W/Siang, Shi-Yomi Districts

Aalo, June 21 : The Maha Abhiyan on Covid-19 Free Vaccination was launched in W/Siang by West Siang Deputy Commissioner Shri Moki Loyi and Brand Ambassador for Covid-19 Awareness, former National Football Goalkeeper and Coach Shri Gumpe Rime amid fanfare by cutting cake at General Hospital Premises today. The Doctor Representative from WHO, Doctors, nurses and medical staffs also witnessed the launching ceremony. In a brief function held on the occasion, the DC and Rime lauded the outstanding roles played by the HCWs and FLWs in containing the dreaded disease in the first and second waves to save lives of the people. Vaccination drive must go on in war footing as no one knows when third wave may also sweep us again as prevention is always better. The DMO Dr. Moli Riba and DFWO, Dr. Tomar Kamki disclosed that vaccination process will go as per long drawn plan to give adequate coverage to the people, particularly in the no network zone. Those who have got the slots online will administered vaccination in the morning hours and elaborate arrangement have been made to carry out spot registrations in the afternoon sessions. They urged everyone to cooperate with the medical department in their mission, " Covid-19 Vaccine for All". The Maha Abhiyan for free Covid-19 vaccine in the Shi-Yomi District was launched by the Deputy Commissioner Shri Mito Dirchi CHC Mechuka amid gaiety.



Tribute to Bishnu Prasad Rabha at Maryam Ajmal Women's College of Science and Technology Declaration of the results of State Level Literary Competition

Hojai, June 21: Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha has been specially honoured with various events, organised by the Department of Assamese, Maryam Ajmal Women's College of Science and Technology. With a view to observe Rabha Divas, college-based competitions such as Quiz, Painting and Singing have been organized through the online platform. A Special Session has been arranged from 7 p.m. through google meet in presence of Dr. Ajit Bharali, HOD Department of Assamese. Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit & Ancient Study University, Nalbari ; he has delivered an informative speech on "The Context of Vishnu Prasad Rabha's Life-Philosophy in Recent Times". Dr. Samim Sofika Begum, College Inspector of Ajmal Groups of Colleges inaugurated the program. Also, Basanta Saikia performed a Rabha song with his melodious voice at the Inauguration Cer-

emony and impressed the audience. On the other hand, the results of the State Level Article and Poetry Writing Competition were also announced at the evening session. Following the results, first position: Dhanmani Das, second position: Mrigank Kalita, third position: Zulfa Siddika in the "A" section of Poetry Competition; & First: Mehboobul Rahman, Second: Amir Sohail Bulbul, Third: Biki Rajak in the "B" section. On the other hand, in Article Competition Yasmina Ali achieved first, 2nd position: Mocksima Zaman, 3rd position: Hanan Ali; and Jahnabi Nath got 1st place, Prity Singh received 2nd, Lakhimi Borthakur got 3rd in the "B" section of Article Competition. HOD Rajiv Hussain, Coordinator Gouri Prasad Sarmah and Assistant Professor Prerona Talukdar conveyed thanking note to everyone for successful completion of the programme.

National Reading Day observed

SIPAJHAR, June 21: Along with the rest of the country the National Reading Day was observed to honour the life and works of late PM Panicker at Doulguri under the auspices of Doulguri Gian Uday Puthibharal on June 19. The discussion organised as part of the celebration of 26th edition of National Reading Day was pre-

sided over by Paban Kumar Kalita, President of the Puthibharal. Addressing the discussion Harin Kalita, religious minded senior member of the Puthibharal highlighted his experience as one of the reader of religious books. Bhargab Jyoti Hazarika, Assistant secretary, Bhaba Jyoti Saharia, Vice President and Mathura Mohan

Deka, Advisor of the Puthibharal also discussed on the topic of celebration of the National Reading Day. In his presidential address Paban Kumar Kalita discussed on the life and contributions of late Puthuvayil Narayana Panicker who was regarded as the father of the library movement of Kerala. The discussion has decided to set up the family library covering the entire locality.

Inter School Online Bishnu Rabha Song Competition Held

Golaghat, Jun 21: Under the aegis of four leading government educational institutions in Golaghat namely Golaghat Govt Bezbaruah HS School, Dergaon HS School, Kakodunga HS School and Nabhanga Bapuji High School and in association with First Five Group an inter school online Bishnu Rabha

song competition was held yesterday to mark the occasion of Rabha Divas. Chief Co ordinator of First Five Group Dr Devojit Baruah anchored the competition. Before starting the competition a song of Kalaguru Bishnu Rabha was performed by Subject Teacher of Music from Golaghat Govt Bezbaruah

HS School Bobita Baruah. The competition was inaugurated by the Inspector of Schools Golaghat Dr Sameeran Bora. Retired professor and renowned filmmaker Dinesh Gogoi delivered a speech on the life of Bishnu Rabha. Golaghat District Adhibidya Parishad Secretary Phatik Gogoi was present as distinguished guest. Total eighteen selected students from the four schools participated in this competition. The competition was judged by Bobita Baruah, Mandira Borthakur, Gitarthi Thakur and Mousumi Das. The co ordinators of this online competition Sameerjyoti Medhi, Dhruvajyoti Saikia, Diganta Kumar Nath and Suresh Pujari thanked all the participants, guests and judges for making it successful. The results of the competition will be declared in a Webinar on Mathematics which will be held on Wednesday .

International Yoga Day Celebrated

Hojai, 21 June : International Yoga Day has been observed today by the NSS Unit of Maryam Ajmal Women's College of Science & Technology, Hojai, maintaining all the Covid-protocols, following the Common Yoga Protocol given by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The program was conducted at 7am through Google meet in presence of students, faculties and Resource Person of the session, Hridayananda Tamuli Phukan, Yoga National Referee and State Referee (Under Yoga Federation

of India) & State Yogasana Sports Referee (Yogasana Sports Association, Assam) PhD Scholar in Yogic Science & Naturopathic, MSSV, Nagaon. The Program was started with a prayer by the students and Welcome Speech delivered by Dr. Pritom Jyoti Sarmah, Principal of the institution. All the NSS volunteers along with their families actively participated in the programme. Mrs. Debashri Kakati, Coordinator & Assistant Professor stated this to press through a press note.

International Yoga Day celebrates in Barpeta

Barpeta, June 21: The seventh International Yoga Day was celebrated today in the world as well as in Barpeta. District commissioner Tej Prasad Bhusal officially inaugurated the central yoga day function organized by the district administration at the auditorium of Madhab Chaudhary College in Barpeta with the burning of the yoga day. In his speech on the occasion, he said that yoga helps in keeping our body as well as our mind healthy. Therefore, he said that today the entire world has officially recognized such an impeccable contribution to ancient Indian civilization through the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also urged each and every one to inculcate the habit of performing yoga in their daily routine for a healthy body and a sound mind. Additional Deputy Commissioner Nabjit Pathak and Lakhimi Dutta along with other district officials also participated in the inau-



gural function conducted by district information and public relations officer Bikash Sharma. After the inaugural function Yog Guru Rubul Mishra makes everyone practice yoga and pranayama. He also explained the usefulness of yoga practices. Mishra was assisted by Rupam Oja and Babimani Das. The event was attended by a limited number of local citizens and the officials of various departments. It may be mentioned

that this International yoga day is held this time with a very limited number of people keeping in view the risk of an epidemic of Covid-19. In connection with International yoga day, an online essay competition on the topic "The Role of Yoga" among class 9 to 12 students was organized in the education department initiative. It may be mentioned here that International Yoga Day is being widely observed across the district.

Enhanced COVID-19 vaccination drive gets underway in Nazira

Nazira, 21 June: The Nazira Sub-Divisional administration has intensified the COVID-19 vaccination drive as per the recent directives of the Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. In order to ensure successful implementation of the program, the SDO(c) Sabyasachi Kashyap on Monday visited a number of covid vaccination centres (CVCs) mainly catering to the tea-garden labourers and their family members in tea-tribe dominated areas. With the aim of achieving last-mile vaccination in the sub-division, the SDO(c) took stock of the preparedness on the part of the officials and personnel involved in



the vaccination process, while urging them to ensure that every single residence of such areas are vaccinated. He further appealed to the concerned citizens and civil society groups working in tea garden areas to help the administration in mitigating all inhibitions regarding vaccination among certain sections of people, rising out of rumours doing the rounds through various medium. "To keep the virus at bay, it has to be eradicated from the entire subdivision in general and the tea gardens in particular", the SDO(c) said.

WARREN TEA LIMITED
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NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Regulation 47 of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on 29th June, 2021 at Kolkata to consider, inter-alia, the Audited Financial Results for the year ended 31st March, 2021.
For Warren Tea Limited (Soma Chakraborty)
Company Secretary

Place : Kolkata
Dated : 21st June, 2021
This information may be accessed on the Company's website www.warrentea.com and the same has also been forwarded to the stock exchanges for dissemination on their websites i.e. www.bseindia.com and www.cse-india.com

THE ASSAM RISING

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Sustainability has been a success story

Some of the most striking images from the early days of the pandemic, when public health orders and lockdowns ground economies to a halt, were the arresting photos of the Himalayas, suddenly visible from across northern India, as decades of unrelenting smog finally abated. Unbelievably, some locals glimpsed the immense mountain range for the first time in their lives. It's never too late to clear things up. And the pandemic has revived a movement that has its roots in the 18th century, when the word "sustainability" was first coined (in German) to describe a new approach to forestry enabling a continual harvest of wood. It's a movement widely believed to have entered the mainstream with the 1987 Our Common Future report - a UN-backed initiative, overseen by Norway's then prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, which laid out an ambitious pathway towards a "sustainable economy". This left us with the enduringly relevant definition of sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Historians of the future will see the last year as a major turning point in world history, and perhaps even the dawn of a new era. The enforced economic slowdown of the pandemic, which inadvertently drove down emissions and induced simple living (gardening, sour dough, local hiking!), provides new momentum for recalibrating cultural values and changing the very trajectory of our globalised industrial society. In many ways, sustainability has been a success story. It has driven an unprecedented increase in renewable energy, revived local and organic food markets, led to the start of the phasing out of single-use plastics, catalysed circular economy systems and sparked an unprecedented normalisation and institutionalisation of sustainability within governments, NGOs, corporations and universities, making many organisations less wasteful, more energy-efficient and more committed to the "triple bottom line", which means weighing equally social, environmental and financial wellbeing. The rise of theories such as Kate Raworth's "doughnut economics", adopted by the city of Amsterdam, offer exciting new ways for such ideas to be further adapted. Moreover, sustainability has had an enormous impact on consumer behaviour, driving sales in everything from shade-grown coffee, environmentally friendly bath products and Fair Trade chocolate, to investor decisions. So-called ESG investments (ones that support environment, social wellbeing and good governance) captured \$51.1bn of net new money from investors in 2020. Increasingly, consumers want to see their values reflected in their spending and investing habits. On balance, however, the sustainability movement has failed to solve the most pressing social, economic and environmental challenge of the day - climate change, and the fossil-fuelled economic growth that sits as its principal driver. Hence the increasing urgency from activists and climate scientists alike. The Paris climate agreement of 2016 was certainly a win for sustainability, but it took far too long to get all of the world's countries on the same page. Sustainability wasn't mainstream, or widely seen as a priority, until around 2000. Before that the pressure to act on sustainability came largely from specialised interest groups, including climate scientists, energy specialists, some policymakers, ecological economists and simple living advocates who had been inspired by environmentalism. As a result, the major milestones in the history of sustainability are largely institutional, methodological and top-down in nature - the 1987 Montreal protocol that banned ozone-depleting substances, the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988, the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, among others. These milestones have had beneficial impacts, but they did not result in the systemic transformations that was their original intent. As 2030 climate targets bear down upon us, our inability to solve the major crisis of our age serves as a potent reminder of why much of the pandemic-era slowdown must, in some form, remain. The smartest jurisdictions figured out how to advance sustainability during the pandemic and make the most of the precipitous decline in traffic congestion. Cities from Milan to Mexico City and Mumbai took tangible steps to advance active transportation, build new bike lanes and create "the 15-minute city". A realistic goal will be for communities to come together and decide cooperatively on a new, sustainable, low-impact vision for the future that would undoubtedly include more robust healthcare, emergency and basic support systems. In a survey, around two thirds of Europeans said they did not want to return to pre-pandemic levels of air pollution. That dream will become a reality only with a concerted effort. It is no longer heretical to observe that economic growth will not, and cannot, solve our climate crisis. From spring 2020 until the early months of 2021, absolute emissions worldwide decreased for the first time in decades, by an average of 26%. Sadly, the early signs from 2021 suggest that emissions are already bouncing back. The economic downturn of 2008 slowed emissions growth, but we haven't witnessed an absolute dip since the USSR broke apart, creating a temporary slowdown in the world economy. It is now time to face this elephant in the room - that more growth means more emissions. We, of the wealthy global north, must find ways to create prosperity without aggregate economic growth. Promise comes, too, from the energy sector, where peak oil seems finally to have occurred, thanks in part to the pandemic. Demand for oil fell by 9% in 2020, and although it's already rebounding, it is clear that we're witnessing the global plateauing of fossil fuel demand. What a post-fossil fuel economy will look like is anyone's guess, but one clear takeaway from the pandemic is that we cannot return to self-centred and worry-free air travel. People need to stop flying, or at the very least, to fly far less often, and only out of absolute necessity - as in the case of a death in the family. Happily, we finally have the fossil fuel companies against the wall. Shell was recently ordered to limit emissions in a historic court case, and both ExxonMobil and Chevron recently had shareholder revolts over climate concerns. The divestment movement grows daily. With sustained pressure, we will see a near-complete receding of fossil fuel consumption over the next two decades, even if China stubbornly drags its feet. As we look ahead to the After Times of the pandemic, we can mitigate our collective trauma by making meaning from the suffering we've endured and by reviving a flagging sustainability movement. Let us learn to normalise and enjoy the low-carbon, low-cost, simple pleasures that truly sustain us.

If this is how they react to taking the knee, please keep politicians out of sport



"Let's keep politics out of football this summer," intoned Nigel Farage, a politician, releasing his second video about football in a 24-hour period. Nigel has reached the top, which is to say that he now operates out of a loft conversion in an undisclosed location. From this nerve centre, he also kept politics out of sport by tweeting multiple times about the decision to suspend a test cricketer for historical tweets. Could fans get Nigel to say the exact opposite for coins on Cameo? It'll cost you £75 to find out. Either way, Farage was joined in his Corinthian endeavours by culture war secretary Oliver Dowden, who informed the world that the England and Wales Cricket Board had gone "over the top ... and should think again". Like Boris Johnson, meanwhile, Oliver seemingly feels unable to condemn those people booing England footballers who take the knee before matches - but he would doubtless feel way more comfortable condemning the very noisy section of England supporters who follow No Surrender on the fourth line of the national anthem at every single fixture. And yet, I'm going to shock you, Oliver: THEY'RE THE SAME PEOPLE. A small minority, yes, but the same small minority. If, as rather a lot of people are suggesting, we "need to listen" to the message they're sending with the booing of the footballers' anti-racist gesture, then I guess it follows that we "need to listen" to their message of totally inco-

herent sectarianism. I mean, I know it's been linked to the BNP and the EDL and the National Front. But if people are doing a thing, then the government's position seems to be that that thing needs to be listened to and taken on board, as opposed to treated as something a minority of nasty twats are getting up to after several pints. Speaking of several pints, it is herent sectarianism. I mean, I know it's been linked to the BNP and the EDL and the National Front. But if people are doing a thing, then the government's position seems to be that that thing needs to be listened to and taken on board, as opposed to treated as something a minority of nasty twats are getting up to after several pints. Speaking of several pints, it is

Marina Hyde

likes of Farage or Fox or Johnson. And whenever one of these walks up to what I imagine they'd call the penalty crease to sky some completely basic point about football, all I can think is: SHE DOESN'T EVEN GO HERE. What are you even doing, guys? Why are you here? Without Googling, tell me where the last Euros were hosted. Let's face it, you couldn't even tell us which two teams were in the FA Cup final. Come back when you can beat a nine-year-old on the trivia. The fish-out-of-water format was typified this week by one Martin Daubney, a former Loaded editor who was briefly a Brexit MEP. Martin has been wetting his pants about the whole taking-the-knee thing and, following England's friendly with Romania on Sunday, rushed to the airwaves to ask for the names of the "two England players" who did not take the knee, because he'd like to shake the hands of "those lads". Oh dear. We don't expect Martin to be able to identify Florin Răducioiu and Ianis Hagi on sight - but we do expect him to have it glommed on that they are, in fact, Romanian. Without wishing to get too deeply into the arcana of England fandom approximately 10 minutes out from a major tournament, knowing which team is which is pretty much the price of entry to this particular conversation. On the one hand, it's hilarious that Martin somehow charlatanned his way through the whole of nineties and noughties lad-mag culture when he appears somewhat clueless about the sport that was supposedly such a massive part of it (which in turn tells you a lot about how plastic lad-mag culture actually was). On the other, could he not just do whatever is the former politician's equivalent of shutting up and playing? Likewise with Johnson and Fox. I've no idea whether Dowden genuinely likes sport, but if the culture secretary really wants to help he should be delivering on his promise to hold social media companies to account for the torrents of racist abuse black players receive on these platforms, instead of dicking around trying to pick the England

cricket team. In the meantime, it remains significant that throughout this entire pandemic, the only group any cabinet minister has suggested should be made to take a pay cut are Premier League footballers. Top-flight footballers are the only super-high-earning UK taxpayer you will ever see a politician disparage. Despite the fact that English football is a hugely successful global business that makes millionaires out of extremely talented, young working-class individuals, there is just something about it that makes all this the wrong kind of success. I wonder if we'll ever put our fingers on it. You can be quite sure the same politicians would listen to pretty much any other passing multimillionaire on any subject on which they cared to opine. A multimillionaire such as Wetherspoon's boss Tim Martin, for instance, is permanently indulged by the government in its every political outpouring. One minute Tim's doing joint appearances with Boris Johnson to push Brexit; the next he's trying to get the government to reverse its EU immigration policy because he's discovered he can't get the staff. What a preposterous character. And yet, it's only sportsmen and women who are continually urged to just shut up and play. You never hear politicians tell Tim Martin to just shut up and get them a pint. So as another Tory MP wades into the row to draw comparisons between taking the knee and the Nazi salute, we have to ask: please, please, please can we keep politicians out of sport this summer? Should that prove impossible, then all these politicians supposedly concerned about "the issues" embodied in the debates over racism in various sports need to look much closer to home for the solutions. They, and not any England sport's management, are responsible for the country. Perhaps they could even consider the lessons of one FA executive's reply to Margaret Thatcher in 1985. "What is football doing to keep its hooligans out of society?" ran Thatcher's pious inquiry. "On the contrary," came the reply. "What is society doing to keep its hooligans out of football?"

A year on, the battered and graffitied Colston is finally a potent memorial to our past

David Olusoga

Last week, for the first time in months, the burning eye of the outrage industry pivoted westwards and came to rest upon the city of Bristol. On Friday, the statue of the 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston, toppled last June during a Black Lives Matter protest, was put on display. To the fury of some, it was not returned triumphantly to its pedestal in the centre of the city, but exhibited in Bristol's M Shed museum. The debate around Colston in the summer of 2020 was largely conducted in a fact-free zone. So it is surely disconcerting for those determined to defend the memorialisation of a mass murderer that in this new setting Colston's bronze effigy is surrounded by displays that give a detailed history of the slave trader's grim career and the strange story that explains why, in the 19th century, a cult was created around him and the statue erected. For most of the 300 years since his death in 1721, Colston was little known outside Bristol. Few would have imagined that his statue would become the totemic image for Britain's 21st-century history wars. Still, the professionally outraged have never allowed Colston's relative obscurity to stand in their way as they rushed to his defence, having first looked him up on Wikipedia. Yet as Colston appeared on display last week, carefully preserved and presented by conscientious curators, it was not obvious what the source of offence would be. The statue has, after all, been retained and with so much actual history included in the exhibit, there was a danger that those sent to report on Colston's second coming might have to write about the suffering of his victims. Luckily, two petty grievances were found. The first is that the statue is being displayed at an "inappropriate"

angle. Perhaps there is a perfect angle, as yet unknown to museum professionals, for the public display of mass murderers at which their crimes become more acceptable, perhaps even quaint? The second grievance: that the statue still carries the graffiti sprayed on it during the demonstration of last June. What the Bristol curators appreciated is what curators anywhere would appreciate - that the graffiti is now an integral part of its story, like the graffiti carved into Stonehenge and the pyramids or daubed on the walls inside the Reichstag by soldiers of the Red Army in 1945. Would those who argue that Colston should have been cleaned also advocate that we chip away the historic signatures and poetry of Julia Balbilla carved into the monuments of Egypt? Should we sandblast the graffiti off the hundreds of slabs of the Berlin Wall that now stand in museums and parks across the world? The historical significance of the blood-red paint on Colston's bronze hands will become greater with each passing year. The art critic Alastair Sooke, who last week compared Colston, a man complicit in the deaths of an estimated 19,000 people, to a "disgraced celebrity", concluded that not removing the graffiti was a calculated insult. Colston, not the thousands whose lives he helped snuff out, Sooke felt, was the real "victim" here. "Have we stumbled upon a murder scene?" he asked. The answer, of course, is yes and Colston was the perpetrator, not the victim. London art critics who casually portray mass murderers as victims, like Westminster politicians who fan the flames of cultural conflict, do so from a safe distance and in a consequence-free environment. Since Colston's fall, those of us who call Bristol home have been disturbed by the way that the city has become targeted by those from outside who seek to deepen divisions rather than heal them. At the time, I wrote of the dangers and distractions of the moment. But as a public historian, rather than a public servant, the task of trying to actually defuse those

dangers fell to others. Those fraught weeks of last summer are the subject of a new BBC documentary, *Statue Wars: One Summer in Bristol* (declaration: I am one of the executive producers). Filmed over the summer of 2020, it is a classic fly-on-the-wall documentary, made by the Bristol film-maker Francis Welch. It follows what happened in City Hall as the world's media, the London artist Marc Quinn and agitators from outside all focused on Bristol. From the moment BLM went global and statues in the US began to fall, Bristol, a city that has struggled more than many to acknowledge its slave-trading history, was always destined to face difficulties. What made it all the more significant is that it also happens to be the first city in Europe to be run by an elected mayor who is a descendent of enslaved people, Marvin Rees, who has just been re-elected. The confected battle lines of our confected culture war run through both Bristol and its mayor. Mixed-race, with a working-class, white mother and Jamaican father, Rees was brought up in one of Bristol's poorest districts. For him, as for many black people, myself included, the "white working class" do not belong to a rival group but are family members, friends and members of the same communities. What comes across in the documentary are the dangers of the road we are currently walking down and the nightmare of division and distraction confronting local leaders. The culture wars look very different from behind the desk of a city mayor than on the pages of the tabloids or in our social media feed. Not for the mayor the easy gesture: he has to work through solutions, try to balance competing interests, particularly the interplay of class and race. Anyone thinking of a future in politics might well watch *Statue Wars* and change their mind. Anyone



unconcerned by the dangers of this moment might rethink their complacency.

Nissan India exports the all-new Nissan Magnite to Nepal, Indonesia and South Africa

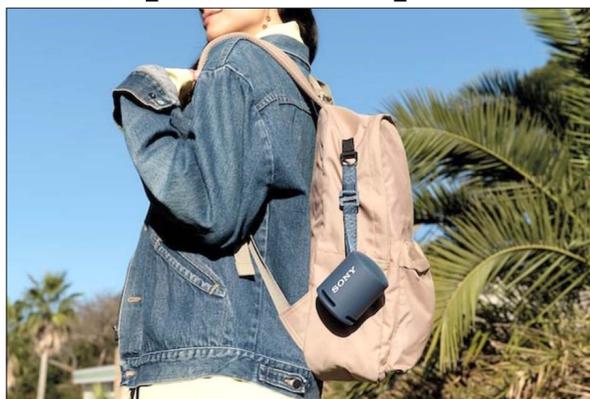


Guwahati, June 21 : Nissan India today announced the exports of the all-new Nissan Magnite in Indonesia, South Africa and Nepal. Since the launch of the all-new Nissan Magnite in December 2020, Nissan India has produced 15,010 subcompact SUVs (till end of May 2021) including 13,790 for India and 1,220 for exports. Built on the philosophy of "Make in India, Make for the World", the new vehicle has replicated its India success in the Nepalese market by achieving 2,292 bookings within first 30 days of its launch in February 2021 in a market that has monthly passenger vehicle sales of 1,580 units. "Following a

successful global launch, the all-new Nissan Magnite has been very well received by the Indian consumers. Having already made a mark in the Indian market with its impeccable design and the latest technology, the all-new Nissan Magnite is driving excitement amongst customer on a global scale. Built on the philosophy of "Make in India, Make for the World", the all-new Nissan Magnite will explore more export markets after the overwhelming customer response it has received in the Nepal market. We are confident that the game changer SUV will strengthen the exports as part of Nissan NEXT transformation plan for our sustainable growth", says Sinan Ozkok, President, Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. : With the introduction of the third shift in its manufacturing process earlier this year, along with 1000+ new hires across the manufacturing plant, Nissan has been able to meet growing demands in the Indian and export markets. This early global exposure has helped Nissan India enhance its quality and attain global benchmarks.

SHARP Introduces '3D Secure-Total Workspace Protection' for Corporate Workspaces

Guwahati, June 21: SHARP, a wholly owned Indian subsidiary of SHARP Corporation, Japan, known worldwide for its unique technology products and solutions, today announced the launch "3D Secure- Total Workspace Protection" solution. The advanced disinfection solution comes equipped with a three-pronged action that works powerfully against both surface & air-borne viruses. "3D Secure -Total Workspace Protection" combines the strengths of Workspace Procat - a disinfect coating service, Naturizer - a natural salt-based sanitizer maker, and the Plasmacluster Air Purifier. The new solution comes with its unique natural advantages and fights bacteria and viruses across all kinds of surfaces and indoor air, providing a clean, fresh, and safe environment within the office premises. The solution provides comprehensive protection against germs and viruses and is most effective when used together, helping employees experience a safe working environment. As part of the new '3D Secure- Total Workspace Protection', Sharp has introduced 'Workspace Procat', a photocatalyst liquid spray used for disinfecting both surfaces and walls. When exposed to light energy from natural sunlight and visible light, including fluorescent and LED, these surfaces generate strong oxidation & decomposition power to deactivate viruses, bacteria, mold, remove odor and other harmful substances. The solution also comes with Anti-deodorant, Anti-fungal, Anti-bacterial, and Anti-fouling properties and provides round-the-clock protection for 365 days. Moreover, Sharp has priced the solution to make it an affordable choice for even small and medium businesses. The effective cost of covering an office space with 1000 sqft of surface area will come to approx. Rs. 150000 for 1 Year. Sharp has also introduced Naturizer, a 100% natural and portable sanitizer maker that uses drinking water and table salt to generate sodium hypochlorite water, nature's super powerful surface disinfectant with 500+ ppm residual chlorine which removes bacteria, up to 99% within 1 minute. The natural disinfectant disrupts the cellular structure of bacteria, which destroys the cell walls of bacteria and protein coats of viruses, plus its low molecular weight makes it effective in



penetrating cell walls and reacts faster where it destroys the DNA and RNA inside of bacteria and viruses. As per studies and references from World Health Organization, 500+ ppm chlorine residue has been recommended for disinfection of environmental surfaces to reduce Covid-19 spread. Naturizer, the natural sanitizer maker, comes with an MRP. Rs. 10950. Announcing the launch of the new offerings, Shinji Minatogawa, Managing Director, SHARP Business Systems (India) Pvt. Ltd., said, "Sharp believes that workspace protection should not be centered around guesswork; it involves a very specialized and scientific approach in the new normal. Sharp is committed to ensuring that people stay safe when working together by helping create a stress-free, healthy, safe, and environmentally protected office space in the new normal, for a simply better life." To provide comprehensive protection, neutralize any viruses and bacteria present in indoor air, Sharp has also introduced Plasma Cluster Commercial Air purifiers. The new range of Air purifiers comes with Active Plasma cluster technology that emits positive hydrogen ions and negative oxygen ions through plasma discharge. These positive and negative ions simultaneously bond on the surface of airborne substances such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, and allergens and make highly reactive OH radicals (Hydroxyl radicals) that break down the proteins on the surface of these bacteria and other substances.

In addition, with the inbuilt passive pre-filters, HEPA, and carbon filters, Sharp Air purifiers mimic mother nature and make the indoor air safe and equivalent to fresh forest air. Workspace protection in corporate companies is a necessity for employee health and safety during the new normal. Surface disinfection and airborne cross infections continue to be a key concern for facility managers, HR & Office administrators and affect business continuity in India and worldwide. Due to this, employees are concerned about their health and safety in attending offices. Besides, the current precautionary measures used for workspace sanitization, disinfection, and air treatment are limited due to short-term effectiveness. Usage of alcohol-based disinfectants is not fire-safe, and it also adds to the plastic waste challenge. At the same time, daily sanitization cannot access every area, offering limited protection against cross infections and there's no comprehensive solution which can work relentlessly throughout the year. The new '3D Secure - Total Workspace Protection' by Sharp, a proven solution delivered by experts will provide much needed confidence to businesses and employees to embrace the new normal. '3D Secure - Total Workspace Protection' solution from Sharp is ideal for Small and Medium Enterprises, Educational institutions, Public and healthcare facilities, Corporate Offices, Hotels, Pharma, Manufacturing, Government Institutions, and other workplaces and institutions.

Captain Harvest range of quality & affordable staples now available exclusively on udaan

Guwahati, June 21: udaan, India's largest business-to-business (b2b) eCommerce platform, today announced a major initiative in the unorganised bulk staples market partnership with Captain Harvest brand. As part of this partnership, Captain Harvest range of quality and affordable bulk staples - including Atta, Maida, Wheat, Rice, Pulses, Besan etc. will be available exclusively on the udaan platform. This national level intervention is aimed at solving the problem of inconsistency in product quality, availability, affordability and weight compliance that exist in the unorganised bulk staples sector and are faced by kirana stores and the end consumers. In addition, this initiative will also benefit the local farmers and millers with better pricing and regular sourcing of product from them, thus supporting the local economy. Vivek Gupta, Head-Food Business, udaan said "One of the biggest challenges faced by the Kirana stores today is the availability of quality and affordable

products in the unorganised bulk staples market. This results in local retailers being at the mercy of the sellers, without any surety about the quality or the weight of the product being sold to them. In addition, their prices also keep fluctuating depending upon the availability of the product. At times, quality issues have also resulted in health concerns for the consumers. Captain Harvest is a significant inter-

vention in this direction. The availability of high quality and affordable staples with 100% weight assurance, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certification, full back-end Integration, and Standardized Quality Systems will help in addressing these challenges at a national scale. This initiative will also help the farmers and small millers of our country enjoy the benefits of eCommerce scale, which is in line with our mission of empowering small businesses of Bharat leveraging technology." Sourced directly from the farmers and processed & packaged in the most hygienic conditions, Captain Harvest range of staples are available in multiple SKUs - eg. Atta in 50 kg, 25 kg, 10 kg, and 5 kg packs. The brand would initially be available in around 40 cities & towns and will be gradually expanded to other markets. Captain Harvest works directly with local farmers and millers to

source staples, benefiting them with better, assured and regular income while improving their quality of output. This also helps in the reduction of procurement costs due to backward integration and economies of scale, thereby benefiting the end consumers with consistent quality and affordable prices. The partnership will provide Captain Harvest a pan India reach leveraging udaan's extensive supply chain network work of retailers by connecting them to sellers, brands and manufacturers across the country. The platform's SaaS offerings such as analysis of real time marketing feedback through app data analytics enables brands and manufacturers to make well-informed decisions about product launches and testing of new products in different markets. While the app-based pricing system gives better pricing control, the product listing advertisements and in-app advertisements encourages manufacturers to reach their targeted, specific, and ready-to-purchase retailers on the platform. udaan is a one stop solution for all business requirements in B2B space. It has built inclusive tech tools for Bharat, specially catering to the needs of brands, retailers & manufacturers providing them a level playing field to scale, trade and grow business.



covering over 12,000+ pin codes and 900+ cities. Captain Harvest will also benefit from udaan's vast retail distribution network and efficient inventory management practices. The udaan platform currently has over 1.7 million retailers, chemist shops, kirana shops, HoReCa, farmers, placing orders and supplying food products, making udaan a leader in the food eCommerce business. The platform offers over 20,000 products from groceries, beverages, cereals, pulses, spices, edible oils, home & personal care categories, fresh, dairy, to a wide range of household products. Overall, udaan enables delivery of over 1.5 - 1.7 lakh orders daily, spread over all business verticals across 900 cities nationally. udaan also provides marketing & sales support and facilitates efficient, transparent & convenient transactions. The platform offers best price, highest quality and widest selection of products to its net-

work of retailers by connecting them to sellers, brands and manufacturers across the country. The platform's SaaS offerings such as analysis of real time marketing feedback through app data analytics enables brands and manufacturers to make well-informed decisions about product launches and testing of new products in different markets. While the app-based pricing system gives better pricing control, the product listing advertisements and in-app advertisements encourages manufacturers to reach their targeted, specific, and ready-to-purchase retailers on the platform. udaan is a one stop solution for all business requirements in B2B space. It has built inclusive tech tools for Bharat, specially catering to the needs of brands, retailers & manufacturers providing them a level playing field to scale, trade and grow business.

Founded in 2016 with a vision to transform the trade ecosystem and empower small businesses by leveraging technology, udaan is India's largest b2b eCommerce platform. It has operations across categories including lifestyle, electronics, home & kitchen, staples, fruits & vegetables, FMCG, pharma, toys and general merchandise. udaan has over 3 million users, 1.7 million retailers and 30,000 sellers on the platform across the country. The platform enables supply chain & logistics operations focused on b2b trade and built on strong technology, for daily delivery across 900+ cities and 12,000+ pin codes through udaanExpress. udaan enables financial products and services to small businesses, manufacturers, and retailers through udaanCapital to grow their business.

At least Rs 15 lakh cr stuck in MSME payments annually; dues cleared typically in 3-6 months: Experts

Mumbai, June 21 : Credit and Finance for MSMEs: The second wave of the pandemic, which exposed vulnerabilities of MSMEs like never before, had aggravated their issues such as delayed payments, high informality, and low financial resilience. The government's plan, as outlined in the Union budget for 21-22, is to create an ARC and an AMC to take over and resolve bad loans. According to the World Bank's estimates, the credit gap for MSMEs in India stands at \$380 billion. Credit and Finance for MSMEs: At least Rs 15 lakh crore is stuck in payments to MSMEs each year with payments typically made in three-six months in contravention of the MSME Act, according to industry experts. The second wave of the pandemic, which exposed vulnerabilities of MSMEs like never before, had aggravated their issues such as delayed payments, high informality, and low financial resilience. "Market-driven solutions such as mainstreaming receivables discounting especially through the 'soon to be tabled' factoring amendment bill and supply chain financing solutions that incentivise large buyers to initiate supply chain financing for their MSME suppliers," were recommendations by experts during a roundtable organised by the Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME) to alleviate

payment-related challenges. Nirav Choksi, Co-founder & CEO, CredAble, Ketan Gaikwad, CEO, Receivables Exchange of India (RXIL), Brajesh Palsaniya, Head - Treasury, Raymond, and Kinjal Sampat, Vice President - Research, GAME were part of the roundtable. According to the MSME Act, the buyer should pay MSMEs within 45 days from the day of acceptance or deemed acceptance of goods or services. Based on the World Bank's estimates, the credit gap for MSMEs in India stands at \$380 billion amid challenges in traditional lending models involving requirement of collateral by banks, poor creditworthiness of MSMEs etc. The case, which dates back to January 2020, saw several hearings and submissions made by the parties concerned before the single judge dismissed the plea of the two e-commerce players last week, giving CCI the go-ahead to launch a probe against them. CCI investigation: Flipkart, Amazon challenge Karnataka High Court order before division bench GeM Govt to GeM sellers: Declare local content share in products or lose out on business, participation in bids "Banks are unable to underwrite MSMEs be-



cause of low levels of digitisation and lack of documentation such as IT returns. This lack of formalisation can be addressed by supply chain financing that relies on the credibility of a buyer or a GST invoice to finance MSMEs which circumvents some of the traditional challenges to lend to the segment," said Srinivas Rao, CEO, Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME). Want to know about easy access to capital for your business? Register for our webinar on making capital accessible for SMEs to enable invoice discounting, TReDS as a concept was introduced in 2014 by the Reserve Bank of India while later in 2017, three platforms including MIXchange promoted by Mynd Solutions, Invoicemart (joint venture of Axis Bank and mjunction services), and RXIL (joint venture between SIDBI and NSE) were issued licenses to operate on TReDS mechanism.

Zee5 Augments Binge Watching; Unveils 'Dekhtey Reh Jaogey' brand Campaign With Sara Ali Khan & Amol Parashar Promising Double Dose Of Uninterrupted Entertainment



Guwahati, June 21: ZEE5, India's largest home-grown video streaming platform and Multilingual Storyteller for millions of entertainment seekers, today, announced its new brand campaign - 'Dekhtey Reh Jaogey' to offer its annual premium sub-

scription @ ₹499/- (previously at ₹999/year) giving fans one more reason to 'Binge-watch' their favourite web series/movie from India's biggest library of Original content. For a long, Indian consumers have evolved to the international concept of Binge-

Watching and with this campaign, ZEE5 aims to enable them further to continue watching and unearthing content from 150+ originals and 2800+ movies resting on the platform. ZEE5 brings aboard popular cine-darling Sara Ali Khan and OTT's favourite boy Amol Parashar as brand ambassadors for the campaign and aims to unite Indians through their shared love for real, relevant, and resonant stories. The 'Dekhtey Reh Jaogey' campaign is targeted towards younger audiences aged between 18-34 to increase share of mind, strengthening ZEE5's position as India's OTT platform of choice. Following a 360-degree approach to target Indian entertainment lovers, ZEE5 has planned a high-frequency campaign across TV, social media, and digital, which is slated to go live today. With

this new subscription package, viewers will have an influx of unlimited entertainment that is both captivating and binge-worthy, including a rich library spanning 12+ Indian languages featuring Web series, movies (Original and theatricals), TVF shows, Live TV, Alt Balaji shows, Ad-free Catch-up TV, Zindagi TV shows, kids' content, and much more. The ₹499/-* subscription will also include 50+ new theatricals and 40+ Originals across diverse languages slated to be launched on ZEE5 through the course of the year. An elated, Manish Kalra, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 India said, "We're a customer obsessed brand and we keep pushing the boundaries of what's possible in a bid to keep delivering an unmatched experience to our users. With the OTT upswing, today, millions of viewers are Binge

Watching content across smaller towns and cities, many of which are underserved in terms of content options and infrastructural set-up. With the 'Dekhtey Reh Jaogey' campaign, we want to make quality entertainment accessible to consumers, in the language of their choice, at the tap of a button, without price being a deterrent. Think of it as 'Entertainment Inclusion', our single biggest goal going forward." On onboarding Sara and Amol as the face of the campaign, Manish added, "Both Sara and Amol are immensely talented and connect with audiences across age-groups, especially the youth. They are exuberant, enthusiastic and love experimenting, which we at ZEE5 believe in as well. We are glad to associate with both of them and hope this campaign achieves maximum reach with their

support." "ZEE5 is our very own homegrown OTT platform. With 'Dekhtey Reh Jaogey', the aim is to entertain everyone, especially during these difficult times. Additionally, for me, Kedarnath and Simmba are my firsts and therefore extra special both of are on ZEE5! I'm excited with my association with ZEE5", shares Sara Ali Khan. "I chose this campaign because of the messaging we are giving out to people to stay home and be entertained without any interruption during this pandemic. ZEE5, our homegrown OTT platform has consistently presented intriguing and amazing content across genres. I started my journey with TVF and recently, the two content creators have joined hands, which shows the trust everyone has in this platform", shares Amol Parashar.

Contd. From Page 1

Chief Minister Dr. Sarma reviews

the district administrations. During the meeting the Chief Minister directed the district administration to collect data of all downstream rivers flowing from Arunachal Pradesh as well as rainfall data which would be helpful for them to pre-empt and negotiate with the flood and carry out relief and rehabilitation exercises. In a bid to reduce the plight of the people suffering from flood, the Chief Minister asked Revenue and Disaster Management Department to explore feasibility for setting up fixed pedestrian shelters on the high-rise platforms in consultation with DRDO. He also asked the district administration on the necessity of complete mapping of the roads vulnerable to flood and take immediate redressal for the repair of roads and restore communication. He at the same time called for extra ordinary efforts on the part of district administration and other stake holders for mitigating the impacts of flood. With regard to the prevailing COVID 19 situation, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma asked the Deputy Commissioner P. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy to ensure vaccination to all government officials immediately so that they can render their services during flood. He also asked health department to go for complete inoculation of the Anganwadi helpers and workers on priority basis. The Chief Minister also gave a target to achieve complete vaccination of Dhemaji district within 75 days. He also visited a model vaccination centre at Dhemaji Town. The Chief Minister asked the Deputy Commissioner to expeditiously earmark land for setting up of Medical College at Dhemaji. He also stressed on developing Dhemaji as a dairy hub. He directed the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department to prepare a value chain network for dairy production and processing in Dhemaji. He also stressed on the need of using the method of artificial insemination of cows to enhance the quality of breed.

Assam Government releases fresh

areas as containment zone and ensure necessary containment measures for COVID-19," the new SOPs further read. Meanwhile, curfew in Kamrup-Metro district will continue to get enforced every day at 2pm and will continue till 5 in the morning next day. "There shall be total ban on movement of individuals from 2PM to 5AM daily in Kamrup Metropolitan district considering the decreasing trend of COVID-19 cases including decrease in the daily case load," the new SOP read. Meanwhile, in districts where the COVID-19 situation has improved in the last few days, restrictions have been relaxed. "In the districts viz. South Salmara, Majuli, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Udalguri, West Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Charaideo where the positive cases are showing less than 400 cumulatively in last 10 days, the lockdown like conditions are here by relaxed and movement of individuals will be allowed from 5AM to 5PM daily," the SOP added. Meanwhile, shops in Kamrup-Metro district will continue to remain open till 1pm every day. The Assam government today allowed the movement of individuals in eight districts including South Salmara, Bongaigaon, Chirang, and Udalguri from 5 am to 5 pm daily. The Assam government on Monday issued fresh guidelines regarding coronavirus-induced restrictions as the state's Covid-19 tally rose to 4,82,505 with 1,775 more people testing positive for the infection. The state government has allowed the movement of individuals in eight districts including South Salmara, Bongaigaon, Chirang, and Udalguri from 5 am to 5 pm daily. The development comes a day after Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma warned of total lockdown in some districts of Assam if the positivity rate does not go down significantly in those areas. Meanwhile, Assam logged 30 new fatalities on Sunday, pushing the death toll to 4,208, the National Health Mission (NHM) bulletin said. The Covid-19 deaths were reported from Jorhat (5), Kamrup (4), Kamrup Metropolitan (3), two each in Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Kokrajhar, Sivasagar and Sonitpur, and one each in Cachar, Darrang, Goalpara, Hailakandi, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Bongaigaon and Tinsukia districts, it said. The 1,775 new cases were detected out of testing of 78,050 samples on Sunday and the positivity rate for the day was 2.27%, the NHM bulletin said. Sonitpur district reported the highest new cases at 160 followed by Dibrugarh (136), Kamrup Metropolitan (133) and Jorhat (123), Assam currently has 32,207 active Covid-19 cases.

Complete lockdown in some dists

Wednesday may take the final call. "Apart from Biswanath, Covid infection has increased in Golaghat and Jorhat districts. The cabinet will probably come to a decision after comparing data from the past one week," Mahanta added. The health minister attributed the drop in daily cases and positivity in the state capital to rapid vaccination. "In some of the districts, the positivity rate has come down. This is may be due to higher testing. Nevertheless, the daily cases in Assam continue to be more than 3,000," Mahanta said. He also informed that inter-district restrictions on passenger movement may not be lifted for a while. The chief minister said the vaccination drive, starting Monday, would aim to inoculate three lakh people everyday. "If the plan materialise, 60 lakh more people in Assam will get vaccinated by July 10," Sarma said. Assam has already vaccinated 50 lakh people. All government employees, who have got both doses, will have to join office, Sarma added. Meanwhile, on the second day of his upper Assam tour, the chief minister reviewed the Covid situation in Dibrugarh and also the district's flood preparedness. Sarma directed the deputy commissioner and other stakeholders to focus on intensive vaccination and creation of Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICU) in the district. He also directed the principal secretary (health) to monitor the ongoing work being carried out to set up 30 PICU beds at Assam Medical College & Hospital, Dibrugarh, as speculation has been doing the rounds that a third wave of Covid-19 may hit the children hard. Besides, the chief minister also directed health department officials to ensure daily vaccination of 15,000 people above 18 years in Dibrugarh, which has been one of the highly infected districts during the second wave. As of Saturday night, 15 districts recorded over 1,000 positive cases for the past 10 days. Sonitpur, Kamrup (Metropolitan), Cachar, Tinsukia, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Nagaon and Morigaon districts continue to be top of the tally. Lack of Covid-appropriate behaviour is often blamed for high caseload in these districts. But the size and population of bigger districts like Nagaon is also one of the reasons behind relatively higher number of cases, though the daily numbers have gone down considerably from more than 400 to about 200. "Nagaon is the most populous district and hence the fall in numbers has also been gradual. However, we have shown consistent drop in numbers," said Nagaon deputy commissioner Kavitha Padmanabhan. Though 1,775 new cases were detected across the state during the day, it does not reflect the real picture, as the number of tests drastically goes down on Sundays. Total 78,050 tests were carried out on Sunday, resulting in a noticeable drop in positive cases. Kamrup (Metropolitan) had 133 new cases. The state's overall positivity rate has marginally gone up to 2.27% from Saturday's 2.21%. The number of Covid fatalities, however, reduced to 30 on Sunday from 40 deaths reported the previous day. Assam's recovery rate has gone up to 92.17%.

N.F. Railway celebrated

the COVID-19 pandemic situation the theme was "Be With Yoga Be At Home". All railway officials were motivated to perform Yoga from their respective homes with families. In NFR Headquarters, the N. F. Railway Bharat Scouts & Guides organised the 7th IDY- 2021 celebrations virtually. In divisions, the IDY-2021 was observed physically or virtually at all important railway stations following Covid-19 protocols. The day was celebrated with great enthusiasm with participation of thousands of railway employees and their family members across NFR. The members of the Bharat Scouts & Guides also observed the IDY-2021 individually or in groups on virtual platform across N. F. Railway at various stations such as Badarpur, New Jalpaiguri and Mariani etc maintaining Covid-19 protocol. N. F. Railway used various social media platforms since last ten days to create extensive awareness amongst common people about the benefit of doing Yoga. As everyone knows, Yoga is an invaluable ancient practice of India, with multiple physical and mental health benefits. It is globally accepted for its proven positive impact on general health and role as a stress reliever.

International Day of Yoga

Battalion among others virtually. A yoga session organized on the occasion was conducted by yoga guru Dibyajyoti Deka. Commissioner and Secretary to the Governor S.S. Meenakshi Sundaram also spoke on the occasion.

Northeast Frontier Railways

to Barmer from June to cater to the rush of passengers. The Guwahati - Bikaner junction weekly special will start operations from June 26, leaving Guwahati at 10:45 am every Saturday to reach Bikaner at 5:50 am on the third day. The Bikaner junction - Guwahati weekly special will run from June 3, leaving Bikaner junction at 1:45 am every Wednesday to reach Guwahati at 12:35 am on the third day. The Guwahati - Barmer weekly special will operate from July 1 and leave Guwahati at 10:45 am every Thursday to reach Barmer at 8:25 am on the third day. Barmer - Guwahati weekly special will start services from July 4, leaving Barmer at 11:35 pm every Sunday to reach Guwahati at 12:35 am on the fourth day. Moreover, the services of several passenger trains will be restored by mid-July. At present 62 pairs of specials mail/express trains and five pairs of local passenger trains operate every day in the region under NFR. The NFR will also operate an additional 10 pairs of specials mail/express trains.

Moriani MLA Rup

added. Kurmi said he has joined the BJP as per advice from astrologers. Also read: Assam: Congress expels Mariani MLA Rup Jyoti Kurmi from party. Criticising the Congress, Kurmi said, "The Congress party has no vision. It was a big mistake for the Congress to form alliance (in the Assembly election) with the AIUDF." While welcoming Kurmi to the BJP, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma recognised Kurmi as one of his former colleagues in the Congress. Chief minister is hopeful that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Kurmi would flourish "even more and will work for the people of Assam". The Assam BJP has also welcomed Kurmi to the party. In a tweet, the Assam BJP wrote: "We welcome Shri Rupjyoti Kurmi to BJP family and looking forward to share many success in future." Stating that Rupjyoti Kurmi has been a prominent leader and a four-time MLA, the Assam BJP said Kurmi "is working for the upliftment and development of the poor".

Bengal Governor Jagdeep

colleague and lawmaker from Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha seat, Jayanta Roy, coming out in support of it on June 15. Roy has, however, clarified that the comments were made in their personal capacity. Accusing the BJP of trying to divide Bengal, Chief Minister Banerjee has asserted that such attempts will never succeed. His visit also comes within days of meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah twice amid allegations of post-poll violence. The governor went to Delhi on Tuesday, a day after a delegation of BJP MLAs petitioned him on the alleged deterioration of the law and order situation in the state. Dhankhar met Shah twice, on Thursday and on Saturday. During the first meeting, he is believed to have briefed the home minister about the law and order situation in the state. During his five-day visit to Delhi, the governor also made courtesy calls to President Ram Nath Kovind and National Human Rights Commission chairperson Justice (ret'd) Arun Kumar Mishra. Hours before his departure to the national capital, Dhankhar had written a letter to the Bengal Chief Minister Mamata alleging that she has been silent over post-poll violence in the state and has not taken steps to rehabilitate and compensate the suffering people. This is Dhankhar's second visit to north Bengal in two months. Following the declaration of results of the West Bengal assembly elections, which the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress won with a huge majority, he had visited Cooch Behar following allegations of post-poll violence. He had also visited Ranagiri in neighbouring Assam where people had taken shelter owing to the 'violence'. Leader of opposition in West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP, called on Dhankhar on Sunday and sought his intervention to stop the alleged post-poll violence and violation of human rights in the state. The Governor on Sunday tweeted that he will embark on a week-long visit to North Bengal from June 21. He will proceed to Darjeeling from Bagdogra airport following a stopover at Kurseong. Dhankhar, however, did not cite any reason for his visit. Adhikari 'sought urgent intervention for worst ever post-poll violence and outrageous violation of human rights @MamataOfficial by implication in false cases all over state, the governor said in a Twitter post. Dhankhar, who has been at loggerheads with the Trinamool Congress government in the state on several issues since taking over in July 2019, also accused the police and administration in the state of being partisan.

Gauhati University's Aswani

Paramjit Singh (third), Class X, Sacred Heart Convent School, Ludhiana, Punjab. The winners of Grade I are Krishiv Khandelwal (first), Class VI, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Mumbai, Maharashtra; Mawiya Shrivastava (second), Class VII, RDJPS School, Delhi and Osho Maheshwari (third), Class VI, Amity International School, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The final results of the Ganga Quest 2021 were announced on Sunday on occasion of Ganga Dussehra. Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat congratulated and felicitated the winners. Ganga Quest is an online quiz contest and an educational programme to sensitize children and youth on river Ganga and other rivers of India and the environment. The quiz was organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga under Jal Shakti Ministry in association with the Tree Craze Foundation. Union minister Shekhawat interacted with the winners and the volunteers, who are working on the ground to strengthen the Namami Gange programme. Shekhawat asked the volunteers for feedback to further strengthen the program. Union minister Shekhawat said, "The physical infrastructure (like STPs, Ghats and crematoriums, etc.) built under Namami Gange can be seen by all, but the far bigger achievement is of reviving people's awareness and devotion towards the sacred Ganga." Shekhawat said that "just considering our rivers as goddesses will not serve any purpose if that doesn't reflect in our treatment of rivers". "We have to take responsibility," he said. The winners shared their experience of participating in the quiz. Some of the winners shared that they have become more sensitive towards the environment after preparing for Ganga Quest. A few participants said they feel a sense of devotion towards not just Ganga but all rivers of the country because of what they learnt during the quiz. They also shared that while they were participating, their family members and friends also took an interest. The virtual event was watched live by over 7,000 people from across the world including from countries like Belgium, Austria, Netherland, Sweden and Germany, etc.

Gu Celebrates International Day Of Yoga

Guwahati, June 21 : Gauhati University NSS Cell in association with Vivekananda Kendra, Guwahati branch celebrated International Day of Yoga on 21st June, 2021 through a webinar on the theme "Yoga for well-being" focussing on "Yoga at Home, Yoga with Family". Inaugurating the webinar Prof. Pratap Jyoti Handique, Vice-Chancellor, G.U. said that yoga is an important component of Indian civilization and a part of our culture and heritage. Prof. Handique said that regular yoga practice increases our physical & mental fitness which has become extremely important in Covid-19 pandemic situation. Prof. Handique also praised the NSS volunteers for their relentless service to the society and increasing awareness of yoga. Attending as Guests of honour Mr. Dipak Kumar, Regional Director, NSS, NER, Guwahati and Ms Meera Kulkarni, Prant Sangathak of Vivekananda Kendra, Assam Prant both of whom emphasised on regular practice of yoga in our daily life. Invited Speaker of the webinar Nayan Moni Dutta, Principal, SMB Jatiya Vidyalaya & Yoga Dronacharya Awardee said that Yoga is union of body & mental consciousness which brings harmony between man and nature. A yoga demonstration of various Asanas was demonstrated by Yoga Expert Mrs. Ankita Borthakur which was followed by all the participants. Earlier welcoming the guest and participants Dr. Ranjan Kr. Kakati, Director, Students' Welfare and Programme Coordinator, NSS Cell, G.U. said that Yoga unites the body, mind and soul which helps in leading a healthy life and urged all the volunteers for a regular practice of yoga. Dr. Kakati also delivered the vote of thanks and 250 persons comprising NSS volunteers, Programme Officers & members of G.U. fraternity attended the webinar.

Meritorious student commits suicide

North Lakhimpur, June 20: In a shocking incident, a HSLC candidate of North Lakhimpur named Rani Gogoi committed suicide by hanging herself inside her own's home at Majguri Gaon under North Lakhimpur Police Station on yesterday evening at around 7-30 p.m. She was the daughter of late Dambaru Gogoi and Nibha Gogoi and was a HSLC candidate of Madhabdev High School. Giving an account of the incident, the mother Nibha Gogoi said that her daughter was a brilliant student and the family, the teachers of the school and the locals hoped a good result from her in the forthcoming HSLC examination. But knowing the information that the Education Department had cancelled the examination, she became totally upset. Yesterday evening, there was noone in the house and taking the opportunity of noone in the house, she committed suicide. The police recovered the body of the student this morning and sent it for postmortem to the Lakhimpur Medical College and Hospital. The police registered a case in this regard and started an investigation into the matter. The incident has drawn sharp reactions among the guardians as well as other people of North Lakhimpur.

Rabha Diwas Observed through Google Meet

Golaghat, Jun 21: Yesterday to mark the occasion of the death anniversary of Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha which is observed as Rabha Diwas throughout the state Golaghat Amateur Theatre Society and Golaghat Sakha Sahitya Sabha also jointly observed the same. But this time both the organizations had to observe the Rabha Diwas through online format Google Meet. The program started with lighting of lamp in front of the portrait of Bishnu Rabha. Inaugural speech was delivered by the President of Golaghat Amateur Theatre Society Dr Ajit Baruah. President of Golaghat Sakha Sahitya Sabha Anil Sharma delivered a speech on the contributions of Bishnu Prasad Rabha in the field of literature and culture. Cultural secretary of Golaghat Amateur Theatre Society Nilofar A Mahtabi conducted the program where Joysmita Deka, Julfik Ahmed, Bashav Borborah, Ananya Goswami, Tanaya Sharma, Polash Loing, Deep Jyoti Das and Durgadhar Neog performed Bishnu Rabha songs and child artist Satarupa Sharma performed a dance on a song of Bishnu Rabha. Also Bishnu Rabha's poems were recited by Bornil Khatoniar, Dipanjali Baruah, Prasanta Deka, Jutika Saikia and Anupijoti Choudhury. Rahimuddin Ahmed played the music of Bishnu Rabha songs on his Mandolin. Dr Tapas Baruah and Dr Lukumoni Goswami delivered their speech on the occasion. Technical assistance was provided by Asif Javed. Administrative Secretary of Amateur Theatre Society Dipmoni Khatoniar offered vote of thanks.

Tender for allotment of lessees for water bodies as well as markets: tense situation prevails at Samaguri

NAGAON, June 21: A tense situation was prevailed in the greater areas of Samaguri today following the scuffle between workers of Congress and the ruling BJP for dropping the tender papers in connection with the allotment of lessee for various local water bodies as well as other weekly and daily markets under Samaguri Bajiagaon Development Block. Sources said that the authority concerned of Bajiagaon Development Block scheduled on Monday as the date for dropping of tender papers for allotment of those lessees various water bodies as well as other weekly and daily markets under the block in the greater Samaguri areas and a section of Congress workers submitted their tender papers accordingly. When some BJP workers too tried to drop their tender papers into the tender box in this regard, the Congress activists went on a rampage and created a ruckus. The Congress activists were so outrageous that they even leaped on the BJP workers and tried to push them out from the office premise too for which the authority concerned had to call on the local Samaguri police. Meanwhile police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, sources added. Besides, circle officer from Samaguri revenue circle also rushed to the spot and scheduled June 23 as next date for dropping tender papers in the office of Samaguri revenue circle, sources added. Notably, in the scuffle initiated allegedly by some Congress workers, a few activists from both political parties were injured too, sources further added.

International Yoga Day Celebration

Guwahati, June 21: International Yoga Day was organized by Yogic Science and Naturopathic Dept. of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva University, Guwahati campus today through Google meet at 7.A.M. Dr. U.R. Maske, Asstt. Prof. & HOD In-charge of the Department, welcomed the dignitaries to the event. In this event esstem dignitaries namely Dr. Hitesh Deka, Vice-Chancellor, Chief Guest Dr. Manoj Kumar Chaudhary, Executive Director, National Health Mission, Pomi Baruah, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Babul Bora Proddhan Sompadok of Srimanta Sankardev Sangh were joined and they spoke on the benefits and priorities of Yoga. The event was strictly followed by the covid-protocol provided by Ministry of Youth affairs and Sports, Government of India. At the ending and sumup of the online celebration of 7th International Yoga Day, Dr.S.K Sarkar Dy. Registrar (adm) of the university discussed the origin and geeting of International recognition of Yoga in United Nation General Assembly in 2015 along with his vote of thanks to all attended the celebration.

7th International Yoga Day observed by 129bn CRPF

Gossaigaon, June-21: Maintaing Covid-19 protocol the 7th International Yoga Day was observed by the 129Bn CRPF with great enthusiasm here at Central Prasar Bharati Complex, Bhotgaon today. The 129bn CRPF disclosed that the CRPF stationed at various corner like Gossaigaon, Salakati, Bongaigaon, Fakiragram, Champabati, Patgaon and in Srirampur also observed the 7th International Yoga Day where a number of women including children were witnessed to take part. Gulab Singh, Commandant of 129 Bn CRPF while performing yoga had dwelt at length about the importance of yoga in our daily life in keeping our mind and body fresh and fit. Addressing the participants Gulab Singh, Commandant of 129 Bn CRPF mentioned that Yoga is not only exercises but a way of keeping the mind and body fit and healthy. Exercising yoga also helps in maintaining equilibrium between good physical and mental health. Besides, Gulab Singh, Commandant of 129 Bn CRPF, Ajay Dwivedi and Shib Kumar Jha, Commandant 129Bn CRPF, Rajneesh Kumar Pathak Deputy Commandant of 129 Bn CRPF as well as numbers of locals were also seen gracing the programme.

Special Team of Disaster Management Visited Covid Hospitals and Covid Care Centre in Golaghat

Golaghat, Jun 21: Today a special team formed under District Disaster Management Authority Golaghat visited six Covid Hospitals and one Covid Care Centre in Golaghat. This Rapid Safety Audit (RSA) team has been formed under the directions received from Assam State Disaster Management Authority for monitoring and reviewing infrastructure and availability of safety measures to face any disaster in Covid Hospitals and Covid Care Centres. Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat and Chairman of District Disaster Management Authority has formed this ten member RSA team which is led by ADC and CEO of District Disaster Management Authority. This special team has officials from Disaster Management, Fire and Emergency Services National Health Mission and District Health Department, APDCL and Lok Nirman Department. Today the team visited Covid Hospitals at Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital, GBM Nursing Home, HGM Nursing Home, Golaghat Nursing Home and Lifeline Hospital and the Covid Care Centre at District Jail, Golaghat.

Kyle Jamieson stands tall as New Zealand gain WTC final edge over India



London, June 21 : The sounds of the Bharat Army's drummers rung around the Agas Bowl on the third day of the World Test Championship final and in the end this energy finally told, India striking moments before bad light ended proceedings at 6.27pm to peg back New Zealand's march towards a position of strength. It was Ishant Sharma, the old warhorse of Virat Kohli's attack, who claimed this precious breakthrough. Devon Conway had become the first batsman to register a half-century in what is proving a low-scoring affair, only to chip a ball on his pads to mid-on and terminate an otherwise resolute 54 from 153 balls. But while it was reward for Sharma's perspiration amid a late charge that saw the bat repeatedly beaten, New Zealand still finished in the ascendancy. The Black Caps will resume on 101 for two with Kane Williamson unbeaten on 12, having earlier bowled out their opponents for just 217 through Kyle Jamieson's frankly immaculate figures of five for 31 from 22 overs. After two days of rain and just two sessions of cricket - the impact of which could yet be offset by this reserve day on Wednesday - it felt like this final had finally burst into life. The crowd may be capped at 4,000 but with the bulk supporting India, a wonderful vibe has bubbled up regardless. This was needed, not just for the International Cricket Council's first stab at giving Test cricket a showpiece event of its own but also the Indian bowlers, who, like their English counterparts during New Zealand's recent 1-0 series victory, found Conway seemingly rooted to the crease. The left-hander had put on 70 for the first wicket with Tom Latham and though he lost his opening partner for 30, Ravichandran Ashwin seeing him caught by Kohli at short-cover, over the course of three hours he had hunkered down with aplomb, leaving anything out of his eyeline and picking off six fours. Mohammad Shami celebrates taking a catch to dismiss Devon Conway. Photograph: John There were

moments of good fortune, not least when the bustling Mohammed Shami extracted some extra bounce from the surface only to see the resulting edges evade fieldsmen, and in the end it took a batsman error, Conway hammering his pads with his bat in disgust as he trudged off. However, New Zealand need not be too down and in Jamieson they had cause for celebration overnight. The 6ft 8in right-arm bowler now has 44 wickets at 14 runs apiece from his first eight Tests - no bowler has claimed more victims at a lower average since the 19th century - and during the opening exchanges of this absorbing, attritional contest he has shone the brightest. The day had begun with a 30-minute delay but still pregnant with possibilities thanks to an encouraging forecast, India's resumption on 146 for three and Kohli ominously unbeaten on 44 following a diligent shift 24 hours earlier. Could the 10th anniversary of his Test debut end what has been a curious 18-month spell without a century? The answer was an emphatic no, Jamieson wiping out Kohli without troubling the scorers further as a string of outswingers was followed by the one that nipped back in for a simple lbw decision and a burned review. With this came vindication for declining a cheeky invitation to bowl at Kohli with a Dukes ball in the nets when team-mates during this year's Indian Premier League. It also brought Rishabh Pant to the crease but, like others, the left-hander found Jamieson's fuller length hard work, taking 20 balls to get off the mark before a booming drive at a tempting delivery outside off stump flew to Latham at second slip. At 156 for five in the 74th over, all eyes were on set man Ajinkya Rahane, who began the day on 29, to chisel out a workable first-innings total. By lunch India's captain had already departed one short of his half-century, however, an injudicious pull shot off Neil Wagner flying to a recently stationed square leg and followed by Ashwin's removal lbw to Tim Southee for a lively 22. From 211 for seven, Kohli's men badly needed the tail to wag. It never came, Jamieson resuming after the break to complete his fifth five-wicket haul when Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah were removed in successive deliveries. Shami, the No 11, drove the hat-trick ball for four but could only look on as Trent Boult had Ravindra Jadeja caught down leg.

Max Verstappen triumphs in pulsating duel with Lewis Hamilton at French GP

London, June 21 : The French Grand Prix for once was the stuff of great saga, a titanic struggle that had it all as the two top teams and their two best drivers locked horns across the full race distance at Paul Ricard. Max Verstappen and Red Bull came out on top but only after a race that ebbed and flowed and could not be called until Verstappen passed Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes for the lead on the penultimate lap. A closely fought affair, both drivers' skills were gloriously displayed as were the roles of their colleagues in the pits. This time it was Red Bull's engineers who held the advantage, landing a striking blow on several levels. Verstappen now has a 12-point lead over Hamilton in the championship and with Sergio Pérez also taking third from Valtteri Bottas in fourth, his team a 37-point advantage over Mercedes in the constructors'. Of more importance however was that Red Bull did it at what had previously been Mercedes' citadel in France, with the team and Hamilton dominating the previous two meetings at Le Castellet. The Red Bull team principal, Christian Horner, had said if his team could beat Mercedes here, they could beat them anywhere. This win was that definitive statement. Horner's analysis looks ominously accurate and Mercedes know they are playing catch up, with this the first time Red Bull have won three races

in a row since 2013. Hamilton conceded his team were on the back foot. "We did a great job today it just did not work out," he said. "I am not massively disappointed, I did the best job I could. Of course there were things we could have done slightly better but overall they were quicker than us all weekend, it is a true reflection of the pace they have." There were no little celebrations in the Red Bull garage at what Horner described as "payback". It was understandable. So close has the racing been this season, similar scenarios to the one at Paul Ricard had already played out twice. Once in Bahrain where Verstappen made an extra stop to attack Hamilton only to go wide in his attempt to pass for the lead and in Spain where Hamilton's extra stop enabled him to catch and pass the Dutchman. This time Mercedes had to try and repeat their triumph at Sakhir by trusting Hamilton to make his worn rubber last to the flag. The world champion very nearly made it happen, finding grip on tyres that were 30 laps old that his teammate could not fathom. Yet this time Mercedes' roll of the dice failed and Verstappen on fresher tyres after a second stop swept past with a lap and a half to go. The victory decided on track between the two as it has been repeatedly this season. Verstappen acknowledged just what a spectacle his duel with Hamilton was presenting. "It shows you the two teams are super close," he said. "One weekend you get it right in strategy and the other weekend the other team gets it right, it's really exciting. It's great to get on top. When I was second in Barcelona you just miss out but that's the way it

goes in racing, it's good for F1 in the end." Mercedes were beaten fair and square but they will also examine how they were left with Hamilton going long as their only option. Hamilton had taken the lead on lap one after Verstappen went wide in turn one lacking grip on cold tyres. However the Dutchman had retaken it when Red Bull pitted their man first. He put in an immense out-lap while Mercedes left Hamilton out and after they pitted him a lap later Verstappen had the place, overturning almost a three-second lead. The team held their hands up to their mistake, underestimating the value of the undercut, with chief strategist James Vowles admitting: "This one's on us, thank you, you did incredibly well," to Hamilton after the race. Hamilton was left to pressure Verstappen and when Red Bull, mindful of avoiding a repeat of what happened in Spain, pitted the Dutchman a second time, Mercedes had no option but to see if Hamilton could perform another miracle. He did his best but Verstappen is a truly impressive driver and his pursuit and pass was inch perfect and delivered with flawless finality at the Mistral chicane where Hamilton was powerless to resist. Hamilton knew he could have done no more and while he accepted the team would have a long debrief, blame will be hard to apportion. Even Verstappen admitted that is team had no expectation the undercut would prove so advantageous as to enable him to leapfrog Hamilton, who acknowledged the first stops had been crucial. "In hindsight if we had stopped earlier, before them, come out ahead and gone on to a two-stop, probably could have won the race," he said. "But it would still have been very difficult, their pace was very, very strong." It had been quite the afternoon at Paul Ricard, which had enjoyed a celebratory air with 15,000 spectators bringing sound and colour to what for a season and half have been largely barren F1 grandstands. They were rewarded with the best race France has presented in the modern era.



'Power of positive thinking': Jon Rahm rebounds from Covid to win US Open

London, June 21 : Jon Rahm was in the form of his career when he was forced to withdraw from last month's Memorial golf tournament at Muirfield Village due to a positive coronavirus test while leading by six strokes after 54 holes. A period of self-isolation that limited his preparations for the US Open did nothing to change that. On Sunday, the fiery 26-year-old whose temperament at times has obscured his ample talent became the first Spaniard to capture America's national championship with a pair of heart-stopping birdie putts on the 71st and 72nd holes, winning by one shot over perennial bridesmaid Louis Oosthuizen while living up to oddsmakers' billing as the pre-tournament favourite on a frenetic afternoon at Torrey Pines Golf Course. "This is the power of positive thinking," said Rahm, whose first major title will return him to No 1 in next week's world rankings. "I was never resentful for anything that happened, and I don't blame anybody. It's been a difficult year and unfortunately Covid is a reality in this world and has affected a lot of people. "I had the best possible hand because nobody in my family got sick, I barely had any symptoms. But we have lost lots of people back home. I know some people may say [what happened at Memorial] was unfair, but it had to be done. We have to be aware of what is happening in this world." The world No 3 started Sunday's final round as one of 13 players within four shots of the lead, a logjam filled with rising ingenues and proven winners. As one contender after another fell out of contention, Rahm played steady, effective golf up and down the 7,685-yard South Course until moving to strike in the final reel. Trailing Oosthuizen by one shot, Rahm curled in a left-to-right downhill putt from 25 feet on the 17th hole for birdie. Then he got up and down from a greenside bunker on the par-five 18th, sinking an 18-foot birdie putt for a one-shot lead on the same green where he made a 60-footer for eagle to win his first PGA Tour title four years ago. An agonising wait followed as Rahm decamped to the practice range to stay warm for a potential two-hole playoff. But when Oosthuizen

bogeyed the 17th after sending a tee shot into the canyon to fall two shots adrift, then failed to chip in for eagle from 69 yards on the 18th fairway, Rahm could finally celebrate with wife Kelley and three-month-old son Kupa on a Father's Day he won't soon forget. "I feel like coming in here without having practiced much relaxed me a little bit," said Rahm, who spent the morning watching a Call of Duty League match before arriving at the course for his 12.22pm tee time. "I thought, you know what, in case I play bad, I have an excuse. I have a bailout in case. I can convince myself, hey, I had Covid." But I feel

made a 60-foot eagle putt on the 13th hole and Oosthuizen sank a 50-foot eagle putt on the 18th, setting off roars that evoked Woods' eagles on the same holes all those years ago while moving them into a three-way tie for the 54-hole lead alongside Russell Henley, the rocksteady 32-year-old from Georgia who swore off Torrey Pines seven years ago but may now be reassessing his decision. A US Open curiously devoid of excitement was suddenly bursting with possibility, setting the stage for a final round as wide open as the yawning canyon separating the South and North Courses. Thirteen

to look at the leaderboards, but the crowd was not cooperating. They were telling me exactly what was going on. So I decided to embrace it. You see all those great names, and to myself I thought whoever wins this one is going to be the one who won a US Open with a star-packed leaderboard. "After I thought that, I went about my business." The thinning out began almost immediately on the back nine, where almost en masse the glut of contenders began moving in the wrong direction. No hole piled on more punishment than the 222-yard par-three 11th, the most difficult on the South Course, where more than half of the pack was derailed. That's where things went pear-shaped for Hughes, who carded a double-bogey after his tee shot became lodged in a tree, and McLroy, who three-putted to fall three shots off the lead (before double-bogeying the 12th to seal his fate). Same for the defending champion DeChambeau, less than a half hour after he'd moved into sole possession of the lead at five-under by nearly aching the par-three eighth hole, who ended a streak of 30 straight holes a par or better with a bogey on the 11th. Any lingering hopes of a title defense were dashed with another bogey on 12th followed by a double on 13th - where a streaker briefly interrupted play on the fairway before getting lit up by San Diego's finest. The stunning meltdown was complete long before his triple-bogey eight on the 17th. Wolff three-putted on the 12th to drop to one-over and out of the running. Morikawa made a mess of things after finding a thick patch of rough on the par-five 13th, then watched a 12-foot putt lip out for a double-bogey seven. Koepka dropped out of contention with bogeys on the 15th and 18th. The carnage benefited Harris English, tied for 14th entering the final round and barely mentioned all day, who was in the clubhouse after making seven birdies in a final-round 68 to go three-under for the week. He finished third. By the time Oosthuizen made his first birdie of the day on the 10th to move six-under and open a two-stroke lead over the field while Rahm escaped the perilous 11th and 12th holes unscathed, it was an effective two-man race. But for 38-year-old from South Africa, a six-time runner-up at major championships since his breakthrough win at the 2010 Open at St Andrews, it was not to be. "I'm second again," Oosthuizen lamented. "Look, it's frustrating. It's disappointing. I'm playing good golf, but winning a major championship is not just going to happen. You need to go out and play good golf. I played good today, but I didn't play good enough." "I feel like I had my shots, I went for it, and that's what you have to do to win majors. Sometimes it goes your way, and other times it doesn't."



like it relaxed me a little bit, and ever since the Sunday at the PGA, I felt a bit of a shift on the golf course mentally. I still had that grit, but almost like each miss bothered me less. I couldn't tell you why. "I believe it's because I really set out myself to be an example for my son that he would be proud of, and I've done some stuff in the past on the golf course that I'm not proud of, and I wish I could eliminate it." The US Open's return to Torrey Pines was always going to suffer by comparisons to the first and only other time it was staged on this oceanside track in 2008, when Tiger Woods out-duelled Rocco Mediate in an 19-hole play-off while playing on a double stress fracture and torn anterior cruciate ligament that required surgery the next week. The atmosphere for this year's contest was at least partially neutered by the reduced attendance of about 13,000 spectators each day, roughly a quarter of the turnout from 13 years ago, despite California's wholesale rollback of coronavirus restrictions on crowd gatherings earlier this week. And aside from a handful of compelling human-interest stories - the fairytale emergence of English journeyman and improbable halfway leader Richard Bland, the young Matthew Wolff's return to major contention amid an uncommonly public grappling with mental health - there was little particularly memorable about the golf itself through most of the first three days, prompting familiar grumblings among the sport's chattering class over Torrey Pines' fitness as a US Open venue. That all turned in the dying stages of Saturday's third round when Canada's Mackenzie Hughes

players were separated by four shots as the final group teed off on Sunday afternoon - and eight of them within three - a star-studded peloton that included five major champions. None of the overnight leaders at five-under-par were considered favorites to claim the winner's share of roughly \$2.25m (£1.59m) from a \$12.5m purse, the highest among professional golf's four bedrock events: not Oosthuizen, the 2010 Open champion from South Africa who can boast runner-up finishes at the other three majors, including last month's US PGA Championship; not Hughes, the unheralded Canadian who entered the tournament on a run of five straight missed cuts; not Henley, the 10-year PGA Tour veteran who has won three titles on the circuit but none since 2017. And it wasn't long before each of them dropped strokes on the front nine, only intensifying the crowding atop the leaderboard. After early charges by former major champions Bryson DeChambeau, Rory McLroy and Collin Morikawa, no fewer than nine players were in the lead at four-under or one stroke back - formidable scores at a tournament in which anything under par is often enough to win. Others in the mix included Rahm and the Cheltenham-born Paul Casey, who both made up ground on their front nines to move within one shot of the pace. They were joined by the hard-charging Brooks Koepka, the two-time US Open champion who had gone five shots behind with a third-round 71, but got in on Sunday's fun with birdies on the first, eighth, ninth and 13th holes. "I'm not going to lie," Rahm said. "I was trying not

Weightlifter Laurel Hubbard will be first trans athlete to compete at Olympics

London, June 21 : The New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard is set to make history and headlines, plus a considerable amount of controversy, after being confirmed as the first transgender athlete to ever compete at the Olympic Games. The 43-year-old will be a live medal contender when she competes in the women's super heavyweight category on 2 August. But Hubbard's inclusion will also frustrate those who believe she has an unfair advantage over her rivals, having gone through male puberty before transitioning in 2012. Hubbard, who won silver at the 2017 world championships and finished sixth at the 2019 edition after recovering from a serious arm injury at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, said she was delighted to have been selected. "I am grateful and humbled by the kindness and support that has been given to me by so many New Zealanders," Hubbard said in a statement. "When I broke my arm at the Commonwealth Games three years ago, I was advised that my sporting career had likely reached its end. But your support, your encouragement, and your 'aroha' [affection] carried me through the darkness." The last eighteen months

has shown us all that there is strength in kinship, in community, and in working together towards a common purpose." Hubbard added. "The 'mana' [honour] of the silver fern comes from all of you and I will wear it with pride." Under IOC guidelines issued in November 2015, athletes who transition from male to female are allowed to compete in the women's category without requiring surgery to remove their testes, provided their total testosterone level in serum is kept below 10 nanomoles per litre for at least 12 months - a rule followed by the IWF. However, a number of scientific papers have recently shown people who have undergone male puberty retain significant advantages in power and strength even after taking medication to suppress their testosterone levels. Hubbard lived as a male for 35 years, and did not compete in international weightlifting. But since transitioning she has won several elite titles. The New Zealand Olympic Committee chief executive,



Kereyn Smith, said Hubbard would be welcomed to the New Zealand team. "As well as being among the world's best for her event, Laurel has met the IWF eligibility criteria including those based on IOC guidelines for transgender athletes," she said. "We acknowledge that gender identity in sport is a highly sensitive and complex issue requiring a balance between human rights and fairness on the field of play." As the New Zealand team, we have a strong culture of 'manaaki' [respect] and inclusion and respect for all. We are committed to supporting all eligible New Zealand athletes and ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing, along with their high-performance needs, while preparing for and competing at the Olympic Games are met.

Saracens take no prisoners to seal escape from Championship purgatory

London, June 21 : With just less than half an hour left of the second leg of the Championship final, and with an aggregate lead of more than 80 points, the Saracens director of rugby, Mark McCall, saw fit to haul off his five British & Irish Lions. If it was good news for Warren Gatland, it was anything but for Ealing Trailfinders. Saracens added another four tries without their star names on the field to rubber-stamp their return to the Premiership with another drubbing. In that sense it was always going to be a formality. With a 60-point lead after the first leg, Saracens had already effectively secured promotion but mercy is not a word that they appear familiar

with - perhaps because they feel none has been shown to them over the past 20 months - though the full-time whistle at least allowed the disgraced three-times European champions the chance to celebrate. Their Lions were due to make their way to Jersey on Monday morning and though Saracens have always been remarkably short odds to return to the Premiership at the first time of asking, McCall and co evidently needed the cathartic release that came with the trophy celebrations on Sunday. "We were in crisis mode around November 2019 and anything could have happened to the club," said McCall. "But the unity and togetherness helped get us

through. It's been a long 18-20 months and we've looked forward to this day." Going through the motions was always unlikely, then, even before McCall decided to pick the same XV, complete with 12 internationals, that had won 60-0 seven days previous. For many reasons it was an understandable decision - this is Saracens' last match of the season, one of the few occasions supporters have been able to attend. And sometimes, if there is the temptation to tinker too much, it is best not to tinker at all. Maybe it was one last two-fingered salute to those who believe they should remain in purgatory. The former assistant Alex Sanderson summed it up well last week when he said: "People might think it's easy to close ranks and have a siege mentality when the world hates you, but it's not. I think everyone should get behind them. They've done their time." Another unrelenting performance with all of Saracens' power on show would certainly have sent a message to the sides they are set to jostle with at the top of the Premiership table next season too. The irony was that after failing to score for the entire 80 minutes last weekend, Ealing took the lead after 32 seconds here - awarded a penalty try when Jackson Wray was adjudged to have knocked the ball dead near his own try-line. He was shown a yellow card for his troubles and Ealing, considerably more settled than last week,

were level at 10-10 at the interval. Elliot Daly got Saracens' second try just over a minute into the second half and Saracens moved swiftly through the gears thereafter romping to a 57-15 victory on the day. "It's been a strange old year," said the captain, Owen Farrell. "We enjoyed coming back and getting together after not much game time at the start. There are loads of things to take from this experience. Some of the younger guys will benefit from it. And some of the more experienced lads too will grow from what has happened and improve. "Mandatory rest periods mean that when Saracens begin next season back in the top flight they will be without their five Lions for a significant chunk of the start of the campaign but McCall will have the returning loanees Max Malins, Ben Earl and Alex Lozowski to call on, as well as a refreshed Billy Vunipola. He has been rested from England's summer plans and having missed out on the Lions tour, he gets the summer off. Manu Tuilagi, however, has been called up as one of seven players added to Eddie Jones's squad from the losing Premiership semi-finalists. His club-mates Ben Curry, Bevan Rodd and Curtis Langdon have also been called up, as have Malins, Earl and Will Capon from Bristol. Ollie Sleightholme and George Furbank from Northampton have also been included in a 36-man squad.



'Olympics delay gives me a year to become a better athlete'

London, June 21 : Britain's two-time taekwondo gold medalist is staying positive following the Tokyo Games move to summer 2021 - partly because it means she can still create history. Jade Jones admitted to feeling 'gutted' when the Tokyo Olympics were postponed a week ago but now she is focused on performing at her best at the rearranged Games next year. A week since the Tokyo Olympics were postponed in response to the coronavirus outbreak there is a need among the athletes affected to move on and focus on the positives. That is certainly what Jade Jones is doing. The two-time taekwondo gold medalist admits she felt "gutted" following last Tuesday's news but now her mindset has well and truly changed. The pursuit of history is key to why Jones is refusing to mope. Tokyo offers her the chance to become the first athlete in her sport to claim three Olympic golds and she is ultimately relieved that she can still achieve that milestone. "If the Olympics had been cancelled, as opposed to postponed, that would've broken me as I wouldn't then have had a chance to do what no one else in taekwondo has ever done," she says. "I'm just grateful the Olympics are still on." Mentally, it's tough. I've been training for four years for that one moment and, as an athlete, you try to peak for that. All the training and preparation is geared towards that... and then it's gone. But it had got to the stage where it was hard to carry on anyway as all of our training camps and competitions were getting cancelled. At least after last week's announcement we now know where we stand. We also have another year to become even better athletes. "Just over a year, in fact, after the International Olympic Committee announced on Monday that the Games will begin on 23 July next year, with the Paralympic Games starting on 24 August. When athletes will be able to start training and competing given enforced self isolation is another mat-

ter and while that is naturally a worry for Jones given she has been able to set up a gym at the house she shares in Manchester with friend and fellow British taekwondo competitor, Bianca Walkden. Jade Jones in action against Taipei's Chia-ling Lo in May last year during the world championships in Manchester, where the 27-year-old won her first world gold medal. "As soon as we were told the Team GB academy was shutting we zoomed down there in the car, grabbed as much kit as we could and took it home," says Jones. "We then chucked everything we had in the garage and spent a day fixing it up. I'm actually quite chuffed with it. And I've always wanted a home gym, so at least that's something I've been able to achieve during all of this." I'm also spending time allowing my body to recover. As an athlete training takes a big toll on you, so I'm getting all the right nutrients down me as well as using the recovering stuff that's been provided by my sponsors. Under Armour. I'm trying to turn every second at home into a positive. "But that can be difficult. Jones is missing seeing her family back in north Wales - "not being able to go home and give them a hug is hard" - and there is only so far forcing yourself to look on the bright side can go when you have had the rug sharply pulled from underneath your feet. Jones should be in a pre-Olympics training camp right now before flying out to Tokyo on 14 July. And there is little doubt the 27-year-old stood an excellent chance of securing that third successive gold medal in the Japanese capital. Quite simply, Jones is one of the very best around in her sport, as shown by the world championship gold she secured in Manchester last May. "I'm not going to lie, it took me a few days to get my head around the fact the Olympics were not going to take place this summer," she says. "I found out at the same time as everyone else, while watching the news, and I was gutted."

Team GB cyclists target winning 'in the right way' at Tokyo Olympics

London, June 21 : The British Cycling performance director, Stephen Park, has promised his riders will win "in the right way" at the Tokyo Olympics in the wake of the devastating guilty verdict against the former team doctor Richard Freeman this year. Park also vowed that British Cycling had moved on from the old regime, under which Freeman was found to have purchased banned testosterone knowing it was to dope an unnamed rider, as he named a 26-strong squad for Tokyo. "Personally, I think it is really important to prove we have moved on," said Park, who took over British Cycling in 2017. "I am wholly committed to us winning in the right way. We have a responsibility to lead the sport, we have a responsibility to do that with integrity." "We are going into battle for the British public. We want them to be proud of what we do and about how we do that." Team GB can count on six previous gold medalists in Tokyo, including Geraint Thomas, Ed Clancy, Jason Kenny, Laura Kenny, Elinor Barker and Katie Archibald. Park warned, however, that fewer medals were on the cards because its tech advantage over its rivals had shrunk. Starting with the 2008 Games in Beijing, British track cyclists have benefited

from special skin suits with drag-resistance ridges that create a "turbulence effect" which reduces the amount of wind resistance acting on the body. Sources have previously told the Guardian they give a 5%-10% performance advantage over rival countries. Such tech played a vital part in helping Britain top the medal table in Beijing, London and Rio. However Park admitted that eight medals in Tokyo - compared to 12 in Rio - was now more realistic. "The tech margins we have had in the past will be somewhat eroded," he said. "As the years go on, there are a number of people that have worked with our team who are now working elsewhere, and some of that information leaks out." That said, I am absolutely confident that the kit package will be as good if not better than any other nations. We have still spent a huge amount of time, effort and money ensuring we are competitive. "The team will be headed by Laura Kenny, who confirmed she will compete in three events, the omnium, team pursuit and madison, as she seeks to become Team GB's most successful Olympian. Kenny, who already has four gold medals to her name, said the year's delay due to the pandemic had given her more time to prepare

after injuring her shoulder. "I would never have wished this whole pandemic on the world," he said. "But, for me, as an athlete, definitely, having this extra year has helped me do all three events." Freeman now has nothing to lose in a lurching, revealing narrative. Her husband Jason, who could also surpass Chris Hoy's Team GB record of six Olympic golds, said he was putting such thoughts at the back of his mind. "I

of whom will also contest the men's time trial event. In the women's road race, the London 2012 silver medalist Lizzie Deignan will be joined by Anna Shackley, with Shackley also competing in the women's time trial. Park, who joined British Cycling in 2017 after Freeman had left, also stressed there had been wholesale change in the organisation which had previously faced accusations of having a "culture of fear". "We have done a huge amount of work in recent years around wider wellbeing," he said. "We have overhauled a lot of our medical practices. A big shift in how we approach mental health. We believe happy riders are fast riders."



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