



The Assam Rising

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CM asks officials to complete
Hollongi airport by Aug 2022

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International friendlies: Portugal rout
Andorra 7-0, Finland stun France



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Man Shot And Robbed

Dhemaji, November 14: In an unprecedented incident, a man was shot at and robbed in Gogamukh of Dhemaji district on Friday night. According to sources, the incident happened in front of RR Mill when the man, identified as one Milan Hajong, was stopped by two bike assailants on Friday night. They shot Hajong and looted him off his money and some belongings after he refused to comply. Hajong was critically injured after being shot and was rushed to the AMCH. T.3he incident happened just 100 meters away from Gogamukh police station.

Children's day at SOS Children Village

Guwahati, November 14: Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday celebrated children's day with children of SOS Children's Village in Azara, Guwahati. CM Sonowal Tweeted, "Happy to spend some wonderful time with my young friends of SOS Children's Village, Azara near Guwahati on #ChildrensDay." It is to be mentioned that children's day commemorates the birth anniversary of the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who was born on November 14, 1889. He was also fondly called Chacha Nehru and the day is dedicated to educate and empower the children whom he considered to be the real strength of a nation and the foundation of a society.

Death of Assam journalist sparks protests, Rahul Gandhi & Congress blame BJP



Guwahati, November 14: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi took to Twitter Friday to condole the 'mysterious' death of Assamese journalist Parag Bhuyan a day ago, adding that "real journalism in BJP-ruled states of Assam, Madhya Pradesh and UP is being silenced while those doing 'tamasha' are given protection". Bhuyan, a journalist from

Kakopthar town of Upper Assam's Tinsukia district, had stepped out of his house Wednesday to visit a nearby pharmacy, when he was mowed down by a speeding vehicle from the opposite side. He died of his injuries Thursday morning, and since then, different narratives have emerged on how he died and who could be responsible. The incident sparked angry reactions from journalists, various organisations and political parties, stating that his death cannot be treated as an accident. Bhuyan's family members and various journalists' associations in the state demanded a detailed probe into the incident, alleging foul play. In Guwahati, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee

(APCC) workers staged a protest, demanding justice. Raising slogans against the BJP government in the state, the protesters demanded a CBI probe into the incident and blamed the state for failing to give any protection to journalists. The Congress protesters were restricted by the police, and later taken away in a bus. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Thursday offered his condolences and ordered a CID probe into Bhuyan's death. The police in Tinsukia, meanwhile, have claimed that they have seized the vehicle involved in the incident, and have arrested driver James Mura and handyman Baba Bordoloi from the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. Bhuyan, 52, was a prominent

Assamese journalist in Tinsukia district working for the regional media, and the vice-president of the Tinsukia Press Club. He covered most of the major stories in his area - from insurgency to politics, illegal coal and timber syndicates operating in Kakopthar to cattle smuggling, as well as corruption and law and order. He last worked as a senior reporter with the Guwahati-based Pratidin Time group, and as a local reporter for the Assamese daily Axomiya Khabar. Nitumoni Saikia, editor-in-chief of Pratidin Time, said in a statement that Bhuyan's death is suspected to be a "planned murder", and that he had received "personal threats" for exposing the illegalities. **Contd...Page 6**

No Power in world can stop our brave soldiers from guarding country's borders : PM Modi

Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said no power in the world can stop India's brave soldiers from guarding the borders of the country, while adding that today every Indian is proud of the strength and bravery of their soldiers. PM Modi addressed soldiers at Longewala in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan today on the occasion of Diwali. "I would like to extend my Diwali greetings. I am here to convey ever India's greetings to you today. I would like to wish all our security forces on the occasion of Diwali. No power in the world can stop our brave soldiers from guarding the borders of our country. This country is happy and we are celebrating festivals because of your existence," said PM Modi. "You may be at the



snow-capped mountains or in deserts, my Diwali is complete only when I am with you all. My happiness doubles when I look at the joy on your faces. I have brought the greetings of every Indian among you today, have brought the love and blessings for you," he added. "Be it the peaks of the Himalayas, the stretch of desert, dense forests or the depths of seas - your valour has always tri-

umphed in every challenge. Whenever history on the excellence of soldiers will be written and read, the Battle of Longewala will be remembered," he added. "Saluting your valour, 130 crore countrymen of India are standing firm with you today. Today every Indian is proud of the strength and bravery of his soldiers. They are proud of your invincibility," said PM Modi. **The Prime Contd...Page 6**

BTC election dates likely to be announced on November 16



Guwahati, November 14: According to sources, the dates for the ensuing polls in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) shall be announced on Monday (November 16). Polling for the 40 seats of the BTC was scheduled to be held on April 4 and the results were to be announced on April 8. But in March, as the pandemic broke out, Assam's Election Commission indefinitely de-

ferred them. With the elections drawing closer, highly-placed official sources have confirmed that the polls in the Bodo-dominated region of Assam are likely to take place in two phases. The BTC polls

2020 are expected to be a four-way contest between the BJP, BPF, UPPL and Kokrajhar MP Kumar Sarania's Gana Suraksha Party. **ALSO READ :** Patricia Mukhim to approach SC to challenge criminal case against her for Facebook Post about attacks on non-tribals. "From initial discussions, it appears that the election in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) shall be held in two phases on December 8 and December 12. However, the final call in this regard shall be taken by the Election Commission of India (ECI)," an official source told

Para-military forces stationed in Assam, which have deployed to Bihar to keep the peace during polls, will also be back in time for the elections in the BTC. "As per reports, around 60-65 companies of troopers have been deployed to Bihar for the polls. Once the polls there are wrapped up, they will be back to beef up security in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) for the polls," the source added. The polling for the 243-member Bihar assembly elections 2020 will be held in three phases on October 28, November 3, and November 7.

Ripun Bora urges Hagrama Mohilary's BJP to join 'Grand Alliance'

Guwahati, November 14: Assam Congress President Ripun Bora today called on Bodoland People's Front (BPF) leader Hagrama Mohilary to join the Congress-led Maha Gathbandhan (or Grand



Alliance). Talking to Inside Northeast, Bora said, "We are calling upon Hagrama-led BPF to join the Congress' grand alliance ahead of the polls in the BTC region. In fact, all like-minded

parties should join the alliance head of the polls." Earlier, Bora had asked the new regional parties in the state - Asom Jatiya Parishad and Rajior Dal - to join the grand alliance to topple the BJP from the power corridors of Dispur. The BJP has the support of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), Assam's largest regional party that was formed at the end of the six-years-long anti-foreigner agitation. Bora's invitation to Hagrama comes amid a growing rift between BJP and BPF - which are part of the ruling alliance in Dispur. The BJP has directly challenged Hagrama's might in his Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) by nominating 26 can-

didates to contest in the ensuing Council polls. The saffron party is confident of its chances. Hagrama, on the other hand, claims that the war of words between him and BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma is based on an "understanding." Assam Health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday exuded confidence that the BJP would form the Bodo Territorial Council after winning the upcoming election in Bodo Territorial Region in lower Assam. Addressing an election rally at Salakati in Kokrajhar district, Sarma said: "this time there will be a BJP government at Kokrajhar because the people of this region has decided for speedy development of this region with good governance."

Penalty Of Rs. 100 For Not Wearing Masks

Guwahati, November 14: The Nagaland government has decided to impose a fine of Rs. 100 on people who don't wear face masks in public places and Rs. 500 on institutions without handwashing facilities with immediate effect. The decision came after the Nagaland Disaster Management Authority observed that wearing masks, especially in public places, making the provision of handwashing facility by various establishments, maintaining physical distance in high-risk settings are often not being followed which poses a seri-



ous risk of infection not only to the defaulters but also to other people around them. Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and in view of the guidelines issued

under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 the government has decided to make it compulsory for everyone to wear face mask and also provide hand sanitizers or handwash facility in all establishments, including offices, educational institutions, religious places and shops with immediate effect. Nagaland Chief Secretary J Alam said violation of the SOPs and guidelines would lead to penalization of the defaulters. People not wearing a mask in public places, including offices, banks, markets, business establishments, **Contd...Page 6**

Republicans face court setbacks, Donald Trump law firm steps down

Philadelphia, November 14: Republicans suffered setbacks to court challenges over the presidential election in three battleground states on Friday while a law firm that came under fire for its work for President Donald Trump's campaign withdrew from a major Pennsylvania case. The legal blows began when a federal appeals court rejected an effort to block about 9,300 mail-in ballots that arrived after Election Day in Pennsylvania. The

involves a Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision to accept mail-in ballots through Friday, Nov. 6, citing the pandemic and concerns about postal service delays. Republicans have also asked the US Supreme Court to review the issue. However, there are not enough late-arriving ballots to change the results in Pennsylvania, given President-elect Joe Biden's lead. The Democratic former vice president won the state



judges noted the "vast disruption" and "unprecedented challenges" facing the nation during the Covid-19 pandemic as they upheld the three-day extension. Chief US Circuit Judge D. Brooks Smith said the panel kept in mind "a proposition indisputable in our democratic process: that the lawfully cast vote of every citizen must count." The ruling

by about 60,000 votes out of about 6.8 million cast. The Trump campaign or Republican surrogates have filed more than 15 legal challenges in Pennsylvania as they seek to reclaim the state's 20 electoral votes, but have so far offered no evidence of any widespread voter fraud. A Philadelphia judge found none as he refused **Contd...Page 6**

Punjab Farmers Against Farm Laws Meet Centre, Reveal Five Demands

New Delhi, November 14: Punjab farmers protesting against the three controversial farm laws passed by the centre in early September - laws that have been criticised as "anti-farmer" - met union ministers Piyush Goyal and Narendra Singh Tomar today and presented a long list of demands. Apart from the immediate withdrawal of the farm laws, the farmers said punishments for burning farm wastes - linked with deeply un-

healthy spikes in air pollution in Delhi and surrounding areas - must be cancelled and farmers charged jailed for this be freed. These punishments include a jail term of up to five years and a fine up to ? 1 crore. Other demands made by the representatives of farmers' unions from the state include dropping of cases related to stubble burning and reversal of an amendment to the Electricity Bill, which promotes privatisation of the sector and discontinuation of free supply for farmers. "We have made a demand in



front of the Agriculture Minister (Narendra Singh Tomar) and Railway Minis-

ter (Piyush Goyal) that the three laws related to agricultural reform should be

withdrawn because through this the corporate grip will become very

strong." Sukhdarshan Singh Natt the leader of the Punjab Kisan Union, told The farmers also called for the immediate restoration of goods train services across the state. The Railways had stopped all passenger and goods trains in Punjab after vociferous protests by farmers saw blocked highways and rail rakes at more than two dozen locations across the state. Today the farmers' representative said all tracks had been vacated. **The Contd...Page 6**



New Delhi, November 14: AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria in an interview to IANS said we may reach a stage down the line where we may have a good amount of immunity, and the people may feel that there is now good immunity and the utility of the vaccine is not there. He added, if the virus doesn't mutate or does not cause changes **Contd...Page 6**

Herd Immunity May Come Before Covid Vaccine Goes Off The Shelf: AIIMS Director

Los Angeles superior court judge Brenda Penny declined to suspend James Spears



Report : Los Angeles superior court judge Brenda Penny declined to suspend James Spears from his central role in the court conservatorship that has controlled his daughter's life and career for 12 years, as Britney Spears' attorney Samuel D Ingham III requested at the contentious hearing. But the judge said she would consider future petitions for his suspension or outright removal, which Ingham plans to file. "My client has informed me that she is afraid of her father," Ingham told the judge. "She will not perform again if her father is in charge of her career." The pop star has been on an indefinite work hiatus since early 2019. James Spears' attorney, Vivian Lee Thoreen, defended what she said was his perfect record in his run as his daughter's conservator, which has seen her net worth go from in debt to well over \$60m. Thoreen argued that the disruption caused by his removal would do her the very harm the suspension is meant to prevent. "I don't believe there is a shred of evidence to support my client's suspension," she said. Thoreen also objected to Ingham's statements about the father-daughter relationship as inadmissible hearsay. The judge did approve that a corporate fiduciary, the Bessemer Trust, will now serve as co-conservator over Spears' estate along with her father, which the singer had requested. Most of the attorneys involved, along with Britney Spears' parents, took part in the hearing via phone and videoconference. The pop star did not attend in any form. The conservatorship, known in many US states as a guardianship, began in 2008 when Spears was struggling with her mental health, often publicly. The arrangements are normally limited to people with severely diminished ability to make decisions for themselves, and are meant to be temporary, but Spears, 38, has remained under court control longer than anyone expected. Ingham on Tuesday called her a "high-functioning conservatee" who deserves at least

notice of the actions her father is taking, which he has declined to provide. Ingham said Spears has not spoken to her father in a very long time. Thoreen argued that the reason father and daughter have not communicated is because Ingham has prevented it. Britney Spears has acknowledged that the conservatorship was necessary when it began, and probably saved her career, and she remained silent both in public and in court for nearly all of its existence, with her attorney acting mostly as a neutral observer. But starting in August she began publicly seeking to choose who had power over her, asking for greater transparency in the court's often secret moves, and even declaring that she was sympathetic to fans who have increasingly demanded in protests and online posts that those in control must FreeBritney. Dozens of those fans protested outside the downtown Los Angeles courthouse as they do for every Spears hearing, and a few, wearing #FreeBritney face masks, sat in the courtroom that was sparsely attended because of coronavirus spacing guidelines. For most of the conservatorship James Spears also served as conservator over not just his daughter's finances but her person, giving him great control over her life decisions. He stepped down temporarily from that role last year, citing health reasons, and Britney Spears has requested that his temporary replacement, Jodi Montgomery, be made permanent. In documents requesting James Spears' suspension, Britney Spears said he had no intention of working with the Bessemer Trust as co-conservator, and that he meant "to retain full functional control of her assets, books and records in the face of Britney's objections". She also cited his recent failure to notify her that her business manager had resigned and he had appointed a new one. James Spears' attorneys argued that in appointing a new business manager he was only keeping the continuity of his daughter's business flowing and doing his job as conservator, and had no legal requirement to inform her of his moves. His attorneys said in court filings that his "sole motivation has been his unconditional love for his daughter and a fierce desire to protect her from those trying to take advantage of her." Most of the proceedings in the Spears conservatorship have been closed to the public, making Tuesday's hearing a rare glimpse into the family drama happening behind the scenes.

The United States of America is fundamentally divided

It brought a tear to the eye and a hand to the heart. Joe Biden, in his acceptance speech, called for unity and healing. He would work "to win the confidence of the whole people". I just hope he doesn't mean it. If he does, it means that nothing has been learned since Barack Obama made roughly the same speech in 2008. The United States of America is fundamentally divided. It is divided between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. There is no unity to be found with kleptocrats and oligarchs. Any attempt to pretend there is will lead to political failure. It will lead not to healing but to a deflected polarisation. If Americans are not polarised against plutocrats, they will be polarised against each other. I understand that, in a sentimental nation, bromides like Biden's might be considered necessary. But I fear he believes what he says. When he spoke to wealthy donors at the Carlyle hotel in Manhattan last year, he told them not only that "no one's standard of living will change, nothing would fundamentally change", but also that "you have to be able to reach consensus under our system". In this context, consensus looks like appeasement. Obama's attempt to reconcile irreconcilable forces, to paper over the chasms, arguably gave Donald Trump his opening. Rather than confronting the banks whose reckless greed had caused the financial crisis, he allowed his Treasury secretary, Timothy Geithner, to "foam the runway" for them by allowing 10 million families to lose their homes. His justice department and the attorney general blocked efforts to pursue apparent wrongdoing by the financiers. He pressed for trade agreements that would erode workers' rights and environmental standards, and presided over the widening of inequality and the concentration of wealth, casualisation of labour and record mergers and acquisitions. In other words, he failed to break the consensus that had grown around the dominant ideology of our times: neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been neatly described by William Davies, a professor at Goldsmiths College, as "the disenchantment of politics by economics". It sees politics



as an ineffective or illegitimate means of social improvement. Decision-making should be transferred to "the market", a euphemism for the power of money. Through buying and selling, we establish a natural hierarchy of winners and losers. Any attempt to interfere in the discovery of this natural order - such as taxing the rich, redistributing wealth and regulating business - will inhibit social progress. Neoliberalism disenfranchises politics by sucking the power out of people's votes. When governments abandon their ambition to change social outcomes or deliver social justice, politics become irrelevant to people's lives. It is perceived as the chatter of a remote elite. Disenchantment becomes disempowerment. Before neoliberalism triggered the financial crash of 2008, its doctrines were treated as orthodoxy across the political spectrum. Obama had a chance to break from this cage, to confront the powers that "the market" disguised and the social divisions it caused. But he chose not to take it. Grace and decency alone cannot defeat structural injustice. Trump stormed into the political vacuum. Chaotic and unscrupulous, in some respects he offended the neoliberal consensus, ripping up trade agreements, while in others he reinforced it. But the important point is that he was a monster the consensus created. His success was a product of the fake unity and fake healing of elite political

George Monbiot

agreement. When mainstream politics offered only humiliation and frustration, people turned to a virulent, demagogic anti-politics. Biden has turned leftwards since he was Obama's vice-president. There are some strong policies in his platform. But there is also a determination not to break the consensus by directly confronting the donor class. His "clean energy revolution", which envisages massive investments in renewables and greener infrastructure, covers half the necessary effort to prevent climate breakdown. But without an active programme to retire dirty infrastructure and leave fossil fuels in the ground - in other words, directly confronting fossil capital - it will be less effective than he imagines. His measures to support small business are positive, but they will count for little unless he also breaks up big business, starting with big tech. He has promised to raise taxes for the rich. But the plutocrats will laugh at him until he wages war on tax havens and secrecy regimes, starting with his home state of Delaware. Unless Biden unites the people against the oligarchs who dominate the nation, the people will remain divided against each other. Biden will be tethered by circumstance. If the Democrats fail to win both Senate seats in Georgia, he will face a hostile upper house. Trump's appointments ensure that not only the supreme court but also many federal judges will seek to frustrate

The 27 countries are deeply divided over proposals for a new 'pact'

Fortress Europe is being redesigned - but it is no easy task. European Union home affairs ministers on Thursday began the process of repairing the bloc's broken migration policy, just weeks after the tragic devastation of the Moria refugee camp on Lesbos. Expect no quick changes, however. The 27 countries are deeply divided over proposals for a new "pact" on asylum and migration. The European commission's plan calls for faster pre-entry screening and quick returns of those who fail to qualify for asylum. The focus is on ending sometimes deliberately slow, inhumane and inefficient border management procedures, which lead to squalid, overcrowded camps such as Moria, where people can be left in limbo for years. The return of those denied asylum could be managed with a newly appointed "EU returns coordinator". EU data shows that on average approximately 370,000 applications are rejected each year, but only a third of people are expelled. Ursula von der Leyen, the European commission president, is hoping that these and other changes will convince EU governments to view migration not as an evil but as an asset that has "defined our societies, enriched our cultures and shaped many of our lives". But Europe's anti-migration hardliners are having none of it. The key concern of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech republic is that refugees must be kept in "hotspots" or camps outside EU territory while asylum claims are processed, although - so far, at least - no one seems to favour Priti Patel's bizarre scheme for sending asylum-seekers to Ascension Island in the south Atlantic. Europe's progressives, on the other hand, worry that the commission proposals pander too much to the far right. Rights agencies and NGOs warn that the pact may weaken protection for some of the world's most vulnerable people. EU polarisation over migration is not new. Germany and Sweden welcomed many of the 1.5 million refugees fleeing Middle



Eastern wars five years ago, but the bloc's eastern states looked the other way. Later they blocked EU efforts to introduce a system of quotas for redistributing refugees among the 27 member states. The number of asylum seekers is now down, but for many EU governments the migration "crisis" will never be over. That is because the problem has never really been about numbers. Europe's relentless arguments over border controls, asylum claims and mandatory or voluntary "solidarity" hide a darker discussion and a deeper divide. Pride and prejudice are the real obstacles standing in the way of a well-managed EU policy on migration. The migration discussion is entangled in Europe's dismal record on racism, the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment and the continent's complex post-colonial relations with its southern, especially African, neighbours. At stake is the EU's commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Also at risk is the EU's global reputation. EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson may say she wants to take the drama out of migration and make the the policy a "normal one". But before they can agree on new migration rules, politicians and policymakers will have to tackle three closely related but seemingly unconnected challenges. First, Europe

must confront - and change - its biases on race, religion and ethnicity. Second, there should be an honest conversation on European values and identity. Third, Europe needs to acknowledge the urgency of rebooting relations with African states and other emerging countries. By coincidence rather than by design, along with the migration proposals, all three questions are currently on the agenda. After Black

Criticising Orbán's hate-mongering antisemitic diatribes and rejection of an open "parallel society" where Muslims and Christians live together is easy. But more subtle forms of prejudice abound. The recent denunciation by the French president, Emmanuel Macron, of "Islamic separatism" or the nomination of an EU commissioner to "promote the European way of life", viewed by many as a dog whistle to the anti-migrant camp, are more difficult to call out. In the absence of the moral leadership required for a strong new narrative, that of a multiracial, multi-ethnic and multicultural EU, the bloc's history and identity will continue to be based on ideas of exclusion and superiority: self-comforting myths where "true Europeans" stand in contrast to unwelcome outsiders and intruders. None of this augurs well for a quick decision on the migration pact, even though the EU clearly needs migrants for their skills and talent but also as contributors to an ageing Europe's coffers and pension systems. And the pandemic revealed just how many, "essential functions" across the continent are performed by "key workers" who are often migrants. Portugal and Italy introduced temporary amnesty schemes for refugees while others fast-tracked work permits or allowed asylum seekers to work throughout their application process. And while national governments dither even over the humanitarian taking-in of refugee children made homeless at Moria, local communities are responding at the grassroots level. A movement of German towns is arguing they can help alleviate the crisis on their own and has volunteered to bring in more asylum seekers. Even once-hardened anti-migrant German politicians have reportedly started promoting moderate views on migration amid evidence that despite far-right scaremongering refugees are integrating successfully. Securing agreement on a new, more sensible and saner migration management system will be slow and painful. Johansson's colleagues are unlikely to take up her suggestion to negotiate the new pact with "cool heads and warm hearts". As the author Hanif Kureishi wrote in 2014: "The immigrant has become a contemporary passion in Europe, the vacant point around which ideals clash."

"vaccine nationalism" the dynamic that we've seen in action this year



The news that joint efforts by the US pharmaceutical company Pfizer and the German biotech company BioNtech have produced a vaccine that is 90% effective at protecting people from Covid-19 has been understandably applauded - in spite of the caveats. Pfizer states that it can manufacture up to 50m doses by the end of 2020 and up to 1.3bn doses in 2021. Given the desire to get life back to normal, these doses will be in incredibly high demand. Some

the 2009 "swine flu" pandemic, the use of these agreements was widespread to such a degree that the majority of vaccine manufacturers said they were unable to provide 10% of vaccine stock to United Nations agencies because of their pre-existing commitments to fulfil agreements with wealthy countries. In this sense, "vaccine nationalism" - the dynamic that we've seen in action this year, as nations pursue self-interest rather than the common good - is not new. Low- and middle-income countries have lobbied for equity in access to treatment and vaccines for years - they know well that the market-based agreements on which global health agreements rest favour governments with the largest pockets. This was most acutely seen over access to antiretroviral treatments for HIV in the 1990s, and the Indonesian viral sovereignty dispute of 2007. The prospect of rich countries getting their hands on a vaccine first is always on the cards. That's why the public-private health partnership GAVI, the CEPI foundation and the World Health Organization established Covax earlier this year.

Clare Wenham

governments around the world, including the UK, have already begun to indicate to their populations that they will receive a vaccine by Christmas. But how will the distribution of this finite number of vaccines work when we only have enough for one seventh of the global population? At least 500m doses of the vaccine have been reserved by high-income countries including the US, UK, Canada, Australia and the European Union, with the potential for this to rise to more than 1bn doses through advanced purchase agreements. These agreements work by countries paying to reserve doses at an agreed cost in an attempt to guarantee priority access. During

progressive measures. Much of his time will be spent firefighting the pandemic, and the economic and social crises it has caused. It might seem strange to note that the US was lucky to get Trump, but it was, in this respect: while he is power-mad and entirely lacking in conscience and empathy, he is also impetuous and incompetent, and failed to follow a clear programme. In other words, he was a hopeless wannabe dictator. He was also unfortunate: were it not for the pandemic, he might have won again. But he has blazed a trail for someone more effective: someone with Trump's absence of moral constraint, but with a determined programme and a cold, strategic mind. If Biden fails to break the political consensus, in 2024 he could open the door to a competent autocrat. Writing in the Atlantic, Zeynep Tufekci names some plausibly frightening candidates. Before we consider solutions, I think we have to recognise the possibility that US politics might not be fixable. The system is constitutionally padlocked; beholden to the power of money, which is reinforced by the supreme court's catastrophic Citizens United decision, removing the caps on political spending by lobbyists; perhaps now terminally confused, frightened and angry. But if there is a solution, it must involve the re-enchantment of politics. What does this look like? I suspect it means a tub-thumping left populism, inveighing against billionaires, against big money in politics, against the stripping away of public protections, against white collar crime and in favour of the radical redistribution of both wealth and political power. It would reach past an obstructive Senate and supreme court to appeal directly to the people. It would build and sustain social movements that are bigger than the Democratic party, using its activist base not just to win elections but also to drive home political change. Though Biden is a political chameleon, and though I will never abandon hope, it is hard to see him fulfilling this role. Perhaps I'm being too pessimistic, but at this early stage his presidency looks to me like an interregnum between something terrible and something much worse.

CM asks officials to complete Hollongi airport by Aug 2022

ITANAGAR, November 14: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday asked the officials engaged in the construction of the greenfield airport in Hollongi to complete the project by August 2022. During a visit to the airport site with Civil Aviation Minister Nakap Nalo, a host of legislators and departmental officials, Khandu was provided with firsthand report of the ground facts. Officials of departments like power, PHE, public works and district administration presented details of the works being carried out by each, such as water supply, power, approach road, boundary wall, land acquisition, rehabilitation of displaced Chakma settlers, etc. Most of the works are underway, and the officials assured that all works would be completed by March next year, except for a few works that would be executed after



completion of the boundary wall, approach road, etc. "This project is our topmost priority. Please be informed that earlier the completion target was November 2022, which has been changed to August 2022. Work accordingly," Khandu advised. He gave assurance that funds would not be a constraint in

completing the works on time. He, however, expressed concern over the slow progress of work on the runway and the airport terminal. Addressing Kaushal Patel, the chief project manager of Dinesh Chandra R Agarwal Infracon Pvt Ltd, the Gujarat-based firm executing the project, Khandu said all assistance would be provided to the firm by the government. He, however, urged Patel to speed up the construction process. "You have got five months of the best working season now. Make full use of it. Work day and night. You have got all our support and cooperation," Khandu said, adding that he would monitor the progress of work personally from time to time. As the airport site lies along the Assam-Arunachal boundary and some land have to be acquired from the Assam side, Khandu informed that

he would soon have a talk in this regard with his Assam counterpart. "As both Arunachal and Assam will benefit from the airport, we will coordinate with the Assam government in successful completion of the project," he said. The CM also visited the rehabilitation site of the 186 displaced Chakma families and interacted with them. He assured them of assistance, especially in resolving the drinking water issue, work on which is underway. As a temporary solution, water is being supplied through borewells at the moment. Khandu was informed that 156 families had to be shifted and rehabilitated from the project site and 30 families from the four-lane approach road. Almost all the families have shifted, except a few who will follow after harvesting their crops.

Special felicitation programme held at Samar Dalani



A Correspondent: Biswanath Chariail,

Nov 14: A Special felicitation programme was held at Samar Dalani under Sootea LAC on November 14. The felicitation programme was called on by Dakhin Nagsankar Gorkha Samaj to felicitate Moti Kumar Newar; newly elected executive member of Gorkha Development Council (GDC) who has taken charge recently. The day-long programme was chaired by Bhabani Sarma; a retired teacher of Samar Dalani. Parbati Sarma; president of Gorkha Samaj forwarded welcome address while Rishi Raj Sarma briefed the objectives. Addressing the gathering as a chief guest Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika said that the Gorkhas are the part and parcel of greater Assamese society. We cannot imagine a

complete Assamese society without including the Gorkha Community. Gorkhas are an inseparable part of greater Assamese society and the Assam government has been working round the clock for all round development of every small community of Assam. Notably, Sootea MLA was also felicitated by more than thirty socio-cultural organizations of greater Samar Dalani area along with Moti Kumar Newar; the newly elected GDC member. Moti Kumar Newar, in his speech said that he would work for all round development of the community in the days to come. Purna Kumar Sarma addressed the gathering from the side of society. All the proceedings of the meeting were carried out by Anjan Baskota.

13 businessmen arrested on charge of gambling from Haiborgaon bazaar at Nagaon

A correspondent : NAGAON, Nov 14: Based on a secret inputs, Haiborgaon Outpost police led by SIA Rahman, Officer in Charge of the Outpost arrested a total of 13 businessmen from a resident situated at Nagaon Laokhuwa road near Haiborgaon bazaar for alleged gambling inside the house of a businessman on Friday midnight. Police subsequently seized several bundles of playing cards and money in cash of around Rs 2 lacs from their possessions. According to

sources of police, the arrested businessmen have been identified as Ratan Lal, Krishan Munda, Anil Agarwal, Biplab Mandal, Om Prakash, Jagindar Singh, Dilip Gujrani, Nanda Lal, Banshidhar Maheswari, Sri Ram Binud Jain and Bulu Bardhan. The sources claimed that all these businessmen were gambling inside the house of one Binud Jain at Nagaon Laokhuwa road near Haiborgaon bazaar. Significantly, police recorded all in video mood before they were arrested.

Three members of the Naga Council Dimapur (NCD), have responded to allegations against them by leaders

DIMAPUR, November 14: Three members of the Naga Council Dimapur (NCD), have responded to allegations against them by leaders of the 'mass civil society organisations of Dimapur'-GB's (Sadar) Union Dimapur, Dimapur Urban Council Chairman Federation, Naga Women Hoho Dimapur, Dimapur Naga Students' Union and Dimapur District Citizens' Forum. In a rejoinder, the NCD members- J. Walter Longchar, S. Mar Aier and Chovise Neinu- said they were compelled to respond to the "concocted version" of the CSOs over "the litigation on the illegal formation of the current tenure of NCD" besides condemning the "just

verdict of the honourable Court" and maliciously flashing their names in the media. The three said they were "compelled to highlight the circumstances and reasons" which compelled them to seek legal justice against the "illegal formation of the NCD office" in order to preserve the sanctity of NCD. The three said just because they are newly nominated/elected representatives to the NCD, their legal rights as councillors cannot be questioned and that the allegations against them was "an attempt to jeopardise the integrity of any democratic institution." Citing Article 8 of the NCD constitution, they said it stipulated that "nomination/selection/election" of the office bearers has to be done by the Councillors. However, this provision was "blatantly ignored" as the present office bearers were selected by the "outgoing Councillors." They said this was not only "unconstitutional and undemocratic, but an attempt by some people with vested interests, to occupy the chair illegally." The signatories pointed out that NCD is to be constituted by Councillors representing the 19 Dimapur-based Tribal Hohos who elect the office bearers and so it (NCD) was answerable to the Tribal Hohos. However, they said it was "unfortunate that some councillors, with selfish vested interest" refused even to heed the advice of the Tribal Hohos, for convening a meeting of the new team. This compelled them to move the court to "check such illegal attempts" and accordingly, the Court had passed its judgement through a restraining order. The three said despite the "laid down principles in the constitution, the illegal formation of the NCD went ahead" and some people, "taking the name of CSOs" voiced support for "such deliberate hijacking of the NCD" which they said was "unfortunate and highly objectionable." Further, they said the litigation was against "illegal attempts by some with vested interest, to occupy the office, through unconstitutional means" and that their prayer to the Court to uphold the NCD's constitution was to also protect the interest of all Nagas, rather than "allowing it to continue as a syndicate."

Senior Journalist Mangal Sing Jhanjhari passes away



SIPAJHAR, Nov 14: Senior Journalist and three term former Vice president of Darrang district committee of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) passed away at his Kharupatia residence. He was 57. He had served as press Correspondent of Saptahik Mangal Batari, Hindi daily Jagriti, Purbachal, Sentinel, English daily North East Times and Assam daily Ajir Assam. He had joined in Bharatiya Janata Party in 1987-1988 and served the party as Secretary and vice president of the Darrang district committee of the party. He had close relations with the central leaders of the Party. He was one of the ward Commissioner of Kharupatia town committee, land advisory board of Udalguri BTAD and Mangaldai Press Club. He was suffering from cancer. His death is widely mourned in the entire Darrang district.

AAMSU draws condolence to Porag Bhuyan in Gossaigaon

Our Correspondent : Gossaigaon, Nov-14: The All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) has condoled the mysterious demise of Journalist Porag Bhuyan here at Gossaigaon on Friday last. Regarding this a candle march procession was also carried out which was attended by Rezaul Karim Sarkar, Central vice-president AAMSU. Attending the candle march procession, Rezaul Karim Sarkar asserted that there should be proper investigation for the mysterious death of Porag Bhuyan and the culprit should be punished as per the law. He further said that the due to the negligence of the government the attacks on scribes has been taking place now a days which needs to be tackled carefully.

Gunindra Nath Das, MLA of Barpeta inaugurated many schemes under the 14th Finance Commission at Bhella



Barpeta, November 14: With the election day in full swing, the activities of every political party have increased in the state. Representatives of all parties have come up with new strategies for crushing the voters. In the run-up to the elections, it is as if every Representative has entered into an undeclared contest for the inauguration of the election. Gunindra Nath Das, MLA of Barpeta Assembly constituency, is also not far behind in this regard. In various panchayats of his constituency, he is working tirelessly to inaugurate the schemes. MLA Gunindra Nath Das has inaugurated several schemes in the last few days in 1 No. Bhella Goan Panchayat Of Barpeta. He also inaugurated paving with blocks at the road from Barpeta Daulashal Hajo Path to Bhella Small Primary Health Center at a cost of about Rs 4.5 lakh allocated under the 14th Finance Commission of the Zilla Parishad. Earlier, the road leading from that road to Balachar was paved with paving blocks. Yesterday, MLA Gunindra Nath Das inaugurates a scheme for a permanent platform on the premises of Bhella Higher Secondary School. Satisfied with the work of various schemes implemented in Bhella Panchayat, the MLA lauded the President of the Panchayat, Afia Begum. The MLA said that the government scheme has been implemented most successfully in Bhella Gaon Panchayat in Barpeta district. MLA Gunindra Nath Das says the government should allocate more schemes for the overall development of Bhella Village. He also said that he would play a significant role in this regard. His inaugural programme was attended by several prominent personalities from the Bhella area.

Tribal and Local eco-friendly products of Assam demonstrates the richness of the region as it exemplifies 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', opines experts

Guwahati, November 14: Tribal and Local eco-friendly products of Assam demonstrate the richness of the region as it exemplifies 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat exemplified by Tribal and Local eco-friendly Products- propelling socio-economic growth and development' here today. Experts from Industry fraternity including organisations of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Textiles along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the market potential of eco-friendly products and its awareness from socio-economic, cultural, academic and

policy perspective. Talking about Central Government awareness initiatives on 'Vocal For Local' this Diwali- 'Local for Diwali' and 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' in which Assam and Rajasthan are grouped, Dr. Abhinav Kant, Incharge, Bamboo and Cane Development Institute, Ministry of Textile, Agartala said that local and tribal products help in economic and social development of a region and it has tremendous potential for employment. He said that Khadi and Village Industry products such as shawls, jackets, rumals and textile of a region demonstrate the culture of a place. He said that Muga silk of Assam has various utility in textile and the cultural dances in Assam also demonstrate the vivacity and enthusiasm of people of the region. The Galaxy of dignitaries in the discus-

sion, which included Shri Arimardan Singh, ADG (M&C), PIB Ranchi said that just as Rajasthan, which has huge potential in Small and Medium Enterprises such as pottery, Metal work and spices, likewise, Assam too has huge market for tribal and local products such as Gamusa, Bamboo and Cane Products, Mekhalas, Muga silk and shawls. He said they are not only eco-friendly but have a market which is potentially domestic and international. Shri Manoj K Das, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd., Guwahati said that this festive occasion is also an opportunity to experience the joy and celebration of products such as Diyas, toys, pottery, Agarbattis and Khadi products which are trendy and has market for youth with its market ac-

cessibility and marketability. He said that awareness initiatives are one of the efforts to appreciate the importance of products which demonstrates culture of Assam. Shri Hemanta Rabha, Project Head, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati and National Youth Award (2003) and UNESCO General Conference Youth Forum Attendee in Paris (2003), said awareness initiatives such as 'Vocal for Local' products this Diwali is an opportunity to talk about talent and advantages of tribal products which are strengthened with initiatives of processed food and agro-products by market analysis and its marketability with regard to demand and consumption driven potential of Assam. He said that products such as that of minor forest produce could be value-added such

as jackfruit which after being processed has huge market potential. Shri Chandan Pachani, another Senior officer, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati said that the organisation has been training entrepreneurs for better efficiency and effectiveness in which technology is of vital efficacy. Enlisting the provisos of the Indian Constitution, Abdur Rahman Mallick, Advocate Delhi High Court lauded PIB for this informative and knowledge webinar and said these endeavours are a WIN-WIN scenarios for all in the value-added process of socio-economic development, thereby a potential entrepreneur enhances employability opportunities which affects socio-economic growth of a place. The informative and knowledge webinar was planned and coor-

minated by Shri Samrat Bandyopadhyay, Joint Director (M & C), PIB, Guwahati. Senior officers of PIB were present in webinar. The public awareness webinar delved into details on the various aspects of the topic such as market potential, socio-economic, growth and development, among others. The interactive Webinar has enthusiastic participation of students, academicians and industrial fraternity of Assam as they said that this information cum knowledge Webinar would help them in informed decision making and to celebrate the culture of other States. Along with students, eminent journalists and other government senior officials from Doordarshan Guwahati, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati, All India Radio Guwahati were also present on the occasion.

NPF demands rollback on fuel tax

DIMAPUR, November 14: A day after the ruling PDA coalition government announced new hikes in taxes on petrol, diesel and petroleum products, the opposition NPF has condemned the decision and demanded an immediate rollback "before it becomes too late to control its impact on a beleaguered and stressed society." It may be recalled that the state government on November 11, announced fresh hikes in price of petrol from 25% to 29.80% and diesel from 14.5% to 17.50%. NPF through its press bureau reminded that when the PDA government tried to extract money from public under "COVID Cess", it was strongly opposed by the Naga public which compelled the government to withdraw the cess on fuel. NPF said the PDA government has again come up with a "new formula" to suck money from the public. The opposition said "this new formula" was a "cruel decision" since public was reeling under the economic impact of caused the COVID-19 pandemic. It said the hikes also exposed the PDA government's inhuman and utter disregard for the public welfare. NPF said the increase in tax on petrol and diesel was a "frontal assault on the right of the people to food and shelter" which were the most basic needs for survival. It said the hikes have a direct and escalating effect on the cost of essential com-

modities and construction materials. NPF also said it was "stupefied" by the decision that comes at a time when the public were still "valiantly struggling" to cope up with the skyrocketing prices of commodities earlier due to the "Cess on petroleum products" which was yet to normalise even after the government ordered a roll back of the Cess. NPF said it was convinced that the "atrocious decision" to hike taxes on fuel, would severely handicap the buying power of consumers whose economy was already severely impacted by the pandemic. According to NPF the additional burden on the common people caused by the new hikes, will also adversely affect the welfare and livelihood of thousands of people, especially the daily-wage earners, private sector entrepreneurs, employees, small scale business. NPF said the resultant consequence will be a ripple effect on the dependents, the rural economy and the entire economy of the state since Naga society is close-knit and inter-dependent.



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Despite Trump's claim of "tremendous progress," there was no outcome on a trade deal

To move forward, Joe Biden must steer the conversation away from tariffs, an obsession of his predecessor. The big opportunity for the likes of Apple Inc., Facebook Inc., Amazon.com Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google is in India's still nascent but rapidly growing digital economy: smartphone penetration of 32%, compared with 61% in China. Silicon Valley deserves to be high up in the incoming president's priorities. By the time Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi walked hand-in-hand in a Houston stadium in September 2019, the U.S. had raised tariffs on 14% of Indian exports, including steel, aluminum, textiles and jewelry. New Delhi had retaliated by making California almonds and Washington apples costlier. The pageantry - and the bromance - were on display again during Trump's India visit in February. Despite Trump's claim of "tremendous progress," there was no outcome on a trade deal. At \$34 billion last year, U.S. exports to India aren't doing badly. Yes, China took in three times as much American merchandise, but its economy is nearly five times bigger. And that's just goods. Throw in India's spending on U.S. technology, travel and other services - already at 43% of Chinese levels - and it's clear that Trump, the self-proclaimed Tariff Man, was alienating a potentially valuable ally over a \$29 billion trade deficit, not even a 10th of the gap with China. It's time for a saner approach. The Biden administration can strike a bargain, persuading New Delhi to accommodate greater U.S. involvement in consumer apps, and to treat this investment fairly. In exchange, the U.S. would unwind Trump's tariff increases and restore India's access to the so-called generalized system of preferences that encourage developing nations to industrialize. Trump took away India's GSP privilege last year. Some parts of India's digital economy are already controlled by U.S. companies. Google Pay and Walmart Inc.'s PhonePe dominate instantaneously settled mobile payments. Last week, Facebook got the regulatory go-ahead for WhatsApp users to access the network, which has seen transactions double over the past year to 2 billion last month. But moving small sums from one bank to another is no money-spinner. It's a customer acquisition tool, provided tech firms can then do more with these subscribers and their data. It's here that Biden's team will have to engage with New Delhi, which is planning to tighten already restrictive e-commerce rules by mandating government access to online companies' source codes and algorithms. The Indian payments regulator wants to limit the share of any app to 30%, probably because WhatsApp's 400 million customer base means it can have a chokehold on an important part of the nation's financial plumbing. The Modi government is hardly unique in its wariness of Big Tech's market power, and how it may be abused. Europe wants to rein in Silicon Valley and impose a global digital tax. Beijing protected its own market for homegrown players, and produced runaway successes. But China now seems to be having misgivings about the deep entrenchment of tech in the country's financial architecture, as evidenced by the recent busting of Ant Group Co.'s initial public offering. Broader anti-trust rules against dominant corporations like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Tencent Holdings Ltd. are coming. India is the only billion-plus-people market where U.S. tech firms can scale up. Just like in China, where they've been effectively shut out, the ultimate prize will be to substitute hard collateral in consumer and business loans with payments and e-commerce data. Because the reward is large, resistance from domestic lobby groups will be tough. Straightforward demands - like India must allow platforms to store consumer data wherever in the world they want - would get tangled in concerns around financial stability and national sovereignty. Tycoon Mukesh Ambani, whose Jio Platforms Ltd. is the leading contender to become an Indian super-app, has called for an end to "data colonization" by global corporations. Modi has embarked on a campaign of self-reliance, though for now it seems to favor the U.S. by aiming to reduce dependence on Chinese imports and investment. Drawn by India's financial incentives for local manufacturing, Apple's supply chain is looking to set up assemblies. Keeping the Indian digital market open to U.S. tech may appear a modest diplomatic goal, but hitting it is important. For one thing, a more ambitious project, such as a free trade agreement, will be a hard sell. Pandemic-hit U.S. workers will worry about losing jobs to cheaper Indian techies, especially if India pushes for a reversal of Trump's H1-B visa curbs. Indian farmers will fear ruin at the hands of more productive American agriculture. More crucially, digital India is where America Inc.'s checks are going. Ambani, India's richest man, has raised \$26 billion this year for his online and retail businesses from global investors, including Facebook and Google. To that, add the \$16 billion Walmart paid for e-commerce website Flipkart, and the billions of dollars committed to India by Amazon. Being foreign-controlled, neither Amazon India nor Flipkart is allowed to own inventory or openly discount merchandise.

We must prevent a vaccine 'infodemic' from fuelling the Covid pandemic

The world has been offered a first ray of hope for a potential Covid-19 vaccine, created by Pfizer and BioNTech. So far, efforts have been focused on the manufacture and deployment of this and many other vaccines. Now that we have our first candidate, attention will turn to uptake. If researchers offer a vaccine, will people volunteer for it? And if they don't, why not? As the World Health Organization director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, warned in March, we are not only fighting a pandemic, but also an "infodemic", a deluge of information - both factual and incorrect. This can generate doubt and vaccine hesitancy, which the WHO listed as one of the top 10 threats to global health in 2019. A recent survey conducted in the UK found that 36% of people were either uncertain or very unlikely to be vaccinated against Covid-19. One theory attributes growing vaccine hesitancy to the rise of misinformation and conspiracy theories emanating from the anti-vaxx movement. In 1840, when the Vaccination Act was introduced in the UK, the now familiar arguments were aired: vaccines cause harm; the alliance between medical science and government is driven by profit; vaccinations are an infringement of basic civil liberties; healthy lifestyles and homeopathic medicines provide better alternatives. In the

case of Covid, conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers have spread infectious rumours such as the biologically implausible message that the virus is spread by mobile phone towers. Others spun subplots featuring Bill Gates implanting digital microchips during vaccinations or intentionally causing the "plandemic". Others peddle bogus "natural" cures, from which they make a personal profit. Misinformation can spread faster than the virus, making it difficult to identify an actionable path to counter it. The content is often highly engaging, with simple messages that feed on our deepest fears and doubts.

Melinda Mills though most people are unlikely to believe that the world is controlled by a reptilian elite, we do respond to information that is sprinkled with truth. Yes, the risk of catching the common cold can be reduced by a healthy diet, so why not Covid too, some might think. The endgame is polarisation, confusion and distrust via the tactic of what the historians Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway referred to in their 2010 book as "merchandising doubt". Social media companies are increasingly being held accountable for risking public health and taking measures to halt the spread of disinformation on their platforms. Beyond monitoring and silencing these groups, our stron-

gest weapon is to inoculate the general public against the infodemic by empowering them to spot and report misinformation. But misinformation is not the only driver behind doubt. As researchers such as Heidi Larson have long pointed out, people may be vaccine "hesitant" for reasons such as complacency, inconvenience or a lack of trust and confidence in whether the vaccine is effective or safe. A vaccine that might typically take a decade to create has been developed at high speed, raising questions about how this has been possible and whether it is safe. Scientists and independent regulators have shifted resources to solve this urgent problem, but this needs to be communicated. Others might look at the relatively healthy middle-aged groups in the trials and question how this will translate to elderly people or children. In addition, the Covid-19 vaccine deployment faces an unprecedented degree of uncertainty and complexity that will be exceedingly difficult to communicate. It may take years or months to know the exact duration of immunity resulting from a vaccine, if and when it needs to be repeated or how protective it is across different groups. Moreover, we are not talking about "the vaccine" but rather many vaccines, each with distinct caveats. Whether the public will accept a vaccine is driven by who is best able to get the message across.

With Bihar success, CPI(ML) has smartly blended radicalism and pragmatic politics

As the National Democratic Alliance gets ready to form the government in Bihar, much is being discussed about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's juggernaut. In the Bharatiya Janata Party's big gains, it seems possible that even many migrant labourers, who suffered the worst exodus due to the Covid-induced lockdown, voted in favour of Modi. But despite the BJP's presence, it is incredible to see that one of the biggest strike-rates on the Opposition side has been the Left alliance led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation. The CPI(ML) Liberation won 12 of the 19 seats it contested, even as it has sought recount on three more seats. This success came despite months of relentless propaganda through terms such as 'Naxalites', 'terrorist sympathisers', 'China-funded Maoists', 'tukde-tukde gang' among others. The party emerged in the 1970s after the Naxalbari movement, but immersed itself in mainstream electoral politics by the 1980s. Since then, the CPI(ML) Liberation is one of the faces of the rural poor, and changing the grammar of anti-caste politics in the region. Coincidentally, even though the party is ideologically opposed to the BJP on the Right, it shares one thing in common - both have a truly committed cadre working on the ground. It is this cadre that has not only brought the wins in the 2020 election but also established something far more crucial in terms of future politics. Despite Bihar's strong political culture of social justice, the main beneficiaries have for long been Yadavs, dominant groups among OBCs (Other Backward Classes), and the Paswans among Dalits. What the CPI(ML)



Liberation's success has in the Bihar election, it did not done is that it has turned a party that emerged out of land-based struggles for the landless castes into mainstream politics today. The party's support to the Dalits and Musahar Mahadalits, whose families were massacred during the 1990s by the infamous Bhumihar militia of Ranveer Sena, is widely known. When I was in Bihar last year during the 2019 Lok Sabha election campaign, it struck me how parts of rural Bihar had memorials built by the CPI(ML) to commemorate the victims killed in Bathani Tola, Laxmanpur Bathe, Shankarbiga and more. The CPI(ML) Liberation has taken on hotbed issues of unemployment, agricultural bills and migrant labourers' crisis while retaining its base among the poorest sections of Dalits. In a land of post-Mandal politics of social justice, the CPI(ML) Liberation has shifted with the times to talk about the links of privatisation to caste, land ownership and material resource-based issues as the forefront of its anti-caste politics. Not just that,

field a single upper-caste candidate, changing the popular notion of the Brahminical, Savarna-dominated Left leadership. Today, the BJP seems stronger than ever before, but the farmers-related legislations have put states even like Bihar in a crisis. The popular argument is that the laws only affect the big, landed upper-caste farmers. But the protesting voices have come from Left and Dalit faces, including candidates such as MLA-elect Manoj Manzil, who campaigned against the impact of the market-driven reforms on smaller farmers. After the exodus of lakhs of migrant labourers since May, the CPI(ML) Liberation and its affiliated student organisations spent critical resources in driving aid and relief work, donations, and food-supplies for returning workers. Most of the Bihari millennials never witnessed the Mandal politics that happened 30 years ago. And yet, for many first-time voters, the Mahagathbandhan taking on issues of unemployment, students' protest against

conducting examinations in the middle of the pandemic, workers' crisis and farm laws prioritised the politics of caste with its intersection to jobs, labour rights and rampant privatisation. The 1990s saw important reforms for social justice, but it also saw the era of big reforms of privatisation. The Modi government today has been expanding this even more, by opening doors for privatisation of railways and introducing the agricultural laws. We need political parties that capture this imagination of caste and class together with efficient cadres on ground who take these issues to the common people, before they fall victim to Ram Mandir, offers to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan-over-jobs rhetoric. The CPI(ML) Liberation's wins prove that anxieties over these problems does in fact exist - what we need is Opposition parties that will work to overcome these anxieties on the ground for the Bahujan masses. A few days ago, a blast at a chemical boiler factory in Gujarat killed 12 workers. The few media reports on the incident put it as a case of management's negligence and exploitation of factory workers. Upon visiting the families of these victims, I learnt that almost all the dead were Dalit-Bahujans. The death of these 12 factory workers is also a sign of caste atrocity, but our politics still does not see the exploitation of such workers in terms of their caste identities. What political parties like the CPI(ML) Liberation have done is prove that bread and butter issues, such as jobs or ownership of land, is inherently tied to caste oppression. For a strong anti-caste politics to succeed against the BJP's agenda, we must focus on these issues along with representation and social justice.

The 2010 student protests were vilified-but their warnings of austerity Britain were proved right



As political metaphors go, the shattering of the glass frontage of 30 Millbank by student protesters on 10 November 2010 takes some beating. That day, a peaceful 50,000-strong march against tuition fees and the coalition government's new austerity regime took a spontaneous detour to the Conservatives HQ, and all hell broke loose. The clashes and occupation of the building that followed were a profound shock to the police, the government and the moderate NUS leadership alike. But this was also a historic rupture: the broken glass marked the cracks in the idea that there was no alternative to austerity, or that young people had been lulled into political apathy. It signalled the eruption

of an intense, freezing few months of wildcat protests and occupations that seemed to emerge from nowhere. The students' ostensible target was the tripling of the tuition fees to £9,000 a year, and the cancellation of Educational Maintenance Allowance, the £30-a-week payment to sixth formers that made it possible for many poorer students to stay in post-16 education. Over the winter of 2010 and spring 2011, the horizons of the protests broadened far beyond education, to the pain inflicted by the government's austerity regime, the closed youth clubs and libraries, cuts to the NHS and public sector pay, and the new regime of benefit caps and sanctions. They were met with

Dan Hancox

with the rent strikes that have begun at several other universities, reportedly now involving more than 1,000 students at Bristol. For a radical left once again shut out from institutional politics, the creativity, exuberance and grassroots energy of the student protests are a reminder that shifting the Overton window is not an activity that takes place in Westminster alone. A dazzling and varied arsenal of techniques, online innovations and offline perspiration emerged in the weeks and months that followed the Millbank protest. UK Uncut - with their peaceful high-street sit-ins staged to protest against corporate tax avoidance at shops such as Boots, Topshop and Vodafone - had their arguments smuggled into the Daily Mail. Police surveillance and kettling prompted the creation of a bespoke anti-kettling app, Sukey. For many, the protests were radicalising in themselves, a physical education that ran alongside an intellectual one. One unexpected consequence was that a generation of mostly white undergraduates came to better understand the physical contours of the police violence that was already a fact of life for many of the sixth-form and FE students joining the fray to fight for their EMA. "£30 a week lets me eat" read one placard I photographed at the time. These younger protesters couldn't get a hearing in parliament - the government wouldn't even let the cancellation of EMA go to a vote - and they were written out of the narrative completely by most media outlets, who dismissed the protesters as middle-class dilettantes. Perhaps it was little surprise when, nine months later, the government was met with some of the worst riots in English history. A 2010 Guardian video following protesters from a London FE college culminates in the plaintive moment when a teenager pleads with a line of riot police to let him out of the kettle: "I've got homework to do." The protesters were ahead of their time, demanding the abandonment of New Labour's spending orthodoxies that

were still present in Ed Balls' weak triangulation over austerity. It's not hard to connect the dots between the student and anti-cuts protests, and the eruption of Corbynism and Momentum five years later (three guesses for which lone backbench Labour MPs supported them in 2010) - and some of the student activists went on to work for the latter. Scrapping tuition fees became Labour party policy at the 2017 and 2019 elections for the first time (Ed Miliband had proposed a small cut in the 2015 manifesto). But the neoliberal assault on the university continued both for students - the normalisation of £9,000-a-year tuition fees that the students predicted happened almost overnight - and for staff: last week, the University of East London was accused of forcing redundancies on union organisers who have fought against job cuts. And yet the protesters were denounced and mischaracterised almost across the board by pundits and politicians at the time, which is exactly why most of the press didn't know what to do with Corbynism and Momentum when it arrived. Deborah Orr called the 2010 protests "silly" and "pointless" - objecting to austerity was "like protesting against water's stubborn habit of flowing downwards". These young people were, in Nick Clegg's words, "living in dream world" if they thought there was any alternative to austerity. By November 2018, the UN rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights was condemning the "great misery" inflicted by the coalition's austerity policies, which had been "punitive, mean-spirited and often callous", leaving 14 million Brits living in poverty. Future historians will look back on the 2010 protests as a harbinger, a first wave of youthful radicalism that was echoed in the wildly asymmetric age breakdowns of recent general election votes - in 2019, in spite of a heavy overall defeat, 62% of 18-24s voted Labour versus the Tories 19%. (And it was not ever thus: in 1983, 42% of 18-24 year olds voted for Margaret Thatcher against 33% for Labour.) The most radical politics is still found among the young - in the teenage-led BLM protests, and the school strikes for climate. The student protesters lost their battle, both against the tuition fees bill and against austerity; and vindication by history (not to mention the UN) is scant consolation. But theirs is a lesson in the law of unintended consequences, and the echoes of Millbank reverberate loudly to this day. Far from living in a dream world, the students' modest proposal that education should be a right not a privilege, and their opposition to the grim degradation of the public sphere - and the Britain of foodbanks, benefit sanctions and Brexit that would follow in the 2010s - was an awakening.



People enjoy the view of Lujiazui at the Bund in east China's Shanghai,

Covid worsens living conditions for Brus displaced in Tripura

New Delhi, November 14 : For the displaced Brus, a number of them moved from Mizoram and confined to seven temporary camps in North Tripura, life has been made harder due to the Coronavirus pandemic even as the community looks for a speedy and permanent resettlement within the state of Tripura as assured in the quadripartite agreement signed with the Modi government 10 months ago. Having to survive on "insufficient" funds and rations doled out by the state, the Bru Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been left without any income for months, with most of them having little or no savings to fall back on. The leaders of five Bru organisations had on 23 October taken up their grievances with Tripura Governor Ramesh Bais and Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, urging for speedy implementation of the agreement. Leaders of five Bru organisations and Pradyot Manikya (left), scion of the Tripura royal family, at the 23 October meeting with Tripura Governor Ramesh Bais | By special arrangement Leaders of five Bru organisations and Pradyot Manikya (left), scion of the Tripura royal family, at the 23 October meeting with Tripura Governor Ramesh Bais (second from left, facing camera) | By special arrangement For over two decades, the displacement issue had remained unresolved until an agreement was signed on 16 January - between the Government of India, Government of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru community representatives in New Delhi. As part of the agreement, around 35,000 Bru refugees would be settled permanently in Tripura with the Centre sanctioning a Rs 600-crore settlement package. However, resettlement plans have suffered a delay due to the Covid-

19 crisis. "I think this is just the beginning. These displaced people who trace their roots to the erstwhile state of Tripura need to be repatriated," said Pradyot Manikya, scion of the Tripura royal family and one of the signatories of the agreement with the central government. "If we can have people from another country come settle in the Northeast, then why can't we allow people who were displaced, or who at one stage belonged to the Kingdom of Tripura to live a life of respect within India." "As of now, the government has decided to settle them in equal areas with the approval of local people. They will be settled in clusters so that they can protect their traditions, language and culture," Pradyot added. "The government has ensured that our demands would be addressed. We have also submitted a memorandum. Our people are facing a lot of problems since lockdown," Bruno Mwsha, secretary of Mizoram Bru Displaced Peoples' Forum (MBDPF), a committee of Bru refugees that spearheaded the repatriation and resettlement issues, told. "We are dependent on government relief, but it is not sufficient," Mwsha added. "Many were earning their livelihood as daily wage earners within and outside the state. Those who were working outside in private and government sectors have returned to their respective camps and have not been able to earn a single penny." The Brus are one of the oldest ethnic minority groups in Northeast spread across Tripura, Mizoram and

southern Assam. In Mizoram, they are scattered in Kolasib, Lunglei and Mamit districts. While the Reangs (Brus) are animists or nature worshippers practicing rituals somewhat similar to Hinduism, 80 per cent of the Mizoram Bru community is comprised of Christian converts. The Bru Hindus constitute 60 per cent of the refugee population in Tripura. They had migrated from Tripura to Mizoram



sometime in the 19th century. The ethnic conflict between the majority Mizos and the Brus in October 1997 had forced about 30,000 Brus to flee Mizoram and land in Tripura. The conflict was triggered by the murder of a forest official by the suspected Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), following which a circular was supposedly issued asking Bru headmen to evacuate their villages fearing a backlash. Since then, the Bru IDPs have been living in the seven camps of Kanchanpur and Panisagar sub-divisions of North Tripura district. Another displacement of about 5,000 Brus took place in November 2009 following the death of a Mizo youth in Mamit district. So far, three persons from the Bru community living at the Naisingpara relief camp under Kanchanpur sub-division have tested positive for coronavirus.

From JP to BJP - the many hues of politics and governance in Bihar

New Delhi, November 14 : Considered by many as the cradle of democracy, Bihar has been witness to many significant social and political movements that changed the course of Indian politics. The recently concluded assembly election in the state reflects the true picture of national politics - an ever-surging BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a decimated Congress and a group of regional parties that have become synonymous with the only visible resistance in the absence of an effective opposition for the past six years. In a way, Bihar is like a microcosm of Indian politics. And that is why the state is ThePrint's Newsmaker of the Week. Over the past two months, Bihar has witnessed yet another political change. Although the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, led by Nitish Kumar, is set to return in Patna, the 2020 assembly polls have given birth to new political equations. In fact, the shift was underway for quite some time. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have been the bellwether states for the politics in the Hindi heartland because they end up playing a crucial role in government formation at the Centre. How important Bihar is in national politics goes beyond numbers. And it was visible on the day of counting. On 10 November, India was glued to TV and mobile screens, following the vote-by-vote update. The 16-hour-long counting was like a rollercoaster ride with its ups and downs - a final before the IPL final. The results, yet again, put to test the veracity of exit polls that had given the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) led Mahagathbandhan a clean sweep. At the end, with NDA's win, 31-year-old Tejashwi Yadav was unable to create history by becoming the youngest chief minister of Bihar. The 2020 assembly polls will also be remembered for many firsts - an election without Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan, the last of the Socialist-era politicians from Bihar apart from Nitish Kumar, and a greater acceptance for the BJP, a national party that has so far served as a junior partner in the state. Bihar, which witnessed a near-uninterrupted Congress rule for decades until the 1990s, saw the rise of regional players in Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United). Lalu used V.P. Singh-Mandal gambit to expand his base. About 15 years later, Lalu became Bihar's Chief Minister and his party remained in power till 2005. Since then it has been Nitish, who empowered the Extremely Backward Class (EBCs) - communities that Lalu could not reach out to. While regional players like the RJD and the JD (U) increased their support base, the Congress



witnessed a steady decline, and today, it is a minor player in the state. The party witnessed a decline after the first post-Mandal assembly election in 1995. Regional parties got the support of the other backward classes, Dalits, and Muslims. Bihar has always shown a great appetite to lead the change and be shaped by it. Many momentous political changes that took place in India in the past few decades had Bihar as its epicentre. Even Gandhi began his Indigo movement, which came to be known popularly as the Champaran movement, against the British in 1917 from Bihar. Be it the JP movement or the agitation over OBC reservation or Indira Gandhi's attempt to script her comeback, all have had roots in Bihar. It is Bihar from where Indira Gandhi is said to have scripted her comeback after the Emergency she imposed. It was on her way to Belchi village in Bihar that Indira Gandhi took the famous elephant ride in 1977 - reaching out to the families of Dalit victims who were murdered by upper caste land owners. The Congress, which had been wiped out from Bihar, laid the foundation for its return in the state with Indira Gandhi's visit. The JP Movement had caused much harm to Indira Gandhi, politically. So it was only natural for her to have gone back to Bihar, which held her comeback key. With 74 seats, the BJP has emerged as the second-largest party in Bihar assembly, one short of the RJD's 75 and a good 31 seats more than its ally the JD (U), which won 43 seats. This marks the beginning of a shift in Bihar politics where Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a national leader, seems to have overshadowed the regional satraps. The Modi wave that had swept the country in the 2014 Lok Sabha election had lost its steam just a year later when Bihar voted in the 2015 assembly election. The vote was widely seen as Bihar's rejection of the national trend that was clearly visible in the state in 2014. This time around, the entire campaign of the BJP was on the shoulders of PM Modi whose popularity, it appears, transcends the boundaries of caste and class. This

signals the beginning of the end of the Mandalisation of politics in Bihar. Politics in Bihar, especially during the post-Mandal period, had witnessed a shift from an upper-caste dominated power structure to the OBCs and the Yadavs. Even though PM Modi has said that the party will work under the leadership of Nitish Kumar, the journey for the JD (U) chief is not going to be an easy one. In Bihar, an anti-Nitish sentiment, especially regarding unemployment and lack of industrial growth, is hard to miss. The Bihar chief minister could not look the other way when slogans against him were raised at his own rallies. Since assuming office in 2005, Nitish has made Bihar wait for reform, industrialisation and high economic growth that the rest of the country witnessed in this period. Data from the National Sample Survey showed that Bihar's unemployment rate rose in 2018-19 to 10.2 per cent as against 7.2 per cent in the year-ago period. In the same period, the overall unemployment rate for the entire country fell to 5.8 per cent from 6.1 per cent. But more worryingly, data showed that Bihar had one of the highest unemployment rates in the age-group of 15-29 years - 30.9 per cent in 2018-19 as against 22.8 per cent in the year-ago period. That's the voter Tejashwi Yadav was targeting with his promise of 10 lakh government jobs. The social engineering programmes have failed to alleviate Bihar's poverty, leaving people desperate for economic engineering. In 2011-12, Bihar remained one of the poorest states in the country, with 33.7 per cent of its population below the poverty line. Care Ratings, in a recent report, points out that Bihar has a low share of India's factories - only 1.5 per cent as of 2017-18 - and will need to improve. In Bihar, the share of manufacturing in the total GSDP was as low as 8.7 per cent, while the all-India figure was 17.4 per cent. By voting for caste, Bihar began to slip on the development index but it did lead to empowerment. Christophe Jaffrelot, political science professor at the Sciences Po, Paris, has called it the 'silent revolution'.

Chinese research vessels in Sri Lankan waters come under Indian Navy lens



New Delhi, November 14 : Two Chinese research and survey vessels in Sri Lankan waters have caught the eye of the Indian Navy, which sees them as possibly being part of a larger ploy to gather data vital for conduct of naval operations, especially that of submarines. ThePrint has learnt. The two vessels have reached the Sri Lankan waters over the last one month, sources in the defence and security establishment said. Incidentally, Chinese survey and research vessels have been regular visitors to Sri Lanka and the waters around the Island nation over the last decade. Chinese survey and research activity picked up in 2012 and there has been continuous presence of Chinese survey and research vessels in Sri Lankan waters ever since. "These vessels are ostensibly being deployed for locating wrecks of Chinese Admiral Zheng He's treasure fleet, which reportedly sank off Sri Lanka in early the 15th

century," a source explained. "An agreement to undertake marine surveys, including search for wrecks, was signed between the two countries during the visit of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Head Xi Jinping to Sri Lanka in September 2014." A note prepared by the security and defence establishment said sustained presence of Chinese survey and research vessels also begs the question whether this presence is related only to search for wrecks as claimed. There have been 12 declared visits since February 2014 and many more, which have not come to the attention of Sri Lankan authorities. "Why do these vessels not conduct their activities closer to the shore, where the likelihood of finding wrecks and artefacts will be higher, as would be the ability of Sri Lankan authorities to monitor their activities," the source said. The note indicates that despite repeated requests from Sri Lankan authorities, these vessels do not disclose their activities or details of their movements within Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). "No details of equipment being carried are provided, nor the type of data being collected during

deployment of these vessels," the note said. "Research data is also not shared with Sri Lankan authorities despite being mandatory as per the agreement. To buttress their claims of being engaged in purely historical and scientific missions, Universities at Kelaniya and Ruhunu are being engaged, albeit at a superficial level." Sources in the know said the CCP appears to have bullied its way and swept aside all questions being raised regarding their activities in this domain. "It would be interesting to examine on how many occasions Sri Lankan authorities were permitted to embark these vessels? What was their level of access and has there been any tangible benefit to Sri Lanka from the deployment of these vessels? The opacity with which these deployments are being undertaken and the unwillingness of CCP to share information with Sri Lankan authorities indicates motives apart from just marine archaeology," another source said. The note said survey and research vessels primarily gather data vital for conduct of naval operations, especially that of submarines. "Such unencumbered and suspicious activity within Sri Lankan waters will surely raise the hackles of other nations in the region and also has the potential to upset the delicate maritime balance in the IOR." The note added that the person spearheading the wreckage investigation project from the CCP's

side is Professor Hu Changling, Director of Shanghai Acoustics Laboratory at Chinese Academy of Sciences. It claims that Professor Hu has been deeply involved with the CCP's military for projects, including for submarine sonar systems. Sources said the CCP's claims that these survey missions would be beneficial to Sri Lanka seem quite far-fetched, if not outlandish. "In what can only be described as an attempt to put a square peg in a round hole, CCP has attempted to link the discovery of Zheng He's wrecks to increased tourism from China," a second source said. "However, available data and predictions suggest that there is no such correlation. This is also despite the fact that in 2012, Sri Lanka had celebrated the 600th anniversary of Zheng He's landing on the island nation and held special tourism promotion drives in Yunnan Province, which is Zheng He's native place." While Zheng He is a revered figure back in China, he did not have a benign eye towards the island nation. This is because Zheng undertook a series of naval expeditions to waters around Sri Lanka, using his fleet of Junks. These expeditions were undertaken to collect tribute and demand obedience towards the Chinese Emperor. "This is much in the same way that modern day CCP's economic debt-diplomacy aims to subjugate Sri Lanka's interests," the source said.

Maharashtra govt expects second Covid wave to hit state in January-February

Mumbai, Nov 14 : Anticipating a second COVID-19 wave in January-February, the Maharashtra government has asked the authorities to ensure there is no complacency in testing and said labs should be functional in every district and municipal corporation limits. A circular from the government's health services directorate dated November 11 said a second wave of the pandemic is likely in January-February. The second wave is expected based on what is happening in Europe, it said. The circular said since October, the number of COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra has showed signs of decline. The second wave of the virus has hit many countries, especially those in Europe, it said. The circular said there should be no complacency in coronavirus testing and all labs will remain functional as per

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there should be 140 tests per 10 lakh population, it said. For this, there should be testing labs in each district and municipal corporation limits, the government document said. The circular said the need of the hour is to celebrate a firecracker-free Diwali keeping in mind health interest of COVID-19 patients and those with breathing problems. Talking about COVID-19 protocols, it said wearing masks when outdoors, frequent hand wash, disinfection of surfaces, physical distancing, avoiding spitting and smoking in public places are necessary measures to curb the spread of the infection. It also advised people to avoid unnecessary travel and not to take stress.



A breeder shows the Australian red claw crayfish raised by him at Jinpeng Village of Yonghe Town in Liuyang, central China's Hunan Province,

Contd. From Page 1

No Power in world can stop

Minister further stated the history of the world always narrated that those nations have prospered which had the ability of fight its invaders. "No matter how far international cooperation has progressed, the equations may have changed, but we can never forget that vigilance is the way to safety, awareness is the support of happiness, strength is the belief of victory and efficiency is the prize of peace," said PM Modi. "Today the world is knowing this, understanding that this country is not going to compromise its interests even at any cost. This status of India, this stature is due to your power. You have secured the country, that's why India today speaks vigorously on the global fora," he added. The Prime Minister further stated, today the whole world is troubled by the expansionist forces. "Expansionism is, in a way, a mental disorder and reflects 18th Century thinking. India is also becoming a strong voice against this thinking. Recently our forces have decided that they will not ship more than 100 weapons and equipment from abroad," said PM Modi. "I congratulate the forces for this decision. This decision of the army has also inspired the countrymen to be vocal for the locals," he added. Today, he called upon the youth of the country to build themselves for the army of the country, while adding that in recent times, many start-ups have come forward to cater to the needs of the forces. "New start-ups of youth in the defence sector will take the country further in terms of self-reliance," he added. "Today India's strategy is clear. Today's India believes in the policy of understanding and explaining, but if we try to do it, the answer is equally fierce," said PM Modi.

Death of Assam journalist sparks

and corruption around Kakopthar. The Tinsukia District Journalists' Association (TDJA) said it did not want to call Bhuyan's death a "planned murder" as the investigation is underway, but did demand a thorough investigation into the case that remains shrouded in mystery. A six-member TDJA committee has also been formed for an independent investigation into the possible circumstances leading to the death. "The incident happened Wednesday night when Parag went to the pharmacy at around 8:10pm. A vehicle from the opposite side hit him with such force that he was thrown to a distance of about 20 feet. There was no other vehicle on the road and the incident happened close to the Kakopthar police station," Rana Jyoti Neog, TDJA secretary, told. Bhuyan was rushed to the Assam Medical College hospital in Dibrugarh in a critical condition, from where he was referred to Aditya Nursing Home in the same city for advanced treatment. Bhuyan succumbed to his injuries at around 9:50am Thursday morning. "In recent days, he was aggressively reporting against the coal and timber mafia and illegal groups operating out of Kakopthar. He last reported on BJP leader Dipanjali Kakati assaulting a police officer, after which the story was picked up by but other media as well," said Neog. "He was arrested a couple of times for alleged association with proscribed outfit United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), and had also served a jail term," Neog added. Guwahati Press Club president Manoj Kumar Nath and general secretary Sanjoy Ray added in a statement: "The circumstances under which the senior journalist has lost his life hints towards foul play, making it a fit case for a high-level inquiry." Parag Bhuyan was the brother of Jagdish Bhuyan, a two-time MLA from Sadiya in Tinsukia who served as minister of tourism under Prafulla Kumar Mahanta's Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government between 1998 and 2001. He left the AGP to become state convener of the newly floated Assam Jatiya Parishad. Jagdish Bhuyan said in an interview to Pratidin Time: "My brother was murdered; it is not an accident. He had been vociferous against the illegal groups in our area. Many a time, even I received threats and warnings for the stories he reported. But every time, he would tell me it is his duty to bring to light whatever illegal is happening. I wish all aspects related to his death are investigated."

Herd Immunity May Come

then people may not think to again vaccinate themselves and then, there will be less utilization of vaccine down the line. Also Read - Covid-19 Herd Immunity May be Impractical Health Strategy, Says Study Excerpts from the interview: Yet, Says Satyendar Jain If a vaccine is available off the shelf by beginning of 2022 or end of 2021 for common people, wouldn't they have attained immunity against this viral infection, or maybe Covid-19 scenario improved by then. People may treat this viral infection like common cold and cough, which does not have an adverse health impact? Also Read - India COVID Update: Herd Immunity Not Strategic Option in India Now, May be Possible in Future, Says Health Ministry There are two issues: One is immediate availability of vaccine to decrease and prevent the pandemic. So if a vaccine is available, if you are able to give it to the high risk group and those who have a higher chance of the infection as a priority, we would be immediately able to decrease the number of cases and also decrease the number of deaths. But, we may reach a stage down the line where we may have a good amount of immunity and the people feel there is now good immunity, the utility of the vaccine is not there. And, if the virus doesn't mutate or does not cause changes that may need you to again vaccinate yourself, because you may get re-infection, then there will be less utilization of the vaccine down the line. One issue is how the virus changes and what is the chance of reinfection and if that is a big issue, then should we get ourselves vaccinated to prevent the reinfection. We are learning how the virus behaves over the next few months and based on that there will be a decision on how frequently the vaccine is required. If we have good herd immunity whether it is required or not, this is a big challenge because a lot of money gets invested in vaccine doses and manufacturing and sometimes the vaccine industry is very concerned that they may have a drop in the demand. You have mentioned about people having long-term side effects post their recovery from Covid-19 disease? If Covid-19 is from the coronavirus family, then why do patients develop medical complications that may have lasting health effects or prolonged illness? Most of the previous viral infection we had, has been due to other viruses like influenza. Coronavirus, we have almost seven other viruses in subsets in this coronavirus family. Four of them just cause flu-like symptoms, which are very mild. The other three we have, one was SARS, which was controlled and did not lead into a pandemic. We also have MERS coronavirus, which is not that infectious, so we have small outbreaks. This is the first pandemic of this magnitude with coronavirus, the previous pandemic was with influenza virus. What we are realizing with this coronavirus, which is a new virus, and is of the bat origin. This virus, although causes respiratory tract infection, but it does also cause a systemic effect. The virus attaches to receptors which are present in many organs in the body, the ACE2 receptor. It causes swelling of the blood vessels and if these blood vessels are in the heart, then it may cause myocardial damage to the muscles of the heart. It leads to higher chances of clotting and this leads to strokes. This virus can cause what we call long-Covid. Post Covid squeal, which is not anticipated to be a serious problem, as most viral infections tend to recover and people have post-viral effects lasting for a few days then they become alright. The government is working aggressively on developing post-Covid-19 clinics at all levels, this could be at district level and in medical colleges, and to provide holistic support to these individuals. Many of them need supportive treatment, which could also be meditation, yoga, so it is looking at a comprehensive plan: Allopathic, Yoga and Ayurvedic medicines. There is data to show that BCG protects against viral infections. Can a booster dose boost the immune system and protect people against Covid-19? A: There is controversial data as far as BCG is concerned. There is in-vitro data from labs, which suggests BCG vaccination does give some degree of immune response, which has an anti-viral effect also. One retrospective study from Israel did not show any benefit to people who had the BCG vaccine. But there is another study from Netherlands, which looked at people who are given the BCG vaccine five years ago for some other trial, and they found they had some degree of protection, as far as Covid-19 was concerned. The recent trial being done under the ICMR, does tend to show there may be some benefit, but currently some vaccinated in the older age group are small. There are two trials going on in India, which are multi-centric: one is the BCG vaccine in elderly and the other is the BCG vaccine in younger age groups with co-morbidities. Theoretically, it may be more beneficial, but we need more data, to say it is worthwhile to vaccinate all the elderly with BCG booster dose.

Penalty Of Rs. 100 For Not

restaurants, hotels, public transport, social and religious gatherings or meetings, educational institutions would be liable of Rs 100 fine for every offence. Not providing handwashing facility or hand sanitizers in shops and business establishments, restaurants and hotels would be Rs 500 fine with a warning for first offence while after one week of first offense would lead to sealing of the establishment with or without suspension of registration/license wherever applicable till facilities are provided, he added.

Republicans face court setbacks

late Friday to reject about 8,300 mail-in ballots there. The campaign has pursued similar litigation in other battleground states, with little to show for it. In Michigan, a judge Friday refused to stop the certification of Detroit-area election results, rejecting claims the city had committed fraud and tainted the count with its handling of absentee ballots. It's the third time a judge has declined to intervene in a statewide count that shows Biden up by more than 140,000 votes. And, in Arizona, a judge dismissed a Trump campaign lawsuit seeking the inspection of ballots in metro Phoenix after the campaign's lawyers acknowledged the small number of ballots at issue wouldn't change the outcome of how the state voted for president. The campaign had sought a postponement of Maricopa County's certification of election results until ballots containing overvotes - instances in which people voted for more candidates than permitted - were inspected. Meanwhile, legal giant Porter Wright Morris & Arthur, which had come under fire for its work for the Trump campaign, withdrew from a lawsuit that seeks to stop Pennsylvania officials from certifying the election results. Porter Wright filed the motion Thursday, as criticism grew that law firms backing the Republican election challenges were helping Trump defy the will of the American people. Porter Wright, which has earned more than \$700,000 from the Trump campaign, appeared to take down its Twitter feed Tuesday after it was inundated with attacks. The payments include more than \$140,000 paid through a Republican National Committee account for "recount" challenges, according to Federal Election Commission records. The firm did not reply to specific questions about the posts or whether it would stop representing the Trump campaign entirely. In a statement earlier this week, the firm said it had a long history of handling election law cases for various parties. "At times, this calls for us to take on controversial cases. We expect criticism in such instances, and we affirm the right of all individuals to express concern and disagreement," the Ohio-based firm said. The US appeals court, in denying the request Friday for an injunction, said it was not ruling on the wisdom of the three-day extension or the state court's power to grant it. Instead, the court found the plaintiffs had no right to challenge ballots filed by dutiful voters trying to follow the rules in a chaotic year. "The Covid-19 pandemic ... has caused immense loss and vast disruption," Smith wrote for the three-judge panel, which concluded that mail-in voters may be disadvantaged by the process, not unfairly privileged. "Whereas in-person ballots that are timely cast will count, timely cast mail-in ballots may not count because, given mail delivery rates, they may not be received by 5:00 P.M. on November 6," Smith said.

Punjab Farmers Against Farm

blockade led to losses to the state economy worth ? 22,000 crore, minister Sunder Sham Arora told news agency PTI. The Railways has suffered an estimated ? 1,200 crore loss. The farmers said their protests would continue if the centre did not accept the demands. The farmers' union leaders will now meet in Chandigarh on November 18 to chalk out their future strategy. The protest scheduled for November 26 in Delhi will proceed as planned, for now, the union leaders added. The set of three farm laws - cleared by parliament after shocking chaotic scenes - have been met with protests from across the country. Apart from fears it will remove MSPs (a source of credit in hard times like droughts and crop failure), critics say the laws leave small and marginal farmers at the mercy of corporates and private players. The government says by removing barriers to inter- and intra-state trade of farm and agricultural produce, it is empowering farmers to sell their goods at markets and prices of their choice. Last month Punjab became the first state to formally reject and counter the farm laws; the Assembly passed three bills - each of which is designed to counter one of the centre's laws.

Forest Officials visited the bordering area of Nagaland inside Karbi Anglong



DIPHU, November 14: On the instruction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) authority the KAAC Officials, District Administration of Karbi Anglong and Forest Officials have visited and inspected the bordering area of Nagaland inside Karbi Anglong (Assam) in Daldali Reserve Forest at Lahorijan on Saturday. Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner Ng. Chandra Dhawaj Singha, ACS, Superintendent of Police Debojit Deori, APS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) Abhijit Rabha, IFS, KAAC Principal Secretary Sanjeeb Kumar Das, ACS, KAAC Joint Secretary Herolus Millik, ACS, Divisional Forest Officer (East Division) Jaganath Rongpi, AFS, Bokajan SDPO John Das, APS, Prahlad Kro, ACF and others were present during the visit. During their visit across Lengrijan river of Rilan Village, the

Border Forest Pillar No. 1 and 2 were not found, as it has been demolished or pulled down by the illegal encroachers. It has been noticed that 2 nos. of IRBN Camp have been constructed by Nagaland Govt. between Pillar No. 1 to 8 inside Karbi Anglong (Assam) On an telephonic conversation with Nagaland Administration by DC Ng. Chandra Dhawaj Singha, ACS, he was told the area belongs to Nagaland and for that reason they have tried to do developmental works, including erecting an electric post. But DC's replied it should be under the Administrative Control of Assam Government as it has a notified boundary by Survey of India, 1923. So the developmental works cannot be done from Nagaland side and the law did not permit to dismantle the Forest Pillar. According to Survey of India, Topo Sheet Map of 1923 No.

CM condoles death of Army jawan Hardhan Ch. Roy

Dispur, Nov 14: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today condoled the death of Indian Army Jawan Hardhan Chandra Roy, who was martyred in the Uri sector in Jammu and Kashmir along the Indo-Pakistan border due to the heavy shelling by Pakistani Army across LoC, in unprovoked violation of ceasefire. In a statement here today, Chief Minister Sonowal while terming the incident which took the life of the army jawan as dastardly, said that the martyred jawan from Assam's Dhubri district made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation and left behind a glowing example of patriotism and valour. Though Hardhan Chandra Roy laid down his life in the line of duty, he would remain immortal and would keep inspiring the young generation through his bravery and sacrifice, Sonowal added. The Chief Minister also extended his condolences to the bereaved family members and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Computer training center inaugurated at THB College

A Correspondent : Biswanath Chari, Nov 14: A new computer training center equipped with 22 new sets of computers

supplied by the college authority and installed inside the THB College premises; Jamugurihat was formally inaugurated by Padma Hazarik; MLA Sootea LAC in a meeting held on November 14. Inaugurating the computer training center, Padma Hazarik said about the importance of computer education in student life as well as present day life. Dr. Ajit Hazarika, principal of the college while talking to the media persons said that college students or any other youths from Jamugurihat area can avail computer education with minimum fees. It is expected that the new computer training center will meet the demand of the needy in regard to computer education.



Governor condoles death of Hardhan Chandra Ray; hails the martyrdom

Guwahati, November 14: Assam Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi condoled the death of Hardhan Chandra Ray a soldier belonging to Indian Army's 59 Artillery Forward Regiment who laid down his life while on duty at Uri sector in Kashmir. In a statement today, Prof. Mukhi while condoling the death of Hardhan Chandra Ray of Assam's Dhubri district along with other jawans of the Indian Army, said that the sacrifice made by the jawans are the glaring examples of the valour, dedication and patriotism. They set an example of utmost sacrifice and love for the country which will never go in vain. He also said that their dedication and devotion will definitely be a source of inspiration for the posterity. He extended his empathy to the bereaved family members of Hardhan Chandra Ray and said that the state is proud of its son's supreme sacrifice. He at the same time prayed to the almighty for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Scribe's death condoled

A Correspondent : Biswanath Chari, Nov 14 : The Sootea press club has condoled the demise of senior journalist Parag Bhuyan and paid tribute in a meeting held at Neelema Natya Bhawan, Sootea on November 14. After paying homage, the members of Sootea press club staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the Neelema Bhawan. The members demanded a high-level probe into the death.

Arunachal journalists mourn

ITANAGAR, Nov 15 : The Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalist, the Arunachal Press Club, and the Arunachal Electronic & Digital Media Association mourned over the death of Parag Bhuyan, the senior correspondent of Pratidin group. "The press bodies of Arunachal Pradesh are deeply saddened by the death of a senior colleague from our neighbouring state. We call upon the Assam Police to conduct a fair and thorough investigation to ensure that all those responsible are arrested and justice is delivered to Bhuyan's family," the organizations said in a joint release. Bhuyan was also a local reporter of Axomiya Khabar and VP of Tinsukia Press Club. He was also the younger brother of Ex-Minister Jagadish Bhuyan. His employers have alleged that Bhuyan was killed for exposing corruption and illegal activities in his area along the Arunachal-Assam interstate boundary. Reportedly, Parag Bhuyan was knocked down near his house on the NH-15 while taking a walk on the highway.

83G/9 of 2nd Edition which was published on 1974-75 the Daldali Reserve Forest boundary should be across Lengrijan Area and the Forest Pillar has been erected since then. But with the support of Nagaland Govt., illegal encroachers have demolished Pillar No. 1, 2 and 3 accordingly. As it has been learned that the illegal encroachers from Nagaland have trespassed and tried to occupy the land of Reserve Forest by holding the land pattas issued from Nagaland Govt.. So, the officials have visited here on what strategy to be taken in near future to overcome these encroachments, as told by the Forest Officials. "Through telephonic, I have requested the Deputy Commissioner of Dimapur to have District Level discussion from 4-5 days ago to sort out the disputed land bordering Nagaland," said Deputy Commissioner Ng. Chandra Dhawaj Singha, ACS. "Today along with DC and SP of Karbi Anglong, we visited Daldali Reserve Forest bordering Nagaland and found some encroachment has already been done. So, what strategy to be taken will be disclosed later," said PCCF Abhijit Rabha, IFS.

Literary sitting of Duni Sahitya Sabha held at Bherua High school

SIPAJHAR, Nov 15 : The literary sitting of Duni Sahitya sabha was held at the premises of Bherua High school under the president ship of Karuna Kanta Bhattacharya, President, Duni branch of Assam Sahitya sabha. Inaugurating the sitting Gitika Saharia, Lecturer, DIET, Dudhnoi discussed the role of the literature in society. Gopal Krishna Chamua, Kamal Kumar Nath, Harekrishna Deka, Bhoben Saikia, Dharmeswari Devi, Jagannatha Saikia, Dilip Nath, Durgeswar Saikia, Saientara Kalita and Adya Nath Sarma read out their self composed literary articles in the sitting. Monoranjan Sarma also spoke on the occasion. A good number of meritorious students of the locality were offered felicitation by the sahitya sabha for their brilliant results in HSLC and HSSLC examination last. Dilip Deka, secretary of Duni branch of Assam Sahitya sabha moderated the programme of the sitting. Karuna Kanta Sarma, vice president, Kuli of Assam Sahitya sabha reviewed the literary articles read out in the sitting.

Oil India makes gas discovery in Assam

Guwahati, Nov 15 : Oil India Ltd (OIL) said well Dinjan-1 in Tinsukia petroleum mining lease (PML) in the upper Assam basin struck hydrocarbons. Oil India makes gas discovery in Assam. New Delhi: Oil India Ltd, the nation's second-largest state oil producer, on Friday said it has made a natural gas discovery at a well drilled in Tinsukia, Assam. "The discovery will open up new areas for further oil and gas exploration in Assam and would help in enhancing the gas production with future appraisal and development activities," the company said in a statement. Oil India Ltd (OIL) said well Dinjan-1 in Tinsukia petroleum mining lease (PML) in the upper Assam basin struck hydrocarbons. The well encountered about 10 meters of hydrocarbon-bearing sands, it said. This series is a platform to disseminate knowledge and insights that can help understand the way forward for water management, smart solutions to resolve key issues faced by water utilities, and chart a path for sustainable water management in future. On testing, it produced gas at the rate of 115,000 standard cubic meters per day. OIL, whose majority of operations are concentrated in the north-east, did not indicate the reserves the discovery may hold.

Northern Ireland's Euro 2020 dreams shattered by Slovakia in extra time

London, November 14: When time was finally called on Northern Ireland's two-year pursuit of a second successive European Championship appearance Kyle Lafferty dropped to his knees and wept. One week after the death of his 41-year-old sister, Sonia, the striker stepped off the bench and almost reprised his role as his country's saviour in Euros qualification. It was not to be. There was only heartache for Ian Baraclough and his players at Windsor Park. "The worst I've ever felt after a game," was how the new Northern Ireland manager put it. The 1,060 fans allowed inside Windsor for the play-off final against Slovakia will no doubt concur. It was a tight, fraught night; the kind Northern Ireland have relished in recent years and looked to have embraced once again when Paddy McNair forced Milan Skriniar to put through his own net in the 87th minute. That cancelled out Juraj Kucka's first half goal for the visitors and appeared to swing the tie in the hosts' favour in extra time. Lafferty transformed Northern Ireland as an attacking threat with his hold-up and link-up play after his late introduction. In the 90th minute he beat Slovakia keeper Marek Rodak from 20 yards only for his low shot to rebound off the post. The momentum stayed with Northern Ireland until the 110th minute when Kucka's pass bounced into the path of Michal Duris off Jonny Evans's backside. Duris broke into space on the right and beat Bailey Peacock-Farrell too easily at his near post. Slovakia's

opener had also come from a defensive lapse from Baraclough's team, who pressed, harried and hauled their way back into contention as players dropped through injury during extra time. They bombarded the Slovakia penalty area



once again in the final minutes. Evans, free inside the area, headed straight at Rodak with the last act of an absorbing contest. It would be the last act of a long, tumultuous qualifying campaign for Northern Ireland. Baraclough said of Lafferty: "It shows the magnitude of the guy that he wants to do so well for his country and it must have been so tough to make a decision like that so soon after such a sad loss. But the character was there for all to see." George Saville has had to deal with issues in the lead-up. Stuart Dallas injured his arm in the game but wouldn't give up. Others went down with cramp. But they gave absolutely everything." Northern Ireland produced purposeful spells during normal and

extra time without turning pressure into clear-cut opportunity. Slovakia were far more clinical in adding Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland on their list of conquests en route to Euro 2020. The visitors absorbed early pressure as North-

ern Ireland made a determined start and gradually gained the upper hand with more intelligent attacking play. Marek Hamsik took control of midfield and sprayed dangerous passes behind the home full-backs while false No 9 Ondrej Duda drew centre-halves Evans and Craig Cathcart out of position regularly. The breakthrough was fairly calamitous from a home perspective, however. Saville headed a cross-field ball back towards his defence under little pressure but unaware that Evans had also stepped out to intercept. The communication mix-up was punished in style by Kucka who, sent through on goal by the wayward header, beat Peacock-Farrell with a clinical and calm finish inside the keeper's right hand

post. Northern Ireland created little in the first half other than Niall McGinn almost deceiving Rodak with a deep cross and shooting over from 20 yards after pouncing on a loose pass from Stanislav Lobotka. Their pressing, intensity and creativity had to improve and the second half brought the necessary recovery. Conor Washington drew the first genuine save from Rodak when McGinn stole possession and broke towards the Slovakian box. The winger's final ball was behind Washington but he dug out a shot straight at the Fulham goalkeeper. Baraclough rang the changes in a desperate search for an equaliser. Lafferty, the hero of the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign, almost rolled back the years when he was inches away from connecting with Jamal Lewis's cross. He also released Dallas into the area with a delightful flick but time and chances were running away from Northern Ireland when their late pressure finally paid off. McNair burst past two tired Slovakian challenges on the right, reached the by-line and aimed a low cross towards Liam Boyce at the near post. The otherwise excellent Skriniar had to intervene but succeeded only in steering the ball into his own net. Windsor Park erupted and Lafferty was so close to conjuring a stunning victory and emotional script with his 90th minute drive against the post. The momentum appeared with Northern Ireland in extra time but one more lapse, one more clinical strike from Slovakia, and it was all over.

I can't wait for the summer': Robertson revels in overdue Scotland success

Zurikh, November 14: David Marshall was the hero for Scotland, who have not featured at a men's World Cup or European Championship since 1998, when he saved brilliantly from Aleksandar Mitrovic to secure a 5-4 shootout victory. Ryan Christie's 52nd-minute strike appeared to have sent Steve Clarke's impressive side through until Serbia scored with their first effort on target in the 90th minute through Luka Jovic's header. Scotland are now nine games unbeaten - their best run in 44 years - and will face England, Croatia and the Czech Republic in Group D at next summer's delayed finals. An emotional Andy Robertson paid tribute to the character of the Scotland team as they recovered from the last-minute body blow to pick themselves up. He told Sky Sports: "It just shows you the strengths we've got. A lot of people would have crumbled and lost in extra time but we've stuck together throughout the whole process and now we've got the night we deserve." "I can't wait for the summer now. This is the most emotional I've ever been after the game. I'm so proud of all of them,"



the Scotland captain added. "We've got two games at Hampden lying ahead next summer. I will say every prayer I have to make sure we have a full Hampden because, my god, we will feel it." "We felt the love from back home all the way over here tonight, we knew how it could give everyone back home a lift. I hope everyone parties at home because we've been through tough times as footballers and as for Scotland. It will be 23 years when we get there but we've done it now." Clarke added: "It's a magnificent night for everybody in Scotland. We said we'd try to put a smile back on their faces and I hope they enjoyed the moment as much as we did in Belgrade. Yeah, they can smile tomorrow."

International friendlies: Portugal rout Andorra 7-0, Finland stun France

London, November 14: Cristiano Ronaldo scored once in Portugal's 7-0 rout of Andorra in a friendly on Wednesday, moving a step closer to becoming the all-time top scorer for a national team. Ronaldo reached 102 goals with Por-



tugal to sit seven shy of the 109 scored by former Iran striker Ali Daei, the only other male soccer player to surpass the 100-goal milestone for a national team. Ronaldo broke the century mark after scoring twice in Portugal's Nations League win over Sweden in October. Coming off a minor knee injury and having recently been sidelined by a positive COVID-19 result, Ronaldo entered the match after halftime at the Stadium of Light in Lisbon. He made it 6-0 with a close-range header in the 85th minute after having squandered a few good chances. He had replaced Pedro Neto, the 20-year-old Wolverhampton forward who was making his national team debut and opened the scoring for Portugal in the eighth minute. Paulinho, who was also making his Portugal debut, added to the lead in the 29th and Renato Sanches scored in the 56th. Paulinho scored again in the 61st, and an own-goal by Andorra's Emili Garcia in the 76th made it 5-0. João Félix closed the scoring in the final minutes. Portugal hosts France on Saturday in the Nations League, then visits Croatia on Tuesday. It trails Group B leader Ukraine by three points entering its final two matches in the European competition. Finland stunned World Cup winner France 2-0 in a friendly as the hosts were punished for missing a number of chances. First-half goals from winger Marcus Forss and striker Onni Valakari gave the Finns an unexpected win, which had looked even more unlikely after France carved open the visiting defence early on. Forward Marcus Thuram, the son of Lilian Thuram, could have made a scoring debut at Stade de France, where his father netted the only two goals of his long international career in the World Cup semifinal against Croatia in 1998. Thuram almost scored with his first chance for France when he headed against the crossbar from close range in the 16th minute. Two minutes later, Thuram volleyed over another good opportunity from close range and tried his luck with a speculative curling shot a few minutes later. With Thuram probing down the left and combining well with striker Wissam Ben Yedder, the French looked in total control only to concede twice in quick succession. After midfielder Moussa Sissoko gave the ball away in the 28th, Forss charged into the penalty area and finished confidently with a driving shot. Three minutes later, the Valakari curled a shot past goalkeeper Steve Mandanda from the edge of the penalty area. Lucas Waldschmidt's early goal was enough for an inexperienced Germany team to beat the Czech Republic 1-0 in their friendly game on Wednesday. Germany goalkeeper Kevin Trapp made a late save to deny Mat'j Vydra an equalizer for the visitors, who were without two players due to positive coronavirus tests. The game was played without fans to minimize the risk of infections. Manchester City midfielder 'Ikay Gündo' recovered from his COVID-19 infection to captain Germany. Regulars such as the Bayern Munich players and Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos were omitted for the friendly and are only joining up with the squad for the Nations League games against Ukraine in Leipzig on Saturday and Spain in Seville on Nov. 17. Germany coach Joachim Löw handed debuts to both PSV Eindhoven defender Philipp Max and Wolfsburg defender Ridle Baku.

Talking Horses: Southwell under microscope as jump racing returns



London, November 14: National Hunt racing will return to Southwell on Friday, more than two months after the British Horseracing Authority took the highly unusual decision to suspend jumping at the course to investigate eight fatal injuries to horses there since 1 July. All of its chase fences have been at least slightly modified, with two singled out for more significant changes, but the investigation concluded that the tight, speed-favouring nature of the course was not a factor in the spate of fatalities. Trainers and owners gave the track a vote of confidence this week when nearly 150 initial entries were received for seven races, including three contests over the chase course. Five of the eight horses killed at the track over the summer were running in chases, including Croco Bay, the winner of the Grand Annual Chase at the Cheltenham Festival in March 2019. The fences either side of the turn into Southwell's home straight have received special attention, with a "shoulder" being added to the front of the fence to encourage horses to shape their jumps more accurately. The first fence in the home straight, meanwhile, has been "re-sited as far from the bottom bend as is feasible". The BHA's investigation focused its attention on chase events after an analysis of faller rates in hurdles - responsible for two of the eight fatal injuries - showed that Southwell's rate was in long-term decline. It also concluded that despite Southwell staging several extra meetings over the summer compared to recent years, having taken over fixtures originally scheduled for tracks, "no evidence could be found to attribute the condition of the ground as a cause of the fatalities". There was evidence, however, that the higher number of fixtures had led to a higher number of low-ability horses - which are more likely to make mistakes or fall - running at the course. As a result, the report recommends that "the volume of fixtures from July to September should be considered", and also that changes should be made to Southwell's programme "to ensure a more even spread through all levels of ability". Final declarations for the meeting - for which the going is currently good, good-to-soft in places - will be made on Wednesday morning, but 142 five-day entries suggest "confidence in the course and the work that's been done among trainers and owners," Robin Mounsey, the BHA's head of media, said on Tuesday. "You can never entirely rule out accidents happening," Mounsey added, "and you also can't jump to conclusions [when they do]. That's why we use long-term data and trends rather than basing it too much on short-term clusters of incidents, but when a course is at or near the top over three or four years, then we will look at it." "Southwell was thrust into the spotlight because we stopped racing there and we said we were looking at it, but there are other occasions where we look at a racecourse and make changes along the lines of those at Southwell. It's a constant process of assessment and improvement."

Amazon gives rugby £20m lifeline and could spark Six Nations bidding war

London, November 14 : There has been little cheer for unions and clubs this year as restrictions imposed by the pandemic have reduced cash flow to a trickle, prompted wage cuts and led to a run on reserves, but Amazon's £20m involvement in the Autumn Nations Cup, which starts on Friday night when Ireland face Wales in Dublin, is being seen as a lifeline. After a decade in which television and sponsorship deals have failed to cash in on the game's popularity, according to a report published this month by a leading sports analytics company, Nielsen Sports, will Amazon's first foray into rugby help generate a bidding war for the rights to the Six Nations from 2022 and the autumn window in Europe? "I do not see them as a white knight for the sport," says Nielsen Sports' Phelan Hill. "The Amazon model so far has not been embedding in a sport and growing an audience. They are opportunistic, looking to protect their Prime customer base which is commerce, and I think they are trying to get a buzz from rugby before the Christmas shopping period." "There are not many major sporting properties available in November and a one-off event aligns with Amazon's DNA. They will be innovative in their coverage, but my feeling is that they are not in this for the long haul but will be looking for the next opportune moment." "I cannot see them investing in the Six Nations because it would mean having to grow an audience base, but what will be interesting in the coming weeks is whether they look to use the matches to drive the sale of merchandise: as you watch a game you tell Alexa to order a jersey." The report showed that rugby union is the sixth most popular sport in the UK with 12 million fans, behind Formula 1 but ahead of cricket, with greater appeal to younger and more female audiences, yet "rugby union properties have significantly lower annual media rights values in the UK compared to other major sports competitions" despite the relative affluence of its followers. Henry Slade scores a try against Italy in the Six Nations in October and is likely to be a key figure for England in the Autumn Nations Cup. "A problem for rugby is its calendar," says Hill. "The Premiership season starts next week, but for the first three weeks the leading players will not be involved. It needs a more joined-up approach, such as the proposed global season, because a fragmented landscape with a tug-of-war over players weakens your product." "Sport has changed. Teams used to be what people



aligned with but in the digital world they are attracted much more by star individuals, especially the young. They want to see them more than a team. Weakening the Premiership when internationals are played has to change. Imagine if Barcelona only had Lionel Messi for half their matches. There needs to be a restructuring because it is as poorly joined up as football was before the advent of the Premier League. The game is massively undervalued from a revenue perspective." "Which is where CVC has come in, taking stakes in Premiership Rugby and the Pro14 and negotiating for a piece of the Six Nations." "They will see that if everyone is not pulling in the same direction, what sort of game do you have?" says Hill. "The delay in the deal with the Six Nations is a sign of the Covid times, with so much uncertainty around. Doubtless they will be trying to push the price down while the unions will be saying it is just a moment in time, but the huge impact the pandemic has had on revenue will focus minds." Amazon enjoyed a 35% increase in its Prime subscribers after televising two rounds of the Premier League last year. Richard Cramer, the managing partner of Front Row Legal, believes that even if the tech giant use the autumn cup as a one-off, its involvement will raise the price in future television negotiations. "It

gives the Six Nations extra bargaining power," he says. "The more players at the table, the higher the stakes. There is a thirst for good-quality sport on television and it will be interesting to see the audience Amazon generate outside the countries involved this autumn. The likes of Facebook, Google and Apple will be interested in the viewing figures and the broadcasting scene has changed dramatically in recent years, no longer confined to a few terrestrial stations and Sky." "One reason for the undervaluation the report focused on was that the Six Nations has so far resisted offers from pay television. As Steve Phillips, the interim chief executive of the Welsh Rugby Union said this month, that is set to change, with finance now considered more important than viewing figures and reach." "It is about survival," says Cramer. "The losses the unions have sustained will take years to plug. The fabric of the governing bodies and jobs are at stake. With reserves being depleted, they will go to the highest bidder. A problem is that predators sense desperation and that is where CVC come in because they have a strong vision and skilled, experienced negotiators in broadcasting. The pandemic has provided the opportunity to sort out the domestic and international calendars. It needs to be taken."

Roston Chase named Test vice-captain, Nicholas Pooran retains position for NZ tour

London, November 14 : Chase replaced opener Kraigg Brathwaite, who was Jason Holder's deputy in the series against England in July, while the 25-year-old Pooran, first named the West Indies vice-captain in 2019, retained his position. West Indies all-rounder Roston Chase has been elevated to Test vice-captaincy while wicketkeeper Nicholas Pooran will continue as deputy in T20Is in the upcoming tour of New Zealand, starting

November 27. Chase replaced opener Kraigg Brathwaite, who was Jason Holder's deputy in the series against England in July, while the 25-year-old Pooran, first named the West Indies vice-captain in 2019, retained his position. "Nicholas Pooran continues in the role of vice-captain of the T20I Team for the tour of New Zealand. He was first named vice-captain for this format for the series against Afghanistan in 2019," Cricket

Windies' chief selector, Roger Harper, said. Chase, 28, has so far played 35 Test matches, scoring five centuries and collecting three five-wicket hauls with his off-spin bowling. "Roston Chase has been appointed vice captain of the West Indies Test Team for this tour of New Zealand. He is an experienced player who is tactically aware and very purposeful in his approach to the game," Harper said.

Last waltz for Nicola Adams owing to partner's positive coronavirus test



Mumbai, November 14: One of Great Britain's most celebrated athletes Nicola Adams accepted the invitation to feature in one of the country's most popular reality television shows, Strictly Come Dancing. But the two-time Olympic gold medalist boxer - whom Indian readers may remember as the one who stopped Mary Kom's run in the semi-final at London 2012 - had an unprecedented request ahead of the show's 18th season. The 38-year-old, an openly gay athlete, asked the show to pair her up with a same-sex partner. Strictly is a dance show in which celebrities are paired up with choreographers to compete against one another. The BBC, who broadcast the show, agreed to Adams' request and paired her up with Russian choreographer Katya Jones (who won the 2017 edition). However, the decision was criticized by viewers. But a month into the season, Jones tested positive for Covid-19, and the duo was forced to exit the competition. The show's protocols, according to the BBC, includes each pair forming a bubble and performing in front of a socially distanced audience. "Each pair of dancers will form a 'close contact cohort,' which can be used in the TV industry by people who need to work closely together and break social distancing rules in order to do their job. They must be regularly tested." In the latest test, despite being asymptomatic, Jones tested positive and she, along with Adams was put into mandatory 14-day isolation. "Nicola Adams and Katya Jones are to leave Strictly Come Dancing after Katya tested positive for Covid-19," the BBC said in a statement. "Katya

is asymptomatic and they are now self-isolating separately. This sadly means they will no longer be able to take part." Adams meanwhile, took to social media to express her disappointment. "I'm absolutely gutted my Strictly journey has ended so soon, I had so much more to give and so many people to win this for! But I just want to say a huge thank you to @Mrs_katjones for being the best dance partner anyone could ask for. Team #outsidethebox." According to The Guardian, Adams had come out to her mother when she was 14, and it was well known that she was gay when she became the first ever woman to win an Olympic gold in boxing at the 2012 Olympics, and later defended her crown at Rio 2016. The feats led her to being awarded the titles Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) and Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) respectively. On September 6 however, she took to her Twitter account to make clear that she wasn't bisexual. "I'm lesbian not bi, just saying," she wrote. Her sexuality has never openly been criticized, and she has been revered for her athletic performances in the country. The only time, allegedly, that there was any criticism was when she asked for a same-sex partner before competing in Strictly. In an interview with The Guardian, Adams said of her request: "I guess it's just breaking those boundaries and showing people that it's OK. It's not such an uncommon thing: professional dancers dance with people of the same sex all the time; you dance in a nightclub with your friends. I just wanted to break down the thing of it being a big deal when it's not really a big deal." Last year, a one-off dance routine on Strictly between Johannes Radebe and Graziano Di Prima, both

professional dancers, allegedly resulted in nearly 200 complaints. However, once criticism following the decision of pairing Adams and Jones together started to come in, the BBC made it clear that it will stand by the decision. "Strictly Come Dancing is an inclusive show and is proud to have featured same sex dancing amongst the professional dancers in group numbers in previous series," the BBC said in a statement. "We have stated, in the past, that we are open to the prospect of including same sex pairings between our celebrities and professional dancers, should the opportunity arise. Nicola Adams requested an all-female pairing, which we are happy to facilitate. The show is first and foremost about dance, the sex of each partner within a coupling should have no bearing on their routine."

thrives when backed, will now head to that challenge with concerns over his personal form. He struggled to get into Delhi Capitals XI in the initial phase and when he got a chance, he didn't set the stands alight. In the eight innings he played, apart from a 60 while chasing a middling total against Royal Challengers Bangalore, the 32-year-old didn't provide the desired solidity. Rahane was out for single-digit scores in five knocks. Mayank Agarwal and Rohit Sharma have had injuries of varying degrees in the IPL, and if it flares up again, India might have to turn to Prithvi Shaw in the Tests. However, with his last seven scores in the IPL reading 4, 0, 0, 7, 10, 9, 0, the youngster won't be full of confidence as he was dropped by Delhi Capitals playing XI for the business

D grade in UAE before touchdown in Australia

New Delhi, November 14: The IPL is over, and it's time to turn our attention to the marquee international contest coming up, India's tour of Australia. With no other competitive matches to follow, we look at the IPL form of the players who would be featuring in the bilateral series in Australia. Ajinkya Rahane, who will be leading India in three Tests after Virat Kohli returns for paternity leave, has had diminishing returns in the IPL. To captain in Australia is difficult enough in any situation, but Rahane, a man who

end of the tournament. Apart from mental blues, technical deficiencies too had crept in: a problem against pacy short ball was ever present and the swinging delivery around off stump too had him lamely poking away from the body. Trent Boult had him on toast, so could Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood. Not too long ago, Kuldeep Yadav was part of an irresistible double spin attack for India in white-ball cricket and was touted for success in Tests as well. But the chinaman bowler seems to



have been found out by a lot of opposition teams, so much so that Kolkata Knight Riders preferred Varun Chakravarty over him. Yadav played just five matches, wasn't even bowled in one of them and bowled his full quota of four overs in just one game. With figures of 0/48 and 0/35 (three overs) Umesh Yadav was deemed surplus to requirements by RCB after just two games. Even after playing 46 Tests, the pacer is dogged by inconsistency. He doesn't have happy memories of the previous tour Down Under when he was the weak link on a pace-friendly Perth pitch. With Bhuvneshwar Kumar out with injury and Ishant Sharma on his way back from one, it could have opened the door for Umesh, but it seems Navdeep Saini has moved ahead of him.

of Ramakant Achrekar, the man who had taught Sachin Tendulkar and Vinod Kambli among others. But the reality about his talent hit home when he faced some quality bowlers in the maidens of Mumbai. The curiosity about the game though pushed him towards cricket law books and he plunged into it. One day, he asked his neighbour Sriram Kannan, a Mumbai Ranji Trophy player, how to pursue a career in umpiring. He found out that Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) gave chances to people to take up umpiring every year; that they just have to pass the written and practical exams. Next day, Pathak landed at the MCA premises and enrolled himself in the next season's umpiring classes. "I wanted to be a cricketer but soon I realised that it's not meant for me. I was always good at studies, so my fam-

CA-turned umpire Paschim Pathak makes an impression



Mumbai, November 14: R Ashwin remembers Paschim Pathak storming towards him with a purposeful look in an IPL game. Ashwin was writhing in pain with a nerve pull from the back and he thought Pathak might be sternly telling him to get off the field and stop wasting time. "I too was getting angry as he approached me. But he turned all soft, "Are

you feeling okay? Is the body fine? And as soon as I said yes, he left," Ashwin tells with a laugh on his YouTube show. "I like his hairstyle; I like his approach." He was a chartered accountant who got bitten by the umpiring bug. Just like Ashwin, Pathak's long hair and approach have caught everyone's eyes, social media has called him Rockstar umpire, and some have termed

him DJ umpire. "I received lots of messages from my friends and people whom I know. People talked about my hairstyle but it's nothing new. I have been growing my hair for the last two years now, even in domestic cricket I stood with my long hair," Pathak told Pathak has an old-school approach to umpiring. He likes to bend while standing behind the stumps. It's an old school of thought which believes that such a stance helps umpires to focus better. He recalls how he had read a famous quote about how cricket is a sport where everyone bends, including the umpire. "The line

stuck with me. If you see in cricket everyone has to bend at some point of time. The bowler has to bend while bowling, fielder bends once he takes a start and batsman too bends at stance. So even I bend while standing behind stumps. It helps me a lot in terms of concentration," he added. The questions about his hair don't surprise him but he has been asked whether he gets bored standing there all day. "Many have asked me that. I say, no not at all, I love this game. Time just flies once we are inside the field," Pathak says. In the '90s, he had enrolled himself in the academy

ily never pressured me. I became a professional umpire after giving an exam in MCA and later cleared all umpiring exams under BCCI in 2008. Since umpiring was my passion, I stopped my CA work," Pathak says. The 44-year-old Mumbai umpire has umpired in IPL previously as well but hasn't become a social-media curiosity as he has this year. Asked if any cricketer lauded his hairstyle, he politely says, "no". His sister created his Instagram account which has a few hundred followers. Not a tech person, Pathak says he did enjoy the brief limelight he received. Dubai had its behavioural challenges too, in particular, the bio-bubble for umpires but Pathak is thankful for the arrangements made by the Indian board. They were given private beach access, designated areas where they access to meet other umpires.

Roberto Mancini names 41-man Italy squad amid coronavirus concerns

Roberto Mancini names 41-man Italy squad amid coronavirus concerns

Milan, November 13: Italy coach Roberto Mancini named a 41-man squad on Saturday for the Azzurri's upcoming matches as there are question marks over a number of players due to coronavirus concerns. Players from six clubs — Fiorentina, Genoa, Inter Milan, Lazio, Roma and Sassuolo — are self-isolating because of COVID-19 cases in their squads. The Italian soccer federation said they would join up with the national team "when agreed with the relevant health authorities."

Lazio forward Ciro Immobile is among those players. Last season's European Golden Shoe winner has had conflicting results for tests for COVID-19. Mancini himself is currently self-isolating in his home in Rome after testing positive for the virus on Friday. The enlarged squad sees first call-ups for Atalanta midfielder Matteo Pessina and AC Milan defender Davide Calabria, while Bologna midfielder Roberto Soriano is back in the squad more than four years after his last

inclusion. Italy faces Estonia in a friendly on Wednesday, then plays its final two UEFA Nations League group matches at home to Poland on Nov. 15 and at Bosnia-Herzegovina three days later. Goalkeepers: Alessio Cragno (Cagliari), Gianluigi Donnarumma (AC Milan), Alex Meret (Napoli), Salvatore Sirigu (Torino) Defenders: Francesco Acerbi (Lazio), Cristiano Biraghi (Fiorentina), Leonardo Bonucci (Juventus), Davide Calabria (AC Milan), Domenico Criscito (Genoa), Danilo

D'Ambrosio (Inter Milan), Giovanni Di Lorenzo (Napoli), Emerson (Chelsea), Alessandro Florenzi (Paris Saint-Germain), Gianluca Mancini (Roma), Angelo Ogbonna (West Ham), Luca Pellegrini (Genoa), Alessio Romagnoli (AC Milan), Leonardo Spinazzola (Roma) Midfielders: Nicolò Barella (Inter Milan), Gaetano Castrovilli (Fiorentina), Bryan Cristante (Roma), Roberto Gagliardini (Inter Milan), Jorginho (Chelsea), Manuel Locatelli (Sassuolo), Lorenzo Pellegrini

(Roma), Matteo Pessina (Atalanta), Roberto Soriano (Bologna), Sandro Tonali (AC Milan) Forwards: Andrea Belotti (Torino), Domenico Berardi

(Sassuolo), Federico Bernardeschi (Juventus), Francesco Caputo (Sassuolo), Federico Chiesa (Juventus), Stephan El Shaarawy.



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