

The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

Vol. No. V ■ Issue No. 283 ■ RNI-ASSENG/2014/58385 | GUWAHATI ■ WEDNESDAY ■ NOVEMBER 18, 2020 | PAGES 8 ■ PRICE RS. 7.00

For Arvind Kejriwal,
governance is a

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RCB clarifies after Virat Kohli gets trolled
for his Diwali message

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

Gandhi Mandap To 'Go Blue'

Guwahati, November 17: The Gandhi Mandap of Guwahati will go blue on November 20 along with other iconic buildings of India and the world keeping in solidarity with the child rights and the impact of COVID-19 on children's lives, said UNICEF, Assam. The other places which will go blue on November 20 as part of the 'Go Blue' campaign are Rashtrapati Bhawan, Qutub Minar, India Gate and the Gateway of India among others. The UNICEF and GMDA have come together to turn the Gandhi Mandap Blue as part of the campaign. The UNICEF also held a meeting with GMDA CEO Umandnada Doley, IAS, who is keen to join Guwahati with the rest of the Nation in celebrating the #GoBlue campaign.

11 fake Army Officials Arrested

Guwahati, November 17: In a shocking incident, eleven imposters masquerading as army officials carrying fake identity cards and wearing camouflaged uniforms were arrested in Guwahati on Monday night. The accused have been identified as Ganesh Das, Saurav Sharma, Dhiman Krishna, Joymoni Sharma, Nayanjyoti Gautam, Bijoy Moni Sharma, Dijen Sharma, Riponjoy Goswami, Rupam Sharma, Gyananda Das and Kaushik Bhuyan. The arrested persons belong to Patancharkuchi in Bajali, Baihata Chariali and Sathbari in Nalbari. The team of eleven led by Dhiman Krishna were arrested at MES in Borjhar Airport last night, while, they were noticed patrolling by the police.

Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma's rallies in BTC

Guwahati, November 17: Huge crowds were seen at senior BJP leader and Assam cabinet minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma's rallies in BTC areas on Tuesday. The rallies were held at Saraibil (Kokrajhar), Basugaon (Chirang), Thuri Bari (Chirang), The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) polls are slated to take place in two phases on 7 December and 10 December. The counting of the votes will be on 12 December as per an Assam Election Commission notification issued on Tuesday. Video footage from the rallies shows people holding mobile phones pushing each other to click selfies with Dr. Himanta Biswa

Sonowal Inaugurates Swahid Bedi in recognition to supreme sacrifice of martyrs of Assam Movement

Guwahati, November 17: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today inaugurated the newly built Chandi Barua Bhawan and a Swahid Bedi (Martyrs column) encompassing the martyrs of Assam Movement at Howly. At the same time Chief Minister Sonowal laid the foundation stone of an Adarani Toron, a welcome gateway to Howly to be built by Assam Tourism Development Corporation for Rs. 40 lakh on the National Highway. It may be noted that Chandi Barua

Bhawan of Howly has been reconstructed by Cultural Affairs Department involving a financial outlay of Rs. 2 crore. Moreover, the Swahid Bedi has been built using the untied fund of the Chief Minister. Speaking at a programme at Howly organised by the Cultural Affairs Department in association with District Administration, Barpeta, Chief Minister Sonowal while paying rich tributes to the martyrs of Assam Agitation from Howly Madhu Baishya and others,

said that the people of Howly should be committed to keep the town dignified, clean and green. He also called upon the parents to help their wards to imbibe love and respect for Chandi Barua and help them to grow up culturally. Stating that in contrary to discord and disharmony created by the Congress and Left parties, the present BJP led State government has been working to bolster the development of the state taking everybody belonging *Contd...Page 6*



Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is inaugurating newly constructed Swahid Bedi at Howly in Barpeta district

Hold countries that support terror guilty, says PM Modi. Putin endorses him

New Delhi, November 17: With the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (Brics) grouping set to adopt a new counter-terrorism strategy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said countries that help and support terrorists need to be held

guilty. Participating in the virtual Brics Summit chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Modi said multilateralism is going through a crisis and questions are being raised about global institutions since they haven't changed with the times and are based on the mindset

speaking in Hindi, said: "Terrorism is the biggest problem the world is facing today. Countries that help and support terrorists also should be held guilty." He described the finalisation of the Brics Counter-Terrorism Strategy as a great achievement and said India, as the chair of Brics next year, will take this work forward. The Brics Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which will allow the member states to work out common measures and more closely coordinate at the UN and other forums and promote the implementation of the UN's global counter-terrorism strategy, is set to be adopted at Tuesday's summit. Modi's remarks on terrorism were endorsed by Putin, who said some countries *Contd...Page 6*



of 75 years ago. In remarks apparently aimed at Pakistan, Modi, who was

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar gets a new Cabinet with these ministers and their portfolios

Patna, November 17: Nitish Kumar on Monday (November 16) took oath as the new chief minister of Bihar. A 14-member council of ministers was also sworn in Patna by Governor Phagu Chauhan. Those who were administered the oath of office included two Deputy Chief Minister designates, Janata Dal- United (JD-U)

chief Nitish Kumar on Monday (November 16) took oath as chief minister of Bihar for the seventh time. A 14-member council of ministers was also sworn in Patna by Governor Phagu Chauhan along with Nitish Kumar. Those who were administered the oath of office included two Deputy Chief *Contd...Page 6*



Construction Of 18-Km Long Bridge Connecting Assam, Meghalaya To Begin Soon

Guwahati, November 17: In a massive connectivity boost for the North East region, one of the India's longest road bridges is set to come up between Assam and Meghalaya over the Brahmaputra river, reports Economic Times. National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation on Monday (16

November) said that infrastructure sector heavyweight Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has emerged as the lowest bidder for the building of the Rs 3,200 crore 18-kilometre-long strategic bridge. The four-lane bridge would run over the Brahmaputra river on the National Highway 127 B from Dhubri to Phulbari. It would reduce the distance

between the two areas by about 203 kilometre, greatly shortening the travel time. The project also reflects continuing engagement between India and Japan to develop and invest in the North East States, as it is being financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is also financing the over 500-km long bullet train project

between Mumbai and Ahmedabad. The lowest bid to build this bridge was by Larsen and Toubro. It will be one of the longest road bridges over a river in the country and on completion will connect two eastern states - Assam and Meghalaya." Larsen & Toubro has emerged as the lowest bidder for about Rs 3,200 *Contd...Page 6*



BTC Elections 2020 Dates Announced



Guwahati, November 17: The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) general elections would be held in two phases from December 7 this year, Assam State Election Commissioner Alok Kumar announced on Tuesday. Voting in the first phase will be held on December 7, and the second phase will be on December 10. The counting of votes will be on December 12. In the first phase, BTC constituencies falling under Udalguri and Baksa districts will go to polls on December 7 and 8 (in case of re-polls). The poll timings for both the days would be 7.30 am to 4.30 pm. Under Udalguri districts, there are three constituencies -

Majbat, Panery, and Udalguri (ST), while in Baksa district, Barama (ST), Chapaguri (ST) and Tamulpur. In the second phase, voters of two constituencies under Chirang and Kokrajhar districts will exercise their right to franchise on December 10 and 11 (in case of re-polls). The poll timings for both the days would be as same in the first phase - 7.30 am to 4.30 pm. The counting of the ballots for both the phases will start from 8 am onwards on December 12. Alok Kumar, the State Election Commissioner of Assam, today announced that the BTC election shall be held in two phases. In the first phase of polls, residents of

Udalguri and Baksa districts will head to the polling booths. The casting of votes shall take place between 7.30 am in the morning till 4.30 pm in the afternoon. Re-polling, if any, shall take place on December 12, stated the Election Commissioner. Residents of Kokrajhar and Chirang districts shall exercise their

franchise on December 12, 2020, from 7.30 am in the morning till 4.30 pm in the afternoon. The counting of votes shall be held on December 12, 2020, the Election Commissioner informed. Earlier, the Gauhati High Court had directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to release an election notification *Contd...Page 6*

Indefinite economic blockade have suspended temporarily

Diphu, November 17: Karbi Students' Organisation (KSA) along with 12 others organizations have stage indefinite economic blockade at NH-36 and NH-39 highway from Tuesday against Nagaland for illegally encroached inside the land of Karbi Anglong, Assam in Daldali Reserve Forest. During a daylong demonstration at Sarihajan Tiniali for NH-129 and Dillai for NH-29, the goods carrying trucks heading towards Nagaland have stopped. But, after giving assurance from the District Administration on their demand in the evening, the ongoing indefinite economic road blockage was suspended temporarily for a day. As reported, a meeting was held at Dimapur with Karbi Anglong Administration and Dimapur Administration today. After prolonged discussion, the Nagaland Government has assured to remove IRBN camp which was set up under Daldali Reserve Forest. It also assured the land pattas given at Rilam Village by Nagaland Govt. will be

cancelled and all the activities taken from Nagaland will be stopped immediately. It can be mentioned that Daldali Reserve Forest is the place where encroachment activists are still on by the Naga miscreant from Nagaland in the nose of the Forest Department. So, the

moved, illegal construction of temporary sheet should be dismantled. Construction of Border road must be completed within stipulated time and cancellation of land pattas to Rilam Village must be cancelled. But after being repeatedly appealed to the Government,

tee and Standing Committee, which includes elected members, KAAC Officials and several other organizations leaders. But nothing development for border protection can be seen after two weeks of setting up the Committee, instead the illegal encroachment is



said organization has been put on demand that the Forest Border Pillar which was demolished by Naga Miscreants should be erected again as per GPS coordination, the set up of two IRBN Camp of Nagaland & recently constructed electrical infrastructure should be re-

seems staying mum by their side. "For the interest of Border Protection, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has elevated Steering Commit-

tee and Standing Committee, which includes elected members, KAAC Officials and several other organizations leaders. But nothing development for border protection can be seen after two weeks of setting up the Committee, instead the illegal encroachment is *Contd...Page 6*

SI Recruitment Exam On Nov 22, Admit Cards Released

Guwahati, November 17: After 64 days of the cancellation of the written test for the selection of 589 Sub Inspectors (SI) vacancies in Assam Police, the rescheduled exam will be finally held on November 22. Admit cards for the exam have been released on November 16 by the State Level Police Recruitment Board (SLPRB). Candidates who had applied for the exam in 2018 can download the admit card from the website of Assam State Level Police

Recruitment Board." Candidates must not bring any mobile phone, smart watch, calculator, bags and ornaments or any other electronic gadgets to the Test Venue. Anyone found violating this rule shall be barred from appearing in the Test and his/her candidature shall be rejected," it has also notified. On September 20, the recruitment examination for the SI position was held across 154 centers in the state. However, *Contd...Page 6*

Moderna Covid vaccine candidate almost 95% effective, trials show

The race for a coronavirus vaccine has received another shot in the arm with the US biotech firm Moderna becoming the latest to reveal impressive results from phase 3 trials of its jab. An interim analysis released on Monday, and based on 95 patients with confirmed Covid infections, found the candidate vaccine has an efficacy of 94.5%. The company said it planned to apply to the US regulator, the Food and Drug Administration, for emergency-use authorisation in the coming weeks. In the analysis, 90 of the patients received the placebo with the remaining five the vaccine. The results are the latest encouraging news to emerge from the breakneck effort to develop a vaccine against coronavirus and follow a similar interim analysis earlier this month from a collaboration between Pfizer and the German firm BioNTech, which suggest its vaccine is 90% effective at preventing illness. The Moderna vaccine, which is being trialled in more than 30,000 volunteers, is not expected to be available outside the US until next year. The biotech company said it would have 20m doses ready to ship in the US before the end of 2020 and hoped to manufacture 500m to 1bn doses globally next year. So far, the UK does not stand to benefit from the vaccine but a government spokesman confirmed it was in "advanced discussions" to procure it. Moderna has agreed to provide the US with 100m doses, with an option to buy 400m more. Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Qatar and Israel have also signed agreements, and the European commission has a "potential purchase agreement" for 80m-160m doses. The UK chose not to participate in the EU vaccine purchase scheme, with the health secretary, Matt Hancock, arguing in July that the government could source a vaccine faster on its own. The Moderna vaccine, which is based on similar mRNA technology as BioNTech's, is expected to be assessed by the FDA on a final

analysis of 151 Covid cases among trial participants who will be followed on average for more than two months. If the results remain as impressive as the trial goes on, the Moderna vaccine could potentially provide a major advantage over the Pfizer vaccine. While Pfizer's vaccine requires ultracold freezing between -70C and -80C from production facility to patient, Moderna said it had improved the shelf life and stability of its



own vaccine, meaning that it can be stored at standard refrigeration temperatures of 2C to 8C for 30 days. It can be stored for six months at -20C for shipping and long-term storage, the company said. At £38 to £45 for a course of two shots, Moderna's vaccine is more expensive than the other frontrunners. AstraZeneca and Oxford University are aiming to sell their vaccine at about £3 a dose, while vaccines in trial with Johnson and Johnson and a collaboration between Sanofi and GSK are both expected to cost about £8 a dose. Pfizer is charging the US about £30 for a two-shot course. The UK has ordered 40m Pfizer shots but none of the Moderna vaccine. Moderna's two-shot vaccine injects genetic material called mRNA into the body, which cells then use to churn out the spike protein the virus uses to invade cells. The spike protein covers the surface of the virus and is one of

the main targets of the body's immune response to wipe out the infection. The interim results are based on an analysis of confirmed Covid cases among both placebo and vaccinated arms of the trial, starting two weeks after the second dose is administered. Given the relatively small number of cases analysed there is some statistical uncertainty over the 94.5% figure. But Stephen Evans, professor of pharmacoepidemiology at

second, the most significant side effects included fatigue in 9.7%, muscle pain in 9% and joint pain in 5%. Others had headaches, other pains, or redness at the injection site. Prof Trudie Lang, professor of global health research at the University of Oxford, said: "It is very good news indeed to see another vaccine coming through with similar efficacy results as were reported last week from Pfizer." This is also an interim analysis, which means that there were enough cases within the vaccinated volunteers to give statistical significance and allow the team to break the blind to determine who had the active vaccine and who had placebo. "This is really encouraging and it further demonstrates that a vaccine for Covid is a real probability and that having more than one supplier should help assure better and more equitable global availability." Peter Openshaw, professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College, London, said the Moderna results were "tremendously exciting" and boosted optimism that a choice of good Covid vaccines would be available in the next few months. He said the inclusion of high-risk and elderly people in the Moderna trial suggested the vaccine would protect those most vulnerable to the disease, while the reported side effects were "what we would expect with a vaccine that is working and inducing a good immune response". "Moderna have also announced that the vaccine can be kept in a conventional freezer at -20C for up to 6 months, and that once thawed the vaccine can be kept for up to 30 days at standard refrigerator temperatures of 2 to 8C. This makes the vaccine much easier to deliver," he said. "This announcement adds to the general feeling of optimism about vaccines for Covid-19. What we still don't know is how long any protective immunity may last. For that, we will need to wait," he added.

Ian Sample

the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said that based on the numbers released, the efficacy was still likely to be better than 85%. A question mark that remains over the Pfizer vaccine is whether it prevents serious illness. The Moderna results, released by an independent data safety monitoring board, are encouraging on this point. Of 11 participants who developed severe Covid while on the trial, all were in the placebo group. The results also suggest the vaccine is effective in older people and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Moderna's interim analysis includes a safety review of data available so far. The company said it had found no significant safety concerns, with most reactions being mild to moderate and short-lived. Among the side effects reported were injection site pain in 2.7% of trial volunteers after the first jab. After the

Troopel Presents Open Mic 4.0: Soji, Ispriha and Mana won hearts with their compositions and performances

After three successful and successive seasons, online platform Troopel hosted yet another season of Open Mic 4.0, which received a huge overwhelming response in Music and Poetry presentation, the season was broadcasted on the online platform for the first time in the country. In the Music category, Mana and Suzy managed to impress the judges by their voice, while in Poetry, Ispriha Baileung played a key role in fascinating everyone with her poetry. In the fourth season of Open Mic, which began on October 3, around 400 talents from different genres were selected. The audition process was completed in three rounds, after which a total of 15 contestants were selected for the semi-finals and finally 8 got a chance to race in the Finale. The final round on Saturday saw a tough competition between Bhairav Pandit, Man Matai, Ispriha Baileung, Adepur Bindu, Soji Mathew, Vishnu Kumar Swamy, Khalida Khatoun and Anjani Singh Thakur.

On this occasion, Mr. Atul Malikram, Founder, Troopel.com took the opportunity to congratulate all the winners and said, "Our goal is to bring these children to the right place. All are experts individually in their art & skills and this is the first time that Judges are most successful in choosing the winners. We have to face the challenge. But our endeavor is to ensure that the new skilled faces get their deserved recognition."

Giving special thanks to the channel, Soji Mathew, winner of the competition said "I did not expect to win but I was very happy to hear



my name. My heartfelt thanks to the channel, I tried to give my 100% in the finale, and Judges liked and appreciated that effort."

Apart from this, participants who stood on the second and third place Ispriha Baileung and Man Matai said, "Troopel is an extremely reliable platform, where there is a lot to learn for young talent and winning comes along with fun and learning. We would like to thank everyone from the bottom of our heart."

Judges Shivam Dubey (music therapist) and Mohammad Imran Siddiqui (poet) jointly called out all the contestants and praised their extraordinary talent and applauded them. Aishwarya Fender, host of the show played a key role in making the competition a huge success. Gift hampers and other gifts will be presented to these winners from different regions of the country. Apart from this, they will be supported in digital branding through the channel.

Dozens of US Secret Service Officers Assigned to Protect Trump Sidelined by COVID-19

Dozens of US Secret Service officers assigned to protect President Donald Trump have been sidelined by COVID-19, the Washington Post and New York Times reported on Friday as the coronavirus outbreak spread at the White House. Two US

government sources familiar with the situation confirmed to Reuters that Secret Service officers had tested positive for the virus but did not provide a specific number. One of the sources said a larger number of officers who had not tested positive had gone into quarantine as a protective measure. The Post did not say how many officers tested positive for the virus versus those who had to isolate because of close contact with an infected co-worker. It said about 10% of the core security team had been sidelined. The New York Times reported that at least 30 uniformed Secret Service officers recently tested positive for the virus, and that around 60 were asked by the agency to quarantine themselves. Secret Service representatives declined to give a tally of officers affected. White House spokesman Judd Deere referred questions to the Secret Service, but told the Post separately that the administration took every case seriously. The outbreak, which the Post said was at least partly linked to a series of Trump rallies before the November 3 election, comes roughly a month after the president himself contracted COVID-19 and was flown to a US military hospital for days of treatment. COVID-19 has also infected a number of other top officials in the White House, top administration officials and cabinet members and Trump campaign aides. None has died. First lady Melania Trump, Trump's youngest son Barron, top aide Hope Hicks, national security adviser Robert O'Brien and White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany all previously tested positive. President Donald Trump poses for his official portrait at The White House, in Washington, D.C., on Friday, October 6, 2017. (Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead) Others to have contracted the virus include US Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson and, according to a source familiar with the matter, Trump campaign adviser Corey Lewandowski. US House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has repeatedly criticised the White House and the president over their handling of the pandemic, told reporters the latest outbreak was further proof of "Trump's reckless campaign schedule."

Amazon.in Launches STEP to Empower and Accelerate Growth of 7 lakh Sellers

Amazon.in today announced the launch of STEP, a performance-based benefits program designed to help sellers accelerate their growth on Amazon.in. STEP simplifies the seller experience by providing customized and actionable recommendations which help sellers improve key customer experience metrics and in turn, their growth. By improving performance, sellers can unlock benefits across multiple levels like 'Basic', 'Standard', 'Advanced', 'Premium' & more. These benefits include fee waivers, faster disbursement cycles, priority seller support and world-class free account management. STEP puts sellers in charge of their success on Amazon.in by helping them track their performance, benefits and growth in real-time through the STEP Dashboard on Seller Central. Using customized and actionable recommendations, STEP enables sellers to improve key seller controllable metrics like cancellation rate, late dispatch rate, return rate, among others. Based on their performance, sellers can access benefits like online and offline training, fee waivers, faster disbursement cycles, and free account management. Starting 1 December 2020, all sellers on Amazon.in will enjoy 'Standard' benefits up



to 31 March 2021, and effective 1 April 2021 will be eligible for 'Basic', 'Advanced', 'Premium' and more based on their performance from 1 January to 31 March 2021. All sellers will get an opportunity to upgrade their level and corresponding benefits based on their performance every quarter. Manish Tiwary, VP Amazon India, said, "STEP empowers sellers of all sizes and tenure to drive their growth on Amazon.in by focusing on their performance on key metrics which matter to customers. STEP provides objective and transparent criteria along with benefits designed to help sellers improve their performance on these metrics in a predictable manner. At Amazon, we believe that focusing on long term customer experience matters. We have spent time obsessing over every detail of the STEP program and carefully crafting each element to ensure our valuable sellers can provide a great customer experience and in turn, grow and be successful on Amazon.in." With the launch of STEP, Amazon is introducing its revised fee structure, which was earlier deferred to after Diwali. The revised fees, effective 1 December 2020, are linked to STEP levels and include waiver on weight handling fees and lightning deal fees as part of STEP benefits. In addition, there will be reduction in closing fee charges for products in low price range (Rs 250-500) and zero disposal fees for items shipped from Amazon fulfilment centres. Amazon.in has taken several initiatives this year to help its seller community of more than 7 lakh sellers overcome obstacles and get their businesses back on track. These include free Covid-19 health insurance (offered by Acko in partnership with Amazon), on demand payment disbursement, relaxation in performance metrics, fee waivers on inventory storage fees and 50% waiver on 'Sell on Amazon' fees for small sellers, and deferring its marketplace fee revisions to December 2020.

Tulsi Kumar's special gesture for kids this Diwali!



In 2020, Tulsi Kumar conquered the independent music space after making an impact in the playback arena. During the lockdown itself, the talented artist released multiple singles including 'Tanhaai', 'Naam' and 'Zahra Thehro' and 'Tere Naal'

- all of which garnered a lot of success and topped music charts.

Feeling an immense amount of gratitude for her fans and well wishers, Tulsi Kumar decided to bring in this Diwali season, by giving back to society and those less fortunate.

The popular singer visited an NGO that looked after orphans and in the true spirit of Diwali, celebrated the occasion with them with food, dance and music - all to bring a smile on their innocent faces.

When contacted, revealed Tulsi Kumar, "For me, Diwali is a festival of giving, spreading light, smiles and happiness to those around. The year has been filled with many challenges, negative happenings and circumstances. So the best gift we could give anyone this Diwali is spreading smiles, happiness and positivity." Adding that, "When I met the kids of this NGO, I sang with them, danced with them, distributed Diwali decorations and sweets and we celebrated the festival together. It was such a great experience and the look on their faces filled me with so much joy. It also gave me the opportunity to discover their many talents. I encourage people in their small way to bring smiles and make this Diwali lit up in every way possible."

How we think about killers like Peter Sutcliffe tells us who we value in society

"Men are afraid that women will laugh at them," said Margaret Atwood. "Women are afraid that men will kill them." In his account of Peter Sutcliffe's regime of terror, *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son*, Gordon Burn recounts how Sutcliffe's first murder was apparently triggered by a woman laughing at him, which sounds a more plausible reason than the one Sutcliffe put forward when he was finally arrested in 1981: that God told him to do it. This laughing woman was a sex worker and it has become a lazy, dangerous commonplace that Sutcliffe mutilated and killed "prostitutes". He did not. He mutilated and killed women. The names of those 13 women, and their photographs, filled the newspapers when Sutcliffe's death was announced: Wilma McCann, Emily Jackson, Irene Richardson, Patricia Atkinson, Jayne MacDonald, Jean Jordan, Yvonne Pearson, Helen Rytka, Vera Millward, Josephine Whitaker, Barbara Leach, Marguerite Walls, Jacqueline Hill. On social media, they were also remembered and mourned, including by the historian Hallie Rubenhold, who in her eloquent book *The Five* recreated the lives of five of Jack the Ripper's victims in order to give them back

their stories and their selves. At the time, this was not how the murders were treated. Then, the dead women were "prostitutes", not people with lives and friends and children, and hopes and futures that had been snuffed out. The murders were motivated by sex, not by the misogynistic hatred that swilled around the 1970s, which in Sutcliffe metastasised into lethal violence. When a "normal" or, as the police put it, an "innocent" woman was killed, it was a "mistake" that further derailed the police's farcically incompetent investigation. Sutcliffe blundered around Yorkshire, grotesquely killing women almost in plain sight, but his nickname of "the Yorkshire Ripper" gave him a folkloric stature, like his Victorian predecessor or an evil Robin Hood. He had been a gravedigger; he used screwdrivers and hammers; he heard voices in his head. He became a ghoul. He was the shiver in the dark. Sutcliffe's ghastly killing spree took place between 1975 and 1980. In 2006, a forklift truck driver called Steven Wright killed five women over the course of six weeks: Tania Nicol, Gemma Adams, Anneli Alderton, Annette Nicholls and Paula Clennell. All had been sex workers in Ipswich,

and some of the media compared Wright to Sutcliffe, naming him the "Suffolk Strangler". But our attitudes had humanised by then. The figure of Wright never gripped the public imagination. He was banal, careless, stupid, casually using prostitutes like lots of men use them (but killing them as most men do not), arrested

desperation and who were as "ordinary" and "innocent" as the rest of us. Attitudes shift but misogyny remains, as does an indifference to the sufferings of those we cast as "other" (those who we do not see as innocent, ordinary, one of us). How the blind spots change shows something about what and who we



because of DNA evidence. There was public discomfort when the dead women were labelled as sex workers and a new sympathy and respect shown towards the victims, who were remembered and mourned as daughters, sisters, partners, mothers, friends; young and vulnerable women who - sometimes - traded their bodies for money out of

Nicci Gerrard as a society value. At the same time Sutcliffe was murdering women in Yorkshire, Fred and Rosemary West were sexually torturing and killing young women in Gloucestershire, although they were not arrested until 1994. Several of their victims, including their own daughters, went unmissed until they were found all those years later, buried in the basement and

garden of the terrace house that had been turned into an abattoir. They were in care, had slipped through all the slack safety nets, had disappeared from sight, were not searched for. Only one, Lucy Partington, a middle-class student from a safe and loving family, caught public attention: as if every life does not have an equal value. Or Harold Shipman, the GP believed to be the most prolific serial killer in modern history, thought to have murdered more than 200 patients. But by and large, these people were old (or at least middle-aged, which can be glossed as old). By and large, they were women. By and large, they were not well-off. By and large, they were invisible. Or the greatest child protection scandal in British history: the grooming, exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Rotherham between the 1990s and the 2010s and which for a decade at least the police and the council were aware of, knowing but not caring, a hideous blind spot that erased compassion. The 2014 Jay report found that at least 1,400 girls had been abused. How did it continue for so long? Because they were girls. They were working class. Many were in care. They had no power. They were not valued and not seen.

Economic blockade on Nagaland from Nov 17

DIPHU, November 17 : Various Karbi Anglong based civil society organizations led by Karbi Students' Association (KSA) on Sunday decided to call for an indefinite economic blockade on Nagaland starting from November 17 in protest against alleged illegal encroachment by people from neighbouring Nagaland. Movement of all trucks/vehicles carrying essential items will be prohibited. On Thursday, Karbi Students' Association, United Karbi Anglong Women Association, Karbi Anglong Women Justice Forum, Students and Youth Council and Hills Progressive Youth Association among others alleged that encroachment inside Daldali reserved forest had been taking place under the patronage of Nagaland government. In this regard, the organizations had demanded for a tripartite talk between governments of Assam, Nagaland and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council to deliberate and resolve the border issue. Addressing a press meet here on Thursday, Simeon Rongphar-led KSA had warned of imposing a 'four-hour' economic blockade on November 20 if the Assam and Nagaland governments including KAAC failed to convene a meeting to discuss about the border problem. However, after a joint meeting of the Bijoy Bey-led KSA, Rongphar-led KSA and other organizations held here on Sunday, the house decided to call for an in-

definite blockade against Nagaland from November 17. They said that the blockade has been called to protest against unabated illegal encroachment inside Karbi Anglong. They said that the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and the Assam government had also failed



to protect its own land. The organizations also put forth several demands that include eviction of all illegal occupants/encroachment inside Daldali reserved forest, disconnecting power supply allegedly being provided to some occupants by Nagaland government inside Karbi Anglong, removal of Nagaland police personnel near border pillars no. 1 & 2 etc. They also alleged that encroachment activities by people from neighbouring state had increased

since October last. They also alleged that encroachers frequently entered the district's Daldali Reserve Forest to cut down trees. A group of Assam officials led by deputy commissioner (DC) Karbi Anglong, Superintendent of Police, Chief Conservator of Forest and



others visited the disputed area of the border on Saturday. DC Karbi Anglong requested his Dimapur counterpart for an official meeting to sort out the issue at official level. Karbi Anglong forest officials have also raised concern over continuous encroachment by people from Nagaland by removing pillars demarcating the border between the two States. On Wednesday, assistant conservator of forest, Karbi Anglong, Prahalad Kro along with

sub-divisional police officer Bokajan, John Das, during the border survey/inspection, observed substantial destruction of forest areas inside Karbi Anglong. The officials also took note that most of the inhabitants were allegedly issued land pattas by Nagaland government. John Das stated that the whole issue needed to be discussed between Assam and Nagaland governments. AASU threatens economic blockade in another border-related issue, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) Jorhat unit on Sunday also threatened to launch an economic blockade against Nagaland to protest against encroachment inside Disoi valley reserve forest under Mariani. According to reports, a delegation of AASU Jorhat unit visited the area on Sunday. They warned of imposing an economic blockade if such encroachments were not stopped. Jorhat district officials claimed that Assam police had erected a temporary camp in the area on November 11 soon after Nagaland police personnel erected a shed and refused to move from their position. Efforts were on to pursue the Nagaland authorities to vacate the area and dismantle the structure, Assam officials said. The Nagaland government however, denied "illegal occupation" of land in Assam, claiming that its police personnel were keeping vigil within the State's periphery.



Swapnali Mahanta receiving the Award from veteran actor Pranjal Saikia in presence of Mainee Mahanta and Founders of Byatikram Group Dr. Saumen Bharatiya & Pintu Kr. Gupta.

Ex DGP of Assam Police, Dr Kuladhar Saikia unfurls the statue of martyr Anil Bora at Nagaon

A correspondent : NAGAON, Nov 17 : Former DGP of Assam Police and the current president of Asom Sahitya Sabha, Dr Kuladhar Saikia unfurled the statue of the martyr of Assam Medium Movement, Anil Bora affixed at his crematory site near Nagaon Nehrubali today after around 48 years back of his sacrifice. Significantly, the then district body of Asom Sahitya Sabha and All Assam Students' Union (AASU) took decision to set up his statue at his crematory site near Nehrubali. It is due to some reasons unknown, both the organizations could not be able to accomplish it during the last 48 years. But pushing all handle aside, the district body of AASU finally has escalated its enthusiastic effort to bring the years long postponed plan into

the reality. Unfurling the statue of the martyr, Ex DGP Dr Saikia said that those who had sacrificed their lives for Assamese language and its culture, they would be remembered. The respective movement of those martyrs should be taken ahead so that we could take the Assamese culture as well as its language to the world body for better recognition in the entire world, Dr Saikia said. Gracing the occasion, the younger brother of the martyr, Apurba Bora expressed his gratitude to district body of All Assam Students' Union for setting up the statue of the martyr after 48 years of his assassination in Hojai. In the inaugural function, along with other renowned as well as senior citizens of the town, the workers of the district AASU were present.

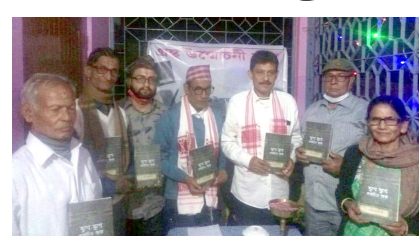
Media is not above law Samudragupta Kashyap

SIPAJHAR, Nov 17 : 'Media is not above law. The media persons should published only those news which are fully based on truth'. Said State Information Commissioner, Samudragupta Kashyap. He was addressing the function of the celebration of the National Press Day organized under the auspices of the Darrang district administration. Delivering the speech on the theme "Role of Media during Covid 19 pandemic and its importance on Media" he has highlighted the importance and relevance of press media towards



strengthening the foundation of democracy. Furthermore he has also discussed about the latest trends of journalism in present rapid changing situations. Addressing the function held at Deputy Commissioner's conference hall the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, Dilip Kumar Bora, IAS stressed the importance of day in commemoration of the establishment of the Press Council of India in 1966 and highly appreciated the role of media persons of the district during pandemic. Speaking on the occasion Gurujyoti Das, MLA, Mangaldai LAC said that the present state government is committed for the all round welfare of the media persons. Chief editor of Saptahik Mangal Batari, Prasanta Kumar Barua and former Journalist and retired Professor of Mangaldai college Dr Nagendra Nath Sarma also spoke on the occasion. Prasanta Kumar Barua, Dr Nagendra Nath Sarma, senior Journalist Bhargab Kumar Das, Dr Khagendra Kumar Nath, former Journalist and present principal of Mangaldai college, Mukut Raj Sarma, president, Mangaldai press club, Hemanta Kumar Barua, Prominent Journalist, and pradiip Ghosh, Journalist were offered felicitation in the function as part of the celebration of the National Press Day. Amrit Bhuyan, Superintendent of Police, Darrang, Pankaj Kumar Deka, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Darrang Kumar Surjit Bora, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Darrang and Assistant commissioner Monika Burhagohai were also attended in the function. Earlier Manimala Gogoi, District Information and Public Relations Officer, Darrang explained the objective of the programme.

Book released at Jamugurihat



A Correspondent : Biswanath Chari, Nov 17: 'Yuge Yuge Pravahita Dhara' an Assamese book written by Dr. Dhundi Raj Upadhyaya, an emerging writer of Gamiripal residence of the author on November 16. Sharanan Deva Nath; a known Assamese poet of Jamugurihat released the book. Addressing the gathering he said, 'Books are unique media of enhancing civilization. Publication, composition and love of reading books will definitely remain till human civilization exists.' Chakrapani Sarma; artist pensioner, Churamoni Sarkar, Padma Sarma and Bala Kumari Devi, retired teachers addressed the meeting which was chaired by Purna Kumar Sarma. Narad Nirola offered a vote of thanks while Dhundi Raj Upadhyaya carried out the proceedings of the meeting.

The average diabetes control level continues to be alarmingly high in Guwahati: India Diabetes Care Index

Guwahati, November 17 : In the run-up to World Diabetes Day, the Novo Nordisk Education Foundation today unveiled the second-year report of its Impact India: 1000-Day Challenge programme. The programme was launched two years ago to address the issue of suboptimally controlled diabetes in India. According to the report, the average HbA1c level in Guwahati was recorded at 8.42% in September 2020. The average HbA1c level has marginally increased as compared to last year's figures and the prevailing high HbA1c levels is a matter of deep concern especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic which puts people with uncontrolled diabetes at a higher risk of a fatal outcome and serious health complications. HbA1c is the best recommended indicator of long-term blood sugar control and gives an average blood sugar control over the preceding three months. 1000 people with an average age of 54 years were part of the analysis in the city, out of which 61% were male and 39% were female. Speaking about the report, Dr. Karuna Kanta Barman, Consultant Diabetologist and Director of

Barman Diabetes Specialties, Guwahati said, "The high level of HbA1c in Guwahati needs immediate attention as the risk of severe health complications from COVID-19 is up to 50% higher among people with diabetes. To keep the glucose level in check, it is important for one to continue medications regularly along with frequent self monitoring of blood glucose and to maintain a healthy lifestyle encompassing a nutritious diet and a regular exercise regimen, since uncontrolled diabetes damages the vital organs like the eyes, kidney, heart, etc." With the existing pandemic situation with COVID-19, people with diabetes should keep an adequate stock of medications and supplies for monitoring blood glucose at home. If symptoms like difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath, fever, dry cough, tiredness, aches and pains, sore throat, headache, loss of taste or smell are experienced, immediate medical attention should be sought. IDCI is a part of the 'Impact India: 1000-Day Challenge' programme by Novo Nordisk Education Foundation and serves as a guiding tool for the status of diabetes care

across India. IDCI was introduced in 2018 as part of the programme to monitor the diabetes care status in the country. Based on big data analytics, IDCI has been providing a real-time view of the average HbA1c in India, a key indicator of the state of diabetes control across select cities. At present, more than 77 million people are living with diabetes in India. Under the IMPACT India programme, digital platforms are being leveraged to partner with practitioners (doctors and paramedics) to evolve and implement an approach to diabetes care appropriate to India. IDCI is a dynamic tool that not only tracks the status of diabetes care but also helps to increase awareness, motivate and sensitize healthcare professionals (HCPs) and society. The last two years of the programme have seen significant contributions from HCPs and people living with diabetes from across the country. There has been an improving trend in the IDCI results every quarter, and this would lead to a reduction in the future burden of diabetes-related complications in India.

With schools set to reopen, APPSA advocates observing SOPs

ITANAGAR, November 17 : The Arunachal Pradesh Private Schools Association (APPSA) has appealed to the school management committees and school authorities to strictly observe the standard operating procedures (SOP) vis-à-vis Covid-19 while starting the classes for the students of Classes 10 and 12. Schools across the state are reopening on 16 November for the two classes. APPSA president Techi James while addressing the Children's Day celebration at the Delhi Public school in Jolly on Saturday said, "The time has come to learn to live with Covid-19 and try to maintain the 'new normal' lifestyle. Our economic activities should continue, and at the same time we also need to maintain the SOPs, so that minimum effect is felt," he said. The APPSA president informed that the association has sought a one-time grant from the state government for procuring hand sanitizers, facemasks, etc, but is yet to receive any reply. He said the schools are trying their best to arrange the short-term requirements for Covid management. Arunodaya University vice chancellor Dr VN Sharma, who also attended the function, spoke on the role of the education sector and the development of the state in the new era. Dr Sharma emphasized on "sincerity, dedication and devotion for the development of the education sector in the state and the country. It also inaugurated a new hostel building on the occasion.

PIB Guwahati Webinar on 'Industrial and Civil Infrastructure - Dams, Hydel and Eco-friendly Power Projects - Potential Drivers and Engines of Growth and Development'

Guwahati, Nov 17 : Industrial and Civil Infrastructure of Assam has propelling effect on Economic development of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic 'Industrial and Civil Infrastructure - Dams, Hydel and Eco-friendly Power Projects - Potential Drivers and Engines of Growth and Development' here today. Experts from Industry fraternity including organisations of Ministry of Power, Water Resources, Steel, Coal, Cement and Hydel Energy and allied sectoral Industries along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the market potential and its awareness from socio-economic, academic and policy

perspective. Talking about Central Government initiatives and its efficacy for public awareness, Dr PK Mukhopadhyay, Member Secretary, DVCHQ, Kolkata said that Energy Sector, Communication and Transport Sectors be it waterways, highways and railways are experiencing a huge paradigm shift leading to social and economic development of North East India as a region. He said that Dams in a region play a pivotal role in eco-friendly growth, water and energy development. He further said that additionally, it has an effect on the food and socio-economic development of a region. Shri Shibasis Basu, ED (Materials Management), SAIL-IISCO Steel Plant, Bumpur, Paschim Bardhaman said that power and energy sector initia-

tive has tremendous potential for direct employment opportunities of youth. He said in that endeavour, Dams, Green Buildings and Constructions and environment friendly Technologies have added to the efficacy of planning, construction, storage of water and utilisation of hydropower sector. Shri Satyabrata Banerjee, Chief Engineer Civil and HoD, DVOC, Maithon that Initiatives of 'Ease of Doing Business', 'Make in India', 'Startup India and Stand Up India' are bringing a paradigm change in the tertiary and allied sectors. He said that optimal utilisation of hydro potential, with many rivers and water resources, has the potential for socio-economic development of Small and Medium Enterprises and industries of a region.



Nazira press club in association with the civil administration of Nazira organised the 52nd press day at Nazira Press Club on last 16th November. Somar Jyoti Mahanta, principal of Sivasagar Commerce College present in the function as a guest of honour and he delivered his lectures focusing on the importance of National press day. In addition to this an "Antaranga Alap" namely- "Aeaitu jivon" was also held where D.C. of Sivasagar Lakshminandan Gogoi, S D O (C) of Nazira Lakshmi Dutta were also present along with other dignitaries.

INDIAN BANK

ZONAL OFFICE, DIBRUGARH

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR ENGAGEMENT OF AGENCY FOR DOING ELECTRICAL SAFETY AUDIT & ENERGY AUDIT OF BANK'S BRANCHES/OFFICE/PREMISES IN DIBRUGARH ZONE

INDIAN BANK invites tenders in two bid systems (Technical Bid and Financial Bid separately) from eligible Bidders for engagement of agency for doing electrical safety audit & energy audit of bank's branches/office/premises in Dibrugarh Zone on behalf of the Zonal Manager, Indian Bank, Zonal Office, Dibrugarh at the address given below.

Zonal Manager, Indian Bank, Zonal Office, T.R. Phukan Road, Chiring Chapari, Dibrugarh, Assam-786001.

TIME SCHEDULE OF THE TENDER PROCESS:

1. Date / Time of Commencement of Tender Process: 18.11.2020, 10:00 am
2. Date / Time for written queries for clarification from Tenderers: 21.11.2020, 12:00 pm
3. Last date and Time for submission of Tender including Technical and Financial Bids and EMD ("Tender Due Date"): 27.11.2020, 12:00 pm
4. Date / Time for opening of the Technical Bid: 27.11.2020, 3:00 pm
5. Date / Time for opening of Financial Bids: Date and time for opening of Financial Bids shall be advised separately after evaluation of Technical Bids.

The Bank reserves the right to cancel any or all tenders and stop the process at any point of time without assigning any reason or notice whatsoever. For further details please visit Bank website - www.indianbank.in.

Date: 18.11.2020
Zonal Manager

THE ASSAM RISING

VOL. NO. V, ISSUE NO. 283, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Grassroot candidates and politics of Bihar

Election officials rejected the nominations of many first-time candidates, including those from activist backgrounds or from marginalised communities. Activists told me these rejections were based on very flimsy grounds, and that electoral officers were hostile to grassroot candidates but helpful to those from parties that have been in power. On 26 October, two days before the state went to polls, many first-time candidates I approached told me they had lost hope in the credibility of the election process. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (United), as well as the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress, have all previously promised and failed to address unemployment, rural distress. They have also failed to properly implement welfare schemes. As a result, several grassroot leaders, many from activist backgrounds, hoped to contest the election. Many stood as independents, and some had the backing of two newly established political parties, the New Bharat Mission and the Plurals Party. The NBM is a grassroot party founded by Ashok Priyadarshi and Pankaj, both land-reform activists. Two of the party's ten nominees, including Priyadarshi, were rejected over small errors that election help desks could have corrected and rectified themselves. An Election Commission guideline titled, "Checklist for Returning Officers," available on their website says that returning officers need "to be liberal in overlooking minor technical or clerical errors." The Plurals Party was founded this year and fielded several candidates who are local activists from marginalised communities. The Plurals Party has the largest number of rejected nominations in this election. "On the flimsiest grounds, election officers across Bihar rejected the nomination of 38 candidates from the total 184 candidates we fielded," Anupam Suman, the party's general secretary, told me. Among the Plurals candidates whose nominations were rejected are Manikant Yadav and Sushma Hembram. Yadav is an activist who had previously served as the headman of Bahraich panchayat in northern Bihar. The Plurals Party had given Yadav a ticket for the Haya Ghat constituency. "The returning officer had told me a day before the nomination deadline that my nomination form and affidavits were perfectly filled," Yadav told me. "However, on 21 October, the deadline, even before my nomination rejection order was issued to me, I was told my nomination rejection is finalised because one column was not properly filled. My nomination rejection was clearly unfair." When I contacted VN Chaudhry, the Haya Ghat returning officer, to ask about Yadav's nomination rejection, he said, "Don't seek any clarification from me. Seek clarification from ECI." Hembram, an Adivasi activist who used to run self-help groups among her community, got the Plurals Party ticket to stand from the Katoria constituency, which is reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Suman told me that Ranjan K Chaudhry, the Katoria returning officer, had given Hembram a checklist of bank account details she had to file. "She produced the details on time before her nomination deadline, 11 am on 9 October," Suman said. "But she was made to queue up to enter the office and they rejected her nomination saying she missed her deadline by entering the office at 11.01 am." Suman said that the party was being selectively targeted. Chaudhry did not respond to multiple calls. "Our spirits have not broken yet only because we trust the public to support us," Suman told me. "The loss of candidates can't be overcome but such things are bound to happen when an evil design created by the nexus between election officers and big parties dominates the election process." Suman told me that the party had challenged the rejection of Yadav's nomination with the Election Commission. Ashok Priyadarshi, one of the founders of the NBM, is an activist who has been fighting for land redistribution in Bihar's Gaya district since the early 1970s in the heyday of the JP movement. The JP movement was a left-wing movement in Bihar in the 1970s, initiated by the political activist Jayaprakash Narayan, which fought against feudal landlords and corruption by leaders of the Congress. "In 1995, while we were lacking a leadership in our fight for land rights in Gaya, Priyadarshi's guidance gave us the leadership we needed and strength to continue our fight," MK Nirala, a rural activist from Dobhi village in Gaya, told me. "Along with many other villages he settled in Gaya district, he settled two villages in Dobhi-Vahini Nagar and Loknayak Jaiprakash Nagar. This was a historic move." During his several decade-long fight for land reform in Bihar, Priyadarshi has constantly butted heads with consecutive governments of both the JD(U) and the RJD, as well as the state's bureaucratic machinery. On 17 October, Shashi Shekhar, the returning officer for Bankipur, rejected Priyadarshi's nomination for the seat. "When Shashi Shekhar rejected Priyadarshi's nomination mere hours before the deadline, we sought clarification from him," Manoj Kumar, Priyadarshi's lawyer who had accompanied him for his nomination, told me. "We were told in a column in Form 26" - an additional affidavit that must be filed with the nomination form - "in which he was asked whether he is using a government residence, he failed to provide answer for each of the three sub-questions." Kumar told me that Priyadarshi said he had answered the question by writing 'Not Applicable,' for a sub-question about the payment of rent, electricity, and water bills in a government residence, which he had never stayed in. Priyadarshi had ticked a checkbox that read 'No.' "The returning officer's reply to Priyadarshi's answer was bizarre," Kumar said. "The officer said Priyadarshi should have provided separate answers to the question on rent, water and electricity though only one question was asked. Why didn't they specify anywhere in the form that it had to be answered as three separate answers when the space left under it would accommodate only one word?" Kumar continued, "Help desks are in place to help nominees correct small errors in the 20 page-long form, when there are any mistakes. Why are the help desks not doing their job?" He said that the rejection of Priyadarshi's nomination was a huge blow for the NBM, a party with a very limited budget and fielding candidates from the weaker sections of society. Kumar said that the NBM has challenged Priyadarshi's rejection in front of the ECI and HR Srinivasa, Bihar's chief electoral officer. Baijunath K Singh, the deputy chief electoral officer of Bihar, confirmed that help desks were mandatory and their roles are clearly assigned. "It's the help desks' duty to verify the candidate's filled form and help with the required corrections before he or she finally submits the forms for scrutiny," he said. However, activists I spoke to told me that across the nomination process for Bihar's polls, help desks were either absent or failed to help nominees from activist backgrounds. As in Priyadarshi's case, several nominees told me that local returning officers were often a major stumbling block in allowing them to contest in the election. Returning officers are usually recruited from among the sub-divisional officers or deputy collector for land reform of a state. Several activists and lawyers I spoke to said that elections vested too much power in the hands of bureaucrats.



In July-August, as a Covid peak came down, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal started speaking of a 'Delhi model' for fighting Covid. This was a blatant lie at so many levels, because Delhi had done a terrible job of managing the Covid crisis in April-June. Whether it was shortage of hospital beds, rules preventing people from getting tested, alleged discrepancy in death figures or fighting with private labs and hospitals to shift responsibility - it was a model for disaster. It was the central government's intervention that helped change things around. None of this prevented Arvind Kejriwal from going on and on about the 'Delhi model', because propaganda and reality don't have to match. Since then, we have had a second and now a third peak of Covid. And each time, Arvind Kejriwal has been found wanting in his efforts. Even when it is known that another peak is likely, as was this winter, he is able to do precious little. Once again, the courts are unhappy and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is taking charge. Arvind Kejriwal is telling us not to panic, which means the situation must be really bad. Kejriwal's comprehensive failure at managing Covid in Delhi has called his bluff on governance. Central to the problem is Kejriwal's worldview, which is nothing but gimmickry. Back during the first peak of Covid, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s answer to shortage of hospital beds was an app that never worked. We

have now forgotten all about the app. Then their answer was to distribute oximeters so citizens could check their oxygen levels. That hasn't prevented a third peak either. However, the AAP realised that testing oxygen levels is good political campaigning. When an AAP worker goes and checks someone's oxygen levels with an oximeter, the citizen feels like the AAP cares about him or her. So, the AAP has been doing its oximeter gimmick across India. Despite all this, Arvind Kejriwal says the third peak will go away just like the previous two peaks. Of course, what comes also goes. He can say the same when the fourth peak arrives. But can he explain why he couldn't prevent a third peak? He blames air pollution, which may

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be scientifically correct, but that brings us to another giant failure of the AAP. If air pollution is so bad that it is causing a third Covid peak in Delhi, why not impose the odd-even rationing of cars? After all, the AAP had captured international attention with the odd-even scheme and has insisted it helped reduce air pollution. So why not do it now when Kejriwal himself admits air pollution is causing a Covid peak? Surely this is the best time for the odd-even scheme when people are dying of both Covid and cancer caused by air pollution? But odd-even is completely forgotten because it was a comprehensive policy failure. It did nothing to reduce air pollution. If it did, the AAP would be imposing odd-even from November to January. Yet it succeeded as a gimmick: it caught everyone's attention, it forced everyone to understand what Kejriwal is doing in a way that people won't notice whether a polluting industrial plant has been shut down or not. This time Kejriwal has come up with a new

gimmick to mislead the citizens of Delhi into thinking he has the answers to the air pollution problem. He has started putting up smog towers, which is like installing an RO to clean up the Yamuna. Of course, engineer Kejriwal would know that smog towers would do zilch to reduce air pollution. But crores of taxpayers' money must be spent just so that the public sees the smog meters and says 'Kejriwal is trying'. The debate will shift from whether Kejriwal is doing anything to reduce pollution to whether smog towers work. We might even be asked to go into the technical details of how a smog tower works. When you can't convince them, confuse them. The pandemic year has comprehensively called the AAP's bluff on governance. The sorry state of affairs in Delhi government hospitals doesn't allow them to brag about running a few OPD clinics. As schools remain closed, they can no longer brag about re-painting school walls. The annual gimmick of showing a high pass percentage in government schools by disallowing likely-to-fail students from taking exams will have to wait until March-April. Arvind Kejriwal won a re-election by giving free electricity but that won't help him win again and again. Delhi is bursting at the seams, choking and panicking. At such a time, Kejriwal's pipe dream of national expansion needs more than just governance gimmicks. It needs political gimmicks. As an ideology-free populist, Kejriwal tries to follow public mood. So, if public mood is against corruption, he'll put up a movement against corruption. If the people no longer care about corruption, Kejriwal will forget about it too. Question is, what is the public mood today? Kejriwal has decided the public mood today is Hindu

nationalism. So he's decided to make a Rightward shift. We now have him and his entire Cabinet perform a grand Diwali Puja ceremony in Delhi's famous Akshardham Temple, against the popular tradition of 'ghar wali Diwali'. The AAP hopes that liberal critics will decry this as 'communal', making the AAP look centre-Right, which is the positioning it wants. If next year Kejriwal thinks the public mood is 'secular', he will start visiting Sufi shrines. This is an incorrect reading of public mood, and even if it is not, it is poor strategy. Except for Delhi, where the BJP does not have good local leaders, nowhere in India will Hindutva-minded voters dump the BJP to vote for the AAP just because Arvind Kejriwal is screaming 'Main bhi Hindu hoon' (I am also Hindu). He will, however, lose the Muslim vote in the process. The Rajiv Gandhi mistake, just repeated by Kamal Nath in Madhya Pradesh. Hindutva succeeds in polarisation only because it is anti-Muslim. Even if Kejriwal becomes actively anti-Muslim (rather than just passively looking the other way in the Delhi riots or allowing the persecution of an Umar Khalid), the Hindutva voter has no need to vote for a poor imitation of the BJP. That still leaves us with the question, what do people want that a party like the AAP could give them? People want solutions to their economic problems. They want the economy to get going again. They want jobs, good education and health, and hope for a better future. The AAP can see that its governance-by-gimmicks trick is unable to give people hope for a more prosperous future. The result is Arvind Kejriwal becoming a baba. We'll have to endure a lot more bhajan-kirtan. Someone gift him a saffron stole, please.

Nitish Kumar is defanged but BJP shouldn't start celebrating yet

If you passed by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg in New Delhi last Wednesday evening, you would think India had discovered Covid-19 cure or the Chinese People's Liberation Army, deployed in eastern Ladakh, had surrendered. Such were the frenzied celebrations at the Bharatiya Janata Party headquarters. As it was, the party was celebrating its victory in the Bihar assembly election. The entire BJP top brass, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others, was there. BJP president J.P. Nadda came standing in an open jeep, waving at the crowds. He was finally out of Amit Shah's shadow. He reversed the party's losing streak in assembly elections under his predecessor. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh credited Shah's successor for bringing "new energy" in the organisation. The scale of celebrations of an assembly election victory, with an ally - Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar - occupying the chief minister's chair, however, left many wondering. Was it because it came as a public vindication of the Centre's Covid-19 management and thumbs-up to its handling of the economy and national security? Probably not, because these were not the issues in this Bihar election. If economic distress was an issue at all, questions were targeted at Nitish Kumar. So, was it the celebration of PM Modi's continuing popularity? But that was never in doubt, not even in states where the BJP lost elections. The ostensible reason for the frenzy at the BJP headquarters was the party's performance - 74 seats, with 19.46 per cent of the votes. But, in 2010, the last time the BJP and Kumar's JD(U) had contested together in an assembly election, the BJP had won 91 seats, with 16.49 per cent votes. So, the number of seats in the new assembly doesn't really explain the ecstatic response at the BJP headquarters. In fact, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) tripped the BJP to emerge as the single largest party in the assembly (with 75 seats). The three percentage point increase in the vote share between 2010 and 2020 could also not be the reason for it. In the 2015 assembly election, the BJP had secured 24.4 per cent votes, the largest vote share among all parties. So, what could explain Wednesday's jubilations? Of course, the victory in Bihar came after the Delhi poll drubbing and provided the



much-needed morale booster and the momentum for the BJP ahead of crucial assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam four-five months later. The real reason that BJP leaders were all excited but wouldn't talk about it was the fact that they finally got the better of Nitish Kumar and are now in the driving seat in Bihar. The BJP can look forward to establishing its supremacy

D.K. SINGH

in Bihar, with or without the JD(U). On Thursday, a day after the celebrations in the BJP camp, Nitish Kumar came out to interact with reporters in Patna and clarified that his remarks about 2020 having been his last election was misinterpreted. Addressing a rally in Purnea on the last day of the Bihar election campaign, Kumar had said, "This is my last election. Ant bhalo to sab bhalo (all is well that ends well)." On Thursday, he claimed he makes this comment in his last campaign speech in every election. A week before that, an official press release had left nothing to misinterpret, saying how the CM had announced 'sanyas' (retirement). The BJP is set to have more ministers in Kumar's new Council of Ministers and is also likely to demand more say in governance. But one needs to watch out if the BJP insists on having the assembly speaker's post. That would give the first indication of how the BJP plans to move ahead in Bihar. With Nitish Kumar at 69, many JD(U) legislators may not mind shifting their allegiance to a more promising and resourceful party and the speaker would play a crucial role in such cases. Another indicator would be whether BJP's Sushil Kumar Modi retains the deputy CM's post. Kumar and Modi go back a long way - right to their participation in students' movement in the 1970s - and are known as Ram-Laxman of the

NDA government in Bihar, despite their different political and ideological affiliations. BJP high command's Deputy CM choice would indicate whether the saffron party intends to tighten the noose around the CM's neck right from Day one or bide its time. Indications are that the BJP intends to keep Kumar under leash right from Day One. Nitish Kumar is a tough nut to crack though. As long as he is in power, he may not mind an ambitious BJP doing a few tricks here and there. But even BJP leaders must know it is Kumar who is keeping all the cards in his hand. If the push comes to a shove, a redo of 2015 is always an option. The RJD may be guarded against Kumar, but the Congress and its allies are capable of inflicting self-injuries just to hurt the BJP. BJP leaders know it and Nitish Kumar must love this situation - the bread that's buttered on both sides. Kumar, a Socialist who swears by Lohia, is known to have strong ideological convictions, except in matters of power. If there is any threat to his chair, Kumar can always remember and invoke his ideological moorings to seek and justify support from other quarters. The BJP may, therefore, not be in a hurry to make its next big move in Bihar - not until the next Uttar Pradesh assembly election, at least. All major politicians in Bihar could claim victory in this election - RJD's Tejashwi Yadav for establishing himself as a doughty politician who is here to stay; Lok Janshakti Party (LJP)'s Chirag Paswan for damaging Nitish Kumar; the CM for getting another term in office; and BJP leaders for undermining Kumar and still sharing power with him. Small players such as Jitan Ram Majhi (Hindustani Awam Morcha) and Mukesh Sahani (Vikasheel Insaan Party) have become

kingmakers, winning four seats each. Either of them pulling out could reduce the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government to a minority. The coming months and years are, therefore, likely to witness unending power-tussle, ego battles, and brinkmanship in Bihar. These factors will likely keep Nitish Kumar busy. Given that he didn't show much urgency in matters of governance in his current term in office, few expect him to do any better in what could be his last term in which survival will be his key agenda. A senior state government functionary who finds Kumar "the sharpest among the available lot" vented out his frustration and helplessness to me: "We are back to the same rut. Distributing freebies, decentralising corruption and no plan or vision for any productive investment for long-term sustainable development.... Buildings banaate rahiye... thekedar khush, party khush, engineer khush. Usme padhai nahi hogi but that is immaterial. Medical college me doctor nahi honge.... doesn't matter... ITI, polytechnic mein instructor nahi hai... par building to har jagah ban gayi na. Yahi is state ki niyati hai.... Hamari niyati khet mazdoor, building site worker, taxi driver, security guard, liftman paida karna hai (there are buildings without doctors, engineers, instructors. The intent of this state is to produce manual labourers)." Well, he may sound too pessimistic but he is probably going by Nitish Kumar's track record in the past seven-eight years. Here are a few pointers to his achievements as reported by my colleague Remya Nair: 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 the previous year. 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 the year ago. Care Ratings estimated that the per capita GSDP of Bihar was at Rs 46,664 in 2019-20, only 35 per cent of the national average of Rs 1,34,226. The Care Ratings report also pointed out that Bihar has a low share of India's factories - only 1.5 per cent as of 2017-18. If this was the state of economic affairs in Bihar when Nitish Kumar was in full control, it's too much to expect a turnaround in Bihar's fortune in the next five years, with a weakened CM who must deal with many frenemies to survive the full term.

January 2021 JEE Mains could be delayed due to Covid situation, but no plans to cancel



New Delhi, November 17 : The Joint Entrance Exam (Mains) in January 2021 could be delayed if the Covid-19 situation across the country worsens, ThePrint has learnt. Officials in the National Testing Agency (NTA) said they want to keep up with the schedule and hold the exams in January, but are not certain if that will be the case. No official notification has been released so far on the date of the JEE Mains exam, and students have expressed apprehension about whether it will be postponed or cancelled. However, sources in the NTA and the Ministry of Education told ThePrint that though

the exam will not be cancelled, it could be delayed because of the pandemic. JEE (Mains), the entrance exam for engineering colleges across India, is held twice a year - in January and April. An official in NTA, which conducts the exam, said: "We want to conduct the exam in January itself, but we cannot guarantee at this point that we will be able to do that. It will all depend on the Covid-19 situation in the country." It will also depend upon the board exam schedule. If the board exams are delayed because of the Covid situation getting worse, JEE Mains will also have to be delayed a little. There are definitely no plans to cancel. "A ministry source who is privy to the developments confirmed: "NTA is working on the schedule for JEE Mains' January date, and an announcement is

likely to be made soon. It is possible that the exam is a little delayed because of the ongoing pandemic but there is no plan to cancel the January exam as of now." ThePrint emailed the Ministry of Education for an official comment on this issue, but received no response till the time of publication of this report. For the January 2020 JEE Mains, the application process had begun in September 2019. However, this year, since the April exam was delayed until September due to the pandemic, engineering aspirants are getting anxious about the next exam in January. Atman Shah, an aspirant from Gujarat, said: "There is no word from NTA about JEE Mains January and this has started to create panic among students. We just want to know whether the exam will be held or not or if it will be delayed." Reema Ahluwalia from Delhi added: "We have been discussing in our coaching groups and other circles whether the January exam will take place this year or not. No one seems to have any official word on this."

BJP's social engineering on display as Nitish takes oath as Bihar CM with new NDA colleagues

Patna, November 17 : JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the Bihar chief minister for the seventh time Monday, and unlike in his previous terms, he was flanked by new BJP faces at the swearing-in ceremony. As many as 15 ministers, including the chief minister, were sworn in Monday. They include six from the JD(U), seven from the BJP and one each from the Hindustani Awam Morcha and the Vikasheel Insaan Party. Of the 15, only Tarkishore Prasad, a four-time MLA from Katihar, and Renu Devi, a four-term MLA from Bettiah, shared stage with Nitish, sparking speculation that they are the frontrunners for the deputy chief ministerial posts. The BJP's ministers had all the hallmarks of the party's social engineering. So far, there has been no place in the state cabinet for veterans such as Sushil Modi, Nand Kishore Yadav and Prem Kumar. Instead, Prasad and Devi are from the so-called backward communities. Prasad is an OBC and has a strong RSS background. He was picked from the RSS to replace Jagabandhu Adhikari, after the latter passed away, for the November 2005 elections. Since then, he has never lost the Katihar seat, which is in the state's Seemanchal region plagued by polarisation of Hindus and Muslims. Devi is of the Nonia caste, which is classified as an extremely backward caste (EBC) in Bihar. She rose from the Durga Vahini, women's wing of the RSS-affiliated VHP, before joining the BJP Mahila Morcha. She worked as an insurance agent and was given a ticket for the first time in 1995 but lost. She won for the first time in 2005, served briefly as a minister in the then Nitish government but was dropped. She later became close to the central BJP



leadership and has served as the national vice-president of the mahila morcha. The two deputy CM frontrunners also have another common factor - both are considered proteges of Sushil Kumar Modi, the deputy chief minister in the previous government. "I will take guidance from Sushil Modi to perform and do my best to meet the expectation of my central BJP leaders," Prasad told. Devi echoed similar views. "Sushil Kumar Modi is like an elder brother who taught me everything about politics. I will strive to meet the expectation the central leadership has from me," she told ThePrint insisting that she enjoyed a close relationship with Nitish Kumar as well. The BJP's social engineering was on display on the first day of swearing-in. Of its seven ministers so far, only three are upper caste. Two of the ministers are OBC, one a Dalit and the other an EBC. There were, however, no Muslim ministers, from any of the parties. All 11 of the JD(U) Muslim candidates lost the elections while the BJP did not field anybody from the community. In the previous term, the BJP had seven upper caste representatives in the then 35-member cabinet. So far, the only survivor is Mangal Pandey, who was the health minister in the previous government. Amrendra Pratap Singh, a Rajput who won at Ara and Jiwesh

Mishra, a Bhumihar who defeated the former AMU president Maskoor Usmani at Jale in Darbhanga district. The party has also picked another Yadav face instead of Nand Kishore Yadav, Ram Surat Rai, a two-time MLA from Aurai in Muzaffarpur. It is being speculated that Nand Kishore Yadav will be the new speaker and the first one from the BJP in the Bihar assembly. The Dalit face in the cabinet is Ram Prit Paswan who won from Rajnagar Madhubani district. Both Mishra and Paswan took their oath in Maithili. BJP leaders, however, are shocked by the omission of Prem Kumar - and eight-term MLA and the EBC face of the party. Sources said central leaders are unhappy as Kumar's supporters raised slogans calling for him to be appointed the chief minister. The JD(U) list shows the restraint that Nitish will have to face in the new ministry. His Man Friday from Nalanda, Shrawan Kumar, and close associate Sanjay Jha were not on the first list. Other aides such as former speaker Vijay Kumar Choudhary and trusted warhorse Bijender Prasad Yadav were, however, sworn in. Ashok Choudhary, the former Congress state president who switched over to the JD(U), is the party's Dalit face in the cabinet. Little-known Sheela Mandal was also sworn in and so was Mewa Lal Choudhary, a Kushwaha and former vice-chancellor of Bihar Agricultural University in Sabour. Choudhary had once faced corruption charges and had underground as he was expelled from the party. The cabinet is also made up of Mukesh Sahini, the VIP chief who lost the polls and is likely to be made MLC from BJP quota, and Santosh Manjhi, son of former CM and president of HAM, Jitan Ram Manjhi.

BPCL gets multiple bids, but Modi govt set to miss Rs 2.1 lakh crore disinvestment target

New Delhi, November 17 : The government's disinvestment process inched ahead Monday, but is likely to fall substantially short of the Rs 2.1 lakh crore full-year target set in the Union Budget. The government has received multiple initial expressions of interest for a strategic stake in oil major Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) from domestic and global bidders, for which the deadline was Monday. The same day, the government also kickstarted the process of initiating an independent actuarial valuation of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, a necessary prerequisite for it to be listed on the stock exchanges. However, experts pointed out that the process is likely to be long-drawn,

given the size of the insurer's books, which will effectively push the listing to the next fiscal year. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the government's attempt for strategic sale of firms like Air India, BPCL and Container Corporation of India. Lack of investor interest due to the uncertainties caused by the pandemic saw the government extending the deadline for expressions of interest for Air India and BPCL multiple times. It also made the terms for an Air India sale more attractive for investors. The revised deadline for submission of bids for Air India is 14 December. While the government has conceded that it will be unable to meet its Rs 2.1 lakh crore disinvestment target, it is looking to get as

close as possible. So far, it has collected slightly more than Rs 6,100 crore through offer for sale and initial public offer in three PSUs, and another Rs 11,000 crore through the Bharat Bond exchange traded fund. The government announced Monday that it had received multiple expressions of interest from global and domestic investors for BPCL.

Trump set to cut troops in Afghanistan, Iraq to 2,500 each by 15 Jan

Washington, November 17 : Donald Trump is expected to issue a formal order drawing down U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to 2,500 in each country by Jan. 15, a U.S. defense official said, as the president works to deliver on his longtime pledge to exit from "endless wars." U.S. Central Command has received an informal warning order, according to the official. The expected order, reported earlier Monday by CNN, would reduce troops from about 4,500 in Afghanistan and from about 3,000 in Iraq before Trump leaves office. Trump's deadline would come five days before President-elect Joe Biden takes office. Pentagon officials didn't immediately comment when asked about the drawdown. But the planned drawdowns drew sharp criticism from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Kentucky Republican, usually a staunch Trump ally, said on the Senate floor Monday that there's little support in Congress for "simply walking

away" from the conflicts. "The consequences of a premature American exit" from Afghanistan "would likely be even worse than President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq back in 2011, which fueled the rise of ISIS and a new round of global terrorism," McConnell said. "It would be reminiscent of the humiliating American departure from Saigon in 1975." The move comes after Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and replaced other top officials at the Pentagon with loyalists last week. Esper sent a classified memo to the White House this month expressing concerns about additional troop cuts, the Washington Post has reported, citing two senior officials it didn't identify. The reduced troop level for Afghanistan is consistent with public statements last month by National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien, although it stops short of a tweet by Trump last month expressing an expectation that U.S. troops there would be home by Christmas.



Liu Ying (R) and He Changle help harvest melons planted by villagers in Dongqin Village, Congjiang County of southwest China's Guizhou Province

Bursting firecrackers on Diwali isn't the problem. Making it a national and moral issue is

New Delhi, November 17 : As I write this, there is a continuous stream of firecrackers outside the window of my Bengaluru apartment: relatively subdued in my immediate vicinity compared to previous years, but nevertheless quite vigorous. It is just as well that the Karnataka government under B.S. Yediyurappa reversed its decision to ban firecrackers - albeit permitting only "green" ones - because it is unlikely that people would have refrained from celebrating Diwali the usual way, and the already overworked police force would have the unhappy task of enforcing a very unpopular rule. There is little doubt that firecrackers, green or otherwise, add to atmospheric pollution. They are also a known fire hazard. They terrify animals, and as a dog owner, I have an acute sense of what a harrowing experience it is for them. All of this is true, but it does not follow that a nationwide ban on firecrackers is the answer. Indeed, a blanket ban across India could be counterproductive in other ways, because the unpopularity of the policy energises socially conservative and reactionary politics, shrinking the envelope of freedom and rule-of-law. The controversy over firecracker policy highlights four bad policymaking habits in India: nationalising, judicialising, moralising, and rushing policies. Over-centralisation of political power in the Union government, the disproportionate influence of New Delhi in public discourse and pervasiveness of social media turns almost every issue into a national one. The capital's polluted air is on the minds of media persons, policymakers, politicians and judges, which makes it easy for them to be persuaded that banning firecrackers is obviously necessary. They easily miss the fact that India is a vast country and there are many areas where the air is not as polluted, the space not as populated and the preference for firecrackers not as intense as the national capital. They also miss the fact that a lot of people are dependent on the firecracker industry, and their interests and livelihoods are also legitimate considerations. One-size-fits-all is generally a bad idea for a diverse and plural nation like India, and

especially so if the 'one size' is that of New Delhi. That is why it is just as well that state governments are making these decisions. It would be even better if they devolve these decisions to municipalities and panchayats. Even if the Narendra Modi government is not involved in nationalising this particular issue, there is the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and, consequently,

element of moralising, of judging people who make, sell, and light them. Converting a debate on policy into one of morality turns it into a battle between right and wrong, destroys the middle ground and transforms its politics. The fourth bad policy habit is the most palpable one: abrupt, drastic decisions that are effective immediately. It is positively



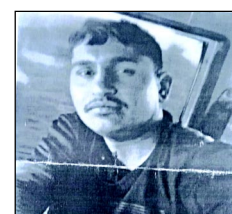
the Supreme Court. This also judicialises the issue. Why is judicialisation not a good thing? Because it is blunt and hard to reverse. Judges seldom take into consideration the economic consequences of their decisions, and unlike politicians and civil servants, they are not publicly accountable for them. It also creates uncertainties, and grey areas feed corruption and strengthen the unscrupulous. The NGT declares where firecrackers are permitted and where not. The Supreme Court has the final say. A few judges are making decisions that thousands of sarpanches, hundreds of mayors and 32-odd chief ministers ought to have made. Worse, elected officials cannot exercise their own policy judgement once the court has given its verdict. The third bad habit is the tendency to moralise policy issues. Lighting firecrackers is not an immoral act, no more than driving a car or taking a flight is. It is best to deal with pollution as a practical issue. It is undesirable because it has negative consequences for air quality and our living environment. The role of public policy would be to minimise pollution. This is best done by changing the incentives of polluters, not passing moral judgements on them. Yet in the popular opposition to Diwali firecrackers, I sense a growing

undemocratic and unjust to announce a ban on firecrackers a few days before Diwali. There is no time for anyone to make adjustments - manufacturers and dealers are left staring at huge losses and children who had been looking forward to the festival face disappointment. We see this sort of abrupt, nearly whimsical decisions made by government authorities more often than not, and those who do not accept them have to approach the courts, thereby judicialising the matter. It is entirely possible to make clear decisions well in advance, announce an adequate transition time table and help those adversely affected for no fault of their own. What would a reasonable firecracker policy look like? First, leave decisions to states and local governments. Second, announce a two to three-year timetable for the transition to less polluting types of firecrackers; with states like Tamil Nadu that produce firecrackers helping the industry make the transition. Third, promote moderation and responsible use of firecrackers, using a mix of public education, taxation and restrictions. If we get rid of our bad policy habits, it is possible in most places in India to both celebrate Diwali with firecrackers and be responsible towards the environment.



Aman performs on an ATV during a mass sports event Let's go 2020. All terrain vehicle in Moscow, Russia,

LOOK OUT NOTICE



The above is the photograph of Pawan Kumar (26 Yrs) S/O Late Meda Ram of Vill- Manpura, P.S.- Rajgarh, District- Churu State: Rajasthan, has been missing on 22/10/2020 at 11.20 PM from Rangia Railway Station.

The Descriptive Roll of the Missing men is as follows :

1. Name	-	Pawan Kumar
2. Age	-	26 Years
3. Height	-	5 Feet 7 inch
4. Complexion	-	Swarthy
5. Wearing	-	Black T-Shirt and Blue Jeans
6. Language	-	Hindi

Please take all out efforts to trace out the missing girl and if and found intimate this office (Kamrup PCR. 0361-2684402, E-mail-sp-kamrup@assampolice.gov.in) at the earliest for taking follow up action from this end. This refers to Rangia PS MMR No. 24/2020 Dated 01-11-2020

Sd/-
Superintendent of Police,
Kamrup : Amingaon
Janasanyog/D/7089/20

Contd. From Page 1

BTC Elections 2020 Dates

with regard to the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council elections and declare the election date by November 20. The Court gave the order after the hearing a PIL filed on the BTC election. The order was passed by a division bench of the Gauhati High Court comprising of Justice Manish Choudhury and Chief Justice (acting) N Kotiswar Singh. According to reports, the elections in the 40-member Council shall be held in two phases. The BTC elections were to be held on April 4 but were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor's rule was imposed and is still in place.

Sonowal Inaugurates Swahid

to all communities and ethnicities on board. He also said that though some vested interest groups are conspiring to derail the rate of development, State government however, remains committed to expedite the development of the state. He also said that in the last four years, government has taken several steps for the infrastructural development of the state. Chief Minister Sonowal also said that since independence though several governments were in power in the state, the development of the areas on the north bank of the Brahmaputra remained lopsided. However, the present BJP led Government at the state moved by the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Sabka Saath, Sabka Bikash and Sabka Viswas principle took several steps for the all-round development of all areas belonging to Barak, Brahmaputra, hills and plains. Thanking his Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami for show his keen interest in the development of Howly, Chief Minister Sonowal urged upon the people of Howly to remain committed to transform Howly one of the top ranking towns of the state. He also said that since Barpeta district is endowed with the blessings of the Gurujona, he called upon the people of Barpeta to work unrelentingly to make the district more developed culturally, spiritually, socially, economically and infrastructurally. Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State (i/c) Naba Kumar Doley gave brief snapshot of all the steps that the State government has taken to enrich the art and culture of all groups of people of Assam. He also stated about different awards and cultural centres that State government is instituting in the name of great personalities of the state. While speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister's Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for taking initiatives for the all-round development of Howly. He at the same time urged upon the people not to pay any heed to the false propaganda being circulated by some vested interest groups against the government. He said that to safeguard the interests of the indigenous people of the state, the present State government took several steps. He, therefore, thanked Chief Minister Sonowal, Cultural Affairs Minister Naba Kumar Doley and Chairman ATDC Jayanta Malla Baruah for Chandi Barua Bhawan, Swahid Bedi, Gateway to Howly town etc. Chairman ATDC Jayanta Malla Baruah, Deputy Commissioner Barpeta Munindra Sharma also spoke on the occasion. MLA Gunindra Das, Director Cultural Affairs Department Bishnu Kmal Bora, Managing Director ATDC Deba Kumar Mishra, Vice Chairperson ATDC Nabadeep Kalita, eminent sculptor Biren Sinha and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion. Later at a different programme, Chief Minister Sonowal laid the foundation stone to mark the beginning of the construction work of Jania Satra to be built with financial outlay of Rs. 50 lakh. At the same programme Sonowal also released 'Na-Ghosa' composed by Sri Sri Purushuttam Thakur and edited by executive editor Asomiya Khabar Biswajit Das. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister gave a brief snapshot of all the steps that government of Assam has taken for the preservation of satra, devalaya, namghars, temples etc. In this context, Sonowal mentioned about the one time grant given to eight thousand namghars in the state. Conducted by the executive editor of Asomiya Khabar Biswajit Das, the programme was attended by the Minister of State (i/c) Cultural Affairs Naba Kumar Doley, Chief Minister's Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami, Chairman ATDC Jayanta Malla Baruah, Deputy Commissioner Barpeta Munindra Sharma, Vice Chairperson ATDC Nabadeep Kalita, social worker Shankar Das and a host of other dignitaries.

Indefinite economic blockade

Bey, President, KSA. "Several political parties had come and gone to power in KAAC, but they failed to address the permanent solution of Karbi Anglong. They have done only for their electoral gain. But if the KAAC dare to protect the land of Karbi Anglong, then they should find the way to protect from the hands of encroachers in manner of permanent solution," said Bijoy Bey, President, KSA. On assurance given by Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner, the indefinite road blockage is suspended temporarily. He has assured us to convey a meeting tomorrow by 2 PM at Diphu in this regard. However, it will resume the protest if the Nagaland Govt. doesn't fulfill their assurance, informed KSA President Bijoy Bey to reporters. The organization which supported the economic blockage with KSA (Inglongpho) were KSA (Lumding Road), Karbi Students & Youth Council (KSYC), United Karbi Youth Association (UKYA), Karbi Anglong Women Justice Forum (KAWJF), Karbi Unemployed Youth Association (KUYA), Hills Progressive Youth Association (HPYA), United Karbi Anglong Women Association (UKAWA), Karbi Students for Justice (KSI), Karbi Farmers Association (KFA), Ex-UPDS Welfare Society (Ex-UPDSWS), Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA), All Dimasa Students Union (ADSU) and Assam Tea Tribe Students' Association (ATTSA).

Hold countries that support terror

were like the "black sheep of the family" and the world cannot afford any complacency in dealing with problems such as terrorism and the Covid-19 pandemic. Noting that important geo-strategic changes were taking place around the world, Modi said these would impact security, stability and growth, and Brics will play an important role in tackling these issues. Multilateralism is going through a crisis and questions are being raised about institutions since they haven't changed with time and are operating with outdated mindsets, he said. Besides the UN Security Council, reforms are needed in the WTO, IMF and WHO, he added. The Brics countries, with 42% of the global population, will play a key role in post-Covid-19 economic recovery and there is a lot of scope to increase mutual trade, Modi said. India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, which aims to make the country self-reliant and resilient, can be a force multiplier for the post-Covid-19 economy and make contributions to global supply chains, he added. Pointing to the call by India and South Africa for waiver of intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines, he sought support from the other members of Brics for this initiative. This was the second time in a week that Modi and President Xi Jinping were on the same virtual platform since the India-China border standoff emerged in the open in May. The theme for the Brics Summit is "Global stability, shared security and innovative growth" and its agenda included intra-Brics cooperation, key global issues such as reforming the multilateral system, measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, trade, health and energy.

SI Recruitment Exam On Nov

the examination was cancelled after fifteen minutes of its commencement due to question paper leak. An investigation by the Crime Investigation Department of Assam is underway. The recent SI recruitment exam scam of Assam Police has created an uproar in the state and in a recent development, the CID in its investigation has exposed how the question paper has been leaked by Kumar Sanjit Krishna, the Karimganj SP who has been transferred as SP of Barpeta FRRO immediately after he was summoned by CID. According to reports, the question paper was leaked on September 18 by opening the trunk of Kumar Sanjit Krishna. Krishna took out a question paper from his trunk and handed over to Rubul Hazarika, one of the partners of Akshay Telecommunication. Hazarika took a photo of the question paper and forwarded to the broker through WhatsApp. The entire team of PK Dutta, Diban Deka and the brokers conducted the examination on September 19 with the question paper leaked by Sanjit Krishna before the actual date commencement of the exam on September 20. The entire process of question paper leakage was preplanned and the outcome has been given by Rubul Hazarika, former DIG PK Dutta, Pranjal Baruah, Saroj Sarma.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar gets

Minister designates and BJP leaders Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi. JD(U) ministers included Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Ashok Choudhary, Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Mewa Lal Chaudhary and Sheela Kumari Mandal. Other than the two Deputy CM designates, the other BJP leaders who took oath as ministers on Monday were Mangal Pandey, Amarendra Pratap Singh, Rampriy Paswan, Jibesh Kumar and Ram Surat Rai. HAM MLC Santosh Kumar Suman and Mukesh Sahni, the founder of VIP, also took oath as ministers along with Nitish Kumar. CM Nitish Kumar on Tuesday allocated portfolios to the new ministers. Here is the full list: Chief Minister Nitish Kumar - Home, General Administration, Cabinet, Vigilance, election and all other departments which are not distributed to any minister Tarkishore Prasad Singh - Finance, Commercial taxes, Environment and forest, Information Technology, Disaster Management, Urban Development, Renu Devi - Panchayati Raj, Backward caste upliftment and EBC welfare, Industry, Vijay Chaudhary - Rural Engineering Department, Rural Development Department, Water Resources, Information and Broadcasting, Parliamentary Affairs, Bijendra Yadav - Energy, Prohibition, Planning, Food and Consumer Affairs, Mewa Lal Choudhary - Education, Sheela Kumari - Transport, Santos Manjhi - Minor Irrigation, SC/ST welfare, Mukesh Sahni - Animal Husbandry and Fishery, Mangal Pandey - Health, Road and Art and culture, Amarendra Singh - Agriculture, Cooperative, Ram Preet Paswan - PHED, Jivesh Kumar - Tourism, Labour, Mines, Ram Surat - Revenue, Law

Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa

this time from the Pramod Boro-led UPPL and the BJP. Though the BPF with its 12 MLAs shares power with the BJP in the state government, there is no alliance between these parties for the BPF election. Taking on BPF chief Hagrama Mahilary, the BJP star campaigner Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The BPF chief has been selling sour mangoes for 15 years now. How long does he intend to sell the same thing? How long do you want to eat sour mangoes? It is time to taste the sweet mangoes and pack him off. There has been misrule during their (BPF) 15 year tenure and the people of BTC now deserve a better political party that will implement all the state and central schemes without embezzling the public money."

Construction Of 18-Km Long

crore four-lane road bridge across river Brahmaputra from Dhubri to Phulbari on NH 127 B," the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL) official said. The project is being financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The proposed around 18 km bridge, which is considered as strategic, will connect Assam and Meghalaya, reducing the detouring road distance by about 203 km from Dhubri to Phulbari, which lie on the either side of the Brahmaputra before it flows into Bangladesh. With increased government emphasis on infrastructure development in border areas after the escalation in tension with the country's largest neighbour, sales of construction equipment to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has increased 50% in the first half of the ongoing fiscal year. India has redoubled efforts, after the latest tensions, to develop key infrastructure. The standoff along the border with China this year has had an unexpected spin-off for India's construction equipment industry. With increased government emphasis on infrastructure development in border areas after the escalation in tension with the country's largest neighbour, sales of construction equipment to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has increased 50% in the first half of the ongoing fiscal year. Overall sales of construction equipment in the local market declined 35% in the six months ended September 30. Sales had fallen as much as 60% in the first quarter, before recording a smart recovery in the following three months, boosted by government spending on infrastructure projects. Indian Construction Equipment Manufacturers' Association president Sandeep Singh confirmed there had been an increase in government spending on the purchase of construction equipment for infrastructure development in border areas. "There has certainly been an increase in road construction in border states the past few months, leading to a rise in demand for construction equipment," said Singh. Singh — who is also the managing director at construction machinery manufacturer Tata Hitachi — said his firm had supplied 94 excavators to the BRO. While the order was originally placed last year, Tata Hitachi worked through the lockdown to deliver the equipment ahead of deadline due to the increased infrastructure development activities along the border. India has redoubled efforts, after the latest tensions, to develop key infrastructure — roads, tunnels, bridges and airfields — along the unsettled 3,500 km border with China. The Centre had identified 73 "strategic roads" (totalling 3,812 km) along the China border, 28 of which were made operational, 33 are under construction and the work on remaining is in initial stages. The BRO has been entrusted with 61 of these roads totalling 3,417.50 km. Defence minister Rajnath Singh had told Parliament in September that the government has doubled the budget for infrastructure development along the border with China. JCB India deputy chief executive Deepak Shetty said: "We work very closely with the BRO. Even during the lockdown, through our digital platform, we were able to connect with and support our customers working in remotest parts of the country ... While we cannot share details on the exact quantum, orders this year have been multipronged for backhoe loaders, excavator and wheeled loaders ... This gives an indication that large projects are underway." Overall, Shetty said, the government's renewed push on infrastructure development had made the company cautiously optimistic. "While we saw green shoots last quarter, we still need to be cautious because of the pandemic. However, the measures that the government has taken to increase investments in infrastructure projects should help sustain the momentum and return the industry on the growth path next fiscal year." Last quarter's recovery in sales was the first in four quarters. Even as total sales volumes are set to decline by 8-10% to 65,000-70,000 units in the ongoing fiscal year, because of the impact in the first quarter, the growth momentum from the second quarter is expected to continue. In 2021-22, the industry expects to regain the peak sales of 95,000 units, registered in FY19.

North Lakhimpur Press Club demands proper inquiry of crimes against journalists

Panigaon, November 17: The North Lakhimpur Press Club (NLPC) today vehemently protested against the murder of Parag Bhuyan, the Kakopather-based correspondent of Pratidin Time, and the brutal torture upon Milan Mahanta, the Mirza-based correspondent of Asomiya Pratidin in a protest meeting held in the club. Organised by the club, the protest meeting unanimously accepted several important resolutions on the both incidents. They are—(1) Demanding proper punishment to the guilty persons by identifying them who are related to the mysterious murder of Parag Bhuyan, (2) Giving exemplary punishment to the criminals related to the torturing incident of Milan Mahanta, (3) A memorandum will be submitted to the Chief Minister through the Deputy Commissioner, demanding proper punishment of the criminals, (4) Abstain from attending in all the Government programs and sending Government news until the arrest of the criminals related to the torturing incident of Milan Mahanta, and, (5) The members of North Lakhimpur Press Club will wear black-badge on November 17 in order to protest against this torturing incident. Today's the protest meeting was chaired by the NLPC executive president Kumud Baruah. The objective was explained by the NLPC secretary Karuna Krishna Nath.

Baijayant Jay Panda Appointed BJP Assam In-Charge

Guwahati, November 17: Baijayant Jay Panda has been appointed the Assam in-charge of BJP for the upcoming elections in April 2021. Panda, a media mogul, was with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and was the right hand man of Nabeen Patnaik before fell out and joined the BJP on March 2019 as the national vice president and spokesperson for the party. His political career is believed to be identical to that of Assam cabinet minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Additionally, he was a member of parliament in the Rajya Sabha for two terms from 2000 to 2009.

KADCC urge Assam Govt. to step in on Assam Nagaland Inter-State Border issue



DIPHU, November 17: "Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) has submitted memorandum in favour to Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner regarding the burning issue on Daldali Reserved Forest under Karbi Anglong in Assam Nagaland Inter-State Border," informed KADCC Vice President Raton Engti on an Press Conference at its own office on Tuesday. From the day one after the formation of Study Team by KADCC, in order to take stock of the ground report on the problem of encroachers inside the Daldali Reserved Forest have apprised the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Assam Government to intervene into the matter and find the permanent solution to get freed from the hands of encroacher. The Study Team visited in the bordering area of Nagaland inside Daldali Reserve Forest on 11-09-2020. During the visit it was found that the massive act of encroachers in Daldal Reserved Forest of Karbi Anglong, Assam and it is found to be a threat for the environment as well as the wild life. The most dangerous and the part of the issue is that the encroachers illegally claim the major areas of the Daldal reserved forest as the land of Nagaland, who dare to construct roads, buildings, boundary walls and graveyards inside the reserved forest continuously. So, in order to save the land of Assam, KADCC urged upon the intervention and to take necessary action by the Govt. of Assam as mentioned in the memorandum. In the Press Conference WKADCC President Sarthe Kramsa, KADCC Vice President Ratul Teron and KADCC Secretary Dr. Mongve Rongpi were also attended.

NPS wins 3rd Prize for 'Best School' in National Water Awards 2019



Guwahati, Nov 17: NPS International School has received the 3rd Prize for Best School Category for innovation in water conservation in the prestigious National Water Awards 2019 held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, conducted by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India. The school will receive Rs 1 lakh, a Trophy and Citation from the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India for this amazing achievement. The National Awards were virtually held on 11th and 12th of November 2020. The inaugural speech of the award ceremony was delivered by Honourable Vice President of India, Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu. Other dignitaries present in the ceremony were Mr. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister for Jal Shakti, Government of India, Mr. Ratan Lal Kataria, Minister of State for Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, Mr. U.P. Singh, Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, Mr. Rajeev Ranjan Mishra, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga and Mr. Anil Joshi, Environmentalist (Padma Bhushan). NPS International School received this award for innovative work done in the realm of water conservation in the school. Assam is a state where we have ample rainfall but we still have drinking water problem. To solve this ever rising problem we thought of coming up with a Ground Water Recharge Plant in the school. Conservation of water is integral to our society and thus we developed a project of Ground Water Recharge Plant in the school premises. The installation of the ground water recharge plant in the school premises is an example which can be replicated by other entities or institutions that are facing water scarcity or are likely to face water scarcity in the near future. The tangible benefits of our project are that we can make it as a project that can be showcased to other schools in our vicinity and they can get inspired by the kind of work done by our students. The whole concept is a brainchild of our Founder Director Mr. J.N. Das, who has always yearned to set examples for others to follow. Such projects also enhances goodwill among the parents, who are now witnessing their wards in getting involved with social projects like these which will help the children to become more confident and independent when they pass out of school. We believe this project will act as a motivator for many other schools in our city and state. Receiving the award virtually, Mr. Das said, "I would like to thank the Jal Shakti Ministry for awarding the 3rd prize in the Best School category. This award is a very sweet gesture for our students who have wholeheartedly worked for this project. We will continue to work to encourage and motivate our students as they are our future water warriors." Two other schools who got the award are Indira Gandhi Government High School Katterikuppam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and SPS Government Senior Secondary School (Boys) Gill, Ludhiana, Punjab. A total of 98 winners were selected in 17 different categories - Best State, Best District, Best Aspirational District, Best Water Warrior, Best Water Regulatory Authority, Best Water User Association, Best Panchayat, Best NGO for Water Conservation, Best Research/ Innovation/ Adaptation of New Technology for Water Conservation, Best Education/ Mass Awareness efforts, Best Urban Local Body, Best Newspaper, Best TV show for promoting Water Conservation, Best School, Best Industry for Industrial Water Conservation, Best Institution/ RWA/ Religious Organisation for Successful Campus Usage and Best Industry for CSR Activity.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL (A)

KAAC :: SECRETARIAT

DIPHU 782460

No. KAAC/G-Esst/P(A)/2019-20/423(Pt. IV)/12(A)

Date, 17/11/2020

NOTICE

The Written Examination for the post Forest Guard shall be held on 29/11/2020 From 10.00 AM to 1.00 PM at the flowing venues as indicated below:

1. Govt. Boyes' Higher Secondary School, Diphu
2. Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Diphu
3. D. A. V. Higher Sraindary School, Diphu
4. Rongbonghom Higher Secondary School, Diphu
5. Chandrasing Teron High School Diphu
6. Binapani Higher Secondary School, Diphu

In Mm connection, the application who have applied for the posts of Forest Guard are requested to collect their calling letter from the office of the Personnel (A) Department. KAAC Diphu w.e.f. 18/11/2020 during the office hours.

Further, all the candidates who have applied for the post of Forest Guard ate requested to report at the Examination centre at 9:30 AM sharp on the stipulated date.

Sd/-
Joint Secretary
Personnel "A" Department,
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.
DIPHU

Memo No. KAAC/G-Esst/P(A)/2019-20/423(Pt. IV)/12(A).

Dtd. 17/11/2020

Sports Ministry sanctions Rs 10 lakh for ailing hockey Olympian MP Singh's treatment



New Delhi, November 17 : The Sports Ministry on Monday disbursed Rs 10 lakh for the treatment of hockey Olympian Mohinder Pal Singh, who is suffering from a chronic kidney ailment and is currently on dialysis. The money, sanctioned under the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons, was given to his wife Shivjeet Singh. Speaking about the decision to extend financial support to Singh, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said, "MP Singh ji has contributed richly to hockey both as a player and a coach. His physical condition is a matter of great concern for all of us." Kidney treatment is an expensive treatment and we wanted to extend as much financial support as we could. "I have also spoken to Mahesh Sharma ji, who is the Member of Parliament of Noida where MP Singh ji lives and a letter has also been sent from his office to PM Relief Fund so that the hospital bills can be paid through the fund." Recently, the Sports Minister met Shivjeet Singh and several other veteran hockey players to assure them of assistance from the Ministry. MP Singh, who also served as the coach of the Indian hockey team, was an outstanding player who represented the country at various international events, including the 1988 Summer Olympics.

'Nobody has ever done that to me': Kell Brook well beaten by Terence Crawford



Paris, November 17 : Terence Crawford started slow and finished fast, stopping Kell Brook with a barrage of punches in the fourth round Saturday night to retain his welterweight title in Las Vegas. Crawford remained unbeaten and kept his place on the pound-for-pound best list with an impressive stoppage of the British fighter, who fought well for three rounds before succumbing to Crawford's power. Crawford turned the fight around with a big right hand that sent Brook into the ropes and prompted the referee, Tony Weeks, to give him an eight-count. When the fight resumed, he landed half a dozen punches to the head before Weeks waved the fight to a close at 1:14 of the fourth round. "Kell is a tremendous talent, I can't take nothing away from him," Crawford said. "But he lost to a better man tonight." Brook said he thought he was controlling the fight when he got hit with the punch that sent him across the ring. "Never in my career, nobody has ever done that to me, not even in sparring," Brook said. Crawford, who scored his 28th knockout in running his record to 37-0, took his time in the opening rounds to figure out Brook, who used his jab and speed to win early rounds. After switching from an orthodox stance to southpaw he began landing at a better pace before unleashing a right hook early in the fourth round that sent Brook (39-3) staggering across the ring. The British challenger was held upright by the ropes but when the fight resumed, he was unable to defend himself as Crawford landed a flurry of punches before Weeks stopped the bout. Fight statistics showed Crawford landing

Australia captain Tim Paine in isolation amid Adelaide Covid outbreak

London, November 17 : The Australian cricket fraternity is pledging to do everything possible to keep playing as a fresh coronavirus outbreak casts a shadow on the first Test and forces Tim Paine and his Tasmania teammates to self-isolate. It follows news the national team will perform a barefoot circle ceremony before each series this summer in support of the global anti-racism movement and to recognise the country's Indigenous people. A cluster of Covid-19 cases in Adelaide - the venue of the series-opener between Australia and India - has prompted other states to close their borders with South Australia. The governments of Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have announced border closures with Queensland to impose a 14-day hotel quarantine on all visitors from Adelaide from 11.59pm on Monday. Victoria declared SA a hotspot but opted against shutting the border. Adelaide is scheduled to host the series-opening Test from 17 December. The city is then due to be a base for some Big Bash League franchises for a block of games starting on 28 December. The Sheffield Shield hub in Adelaide wrapped up last Wednesday but domestic players have still been affected by the SA outbreak. Paine



and Tasmania teammates have been told to self-isolate at home, as per that state's current health advisory for travellers who have returned from SA since 9 November. Cricket Australia is monitoring the situation, while former Australia coach and current Brisbane Heat boss Darren Lehmann said cricketers will make every effort to keep the summer schedule rolling. "All players in the AFL, the NRL, made it work and their staff and families did," Lehmann said on Monday. "So I can't see that being different in cricket, making it happen for the good of the game." SA announced the new Covid-19 cluster on Sunday, with the number of cases quickly growing to 17 on Monday. "First and foremost, we hope that they get to the bottom of that in South Australia and they contain that really well and then we can move forward to the hubs,

whatever that may look like," Lehmann said. "You have just got to be flexible. That's the 2020 model, the way everyone has been able to move quite quickly on the hop." Like other sports, cricket would be guided by advice from health officials, Lehmann said. "Fingers crossed that is only a small cluster and they get on top of that, because the health and wellbeing of people is paramount," he said. "But the game itself, Cricket Australia - the AFL did a great job, the NRL did a great job - and I'm sure CA will do a really good job of managing through those processes because it is a logistical nightmare." We have just seen it work in Adelaide with the Shield so I can't see a problem with the BBL happening as well." Meanwhile, fast bowler Pat Cummins says Australia's players will stand in a circle with bare feet ahead of the one-day international series-opener against India in Sydney on 27 November. It will be the first time they have made the gesture. "In Australia, we think the most, I guess, marginalised group is the first nations people and the Indigenous peoples," Cummins, vice-captain of Australia's test and one-day teams, said in a video call. "And we think the barefoot circle's a great way to celebrate them." Some

people might want to take the knee, some people might want to show it in different ways and absolutely we're all for that. But we've kind of come together as a team and think this is the best way we can demonstrate anti-racism as well as celebrating the Indigenous culture here." The Australian men are following the lead of the national women's team who formed a barefoot circle with New Zealand players in Brisbane ahead of the limited overs series in September. Last month, five Indigenous players and eight team captains in the professional Women's Big Bash League made the gesture to "connect to country and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land", governing body Cricket Australia said. Australian cricket has grappled with how to support the anti-racism movement since the country's one-day team was publicly criticised by former West Indies bowler Michael Holding for not taking a knee during the limited overs series in England in September. Cummins said Australia's players would also try to "do a lot of work" learning the country's history. "You could probably put our hands up and say we haven't done enough in the past and we want to get better," he said. "So this is one small thing we're going to introduce this summer."

Australia Cricketers To Make "Barefoot Circle" Anti-Racism Gesture In India Series



Melbourne, November 17 : The Australian men's cricket team will form a "barefoot circle" before the upcoming series against India to demonstrate opposition to racism and celebrate Aboriginal culture, vice-captain Pat Cummins said Monday. Cummins said the decision came after discussions within the team, which was criticised by West Indies great Michael Holding for not taking a knee during a tour of England in September. The practice of gathering barefoot on the pitch before a series was introduced by the Australian women's team this year at the urging of all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner, who has Aboriginal heritage. Pat Cummins said the men's team would introduce it for the India tour, which gets under way on November 27, and make it a regular pre-match ritual at the start of a series. "We think it's really important to do our bit and we've decided to do the barefoot circle," he told reporters in a conference call. "Not only as a sport, but we as people are abso-

lutely against racism." I think we could probably put our hands up and say we haven't done enough in the past and we want to get better, so this is one small thing we're going to introduce this summer." The act of placing a knee on the ground was made famous by former American NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who first did so in 2016 to protest police brutality against Black people and other minorities. Cummins said Australia's cricketers instead chose the barefoot circle because of its nod to Aboriginal culture. "In Australia, we think the most marginalised group is the First Nations people, the indigenous people," he said. "We think the barefoot circle is a great way to celebrate them. Some people might want to take the knee and show it (support) in different ways, we're absolutely all for that." Australia coach Justin Langer was stung by Holding's criticism and said at the time that his team wanted to send a "sustained and powerful" message against racism.

'This is something I've had inside of me for years'

London, November 17 : Twenty minutes into our interview, Michael Holding starts to cry. He is in the middle of a story about a holiday he took with his mother when he was a little boy. His mother's skin was brown, his father's was black. Her family had objected to that and cut her off when she married. "We went on a trip to New York and we were staying with one of our aunts in Rochester. We were upstairs and she got up in the morning and looked through the window and she saw a black girl and a white girl playing together in another backyard, having great fun, and she pointed them out to me and she said: 'Look at that, we have hope.' That was 50 years ago." Holding turns away from the screen and puts his fingers to the bridge of his nose. "I'm sorry. I'm getting emotional thinking about it now." The 66-year-old Holding says he is "a very private person", but he has laid himself bare this year. In July, he opened Sky's coverage of England's Test series against West Indies with a

powerful monologue about the Black Lives Matter movement. The next day he broke down on Sky News while talking about his own experiences of racism. The clips went viral. They reached an audience who had no interest in cricket, no idea who he was. He has become a patron of the MCC Foundation, but he is not really interested in talking about sport. His thoughts are bigger than that. "I know people keep on talking about what's going on in different games. I don't concentrate too much on that. I think more about society. Because it's society that needs fixing, not the individual sports. If society never changes it doesn't matter what sport does. All sport can do is help show the way, it can't solve the problem." The foundation is working to open up access to the game in the UK, funding a network of 55 cricket hubs, and around the world, in South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, where it has been building nets, training coaches and providing kit to local

players. During lockdown, when cricket was suspended, the foundation was repurposed while the MCC went into a partnership with Westminster council to fund a project to feed homeless and vulnerable residents in the local community. Their money paid for more than 27,000 meals. "I've seen and heard of the things the MCC are doing, not talking about, but doing," Holding says. "And I'm very happy to be involved, because they're absolutely brilliant. But this is a much bigger problem and it's not going to be a simple thing to fix." Holding believes the answer is in educating people. Including the prime minister. "I heard Boris Johnson say you can't edit history. Well history has already been edited. What we need is the real history, the entire history, what we have is the edited history,



and it was edited to suit one race." The MCC is confronting its own past. This summer it removed two portraits of its first honorary secretary, Benjamin Aislabie, who owned slaves in Antigua and Dominica. "We have to start somewhere, but all this is just scratching the surface. I don't want people to sit back and think: 'OK, now this is happening everything is fine.' That's why I was so upset when the players stopped taking a knee. Because this has not ended yet." Holding isn't on social media, and doesn't pay much attention to the people who have pushed back against the protests.

RCB clarifies after Virat Kohli gets trolled for his Diwali message



New Delhi, November 17 : After Virat Kohli's message urging people to celebrate Diwali without crackers faced social media trolling, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) issued a clarification over the same stating that visuals were used from archival footage of UAE's Flag Day celebration on November 3. RCB also cleared their stance on keeping the environment clean and safe. "Hope you are all enjoying a happy and peaceful Diwali with family and friends. To clarify, the fireworks shown in RCB's recent celebratory video was archival footage of UAE's Flag Day celebrations. RCB continues to work hard to protect the environment like we've over the years," the tweet read. Hope you are all enjoying a happy and peaceful Diwali with family and friends.?? To clarify, the fireworks shown in RCB's recent celebratory video was archival footage of UAE's Flag Day celebrations. RCB continues to work hard to protect the environment like we've over the years. Earlier, Kohli had given a message to his fans and followers asking them to enjoy the festival of lights with a diya and family. "Please remember do not burst crackers to protect the environment and have fun at home with your loved ones with a simple diya and sweets on this auspicious occasion," Kohli had said in this message. Gearing up for a gruelling tour of Australia, the Indian team on Saturday began outdoor training with a light session after the entire contingent tested negative for COVID-19. The Test series will begin with a Day-Night game at Adelaide from December 17. Skipper Virat Kohli will miss the last three matches as he will be on a paternity leave during that time.

Jos Buttler says openness is key to overcoming life in the tour bubble

London, November 17 : Jos Buttler urged any teammates struggling with bubble life this winter to speak up as the England squad gathered for their overnight departure for South Africa on Monday. A 25-day trip that comprises three Twenty20s and three ODIs might not appear taxing on paper but it is England's first away tour since the Covid-19 pandemic struck and begins a winter of up to four assignments that will be spent solely in the confines of hotels and cricket grounds. "We won't get to fully enjoy South Africa as we usually would but I think everyone has become accustomed to what it's going to be like," said Buttler, England's white-ball vice-captain, before the team's charter flight to Cape Town. "If you're feeling under pressure or not quite yourself, the key is to have the confidence to open up and talk about it. We all go through it at different stages, where you feel a bit homesick or claustrophobic when you can't get out and about, like you'd usually like to. We just want to make sure everyone is aware of that." Buttler is one of 11 players in the 23-strong touring party to have gone straight from a similarly restricted English summer to the recent Indian Premier League in the United Arab Emirates. His family could at least join for the latter, while the fact its hotels were not on site at the grounds also helped create some distance. "It's just the restrictions on your freedom," said Buttler. "I certainly found it was tougher to escape staying at hotels on the grounds in England. They were high pressure matches and when you've put a lot into the game, it's nice to get away." Looking out the window and still being on the ground makes it tougher to have your differentials between the game and your relaxation and recovery time. I found it easier in the IPL staying at a hotel away from the ground. There was a clear separation between the two which is great. "While arrangements for trips to Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India in the new year are yet to be formalised, this tour offers an escape similar to that of the IPL."

Why Formula One star Lewis Hamilton matters

London, November 17 : Lewis Hamilton equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven titles in Formula One to enter the pantheon of greats on Sunday. Hamilton matches up, and in some cases, even exceeds Schumacher in terms of achievements on the track. But if there is one arena where Hamilton has no competition, it is the work he has done in terms of political engagement in a sport that has rarely engaged with life outside of its bubble of races, engineers, mechanics, machines and brand building. Formula One is a sport that has historically favoured teams and drivers with the deepest pockets. The economics of the sport allow for only a select few to enter it. Before he began his dominance in the sport, Lewis Hamilton's identity among a larger public audience was that of being the first ever black race car driver in Formula One. Hamilton, who came from a poor British family and whose parents had to truly struggle for his career in racing to become a reality, is the biggest anomaly in the way Formula One has always been run. It is therefore no surprise

that the man who has practically no business being around the sport, has been its biggest campaigner for bringing about diversity in the sport. Hamilton's call for diversity over the years hasn't just been about there being more race car drivers of different ethnicity. In an interview once, Hamilton said, "There really is the most minimal diversity within this sport and I really want to be a part of shifting that, working in cooperation with Formula One and the FIA. I don't know why there's not enough university students, engineers, mechanics and even media coming through from more diverse backgrounds." The response to his call for action was perfunctory at best. Formula One boss Corey Chase promised to open up newer avenues for drivers of colour to enter the sport. But the overall message of hiring people of colour was lost among the noise. That was until Hamilton this year ramped up his efforts to bring about changes in F1 as the Black Lives Matters movement grew. One of the most

recognisable sports stars in the world and the greatest driver in the sport (in terms of number of wins) only



Black Lives Matter T-shirt and took a knee - he also got other drivers to join - but also got his German team, Mercedes, to join the campaign. The success that both Mercedes and Hamilton provided each other helped the Black Lives Matter movement gain vis-

ibility in Formula One. And with Mercedes not wanting to let go of their prize driver to other teams, made them more ready to go with the changes that the Brit was wanting the team to implement. It led to Mercedes racing in 2020 with an all-black livery instead of their customary silver, in a bid to align themselves with the Black Lives Matter movement. For a team with cars painted silver and black for decades and known as the 'Silver Arrows', going all-Black, including racing suits and uniforms for the mechanics and engineers, was a significant step. "We will not shy away from our weaknesses in this area, nor from the progress we must still make; our livery is our public pledge to take positive action. We intend to find and attract the very best talents from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, and to create credible pathways for them to reach our sport, in order to build a stronger and more diverse team in the future," said Mercedes boss Toto Wolff earlier in the year, reiterating the team's backing of

Hamilton's political stand. As he continued to wear BLM t-shirts, helmets and took a knee as a sign of protest, Mercedes continued to back him. Despite his team backing his stance on being vocal about the Black Lives Matters movement, the response from F1's stakeholders was not as enthusiastic. Hamilton criticised F1's response to BLM by saying that it was too rushed and that the organisation was not looking to make any actual, structural change. "We've said things and there's been statements released and we've made gestures such as kneeling but we've not changed anything," Hamilton said according to a BBC report. "Except for perhaps some of our awareness." This made clear when Hamilton continued to wear BLM t-shirts and talk about the movement even after the season opener in Austria, though F1 gave the impression that it was to be a one-time perfunctory show of support. Formula One had allocated time before the season opener for drivers to show support for the anti-racism movement but did not do the same for the second and third rounds.

Diego Maradona leaves hospital 8 days after brain surgery



London, November 17 : Diego Maradona was released from a Buenos Aires hospital on Wednesday, just over a week after undergoing brain surgery, and will continue his recovery in a private home. Footage broadcast by local TV stations showed the former World Cup winner leaving the Olivos clinic in an ambulance. Maradona's doctor, Leopoldo Luque, told journalists that he had authorized the release. Maradona's lawyer, Matias Morla, said the 60-year-old Argentine will continue to receive treatment for alcohol dependency. He is expected to stay in a house near his older daughters. The 1986 World Cup champion last week had an emergency operation for a subdural hematoma, which is an accumulation of blood between a membrane and his brain. Maradona's personal doctor, neurologist Leopoldo Luque, said Tuesday that even small amounts of alcohol consumption could have negative effects in combination with the medication Maradona needs for his recovery. The former Boca Juniors, Barcelona and Napoli star has had addiction problems in the past. Morla said the surgery may have been Maradona's "toughest moment." "It could have taken his life," the lawyer said. "What he misses now is the union of his family, being surrounded by health professionals." Morla also called on friends and relatives of the former footballer to stop posting negative messages about each other on social media, saying the infighting is affecting the Argentine great. "The situation here is clear: being at peace with the relatives," Morla said. "They have to respect each other, coordinate the visits among themselves because in this case Diego has to recover. ... One has to give him peace and give him unity." Maradona was initially admitted to another clinic in La Plata with signs of depression, anemia and dehydration, before being moved to Olivos when the subdural hematoma was discovered. Dr. Luque said an accident likely caused the subdural hematoma but that Maradona did not recall any falls or mishaps. Maradona felt ill Oct. 30 while coaching first-division team Gimnasia y Esgrima. He had left before the end of the first half, raising questions about his health.

Daniil Medvedev wins with underarm serve at ATP Finals



London, November 17 : Daniil Medvedev pulled off an underarm serve as he outlasted Alexander Zverev and joined Novak Djokovic as a winner at the ATP Finals on day two Monday. Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4, while Djokovic cruised past Finals debutant Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-2 in an empty O2 Arena. Djokovic and Medvedev meet on Wednesday to secure the group lead. Medvedev led 4-3, 30-30 in the second set when he surprised Zverev with a quick underarm serve. It brought the German to the net and he lost the point when his backhand block volley flew long. "My wide serve was not working as well as I would like and he was returning good," Medvedev said. "I see that he was five meters behind the baseline and I have the ball close to my racket, so I thought, 'Go for it.'" It actually worked. It's also smart. "Two games later, he served a love game to earn his first win at the ATP Finals in his fourth match going back to last year. Medvedev went 0-3 in his first Finals, including a loss to Zverev which he avenged after an attritional opening set. Zverev, the 2018 champion, earned a break in the first game but gave it straight back with three double faults. Another double fault by Zverev in the sixth game gave Medvedev a 4-2 lead, and the Russian finished the set with his first ace. A weak forehand into the net cost Zverev the decisive break at 3-3 in the second. Medvedev held with the underarm serve, and he beat

Zverev again eight days after winning their Paris Masters final. "This was one of the most (intense matches) I had in my career," Medvedev said. The top-ranked Djokovic smothered Schwartzman after conceding an early break and, despite no fans inside the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena, he gestured to each section as if to say thanks. "Why I celebrated? Because that's my celebration and that's also my gratitude to the court and to this opportunity to be able to compete," the Serb said. "Even though there was no crowd in the stands, I know that there was a lot of people watching it on TV, so that was me sharing that emotion with them." Djokovic hasn't lost an opening ATP Finals match since 2007 against David Ferrer. He also has never lost to Schwartzman in six matches. "It felt like a practice session in a way," Djokovic said of playing in the empty stadium. "This has been one of the most exciting arenas to play for a tennis player. The atmosphere was always electric and the crowd was always loud and really into matches." He has won the elite, season-ending event five times - one short of Roger Federer's record. Schwartzman qualified for his first ATP Finals by reaching the French Open semifinals and two finals, including at the Italian Open, where he lost to Djokovic. "That start of the match he was not playing his best," Schwartzman said. "I took the chance at the beginning, but then that break back from him ... I did too many mistakes." Schwartzman is the first South American to play singles at the ATP Finals since 2013 and another Argentine, Juan Martin del Potro. The ATP Finals move to Turin, Italy, next year, after 12 years in London. The players' hotel is a short walk away, but health protocols require they are driven to and from the venue. The tournament is using electronic line calling for the first time.

Uruguay's Luis Suarez and Rodrigo Munoz test positive for virus

London, November 17 : Luis Suárez and goalkeeper Rodrigo Muñoz have tested positive for the coronavirus, the Uruguayan Football Association said on Monday. They and national team staffer Matías Faral, also infected, will miss Uruguay's home match against Brazil on Tuesday in South American World Cup qualifying. "All three mentioned are in good healthy state and have already implemented the measures needed for the case," the Uru-

guayan FA said on social media. Besides missing Suárez and Muñoz, Uruguay is already without goalkeeper Martín Silva, defenders Sebastián Coates and Matías Viña, midfielder Federico Valverde, and striker Maxi Gómez for the match against Brazil. Viña was also infected with COVID-19. Suárez will miss not only the Brazil game, but also Saturday's Spanish league match between Atlético Madrid and his former club Barcelona.

Women's Super League

Talking points from the weekend's action

London, November 17 : Following on from last season's success, the WSL used the men's international weekend to schedule three huge games, and were rewarded with a scintillating set of high-level thrillers. In the UK, 250,000 people watched the Manchester derby, and I'm excited to see the figures for the US - rights have been bought by NBC. To the football itself, and what a game! Though United are in just their third season, the rivalry is already deep, with tackles flying in and badges being kissed. In the first half both teams pressed high, which suited City's one-touch, pass-and-move style, and they were good value for their 2-0 half-time lead. So Casey Stoney ordered her team to sit off and mark tight, forcing City to take more touches on the ball. Then, the second Tobin Heath felt the player in possession panic, starved of passing options, she triggered the press and United hunted the turnover. Stoney also



replaced Jess Sigworth with Kirsty Hanson, asking her to stay high up the pitch after watching Sigworth spend the first half tracking Demi Stokes, City's left-back. This pushed Stokes back while on the other flank Heath won her epic battle with Lucy Bronze, scoring a spectacular equaliser. Last season United were hard to beat, losing 1-0 to Arsenal, Chelsea and City, but they now have the attacking flair which elevates them from Champions League possibles to champi-

onship contenders. City also take a lot of credit - their first-half display was outstanding, and probably the best they've played this season. But they struggled as soon as United stopped playing into their hands, and Gareth Taylor was far too slow to recognise what was happening. This was another game of exceptional quality. Under Joe Montemurro Arsenal play 4-3-3 and look to dominate their opposition, but on Sunday he switched to 4-2-3-1, asking his players to trust the

gameplan and stay patient, essentially looking to do to Chelsea what Manchester United did to his team. So Arsenal sat narrow and deep, working their asses off to win the 10-yard sprints to loose balls before springing into attack - usually from a turnover, with Jill Roord and Kim Little suffocating Chelsea before pinging balls out to Vivianne Miedema down the left. Though the approach nearly worked, it's hard not to wonder whether they have the squad-depth to sustain a challenge on all fronts - a recurring theme over the last few years. Chelsea were really good in the first half, Ji So-yun in particular. They too needed to stay patient, unable to play their usual game of drawing teams in then spreading play wide, and sneaking a point after going behind with four minutes left will have left them on a high - though they should have stolen all three, except Sam Kerr hooked wide with only the keeper to beat.

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