



The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Main Dome Of Kamakhya Temple

Guwahati, November 19: The gold plated main dome of Kamakhya Temple was unveiled by the temple authorities on Thursday. The dome was unveiled by conducting a small ceremony inside the temple premises in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The three pitchers on the dome have been plated in gold which was donated by the Reliance Industries Group. The Reliance Group donated 20 kgs of gold to give the dome a new look. "No new construction of the temple's main dome has been done. Only gold plating of the existing stone pitchers has taken place," said Mohit Chandra Sarma, Bor Doloi of the temple. Engineers and artisans sent by RIL have carried out the gold plating work in the temple.

Artists Detained For Painting

Guwahati, November 19: While painting a graffiti of peasant leader Akhil Gogoi few artists were detained by Basistha Police in Guwahati on Thursday morning. The graffiti was made on the walls of the flyover near Games Village. Speculations are made that the graffiti was made by student artists from different colleges or varsities and represent Anga Art Collective. The graffiti was created to protest for Akhil Gogoi's release. Gogoi has been in judicial custody since December 2019 for allegedly inciting violence during the Anti-CAB/CAA protests in Assam.

Pink Buses To Come Up In 2021

Guwahati, November 19: The Assam State Transport Corporation will launch pink buses exclusively for female commuters and elderly persons in Guwahati. The buses that would be called 'Brahman Sarathi' will be launched at the beginning of 2021. 15 buses will be allocated initially in the capital city.

Sonowal inaugurates World Heritage Week in Sivasagar

Historical monuments are symbols of art, culture and people : CM



Guwahati, November 19: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said that historical monuments and antiquities are the symbols of art, culture and people of a state. Left by the ancestors, all have a duty towards protection and preservation of the historical monuments. Assam government has

taken sequel of steps for the preservation of its historical monuments of the state for projecting Assam as one of the leading states in the world in the field of historical monuments. Inaugurating the World Heritage Week 2020 at Sivasagar today, Chief Minister Sonowal said that

the Central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earmarked Sivasagar as one of the five iconic sites in the country and therefore, taken several steps for the protection, preservation and beautification of the historical monuments of the district. He at the same time said,

"Built by our forefathers, State government is committed to promote the state and the rare monuments". He, therefore, called upon everybody to share collective responsibility to project the monuments and antiquities of the state before the world community. Chief Minister Sonowal also said that the Directorate of Archaeology has taken positive steps to preserve the lineage of the 42 Ahom Kings as well as other monuments **Contd...Page 6**

Bihar Education Minister Mewalal Choudhary resigned three days after taking oath

Patna, November, 19: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's fourth term started with the resignation of a minister three days after he and his 14-member cabinet took oath. Education minister

questioned why he was inducted in the government. A criminal case was filed against the JD(U) MLA from Tarapur back in 2017 after allegations that he was involved in irregularities in the

pendent from the party for a while after jibes from the BJP, which was in the opposition at the time. The case was filed and investigations conducted against him after sanction from President Ram Nath Kovind, who was then the Governor of Bihar. No chargesheet has been filed against him yet. Pointing to that, Mr Choudhary had said filing of a case is no indication of guilt. "There are cases against so many legislators," he had said, adding that he had not included the matter in his election affidavit as "The probe is ongoing. Nothing has happened". Claiming he was the informer in the case and not the wrongdoer, he had **Contd...Page 6**



Mewalal Choudhary had to step down after the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal flagged a three-year-old corruption case against him and

appointments to posts of assistant professor and junior scientists as the vice-chancellor of Bhagalpur agriculture university. He was sus-

Fight between BJP & BPF is like husband-wife quarrel, divorce is unlikely, says MP Naba Sarania



Guwahati, November 19: Ahead of polls in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) polls, Kokrajhar Lok Sabha MP Naba Kumar Sarania today claimed that the war of words among the BJP, BPF, and UPPL parties is like a squabble between a

man and his wife, going on to claim that a "divorce" is very unlikely to occur. "The fights between the BJP, UPPL, and BPF are like quarrels between a man and his wife. It will never head to divorce as they have been together throughout. Himanta Biswa Sarma has been like the Chief Minister during the Tarun Gogoi and Sarbananda Sonowal regimes," Naba Sarania told mediapersons in Baksa district today. The MP also alleged that Biswa Sarma's recent war of words with BPF supreme Hagrama Mohilary is because of their intent to take the limelight away from his own party and its core

issues. "Himanta Biswa Sarma is trying to divert from the issues of the equal rights for the non-Bodos due to which the GSP has been formed. They are trying to take the limelight away from us. Whatever they are doing, they are doing with deep understanding," he said. Sarania today launched a massive bike rally by GSP workers that will see them take their message to the different parts of the region. "Our long journey and struggle for rights has brought us to this stage. Therefore, I thank all who have made sacrifices. I hope we will be able to form the Government. Our suc-

cess is crucial because a lot — be it about right, development — depends on it," Sarma said, flagging off the rally. Naba Sarania further declared that "security" and "land rights", especially for the non-Bodo community, are the main issues of the GSP party. He further exuded hope that his party would be able to win the requisite number of seats to form the Government in the BTC if the same people who turned out to vote for him in the General Elections, once again vote for his party during the BTC polls. It needs mention here that the Election Commission of Assam on Tuesday **Contd...Page 6**

CM extends greetings on Chhath Puja

Guwahati, November 19: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today extended greetings to the people of the state on the occasion of Chhath Puja. In a statement, the Chief Minister said that the celebration of

Chhath Puja would strengthen human values and promote harmony and camaraderie in the society. Worshipping the sun god with humility and devotion would bring peace, happiness and prosperity to all, he

added. He also said that since the festival is all about abstinence, purification and discipline, the observance of Chhath Puja would give strength and zeal to the society to overcome challenges like COVID19.

With eyes on active politics, AASU leaders to quit in Duliayan Convention

Duliayan, November 19: The 4-day Conference of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) will see a tectonic shift in Assam's largest student organization as its leaders are likely to cast off their Union robes in their pursuit for political aspirations. Around 8,000 Aasu delegates from Assam have reached Duliayan for the convention which is on the radar of political pundits as it is expected to give a final shape to the new regional party, Asom Jayita Parishad (AJP). In September, AASU and Asom

Jatityabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), another influential student body, had joined hands and announced formation of Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP). The party is expected to contest the upcoming polls in the State. The two regional student bodies had spearheaded the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act stir in the state opposing the Centre's move to grant citizenship to religious minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Another regional body, the Krishak Mukti **Contd...Page 6**



KMSS condemns "fascist Govt" for arresting artists who made activist's portrait

Jorhat, November 19: Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) leaders from Jorhat in Upper Assam today condemned the "fascist" BJP government after the arrest of its workers for the painting of a massive mural of its incarcerated leader Akhil Gogoi in Guwahati city earlier today. "They had made a portrait on a overbridge in Guwahati's **Contd...Page 6**



Big question mark over "dramatic" rift between BJP & BPF : Urkhao Gwra Brahma

Tangla, November 19: Former Rajya Sabha MP and United People's Front Liberal (UPPL) leader Urkhao Gwra Brahma yesterday declared that a big question mark over the rift between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) which he has termed as "overdramatic". "There is still a big question mark over their alleged rift. It is because Chandra Brahma, Rihon Daimary, and Pramila

Rani Brahma are still Ministers in the Sarbananda Sonowal-led Cabinet," the former MP said on the sidelines of a massive election rally in Tangla, Udalguri. Brahma said that the allegations of "corruption" in the BTC should have been resolved by the State Government earlier. "The State Government cannot simply keep alleging corruption, they must take action against it. The rift between the BJP and BPF still baffles and it seems

like an in-house quarrel. It seems over-dramatic at times," Urkhao Gwra Brahma said. Reacting to the BJP's "aggressive" campaigning in the poll-bound BTC region, Brahma said, "The mandate will be for the BTR treaty as a majority of the population would want its successful implementation. The BPF party will be hampered by its opposition to the BTR treaty. As for the BJP, it does not have a base here and no matter how aggressively they campaign,

they will not see growth here." Claiming that the public now has "unprecedented faith" in the UPPL, Brahma said that his party's ascension is "natural" and it is well poised for an election triumph. Responding to rumours of a possible alliance between the UPPL and the BJP, Brahma said, "There is no understanding between the BJP and the BPF parties as our candidates are squaring off against each other in the **Contd...Page 6**



Global treaty to tackle plastic pollution gains steam without US and UK

Support is growing internationally for a new global treaty to tackle the plastic pollution crisis, it has emerged, though so far without the two biggest per capita waste producers - the US and the UK - which have yet to signal their participation. A UN working group on marine litter and microplastics met at a virtual conference last week to discuss the issue. More than two-thirds of UN member states, including African, Baltic, Caribbean, Nordic and Pacific states, as well as the EU, have declared they are open to considering the option of a new agreement. The treaty would be akin to the Paris climate agreement or the Montreal protocol to prevent ozone depletion. Neither the UK nor the US have declared their desire for a new agreement. Britain, which leaves the EU at the end of the year, is considering one of two options: to support increasing calls for negotiating a new global treaty, or to strengthen existing agreements to reduce plastic waste. A decision by Zac Goldsmith, a minister for the environment, is understood to be imminent. The US has so far opposed an international agreement on plastic waste. The UN environment assembly, which set up the ad hoc working group (AHEG) on marine plastics in 2017, concluded that the existing international legal framework governing plastic pollution, including the Stockholm and the Basel conventions, is fragmented and ineffective. The flow of plastic into the ocean is expected to triple by 2040 if current trends continue, up to 29m tonnes a year - the equivalent of 50kg for every metre of coastline in the world. All efforts made and announced so far to curb plastic waste are expected to reduce the volume by only 7%. Once

in the sea, it breaks down into microplastics, to be ingested by marine life. Political momentum for a global agreement to address the full lifecycle of plastic has been growing, with several high-level ministerial declarations in favour. A huge ball of old nets and plastic waste in the



North Pacific Karen McVeigh record in issuing a ban on polythene convergence zone - more commonly known as the Great Pacific garbage patch. Earlier this month, a resolution calling for the world community to agree to a binding global agreement was adopted by International Union for the Conservation of Nature members, and 2 million people have signed a petition calling for one to be adopted. At last week's fourth and final meeting of the AHEG group, which will feed into UNEA's 5th conference in 2021 and 2022, many delegates expressed concern that the crisis was being exacerbated by excess plastic pollution linked to personal protective equipment necessary to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Several delegations voiced support of a new global agreement, although there was no consensus on whether it would only address marine plastic litter or go

further to tackle plastics pollution as a whole and if it would be legally binding. Ayub Macharia, the director of the National Environment Agency in Kenya, said the world required a global agreement to protect a "common heritage, our planet Earth". He told delegates: "Kenya is on

it. Hugo-Maria Schally, head of the multilateral environmental cooperation unit at the European commission, claimed the EU had been a proponent of a stronger global framework to address marine litter and marine plastic pollution for some time, and that the lack of participation so far by the US remained a huge obstacle. "We see moves by the US to come to some kind of understanding, but I'm not sure that the difficulties can be bridged," Schally said. Many NGOs believe that an international agreement is the only viable option to tackle plastic waste. One model for such a treaty, drawn by the Environmental Investigations Agency (EIA), involves four key pillars: monitoring and reporting, to examine the extent of the problem; prevention; coordination; and technical and financial support, for example aid to developing countries. "Maintaining the status quo is not only untenable, it would have catastrophic implications for planet Earth," said Christina Dixon, senior ocean campaigner at EIA. "It's therefore heartening to see such growing convergence around a global and legally binding treaty to combat plastic pollution." Tim Grabiell, senior lawyer at EIA, said: "Support for a global treaty on plastic pollution is a critical action that the Biden administration can take to correct the wrongs of the Trump era. Over the last four years, we have continually encountered opposition from the Trump administration to truly address plastic pollution, slowing down progress and watering down international efforts. We are hopeful that, with a change in leadership at the top, the US will join its allies and support a global treaty on plastic pollution at UNEA-5."

Barack Obama rules out role in Biden cabinet - 'Michelle would leave me'



The 44th president made the remark in an interview with CBS Sunday Morning, two days ahead of publication of his memoir, A Promised Land. He was due to speak to CBS again, for 60 Minutes, on Sunday night. Biden, Obama's vice-president from 2009 to 2017, is preparing to become the 46th president in January, having defeated Donald Trump at the polls. Asked how he will help Biden, Obama said: "He doesn't need my advice, and I will help him in any ways that I can. Now, I'm not planning to suddenly work on the White House staff or something." Susan Rice and Michelle Flournoy are among Obama administration veterans reportedly being considered for key posts under Biden. Asked if he would consider a cabinet position, Obama said: "There are some things I would not be doing because Michelle would leave me. She'd be like, what? You're doing what?" The Obamas have enough to occupy their time as it is, not least through establishing a charitable foundation and fulfilling a production deal with Netflix. In his book, Obama considers what his meteoric rise to the US Senate and then the White House meant for his marriage to Michelle and family life with their daughters, Sasha and Malia. "My career in politics, with its prolonged absences, had made it even

tougher" for his wife to pursue her own law career, he writes. "More than once Michelle had decided not to pursue an opportunity that excited her but would have demanded too much time away from the girls." "... With my election [as president] she'd been forced to give up a job with real impact for a role [as first lady] that - in its original design, at least - was far too small for her gifts." The Obamas' literary gifts have at least paid off. A Promised Land is part of a reported \$65m deal with Penguin Random House that also covered Becoming, Michelle Obama's memoir, released in 2018, and which has sold more than 10m copies. The former president is expected to produce a second volume. He also discussed the first with Oprah Winfrey, for Apple TV in an interview scheduled to broadcast in full on Tuesday. In a released clip, Obama told Winfrey he and Michelle "went through our rough patches in the White House, as she's written about, she's talked about. But I tell you that the thing that I think we were good about was talking stuff through, never losing fundamental love and respect for each other, and prioritising our kids." Though Trump shows no sign of willingly giving up power, his memoirs are already the subject of speculation - and a rumoured \$100m price tag. Another passage of Obama's CBS interview might have had resonance for the current president, had he been watching. Obama discussed what it is like to have the luxurious trappings of office, in this instance the presidential motorcade, inevitably taken away. "I'm driving along," Obama said, laughing. "I'm still not driving, but [I'm] in the car. I'm in the car in the backseat and I'm looking at my iPad or something. And suddenly, we stop and I'm like, 'What's going on?' There's a red light. There's a car right next to us. Some kids are eating a burrito or something in the backseat."

Major breakthrough needed to avert no-deal Brexit, says Irish minister



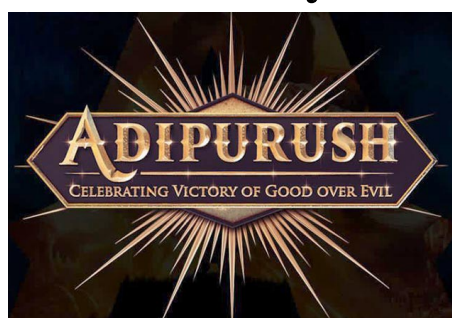
Brexit negotiations on a trade deal resume in a crucial week, as it emerged talks on the issue of EU access to British fishing waters have not progressed since the summer. As the two sides re-engaged in the troubled discussions, with less than seven weeks to go before the end of the transition period, Ireland's foreign minister, Simon Coveney, said the negotiations were "not in a good place" on fishing rights. "We really are in the last week to 10 days of this, if there is not a major breakthrough over the next week to 10 days then I think we really are in trouble and the focus will shift to preparing for a no-trade deal and all the disruption that that brings," he said. "I think the British government understand only too well what's required for a deal this week, the real question is whether the political appetite is there to do it. I think we will [get a deal], that's been my prediction for a while, but I won't be shocked if it all falls apart." The outstanding issues remain the level of access to UK waters provided to EU fishing fleets, fair competition rules for business - including rules on domestic subsidies - and the mechanism in the final treaty for resolving future disputes. The UK's chief negotiator, David Frost, tweeted on Sunday that there had been "some progress in a positive direction in recent days". But he insisted

that his negotiating position on the most contentious issues would not soften in light of the departure of Boris Johnson's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, the former campaign director for Vote Leave. It is understood that common ground is being found on the shape of a deal for how both sides will regulate domestic subsidies. But there is no agreement on a mechanism on maintaining similar baseline environmental, labour and social standards in the years to come. The UK insists it will not tie itself to the Brussels rulebook. Coveney particularly emphasised the danger posed by the issue of fishing rights to blow up the negotiations despite its comparatively small economic value. "It's a lot more emotive, and a lot more political quite frankly," he said. "What the

Daniel Boffey

British government has promised to their fishing industry, versus Michel Barnier's negotiating mandate from the EU is a very, very wide gap." He continued: "It's not good ... the negotiations are not in a good place when it comes to fishing. There hasn't really been any success in closing the gap between the positions of either side and until we find a way of doing that there isn't going to be an agreement, so we're in the same place in fishing, as we were in mid-summer." Neither side really has budged from their position, there's been minor concessions discussed on both sides but really it hasn't moved anywhere. "The EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, had hoped to provide a positive progress report to the bloc's 27 heads of state at a videoconference call on Thursday but the timeline appears to be slipping. Senior MEPs have insisted that the European parliament needs at least three weeks to scrutinise any deal before a vote on ratification. A vote is pencilled in for 16 December but sources said an extraordinary parliamentary session could be announced for 28 December."

Bhushan Kumar (T- Series) and Om Raut (Retrophiles) produced Adipurush to release on Independence Day Weekend 2022



Prabhas and Saif Ali Khan starrer,

Adipurush is slated to release on 11th August 2022! With Independence Day 2022 falling on a Monday, it will have a 5-day extended opening weekend at the box office. The film will be directed by Om Raut, produced by Bhushan Kumar of T-Series, Om Raut, Prasad Sutar and Rajesh Nair of Retrophiles, and is in the pre-production stage, scheduled to go on floors in January 2021! The film will be released in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada.

Try the New Tide Fresh & Clean for Free

Kickstarting Tide's biggest product sampling ever, it aims to drive more than 20 lakh trials across India for its new variant, Tide Fresh and Clean



India, Nov 19 : Tide India, one of the leading fabric care brands in India from P&G is back to redefine audience engagement and enhance consumer experience, with its latest

free in-store product experiential campaign for its newest product Tide Fresh and Clean. The new 'yellow' Tide was launched in September with the promise of great cleaning that fits the budget. With this sampling drive, Tide aims to get more and more people to try the new product! With this activation, Tide is bringing the opportunity to try the new product near you, in your own city. The brand aims to route the biggest free product trials reaching more than 2 lakh stores across launch

regions engaging more than 20 lakh consumers with free samples. Consumers can claim their 100 g Tide Fresh and Clean sample everyday till 22nd November from their nearest

retailer or SMS TRY TIDE<Pin Code> to 7039555555 to receive details of their 3 nearest stores.

You may have come across the latest, very fun film on Tide Fresh and Clean on your TV, with actor Sanjay Mishra and famed actress Ayesha Raza. The range has quickly turned into a household favourite, as it has taken away the struggle of finding a budget friendly product with both, optimal quality and quantity. The innovative and ground-breaking fabric cleaner offers a 3 in 1 benefit as it fights tough dirt on clothes, provides an excellent freshness with a subtle fragrance of Lemon & Mint, and delivers an outstanding product quality at a price that will keep any pocket happy.

The product has been launched in your city in September and is available in two sizes - 500 g at Rs. 35, and 1 KG at Rs. 69. The special free sample pack of 100 g is available at select outlets for a limited period only. Available in a premium package, the Tide Fresh and Clean is an eyeball grabber, as the shopkeepers and consumers are all equally attracted

to try out the new 'Peela Wala Tide'.

About Procter & Gamble P&G serves consumers in India with one of the strongest portfolios of trusted, quality, leadership brands, including Vicks®, Ariel®, Tide®, Whisper®, Olay®, Gillette®, AmbiPur®, Pampers®, Pantene®, Oral-B®, Head & Shoulders® and Old Spice®. P&G operates through 3 entities in India of which 2 are listed on NSE & BSE. The listed P&G entities are: Procter & Gamble Hygiene & Health Care Limited and 'Gillette India Limited', whereas the unlisted entity (which is a 100% subsidiary of the parent company in the U.S.) operates by the name 'Procter & Gamble Home Products Ltd.' In the last 12 years, P&G's signature CSR program P&G Shiksha has built and supported 1000 schools that will impact the lives of 10,00,000 underprivileged children across the country by providing them with access to education. Please visit <http://www.pg-india.com> for the latest news and in-depth information about P&G India and its brands.

Over 100 scientists join hands with the United Nations to build public confidence in COVID-19 vaccines through Team Halo

India, November 19 : As the world eagerly awaits the roll out of COVID-19 vaccines, the United Nations has collaborated with The Vaccine Confidence Project at the University of London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to undertake Team Halo, an initiative which aims to counter the misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines. As per a recent survey conducted by LocalCircles, 61 per cent respondents from India said that they are sceptical about COVID-19 vaccines and would prefer not to take it immediately even if it is made available by early next year. This is worrying news for scientists working to develop vaccines that will put an end to the pandemic.

Through this initiative, over 100 scientists have joined hands to tackle the issue of misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines and build confidence by busting myths and sharing information on the safety and effectiveness of vaccines on social media. Globally, the initiative is

supported by scientists who are involved in the race of coronavirus vaccine development across the world's top institutes like Imperial College London, Harvard Medical School, University of Sao Paulo, University of Barcelona and many others. In India, over 22 scientists have joined Team Halo from renowned institutes such as Institute of Medical Sciences and Sum Hospital, Bhubaneswar; PGIMER, Chandigarh; Nizams Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad; IIT Indore; Christian Medical College, Vellore; SRM Research Institute, Chennai; and Deep Children's Hospital and Research Centre, Gandhidham. Speaking about the initiative, Dr Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at Christian Medical College Vellore, Chair of the Immunization Technical Advisory Group for the World Health Organisation South East Asian Region and a Team Halo contributor who works on vaccine development,

clinical and laboratory evaluation of vaccines and vaccination policy said "At my institution we are studying how COVID-19 reinfection operates and I am excited about opening up the story of the search for COVID-19 vaccines for the public. People want to know about the science and stories behind the headlines, and I'm delighted to be experimenting with social media to make serious points in creative ways." Melissa Fleming, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications said "Rampant misinformation has undermined public trust in vaccines. Team Halo is about reclaiming that trust. These are incredible people doing exciting science as part of a global collaboration. We should be celebrating them for helping us get to the end of this awful pandemic."



Team Halo India will also allow scientists to respond to questions from the public and directly counter vaccine misinformation and rumours spreading in parts of the internet. Dr Shiv Pillai, Professor of Medicine and Health Sciences & Technology at Harvard Medical School, said "Science is a universal endeavour. We hear a lot about the efforts of individual countries to find a vaccine, but the reality is that this has always been a global effort. Whether it's the international teams working in any given laboratory or the collaboration across borders since the first days of this crisis, we have been trying to stop this virus together."

APWWS West Siang takes out Candle March in Protest against gruesome murder of Tech Meena Lishi



Aalo, Nov 19 : The Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society, West Siang Unit led by its President Smti Marbom Riba Bagra and senior women of the district took out a Candle March from its office to Nehru Chowk in protest against the gruesome murder of seven month old pregnant Tech Meena Lishi near Karsingsa block point around 25 km from Itanagar on 5 th Nov last. Congregating at Nehru Chowk to pay tribute to the departed soul, President APWWS West Siang Unit Smti Bagra said that this is the rarest of the rare crime meted to a woman by her own husband and first of its kind in this peaceful state. The perpetrator of the crime has not only

killed late Meena but also a seven month old baby growing in her womb and urged the law enforcing authority to give stringent punishment to Roni Lishi and all Contract Killers who were involved in the murder. The West Siang women also lauded the Capital Police for making a great breakthrough in the Meena Techi Lishi murder case. What was preplanned as an accidental case turned out to be a coldblooded murder of an innocent and humble woman and women wing here assured to raise their voice in any platform. Smti Jumde Gamlin, Chairperson also spoke on the occasion. One minutes silence was also observed as mark of respect to the departed soul

Stressed on the highlight of welfare schemes

Meeting of the OBC Marcha of BJP held at Sipajhar

SIPAJHAR, Nov 19 : The young members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should be fully active with war footing manner for the forthcoming Assembly election of the state. They should take initiative to highlight the welfare schemes implemented by the government so that the people may get benefits from those schemes." Said Dibya Jyoti Sarma, president of Yuva Marcha, Darrang district committee of Bharatiya Janata Party. He was addressing the meeting of the executive committee of the Other Backward Class (OBC) Marcha, Darrang district committee of Bharatiya Janata Party held at the premises of Sipajhar Academy under the president ship of Nipam Nath, president, OBC, Marcha, Darrang district committee. Addressing the meeting MLA, Sipajhar LAC Binanda kumar Saikia has strongly criticized the politics as Congress Party and urged

upon the public to follow the politics of development of Bharatiya Janata Party. Guru Jyoti Das, MLA, Mangaldai LAC in his speech has stressed on the need of strengthening the base of social media. Dharendra Deka, President, Darrang Zila Parishad, Ajit Kumar Deka, Vice president of Darrang district committee of Bharatiya Janata Party, Mihir Saharia, secretary of Darrang district committee, BJP, Jitu Barua and Haren Deka, president of Sipajhar and Patharighat Mandal committee of BJP, Pankaj Das, state secretary of OBC Marcha, Janjit Barman, Darrang district Pravari of BJP and Ripunjoy Saikia, state in-charge of college and university out reach were attended in the meeting as guest of honor. The various schemes undertaken by the both central and state government for the interest of the OBC communities of the state in details.

Tension rises in Kanchanpur after pump operator allegedly thrashed by miscreants



Agartala, November 19 : A 36-year-old water pump operator was attacked by a group of miscreants in Purba Laxmipur area which has escalated tension between the two groups in Kanchanpur sub-division. Amidst the ongoing indefinite protest in Tripura against the re-settlement of the Bru migrants in Kanchanpur sub-division on Tuesday, a 36-year-old water supply operator was attacked by a group of miscreants in the Purba Laxmipur area which has escalated tension between the two groups. Reportedly on Tuesday morning while Subal Dey was attending his duty at the water supply, he argued with a group of people who later started assaulting him and attacked him with a sharp weapon. Later he was rushed to Dasda primary health centre from where he was shifted to Kanchanpur sub-division hospital. Later the doctors on duty referred him to North district hospital in Dharmanagar. Following the incident, a team of police led by Kanchanpur sub-division police officer (SDPO) Bikramjit Shukladas rushed to the spot, while a huge deployment of police and TSR had made across Kanchanpur sub-division to keep the situation under control. The North district superintendent of police, Bhanupada Chakraborty also reached Kanchanpur to take stock of the situation in Kanchanpur. Meanwhile, a meeting through video conference was conveyed by the North district magistrate B Nagesh Kumar to hold talks

with the agitated group. Speaking with EastMojo, Sushanta Bikash Barua, convener of JMC said that Subal was attacked by a group of Bru refugees and their leaders and he was referred to the district hospital with serious injuries. "We have participated in a meeting called by the North district magistrate in presence of the Kanchanpur sub-division magistrate. We have been asked to withdraw our protest. However, we have denied their appeal and demanded that until and unless our demands are met the protest would continue", Barua said. He also said that the indefinite protest would continue unless assurance in black and white from the state ministry or secretary level is handed over to them. Since Monday the Joint Movement Committee consisting of Bengali and Mizo organisations have called for an indefinite strike from Monday, alleging breach of promise by the Tripura government in the resettlement of Bru migrants in Kanchanpur subdivision. Nagarik Suraksha Mancha, a local Bengali organisation, was formed in December last year following violence during the series of anti-CAA protests in parts of Kanchanpur sub-division. Several shops and houses were vandalised in the violence, which the Mancha said was perpetrated by tribal protesters including Bru migrants from the relief camps. Earlier in January, after signing the agreement, Union home minister Amit Shah had announced a 40x30 ft area plot to build a house, Rs 4 lakh as fixed deposit, financial aid of Rs 5,000 per month along with free ration supply for the next two years to all the Bru families. To build houses, an amount of Rs 1.5 lakh will also be provided to every family. The Tripura government had identified a total of 3,600 hectares of land in 11 locations in list one for resettling 4,900 families comprising 33,000 people across the state.

Coaching institutes, private schools defy govt order, open hostels

ITANAGAR, November 19 : Despite the government's notification for continued closure of hostels, residential schools, coaching institutes and a few private schools in the capital have opened their hostels for students. Some schools in the capital have opened hostels for higher secondary students, and some parents have raised concern over health issues and proper maintenance of the Covid standard operating procedures (SOP). A parent also informed that they were asked to get their wards tested for Covid-19 before coming to the hostel, and to produce the test results. However, school

authorities claimed that it was "safer to allow students to stay in the hostels, instead of continuing to mingle with too many people outside and then attending classes and mingling with their classmates." "Those who have tested negative are the only ones being allowed to stay in the hostels. If we can allow sit-in classes, where everyone comes in after mingling with innumerable people outside, why should not we consider allowing hostels to open, as well - they are closed to outsiders and are safer. Nobody knows when Covid-19 is going to leave. For how long will we shut down schools and hostels? Students

from outside the capital are the ones who mostly require staying in hostels. How will they attend classes if hostels are not open? We are following all the SOPs and have to live with the new normal," school authorities said. Responding to the concerns of the parents, All Arunachal Private Schools' Association president James Techi Tara informed that the association is following the norms of the government and has not allowed schools to open hostels. At the same time, he said that "the schools which parents have claimed have opened their hostels must have undertaken certain precautionary measures

and strategies. No school will take the risk of putting their students in danger. If a specific school has opened its hostel, the parents should enquire about the preventive measures the school is taking to ensure that there is no outbreak of Covid-19 there." Education Minister Taba Tedir had announced the opening of schools for Classes 10 and 12 from 16 November onwards. As per the notification issued by the directorate of secondary education on 6 November, "Class 1 to 8, 9 and 11, residential schools, hostels and coaching institutes shall not open till further order."

Role of media, media persons highlighted, tributes paid to Taro Chatung

ITANAGAR, November 19 : The role of the media in creating and shaping public opinion, and the responsibility of media persons as watchdogs of the society were highlighted in detail during the National Press Day celebration here on Monday. The event was organized by the Arunachal Press Club (APC), the Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ), the Arunachal Electronic and Digital Media Association (AEDMA) and the directorate of information & public relations. Addressing the gathering of journalists from across the state, APUWJ president Amar Sangno called upon the media comrades to reaffirm to preserve, protect and defend the freedom of the press and uphold the highest standards of journalism. Sangno said that, as the world at present is battling the Covid-19 pandemic, the road ahead would be tough for the journalists. "We all have seen and experienced one of the darkest chapters of human history in the millennium. I salute those comrades who have been reporting fearlessly, risking their lives and of their loved ones during the Covid-19 lockdown alongside other frontline workers to disseminate, correct, unbiased and credible information to the masses," he said. The APUWJ president also raised concern over the mushrooming of digital and social media platforms. "Though the International Federation of Journalists - the largest working journalist's organization in the world - advocates the growth of independent digital media to make democracy vibrant and strong, the mushrooming of digital and social media platforms is a threat to principled and ethical media houses," he said. Sangno said these media organizations are neither obliged to the fundamental principles of journalism, nor do they follow the basic journalistic ethics, thus jeopardizing the noble profession. Sangno on behalf of the state's media community expressed gratitude to the Pema Khandu-led

government for its constant support and cooperation for the healthy growth of the media in the state. He also said that the passing of the Arunachal Electronic Media Advertisement Policy, 2020, by the state government would help the proprietors of digital and electronic media houses ensure quality journalism and also provide jobs and personal security to working journalists and other employees. Sangno also called

and the profession. "You are responsible for your work as documenting and reporting stories is 'bearing honourable witness to history'. So, journalists must make sure that they build the relationship of trust with their audience by providing the correct information," Riba said. He said what a journalist writes and shows shapes the vision of the audience, and therefore there are consequences for the same. "We are accountable for our

upon the media persons to stay away from giving opinions in their reports. Speaking on the topic 'Blurring the lines between journalism and content creation', senior journalist Mukul Pathak called upon his juniors to always follow the path of truth, accuracy, humility and accountability, and to be fair and impartial in what they write and show. "You are accountable for your work, so you should be able to take responsibility if there are discrepancies. Also, be open to feedback and criticisms," he said. Pathak said there is a thin line between journalism and content creation as there are certain guidelines to be followed in the former. He also urged his media comrades to stay away from being activists. IPR Deputy Director Denhang Bosai, speaking on the topic 'Challenges of government media', spoke of the issues the district IPR officers (DIPRO) face while carrying out their duties due to connectivity issues. He, however, thanked the media persons of the state for their coordination and support with regard to disseminating information on several developmental aspects of the government. "We can coordinate and work together as we are in the same boat," Bosai said. Earlier, the event saw additional PRO to the chief minister, Rup Jyoti Pater read out a self-composed eulogy on veteran journalist late Taro Chatung, who passed away a year ago. This was followed by the screening of a documentary on late Chatung's life, and a two-minute silence to remember the departed soul. While APC president Dodum Yangfo welcomed the guests, AEDMA president Migom Toko extended the vote of thanks. Among others, Transport Secretary Dani Sulu, PRO to the speaker, Sanjay Mosing, PRO to Alie Pradhan, wife of late Chatung, DIPROs (Itanagar capital region and headquarters) and officials of the IPR department joined the media fraternity on the day. All Covid-19-related protocols were followed during the celebration.



upon the state government to come up with a special "journalists' protection act" to ensure the safety of working journalists in the state. He further called upon the authorities concerned to "end impunity for crime against journalists across the state and country." Several other plights of the state's scribes with regard to their remuneration, job security, etc, were also highlighted by the APUWJ president. Speaking as one of the resource persons of the workshop themed 'Words, visuals and its impact on journalistic content' that followed, Rajiv Gandhi University's Mass Communication Head Moji Riba called upon the media persons to be earnest. Speaking on the topic, 'So why am I in the media?' Riba said the challenges and responsibilities of journalists have grown bigger in today's world "and they need to introspect their purpose of being in the field of journalism and the values they hold for themselves

work, so we must also be ready to face disapprovals and questions," he added. Riba also lauded the journalists and the media houses for the role they played during the Covid-19 pandemic. "At a time when the entire world was at a standstill, our media did not shut down. Putting their own lives at risk, the media persons have played an important role in educating people and helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic. This is the power of what to do and what we want to do," he said. Deputy editor of The Arunachal Times, Tongam Rina said "laying out the facts" should be more important for a journalist while telling their stories. Rina, who was speaking on the topic 'Contextualizing facts in the news' said "fact is always out there for one who finds it, and all one needs to do is make an effort." "A journalist should better chase facts than work on meeting deadlines," she said, and called

PIB Guwahati Webinar on 'Covid precaution awareness and Efficacy of Yoga and AYUSH systems of medicine and health care for being healthy'

Guwahati, Nov 19 : Yoga and Disciplines of AYUSH to build healthy system and for risk mitigation to common flu in winter, experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic 'Covid precaution awareness and Efficacy of Yoga and AYUSH systems of medicine and health care for being healthy' here today. Experts from Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Unani and Psychologists along with academicians deliberated and discussed about healthy system and its awareness from medical, academic and policy perspective. Ayurvedic Physician Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri Dr Vaidya Devendra Triguna said that Ayurveda medication system plays a vital role in people-centric health care services. He said that India knowledge in medication system has been strengthening which could be leveraged for betterment of humanity. He said that India's medical knowledge has immense potential to tackle the imminent issues of health. In this Covid scenario, he said AYUSH system of medication has tremendous potential. Yoga Guru Padma Shri Dr Bharat Bhushan said that India is emerging as a Yoga destination of the world as it is playing a catalytic role for the wellness of citizens by being healthy. He said that India is a country which have

had famed places such as Patliputra and Nalanda and personalities such as Rishi Aurobindo and Chanakya, a country with its richness of culture exemplifies 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. He said that Yoga is not only about being disciplined, but also about being proactive in having healthy activities. Talking about Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and his vision, Dr Bhushan said that endeavour is for cultural and spiritual development, where Yoga plays a quintessential role. Dr Subhas Singh, Director and HoD in a department of National Institute of Homeopathy, Kolkata said that Covid precaution during the winter is very vital because of the cold weather. He said that it is the responsibility of the parents to explain their children about the efficacy of Covid precaution. Dr Manzoor Ahmad, MS (Surgery), ZVM Unani Medical College and Hospital, Pune said that various disciplines of AYUSH of medicine system and Yoga helps to be healthy. He said a disciplined work habit and daily nutritious food provides the strength to ward off most of the common flu issues. Ms Sayantani Sinha, Psychologist and Clinical Hypnotherapist said that most of the issues are psychological and parents have to listen to their children to tackle the issues. She said that stress management and loneli-

ness of children could be tackled with quality time by parents and the children should be encouraged to do things which motivate them to be healthy. Shri Nagendra Nath Tiwari, Deputy Technical Adviser, Food and Nutrition Board, Eastern Region, Kolkata said that nutritious food and having vitamins and proteins in food helps to tackle most of the health issues. Dr. Lopamudra Datta, Principal, Guru Nanak Institute of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology said that awareness about Covid precaution is vital during the winter as behaviour and attitude is pivotal to tackle the health issues. She said that students play a catalytic role in awareness as they could educate their friends. Talking about the provisions of the Constitution, Abdur Rahman Mallick, Advocate Delhi High Court said that societal awareness is vital as he lauded PIB Guwahati on this awareness endeavour. He said that awareness on public health initiatives not only help citizens, but also adds to the endeavours of the health fraternity in effective and efficient results and efforts for tackling Covid issues. The informative and knowledge webinar was planned and coordinated by Shri Samrat Bandyopadhyay, Joint Director (M & C), PIB, Guwahati. Senior officers of PIB were present in webinar.

Sishu Bandhu Award conferred to Girish Chandra Sarma

SIPAJHAR, Nov 19 : Sodou Assam Moina Parijat, a pioneer organization for the all round personality development of the children of the state has conferred Sishu Bandhu Award to Girish Chandra Sarma of Hazarikapara in Darrang district as recognition to his organizational activities and contributions for the development of the children. Representing the State executive committee of the Moina Parijat the award was presented to Girish Sarma at a function by Dr Mrinal Kumar Nath, president of Mangaldai Zila Moina Parijat, Basanta Saikia, secretary, Rana Alam, state executive committee of Sadhu Assam Moina Parijat and Kamaljit Sarma, administrative officer. It may be mentioned here that Girish Chandra Sarma is one of the leading organizer of Moina Parijat and offer his important service to both Hazarikapara Meghali Moina Parijat and Mangaldai Zila Moina Parijat.

Esther Hnamte receives cash incentive, letter from Mizoram Governor

Aizawl, November 19 : Esther Hnamte, the four-year-old singing sensation from Lunglei in Mizoram, whose Vande Mataram rendition stirred souls across the nation, has been awarded appreciation letter and cash incentive by Mizoram Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai. Esther's uncle Beiseia Renthlei said that she received Rs 5,000 and citation from the Governor. The family is "really happy and excited" on receiving the recognition, he added. Renthlei said they plan on using the money her next project. She is coming up with another video for Christmas. Esther hails from Lunglei district in Mizoram. Esther's cover of AR Rahman's Maa Tujhe Salaam had caught the eye of the nation, including the singer himself and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The covid-19 antibody

Historically, medical research has often taken a one-size-fits-all approach, lumping women and men together despite growing evidence that the sexes differ in how they catch and fight disease. Covid-19 seems to be a case in point, with women more likely to be infected, but men thought to be up to twice as likely to die from the virus. The study - which has not yet been peer-reviewed - tracked for nearly six months 308 staffers at Strasbourg University hospitals in France who had a confirmed Covid-positive test. Most of the recruited patients had mild disease. Different antibodies were measured using three different tests at two points over a 172-day period. At the first blood sampling, men older than 50 and those with a body mass index (BMI) of more than 25 exhibited the highest antibody levels. At the second sampling, levels of antibodies (including neutralising proteins designed to thwart the virus from latching on to human cells) had fallen further in men than in women regardless of age and BMI, the researchers said. "Other studies have shown that men have a higher antibody response than women in the acute phase - but we're showing that even though men have a higher response in the beginning, their fall in antibody levels is much quicker over time, while women seem to have more stable levels," said author Samira Fafi-Kremer, head of virology at Strasbourg University hospitals. "I call this the new manifestation of girl power," she joked. The decline appears to depend on how high antibody levels reached to begin with, added Olivier Schwartz, the report's author and head of the Pasteur Institute's virus and immunity unit. "So if you have more antibodies, you will have a more rapid decline, but we don't know exactly why," he said. Dr Sabra Klein, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for women's health, sex, and gender research, said vaccine developers should analyse data to compare male and female responses over time because it was likely the male-biased decline in antibodies would occur following vaccination as well. "If functional antibody responses decline to a greater degree in males than females following vaccination, then it may be that males need another booster vaccine to maintain immunity." Understanding of coronavirus immunity is far from complete. Scientists have cautioned that while antibodies - generated by B-cells - are key to the human defensive arsenal, they are not the only weapons deployed by the immune system. T-cells - which are tasked with stimulating B-cell production as well as annihilating respiratory cells the virus has inhabited - are equally crucial. "I am not surprised that there might be differences in the intensity of the immune response, as this is in line with other infections, but... we need more research," said Dr Sabine Oertelt-Prigione, chair of sex and gender-sensitive medicine at Radboud University in the Netherlands. "It is likely that memory T-cells might be preserved after infection (or vaccination) and be able to support an immune response in case of a secondary infection, as is the case in many other viral infections, but we have no proof of this yet." Earlier this month, an 100-patient study led by the UK coronavirus immunology consortium found that T-cell immunity is likely to be present within most adults six months after primary infection. A separate 185-patient study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, has shown that at eight months after infection, most people who have recovered still have enough immune cells to prevent disease.

Mothers of Bodoland rally behind Pramod Boro for a Dawn of Inclusive Development

Long tormented by divisive politics and underwhelming development, Bodoland is being swept by a wave of hope and optimism with the end of term of the previous council on 27 April 2020. Come December, people of the autonomous Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), which is currently under Governor's Rule, will exercise their rights to elect a new Chief Executive Member. Etched in the national consciousness as a troubled region in the east of India, Bodoland was established by the Amended Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003, and comprises of four districts that 31 lakh people call home. Over the last 17 years, people in the BTR have waited patiently for a change, unfortunately with no substantial development or improvement in socio-economic status quo, a lot of promises have been left unfilled, leaving a lot to be desired.

Changing the status quo : Since Independence, the eastern states have been languishing with an anaemic infrastructure forcing the diaspora to be displaced, with a section of the youth being lured by false hopes of power behind the veil of extremism, while many moved to the neighbouring states and metros hoping to find employment. Now, all of that is set to change with leaders digging their heels to empower the people with employment and a new lease of an inclusive development by uniting stakeholders of all caste, creed, and religion. Former ABSU (All Assam Bodo Student Union) leader, Pramod Boro is a son of the soil who has been through the trenches. Juggling the role of being a student union leader and substantiating the family's income with daily labour wages during his youth, Boro is intimately aware of the pains of the mothers of Bodoland who had to don the role of bread-earners after losing their husbands and sons to extremism. Pramod Boro was one of the key signatories of the January Bodo Accord in 2020 that ended an era of insurgent dissent, paving the way for peace and democracy. This resulted in the youth shunning extremism and returning home. But the incumbent leadership of the Council felt short on their promise of rehabilitating the youth with jobs and businesses. Pramod Boro, the former president of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), was 'unani-



Utpal Saikia

and has been engaged in animal husbandry ever since thanks to the support from Pramod Boro. I am sure that many youths like my son in our community will be able to set up their own businesses," said Golam narzary, a resident of Tamulpur.

Leveraging untapped resources : In a 2016 survey by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare led by horticulture scientists, Dr B. Narasimha Rao and Dr G. Ravichandran, recommended palm oil plantation after studying the scope and prospects of the climate and soil in the BTC which covers an area of 8795 sq km. 75 per cent of the people in BTC is dependent on agriculture, sericulture, dairy farming, and livestock rearing as their primary sources of income. Every year, farmers cultivate 5,22,096 hectares of farmland to produce rice, pulses, oilseeds, cotton, jute, turmeric, and ginger. In addition to empowering farmers with new-age farming equipment and infrastructure, developing the neglected MSME sector is one of the key agendas of Boro's campaign.

"We will hold Janata Darbar every three months to discuss and resolve issues of the people. We will support and empower clubs and self-help groups with an amount of Rs 75, 000 to usher change at grassroot level. We will give more importance in increasing the amount of old age pension, widow pension and scholarship for the students as we believe in equal growth of all. To strengthen our agrarian economy, we will establish centres where agricultural equipment like power tillers, tractors, sickle, paddy grinding machine, among others will be available on rent for the people in all villages," said Pramod Boro.

The long battle of Hasdeo Arand residents against the Parsa coal project in Chhattisgarh

As part of an initiative under the Indian government's new "Atmanirbhar Bharat"-or self-reliant India-mission, the coal ministry launched the auction of 41 coal blocks for commercial mining on 18 June. Three days earlier, sarpanchs of nine villages in Hasdeo Arand, a contiguous stretch of dense forest land in northern Chhattisgarh, wrote to Narendra Modi opposing the auction and calling upon the prime minister to prevent commercial mining in Hasdeo Arand. The sarpanchs wrote that the villagers had already established self-reliant lives and livelihoods, which would come under attack due to the auction. The letter added, "It is unfortunate that when the communities are already grappling with the COVID-19 crisis, they are faced with this uncertainty and threat of displacement." Just ten days earlier, to mark the occasion of World Environment Day on 5 June, residents of 20 villages in Hasdeo Arand staged protests in their respective villages against a proposed coal project. The forest is home to Adivasi communities dependent on the forest for its produce and agricultural land, and its residents have long been protesting clearances awarded to coal-mining projects in violation of their rights over the land and its natural resources. The protests oppose the proposed mining at the Parsa coal block in the Hasdeo forest, which has been allotted to the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited, a power corporation under the Rajasthan government. RRVUNL, in turn, has appointed Adani Enterprises Limited to carry out the mining operations. The villagers protesting the proposed coal project challenged its legality. They argued that it contravened their individual and community forest rights, under the Panchayats (Extension of Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996, the Forest Rights Act of 2006 and the Land Acquisition Act of 2013. These laws require the informed consent from gram sabhas before any land acquisition can take place in scheduled areas with a preponderance of Adivasi populations, such as the Hasdeo forest. Meanwhile, RRVUNL has claimed that these laws are not applicable to the Parsa project, and that in any case, the concerned gram sabhas had expressed their support for it. But the protesters argued that the gram sabhas of the affected villages had passed several unanimous resolutions

since 2015 opposing the project, and that the ministry of environment, forests and climate change had awarded clearances on the basis of forged documents. In January 2019, the forest advisory committee, or FAC, under the environment ministry, granted Stage-I clearance to RRVUNL to mine the Parsa coal block in the Hasdeo forest. The Parsa project

which irrigates over three lack hectares of agricultural land. "No one can throw us out of our land and forest," Sakuntala Topo, a resident of Khirti village in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, said during a protest in October 2019. Korba is a mining-affected region in the Hasdeo forest. "We will not give our jal, jangal, zameen"- water, forest and land, Topo



would dislocate residents of Chhattisgarh's Surguja and Surajpur districts. On 15 May, residents of the area learnt that RRVUNL was initiating land-acquisition proceedings in the villages of Salhi, Hariharpur, Ghattbara, Fatehpur, in Surguja, and Tara and Janardhanpur, in Surajpur. That day, RRVUNL published a "general caveat" in a local newspaper announcing that it "apprehends that a writ petition... or a Public Interest Litigation may be filed in the Hon'ble High Court as the Land acquisition proceeding is being initiated" in these villages. The public notice stated that RRVUNL had appointed Shailendra Shukla, a lawyer practising in the Chhattisgarh High Court, "to appear and oppose" any challenge to the land-acquisition proceedings on behalf of the power corporation. Alarmed that the PSU was going ahead with the acquisition for the mining project, the residents resumed their protest for the first time since the lockdown began on 16 May, and staged a one-day protest in front of their houses to oppose the move. The protests are spearheaded by the Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sankarsh Samiti, or HABSS, a collective comprising the gram sabhas of 20 villages affected by the coal projects. For three months, from October to December 2019, the village residents held a sit-in protest outside Tara against the mining clearances. They suspended it for panchayat elections in December, intending to resume it in March, but they were subsequently denied permission to hold an indefinite protest in the wake of COVID-19. The Parsa block is among 30 mapped block in Hasdeo Arand and one of three in the forest awarded to RRVUNL-the power corporation is already conducting mining operations at the adjacent block, Parsa East and Kete Basan. The project is spread over 1,252 hectares of land, and requires the diversion of 841 hectares located in Surguja and Surajpur districts, in the Hasdeo forest. The majority of the people in the region are members of Scheduled Tribe communities and over ninety percent of them are dependent on agriculture and forest produce for their livelihood. The Hasdeo Arand forests form the catchment area of the Hasdeo river, said. "We will not give it for coal mines." Topo added that leaders of Congress party, such as Rahul Gandhi and Chhattisgarh's chief minister, Bhupesh Baghel, had promised that they would not allow mining in violation of the rights of the residents. Ahead of the Chhattisgarh elections in November 2018, Baghel and Gandhi had both assured the electorate that the Congress party would prevent mining projects that violated the forest rights of the locals. Baghel also accused the Modi government of providing the Adani Group a backdoor entry into coal mining through dubious contracts. But in March 2019, three months after Baghel took charge, the Adani Group was appointed as the mine developer and operator for Chhattisgarh's Gidmuri and Paturia coal blocks. Baghel's government has not intervened in the coal-mining projects in Hasdeo Arand. "We would like ask this government if they want to displace us Adivasis from our land," Topo said. The local opposition to mining operations at the Parsa coal block began years before RRVUNL formally received the first forest clearance, likely due to the course of events leading to the mining operations at the adjacent PEKB coal block. In 2010, Jairam Ramesh, the former environment minister under the Congress-led central government, had declared the Hasdeo Arand forest a "no-go zone" for mining operations. But within a year, Ramesh went back on his word, and rejected the advice of the FAC to grant Stage-I, or in-principle approval for forest clearance to RRVUNL to conduct operations at the PEKB mine. The project received environmental clearance in December that year, and Stage-II forest clearance, which is the final forest clearance granted by the MoEF, by March 2012. In 2014, the National Green Tribunal set aside the clearance and sent the project back to the MoEF for seeking fresh approval from the FAC. But the Supreme Court stayed the decision shortly after, and mining operations have continued unabated at the site ever since, even while the case remains pending before the apex court. In effect, mining operations at PEKB has become a fait accompli. As early as January 2015, to prevent further mining in the

Hasdeo forest, residents of 20 gram sabhas who would be affected by the Parsa coal block had unanimously passed a resolution opposing all future coal-block allotments in the area. In September 2015, the coal ministry allotted the Parsa block to RRVUNL. To prevent a repeat of the PEKB fait accompli, the villagers sent the resolution to Raman Singh, who was the state's chief minister at the time under the previous Bharatiya Janata Party government, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But in March 2017, the Parsa coal project was accorded terms of reference, which refers to conditions laid down by the MoEF that a project proponent-RRVUNL in this case-would have to fulfil to develop and operate the mine. In March that year, residents of Hariharpur and Salhi passed resolutions rejecting the Parsa coal-block mining project. The decisions were reiterated in subsequent meetings at the village held in July and February 2018. The residents had also repeatedly pointed this out in letters sent to the MoEF, the coal ministry, the tribal affairs ministry, and state and district administrations since 2015. Sections 4 and 5 of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act-more commonly known as the Forest Rights Act-mandate that no eviction can take place without due process, and that gram sabhas of the affected villages can take decisions to stop activity that adversely affects the biodiversity. Similarly, the Panchayat (Extension of Scheduled Areas) Act also mandates that a consultation with the local gram sabha has to be conducted before any acquisition can take place. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-more commonly known as the Land Acquisition Act, 2013-also mandates the prior consent of gram sabhas before any acquisition in a scheduled area. Though the coal blocks are allocated to RRVUNL, the power company follows a model in which it appoints a private company as the "mine developer cum operator." As I reported earlier for The Caravan, the concept of an MDO is not recognised in any law governing the Indian coal industry. At Parsa, before and after the reallocation of coal blocks in 2015, the mining operations are carried out by Adani Enterprises Limited. In 2011, The Hindu reported that Adani was offering microloans to residents of Parsa and Ghattbara who agreed to sign documents giving consent to acquire their land for the PEKB coal block. Even before the public hearings were held for PEKB, during February and March 2014, 458 residents wrote to the district collector intimating its decision to boycott the hearing citing environmental impact and displacement due to the project. However, the administration went ahead with the hearing and the Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company, which was earlier allotted the block, submitted a draft environmental impact assessment report without mentioning the local opposition. After the reallocation of the coal block to RRVUNL, the hearing was scheduled again in 2017. According to protesters, Adani continued the practice of eliciting consent through manipulation of public hearings for environmental clearance. The protesters said that the public hearing was conducted in way that silenced the strong opposition to the coal project. "There were people from outside villages like Salka and Udaipur, who were brought to the hearing to support the project," Jainandan Porte, the sarpanch of Ghattbara, told me.

Boris Johnson has to stop playing games and agree a deal with Europe

This week it's for real, at last. The EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, is in London for the last time in earnest - a deal must be struck this week before UK and EU parliaments can start to ratify a trade and security deal. If Boris Johnson's apparently helpless negotiator David Frost cannot shake on a deal, preparations for a hard border round Britain's coast must proceed. The cost will be enormous. No sane person can think this a good idea. Just two bones of contention remain, on fishing quotas and regulatory alignment, the "level playing field". Fishing cannot wait, as key European states would veto any deal without it. Britain must compromise. As for regulatory alignment, some supervision is unavoidable if two neighbouring countries wish to trade at all. The EU is in the right. It is also bigger and stronger and has less need to compromise, and appears to have the US president-elect, Joe Biden, on its side. The EU can replace most of its trade with Britain. Britain cannot do the reverse. There are no com-

pensating trade deals with the rest of world. They are a fantasy. We are told Johnson has been playing poker, hanging tough, boasting and threatening. That is over. The serious prospect now is of "fish and alignment" being allowed further to devastate a British economy damaged more than any other in Europe by the pandemic. Leaving the European Union was a contentious political option,

Simon Jenkins

but leaving Europe's single markets and customs unions was madness from the start. It was largely an extreme rhetorical gambit, brandished to help Johnson defeat his rivals for the Tory party leadership in the summer of 2019. Downing Street this week must throw stubbornness to the winds. Its City of London needs Europe. Its industry needs Europe. It tourism needs Europe. Johnson must climb down. The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, and Johnson's old rival Michael

Gove must collaborate to make this happen. Frost and his team have to listen to Barnier, no ifs or buts, whatever it takes. As a sign of good intent, Johnson should withdraw the internal market bill, which is now before the House of Lords, since under no deal it would necessitate a hard border, smash the Good Friday agreement and incidentally enrage Biden, who has previously said peace in Northern Ireland can't be a casualty of Brexit. Britain just now is as weakened by bad government as it has ever been. The shambles over Covid was preceded by a year of chaotic negotiations over Brexit during which the EU reasonably sought a working trade relationship with a recalcitrant offshore island. Britain postured and lectured and rejected compromise. At the weekend, Johnson was quoted as still saying "we just need to get them to do it" - or he will cut off Britain's nose to spite its face come January. No, enough of these games. Britain must agree whatever deal the EU offers, so everyone can get back to business.

4 terrorists killed in encounter at Nagrota district in Jammu and Kashmir



Jammu, November 19 : Four terrorists have been killed in an encounter near the Ban toll plaza. The encounter took place at Jammu and Kashmir's Nagrota district. Security has been tightened in the area and the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has been closed. Jammu: Four terrorists have been killed in an encounter between security forces and terrorists near Ban toll laza in Jammu's Nagrota district at the Jammu and Kashmir highway, early Thursday morning. According to reports, the terrorists were trapped and there was gun firing from both

the ends. The terrorists were on their way to Kashmir from Jammu in a bus. Confirming the incident, DGP Jammu Kashmir Police Dilbagh Singh said, "Terrorists affiliated with JEM group have been killed at Ban toll plaza in Jammu - Kashmir Highway near Nagrota. They infiltrated from Samba Sector. The terrorists lobbed a grenade on security forces during checking." Two SOG men of the J&K police have been injured in the gunfight, officials said. The gunfight which according to the officials started around 5 AM also led to the closure of Jammu-Srinagar highway. The officials said that the gunbattle started near the toll plaza in the Ban area of Nagrota when some militants opened fire at police and paramilitary forces. The militants, they said, were hiding in a vehicle. The Army also joined the operation, they said. In the initial phase of the gunfight, they said, two SOG personnel were injured who were later hospitalized. The injured have been identified as Kuldeep Raj (32) of Akhnoor and Mohammad Ishaq Malik (40) of Neel Qasim Banihal Ramban. Both have been admitted to GMC Jammu with injuries on neck and their condition is said to be stable. Meanwhile, in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir at least 12 civilians were injured on Wednesday evening in an attack when suspected terrorists lobbed a grenade on security forces. The grenade intended for the joint team of Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Kakapora area of the district, missed the target and exploded on the road. The area has been cordoned and a search in the area is going on. Soon after the attack, the whole area was cordoned off to nab the attackers.



Students participate in a bamboo dance competition at Baoting Middle School in Baoting Li and Miao Autonomous County,

Congress Didn't Want Us To Campaign In Bihar: Sources Close To Dissenters

New Delhi, November 19 : Congress's Kapil Sibal, who has been under fire from party colleagues over his remarks criticizing the party leadership, has refused to officially respond to the attacks. Sources close to him, however, said he had expressed surprise on being attacked for not campaigning in the Bihar election. The attack came from the party's leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury. "Had Kapil Sibal gone to Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, he could have proven that what he is saying is correct and that he strengthened the position of Congress," Mr Chowdhury had said. Leaders close to Mr Sibal said Mr Chowdhury's stance is "unfortunate, since Adhir and other leaders are not aware that most of the G-23 leaders were not on the list of party campaigners for Bihar and none of them could even go to campaign unless the party officially requests them". G-23 was a reference to the 23 dissenters who sent the first critical letter to the party in August, triggering an internal storm and ending up losing the various party positions they held. The latest Congress versus Congress battle - set off by the Bihar results - snowballed on Wednesday with Mr Chowdhury's strong comments about the leaders involved. "If some leaders think that Congress is not the right party for them, they may set up a new party or can join any other party which they think is progressive and according to their interest," the MP had told. Mr Sibal was the first in the line of attack over his interview in The Indian Express, where he advised the Congress to "recognize that we are in decline", pointing to the string of reverses in Bihar, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh where the party has a strong presence. In the same interview, he had also mentioned that he had been forced to go public with his views as "there has been no dialogue and there seems to be no effort for a dialogue by the leadership". It drew barbs from Salman Khurshid, who said: "The fact is we know who the leader is, the fact is we follow the leader. If we follow the leader and we don't get what you think we should get doesn't mean we are going to give up the leader? Somebody doesn't believe we have a leader then they don't know what the party is about." On Tuesday, in a lengthy Facebook post, Mr Sibal called dissenters "doubting Thomases" who suffer "periodic pangs of anxiety" and advised them not to look for "short cuts" to power. Leaders close to Mr Sibal said most partymen agree off the record there is a systemic problem within the party and issues need to be resolved. Without wanting to join issue with Salman Khurshid or Ashok Gehlot, they added that there is a "serious drift" within the party. "Unless the party takes some drastic steps and reinvents itself with a strong and active leadership, the party may not be able to take on the Narendra Modi government," they said.

Trump Team Looks to Box in Biden on Foreign Policy by Lighting Too Many Fires to Put Out



Washington, November 19 : President Donald Trump's order of a further withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and Iraq is the latest foreign policy move on a growing list in his final weeks in office that are meant to limit President-elect Joe Biden's options before he takes office in January. The White House has directed newly installed acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller to focus his attention in the remaining weeks on cyber and irregular warfare, with a focus on China in particular, an administration official tells CNN. It is contemplating new terrorist designations in Yemen that could complicate efforts to broker peace. And it has rushed through

Abu Dhabi puts the squeeze on Imran Khan, Pakistanis in UAE feel the heat

New Delhi, November 19 : Relations between Pakistan and the UAE appear to be on a sharp downward spiral in recent weeks, particularly after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was critical of the UAE's formalisation of its relationship with Israel, people familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity. This has manifested itself not just in the arrest of pro-Palestine Pakistani activists in the UAE, but also of other Pakistani residents, sometimes for minor crimes. The people familiar with the matter said about 5,000 Pakistani inmates are housed in Al Sweihan Jail in Abu Dhabi alone. It is likely that the UAE could impose tighter visa norms for Pakistani nationals who wish to travel to the Emirates for employment. HT learns that Pakistani residents are finding it difficult to renew Resident Permits, and there has been a buzz about deportation,

authorization of a massive arms sale that could alter the balance of power in the Middle East. The Trump team has prepared legally required transition memos describing policy challenges, but there are no discussions about actions they could take or pause. Instead, the White House is barreling ahead. A second official tells their goal is to set so many fires that it will be hard for the Biden administration to put them all out. It's a strategy that radically breaks with past practice, could raise national security risks and will surely compound challenges for the Biden team -- but it could also backfire. Analysts and people close to the Biden transition argue the Trump team may act so aggressively that reversing some of its steps will earn Biden easy goodwill points and negotiating power with adversaries. In other areas, they say the Trump team may be confusing style with substance -- that the difference between Trump and Biden isn't a matter of the end goal, such as a departure from Afghanistan or a nuclear-free Iran, but simply a matter of how each leader wants to get there. "The idea that Biden is some sort of softy doesn't correspond with many things," said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. Pointing to the same baseline goals for a nuclear-free Iran, a withdrawal from Afghanistan and a way to manage the relationship with an increasingly assertive China, Parsi said, "The Biden administration is likely to continue many policies, but just with a different style." Other analysts say that damaging Biden's options might come second to a more important goal for Trump, who has floated the idea of running again in 2024. "I think by seeking to accelerate the process of achieving some of his big foreign policy promises in the next couple of months, Trump is trying to indicate to his base that if he's elected again, he'll continue to do exactly as he promised," said Charles Lister, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute. The Trump team's refusal to work with the incoming team stands in stark contrast with the conduct of previous administrations during transitions. In late 2016 and early 2017, the Obama administration finalized plans for an offensive against the Islamic State but handed over final decisions to the incoming Trump administration because it would be executing the operation and dealing with the aftermath. Officials in President George W. Bush's administration had done the same for Barack Obama. Stephen Hadley, Bush's national security adviser, said, "I had retained a whole stack of actions that either the Bush administration could take as we left office, or we could hold and let the Obama administration make those decisions when they came into office." Acting Defense Secretary Miller announced Tuesday that the US will withdraw 2,500 more troops from both Afghanistan and Iraq by January 15, 2021, five days before Biden takes office. Some observers, pointing to Trump's rush to pull troops over

unanimous objections from the military's most senior leaders as well as NATO commanders, question whether the President and his officials are trying to salt the earth for Biden. "The price for leaving too soon or in an uncoordinated way could be very high. Afghanistan risks becoming once again a platform for international terrorists to plan and organize attacks on our homelands. And ISIS could rebuild in Afghanistan the terror caliphate it lost in Syria and Iraq," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. Lister sees domestic politics at work. "Trump is messaging to his base that he is achieving precisely what he promised, and secondarily he's trying to put the Democrats in a tricky situation," he said. "We're not going to see in two months a total withdrawal from Afghanistan ... so some of this is just symbolism. ... Joe Biden can come into the White House in 2021 and put those troops back in." China hawks in the Trump administration believe there are actions they can take now that will box Biden in, one administration official said. Steps include sanctions and trade restrictions on Chinese companies and government entities that officials believe will be politically impossible for the President-elect to undo. Axios first reported these moves. People close to Biden's transition team dismiss that tough talk, saying that Trump's China policy has been largely toothless, with the President making concession after concession to President Xi Jinping, until the campaign made it politically expedient to look and talk tougher. They argue that in contrast, Biden's approach will be effective because he will work with partners to create what China fears most: an international united front against Beijing. That's something Biden allies say Trump has been unable to do. If Trump levies extra sanctions, the penalties will simply provide Biden with additional leverage, they say. What's less clear: what Miller might do with his mandate to focus on cyber and irregular warfare and what the fallout might be. Trump has floated the idea of a military strike on Iran but was dissuaded, according to The New York Times.

PRESS NOTICE

The executive Engineer, PWD, Guwahati Building Division-I, Guwahati-I on behalf of Governor of ASSAM Invites Item rate bid in two bids system for the work "Replacement of roof of the Deputy Commissioner's office, Kamrup Metro (Renovation of roof and repairing and painting of roof frame, Calling and Electrical fittings and fixtures)" with an approximate value of work of Rs. 37,49,035.00 from APWD registered Class-I (A/B/C) and Class-II contractors (Under Guwahati Building Circle-II) having experience of alimlar nature of work. Details of the bids may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours upto 21.11.2020.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.O
Guwahati Building Division-I
Fancy Bazar, Guwahati-I
Janasanyog/C/7133/20

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

O.O. No. 13
Sealed Tenders, for Technical and Financial Bids, in prescribed formats, affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 10.00 (Rupees ten) only from the intending Govt. Registered Contractors/ Firms/Company Ltd./Joint Venture Unit, for implementation of the following schemes which will be received up to **1.00 PM of 27-11-2020** and will be opened on the same date at **2.00 PM (I.S.T.)** in presence of the tenderers or their authorized agents. Separate sealed and superscribed envelopes are to be used for both Technical and Financial bids and should put them together in a single envelope. If due to certain unavoidable circumstances, the tenders cannot be opened on the aforesaid date, the same will be opened on the next working day. The qualified parties, only in respect of the Technical bids, will be eligible for competing in the Financial bids. Tender paper can be obtained from the office of the undersigned from **21-11-2020** up to **1.00 Noon of 27-11-2020** by depositing **Rs.200/- (Rupees Two Hundred)** only in the form of IPO.
Detail terms and conditions, plan and estimate and tender document may be obtained in the office of the undersigned on or before **27-11-2020**.

Sl. No	Name of Scheme	Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakh)	Name of District	Time of Completion
1	Barjhar Gully Control and Water Harvesting Project under RIDF-XXV, 2019-20 (Part-A)	31.22235	Nalbari	45 days
	Barjhar Gully Control and Water Harvesting Project under RIDF-XXV, 2019-20 (Part-B)	19.824	-do-	45 days

Major terms of References:-
1. The work order will be served as per the decision of the competent authority.
2. Earnest Money: 2% of estimated value in case of General and 1% of estimated value in case of SC/ST/OBC/unemployed Graduate Engineer.
3. Overall quoted rate beyond 2% below the estimated amount will not be accepted in case of RCC works and Overall quoted rate beyond 5% below the estimated amount will not be accepted in case of earth work.

Sd/-
Divisional Soil Conservation Officer Nalbari
Soil Conservation Division, Nalbari
Janasanyog/C/7128/20



A skier is seen at a ski field during a snowfall in Chongli District of Zhangjiakou City, north China's Hebei Province

Contd. From Page 1

Sonowal inaugurates World

scattered in several areas of the state. Sonowal also laid emphasis on generating awareness among the young generation about the rich cultural heritage of the state, as he asked the district administrations and public representatives to take steps in this regard. He said that the district administration and public representatives need to take proactive steps for acquainting the students with their rich cultural heritage in their respective districts. Synchronising with the occasion, Sonowal in acknowledging the role, conferred award christened 'Aithijya Mitra' on Krishna Kumar Sinha of Hojai, Nabin Buragohain of Sivasagar, Ghuguwa Preservation Committee of Dhemaji as the award consists of certificate, angabastra, approbation and Rs. 50 thousand to each of the awardees. Moreover, in recognition to their works related to preservation of historical monuments, Chief Minister Sonowal also felicitated Dilip Buragohain, Jiten Borpatroghain, Dr. Atul Buragohain, Purna Gogoi and Tulsi Neog. Chief Minister synchronising with the occasion also released books named Archaeological Heritage of South Asia, Handbook on Archaeology of Assam and Exploration Report of West Karbi Anglong district. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Archaeological matter Keshab Mahanta said that in accordance with the declaration of Sivasagar as iconic sites along with other four sites, Centre has sanctioned Rs. 3500 crore for the preservation and beautification of the cultural heritage. He also said that a world class museum will be built in Sivasagar for the preservation and beautification of the archaeological sites of Sivasagar. Moreover, for the proposed inclusion of Charaideo's Maidam into UNESCO's world heritage site, State government took a project involving Rs. 25 crore for the preservation and beautification of the maidams. The programme where welcome address was given by Commissioner and Secretary Cultural Affairs Preetom Saikia, Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah also spoke on the occasion. Minister of State for Revenue and Disaster Management Jogen Mohan, MP Rajya Sabha Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, MLAs Kushal Duori Nabanita Handique, Rituporna Baruah, CEM Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council Dipu Ranjan Makrari, Chairman AHSEC Dayananda Buragohain Director Archaeology Department Deepirekha Kuli, DC Sivasagar Lakhinandan Gogoi and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

300 families joined formally

Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in the hills District of Assam. One should be aware that there is a strong correlation between Autonomous State and Sixth Schedule. If Autonomous State can be made then strengthening of Sixth Schedule will automatically come along," ASDC President Chandra Kt. Terang said in the meeting. "After National Party BJP and Congress have come to power, due to their arrogance the 1995 MoU agreement with ASDC and 2011 MoS agreement with UPDS could not implemented properly ill date and this is a matter of concern. Instead they have auctioning the vacancies and surrendering the power of Council to the State. So, to outcome from this mess it is necessary for implementation of Article 244(A) and this can be achieved through the mass movement carried out by ASDC," Terang said. In the Mass Joining Rally organised by ASDC was chaired by its Vice President Sonasing Terang was attended as guest by KAAC ex-EM and ASDC General Secretary Jotson Bey, ex-MLA Hemsing Tisso, KAAC ex-Chairman Daniel Teron, ex-EM Senot Kro, KSA President Jemson Timung, KNCA President Merina Bepyi and several others have attended.

Bihar Education Minister

also targeted RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, who had spearheaded the attack against him. Mr Yadav, he said, had corruption cases against him and should not be the one to point fingers. In a series of tweets, Tejashwi Yadav had accused four-time Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of appointing "criminals" to retain power in state. "Power is protecting criminals... Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has granted exemption to loot and robbery by appointing Mewalal Choudhary... the Chief Minister will continue his discourse on Crime, Corruption and Communalism to save his chair... None of the minority communities were made ministers," he posted. Accusing the Chief minister of scripting a "drama" of the induction and resignation of a "corrupt" minister, Mr Yadav today tweeted, "The real culprit is you. Why did you make him a minister ?? Your duplicity and gimmick will no longer be allowed to run". Mr Yadav, whose party has won the maximum number of seats, said in another tweet that the mandate was order to the RJD to warn the Chief Minister against "corrupt policies, intentions and rules". "Just a resignation will not do now. There is also the matter of finding 19 lakh jobs and many issues of public concern like contracts and equal work-equal pay," he tweeted. A video of Bihar's newly-appointed Education Minister Mewalal Choudhary, struggling to get the lines of the national anthem during a flag-hoisting ceremony, was shared by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Wednesday. The RJD, Bihar's main opposition party, has attacked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for appointing Mr Choudhary, who faces allegations of corruption, as a minister in his cabinet. The undated video shared by the RJD shows Mr Choudhary botching up the lines of the national anthem and singing incorrect lines at a flag-hoisting ceremony. He was surrounded by children and a few adults as he saluted the national flag. Towards the end of the 38-second clip, he is seen saying "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande" as the children say "Mataram". "Bihar Education Minister Mevalal Choudhary, accused in several corruption cases, does not even know the national anthem. Nitish Kumar-ji, is there any shame left? Where did the conscience sink?" the RJD tweeted in Hindi. Mewalal Choudhary, 67, was suspended from the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) in 2017 after a case was registered against him over alleged irregularities in appointments during his tenure as the Vice Chancellor of the Bihar Agriculture University in Bhagalpur district. Mr Choudhary, however, has dismissed as baseless all allegations against him related to corruption in construction and irregularities in appointments to posts of assistant professor and junior scientist. "No. Never. I have not written anything (about corruption in my election affidavit). I don't know where you get this information. I am the informer, I know. No one is above the law and a case is pending in the court. Not even a chargesheet has been filed. The probe is ongoing. Nothing has happened," Mr Choudhary said when NDTV said his election affidavit stated that a case of corruption has been filed against him. Promoted Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com In a series of tweets, Tejashwi Yadav accused Nitish Kumar of appointing "criminals" to retain power in state. "Power is protecting criminals... Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has granted exemption to loot and robbery by appointing Mewalal Choudhary... the Chief Minister will continue his discourse on Crime, Corruption and Communalism to save his chair... None of the minority communities were made ministers," Mr Yadav, 31, tweeted.

KMSS condemns "fascist Govt"

Basistha. Because of this, 3 of our KMSS men, as well as members of the Art Collective have been arrested. It is truly baffling. Akhil Gogoi is no traitor — so why have they been arrested for painting an image of Akhil Gogoi?", said Arindam Gogoi, the Jorhat Secretary of the peasants' body. "Why have the artists and our members been arrested? This has shown that the BJP-led Government is a fascist Government. Therefore, we urge all to vote this fascist Government out." In a shocking development, street artists in Guwahati, Assam, were arrested for bringing attention to the incarceration of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) leader Akhil Gogoi by painting a massive portrait of the activist on the wing wall of a bridge in Guwahati city's Basistha area. According to our sources, 4 artists and Chhatra Mukti Sangram Samiti (SMSS) leader Pranjal Kalita were picked up moments earlier near the Nidhi Bhawan and taken to the Basistha Police Station. According to reports, the artists belong to a group called 'Anga Art Collective.' The mural painted by the artist shows Akhil — raising his fist in a symbol of protest — being surrounded by men in uniform carrying lathis. "They (the artists) had been making a portrait of Akhil Gogoi in front of the Nidhi Bhawan. There was no problem then. Today, authorities turned up and asked the artists to immediately erase the portrait. However, when they said that they had made the mural to demand his release, they were forcibly picked up and whisked off to the nearby Basistha Police Station," KMSS General Secretary Mukut Deka told.

Fight between BJP & BPF is like

declared the dates of the upcoming polls in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) which were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alok Kumar, the State Election Commissioner of Assam, today announced that the BTC election shall be held in two phases — on December 7 and 10.

With eyes on active politics

Sangram Samiti (KMSS), has floated another political outfit — 'Rajior Dal' — which will also take part in the polls. BJP is the second political party to be formed by AASU after Asom Gana Parishad, which came into being in 1985. The AGP is now part of the ruling alliance at Dispur. The general conference, to be held at Dulaijan in Dibrugarh district, is expected to announce the office-bearers of the new political part. At the same time, many known faces — such as President Dipanka Nath, General Secretary Lurinjoyti Gogoi, and Chief Adviser Samujjal Bhattacharya — are expected to leave the body to give wings to a career in politics. Both the President and General Secretary of the AASU are ending just in time for them to make the switch to politics, with their promises of a "better alternative" to the saffron BJP during the agitation against the 'CAA' still ringing in people's ears.

Big question mark over

same Constituencies." The UPPL leader also claimed that many more members of the BPF party will be leaving after the polls. "However, our doors are now closed to the likes of Biswajit Daimary and Emmanuel Mosahary. These leaders come from a regional background and have now gone on to represent a national party. They should have thought long and hard before making that switch," he added. The former Rajya Sabha MP also exuded hope that the UPPL would form the Government in the BTC with an "absolute majority" when all is said and done. "The BJP party will win 1-2 seats, the BPF will win Seats in the single digits, while the Gana Suraksha Party (GSP) of Naba Sarania will score a blank. According to preliminary surveys, the UPPL will win 30 Seats and form the Government with an absolute majority."

Ulfa(I) Appoints Michael Asom As New Deputy Commander-In-Chief

GUWAHATI, Nov 18 : Insurgent group United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent or ULFA (I) has appointed Michael Asom as new deputy commander-in-chief of the outfit. Michael has replaced Drishti Rajkhowa alias Manoj Rabha who had surrendered before Indian Army and Assam Police on November 12. In a statement issued by ULFA (I) publicity wing captain Deep Asom, the outlawed organisation said, "We have granted retirement to Major General Drishti Asom and appointed Major General Sarat Phukan alias Michael Asom in his place." The appointment has made Michael Asom as the second-in-command after commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah. Michael Asom's appointment came after the surrender of Drishti Rajkhowa on November 12. Rajkhowa had been an active member of the ULFA and led the outfit in the western Assam region for over 30 years. Said to be a close confidant of ULFA chief Paresh Baruah, Rajkhowa is known to have been operating in Bangladesh and along the border with Bangladesh in Meghalaya, especially in an area in South Garo Hills district.

Notification For Assam Higher Secondary Tet Released, Details Here

GUWAHATI, Nov 19 : The Government of Assam is going to conduct Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) for Higher Secondary level. Member Secretary of the Empowered Committee for TET for Secondary Education, Assam has published an official notification inviting online applications from eligible candidates who are permanent residents of Assam. The online application process will begin from November 20, 2020. The last date of filing online application forms is November 30. The tentative date for the examination is January 10, 2021. The applications must be submitted at the website— <https://ssa.assam.gov.in/Candidate> must be a citizen of India and permanent resident of Assam. Candidate must have minimum academic and professional qualification as follows: The Assam Secondary Education (Provincialised Schools) Service Rules, 2018, The Assam Secondary Education (Government Schools) Service Rules, 2020 and OM no ASE 238/2014/214 Dt 8th January 2020 has prescribed the qualification for direct recruitment to the post of Post Graduate Teachers. As per the Schedule appended with the Rules mentioned above the qualification for the Post Graduate Teachers shall be as follows: Post-Graduation with at least 50% marks (or its equivalent) from recognized University and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from National Council for Teachers Education recognized institution, but degrees obtained from off campus and distance education institutions shall not be considered as valid. (If the Territorial Jurisdiction of the institution is beyond their approved jurisdiction then the Institution and the subject in which the degree is awarded must have approval of UGC and all other concerned authorities) Age of the candidate must not be less than 21 years of age. At the time of appointment in Govt./Prov. Schools upper and lower age limit will be applicable as per the Govt. rules/act prevailing at that time.

‘Digital India has become a way of life’, says PM Modi at Bengaluru Tech Summit

New Delhi, Nov 19 :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the 'Digital India' mission launched by the Centre five years ago is no longer being seen as a regular government initiative and it has instead become a way of life.

"Thanks to Digital India, our nation has witnessed a more human-centric approach to development. Using technology at such a large scale has brought about several life changes for our citizens. The benefits are for everyone to see," the Prime Minister said while inaugurating the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020. Modi said the government has successfully created a market for digital and tech solutions. It has made technology a key part of all schemes. "Our governance model is 'Technology First'," he said. Bringing to spotlight the significance of technology amid the coronavirus pandemic, Modi said, "At the peak of the lockdown, it was technology that ensured that India's poor received proper and quick assistance. The scale of this relief has few parallels." The Prime Minister said that when it comes to technology, the way ahead lies in learning and growing together and following the approach, several incubation centres are opening in India. He also pointed to the culture of hackathons which have been organised in India over the past few years. Talking about the transition from industrial to the information era, Modi said, "Achievements of the industrial era are in the rear-view mirror, and now, we are in the middle of the information era. Future is coming sooner than anticipated. In the industrial era, change was linear. But in the information era, change is disruptive." He said that in the industrial era first-movers had an advantage over others. However, in the information era the best-mover races ahead, Modi said. Hailing India's IT sector, the Prime Minister said, "Our local tech solutions have the potential to go global. It is time for tech-solutions that are Designed in India but Deployed for the World."



Garehagi Rash committee all set to celebrate 113th Rash festival

A Correspondent : Biswanath Chariali: Nov 19: The historic Garehagi Adarsha Rash festival of Biswanath Chariali is all set to celebrate Rash at Garehagi Bor Namghar on November 30 and December 1 with two days schedule. Addressing media persons here, the organizers have stated that the glorious Rash festival which has crossed 112 years of Rash performance already have brought some changes in their Rash festival this year due to COVID 19 pandemic. Persons above the age bar of 65 and children below 10 years are not given any sort of role to play. The organizers stated that this year the Rash festival will be performed in the open ground and the Keligopal drama would be enacted on those days. Further, the organizers have stated that wearing a face mask inside the performance site is mandatory. They further stated that there will be a permanent bench of sanitization for the general audience. The press meet was attended by Padma Kanta Bora, president, Pradeep Koch, secretary of Garehagi Adarsha Rash Festival committee along with other office bearers.

Assam Governor greets people on the occasion of Chhath Puja

Guwahati, November 19 : Assam Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi greeted the people across the State on the auspicious occasion of Chhath Puja which is a festival of self-discipline, faith, belief and prayers to the Sun God. In a message Governor Mukhi said, "My heartfelt greetings to the people all across the state on the auspicious occasion of Chhath Puja where people participate to offer prayers to Sun God. Hope the celebrations of the festival depict utmost self-discipline, faith and belief and help in strengthening human values like restraint over material desires, renunciation etc". He urged upon all not to make much gatherings and follow the safety guidelines and COVID-19 protocols set by the administration and pray for the betterment of humanity.

AITSAA's Jananeta Bhimbora Deori Award 2020 to Renowned Journalist Dharendra Nath Chakraborty

Guwahati, November 19 : The All India Tribal Students' Association Assam (AITSAA) declared its' Jananeta Bhimbora Deori Award 2020 to Noted Journalist of Assam Dharendra Nath Chakraborty who was former Editor of Dainik Asom, Dainik Janambhumi and Ajir Batori, Sankarjyoti etc on the eve of Bhimbora Deori's 73rd Death Anniversary 2020 on 30th November stated by Arindom Prince Panging, Adviser of All India Tribal Students' Association Assam (AITSAA). AITSAA adviser panging also said that noted writer Dharendra Nath Chakraborty has been honoured for his lifelong contribution to journalism in the State and it will be organized on 30th November 2020 at Barbari Aklan Club respectively. The award carries a citation, various Tribal Communities attire, a Gamocha, Japi, Sarai etc. On the eve of the Bhimbora Deori's 73rd Death Anniversary 2020 All India Tribal Students' Association Assam, Greater Guwahati Karbi Cultural Society, Deori Cultural Society are jointly organized a Seminar on Jananeta Bhimbora Deori and his Contributions towards the Nation respectively, it was informed by Babu Rabha Hakasam President of All India Tribal Students' Association Assam (AITSAA).

Tihar Samaroh organized

A Correspondent : Biswanath Chariali, Nov 19: The Sootea regional committee Sootea AAGSU (All Assam Gorkha Students Union) has organized a 'Tihar Bidai Samaroh' (farewell of Tihar festival) at the playground of Tewaripal ME School, Sootea on November 30, stated a press release. In this connection a reception committee was formed with retired teacher Dalmohan Chhetry as chief advisor and Kabiraj Kharka and Rajesh Chhetry as joint secretaries along with other members. 'Deusi' and 'Bhaile' competitions have been organized in connection with Tihar Bidai samaroh. Notably, Tihar is a five day long mega festival of Gorkhas which is celebrated around the globe. Deusi and Bhaile are similar to Bihu or Huchhari of Assamese society. Deusi and Bhaile are performing dances performed by male and female of the Gorkha community during Tihar festival.

26/11 Mastermind Hafiz Saeed Gets 10-Year Jail Term In 2 Terror Cases

New Delhi, Nov 19 : Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, has been sentenced to 10 years in two terror cases by a court in Pakistan. This was not the first time that Hafiz Saeed, chief of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a front organisation for the terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was sentenced in a terror case by a Pakistani court. In February, Hafiz Saeed and some of his aides were convicted and sentenced to 11 years in a terror-financing case. "The anti-terrorism court of Lahore on Thursday sentenced four leaders of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, in two more cases," PTI quoted a court official as saying. Hafiz Saeed and his two aides - Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid - have been sentenced to 10-and-a-half years each, while his brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki has been sentenced to six-month imprisonment. Hafiz Saeed is wanted in India for planning the attack in Mumbai in 2008, when 10 terrorists killed 166 people and injured hundreds more. He is also known as a "global terrorist" both by the United Nations and the US, which put a \$10 million bounty on his head. Hafiz Saeed was arrested in Pakistan in July last year in connection with terror-financing cases after international pressure built up on Pakistan to come clean. The global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is instrumental in pushing Pakistan to take measures against terrorists roaming freely in Pakistan and using its territory to carry out attacks in India. Pakistan's counter-terrorism department had filed 41 cases against Jamaat-ud-Dawa leaders and four cases against Hafiz Saeed have been decided so far. The rest are pending in several anti-terrorism courts across Pakistan. India has for long been asking international agencies and friendly nations to apply pressure on Pakistan to make it stop sheltering terrorists on its soil. India gave proof to the Paris-headquartered FATF through several dossiers last year about how Pakistani agencies are funding the terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed that was responsible for a car bomb attack on a CRPF convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama in February 2019. Since then Pakistan has been facing possible blacklisting by the FATF, which could lead to downgrading of the country by lenders like International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and European Union.

Govt. announces quota in MBBS, BDS seats under Central pool for children of COVID warriors

New Delhi, Nov 19 : Move aims to honour contributions of healthcare workers, says Health Minister The Health Ministry has approved a new category for selection and nomination of candidates from 'Wards of COVID Warriors' under Central pool MBBS/BDS seats for the academic year 2020-21. Five Central pool MBBS seats have been reserved for this category for the year 2020-21, said a release issued by the Ministry. Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan on Thursday announced the government's decision to introduce a new category called 'Wards of COVID Warriors' in the guidelines for selection and nomination of candidates against Central pool MBBS seats for 2020-21. He said that this move aimed to dignify and honour the noble contribution made by the COVID warriors in treatment and management of COVID-19 patients. The Minister added that the State/Union Territory governments will certify the eligibility for this category. "The selection of candidates will be made by the Medical Council Committee (MCC) through online application on the basis of the rank obtained in NEET-2020 conducted by National Testing Agency," said the Ministry.

'The whole city was gridlocked'

Brisbane heaves as fans allowed back en masse

London, November 19 : The Australian rugby league fraternity has a tendency to pontificate that their code is "the greatest game of all". On Wednesday night, it really was the greatest - at least numerically - as it became the envy of sporting fans and organisations across the world. Suncorp Stadium's official crowd at the State of Origin finale between Queensland and New South Wales was 49,155. It is believed to be a world record since Covid-19 shut down sport. The figure, while not quite a sellout at the 52,500-capacity stadium due to some lingering biosecurity measures, eclipsed last month's 46,061 attendance at Auckland's Eden Park for the Wallabies' loss to the All Blacks. That Bledisloe Cup crowd was larger than the 29,707 at the AFL grand final at the Gabba, which itself had been the biggest attendance at a sporting fixture since 86,174 watched the Women's T20 World Cup final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 8 March. That was three days before the World Health Organisation officially declared the coronavirus a global pandemic. Since then, home-ground advantage has all but evaporated globally these past eight months. Origin is quintessential sporting tribalism. Rapture wrapped in rage and catapulted into every poor sod stationed in its general direction. The annual tit-for-tat is often more about the people in the stands than those on the field and cardboard cutouts, innovative though they are, lack the required partisanship. Not so long ago, Wednesday night's setting was widely perceived as unfeasible, if not plain stupid. The country was in its first lockdown while the indefatigable ARL Commission chair-

man, Peter V'landys, worked bullishly to persuade sceptical health authorities, governments and broadcasters the NRL should and could resume as early as 28 May. When the competition did restart - second only to the Bundesliga - other countries observed with curiosity. Moving so quickly was a fine line to tread at the mercy of a pandemic that does



not follow logistical rules. Now V'landys and his administration have got away with it, other industries are seeking the NRL's advice as they feel their own way through this international mess. That is still the case domestically, as South Australia scrambles to contain a new cluster. Origin has even infiltrated petty political border wars, featuring a text exchange between NSW premier Gladys Berejiklian and Queensland counterpart Annastacia Palaszczuk, in which the latter was accused of "rubbing in" NSW's series-opening loss at Adelaide Oval. Last week, after the Blues levelled the series at Sydney's ANZ Stadium, Palaszczuk announced the state was lifting the cap on crowds from 75% of stadium capacity to 100%. "I think

Queenslanders are going to be very, very happy with this outcome," she said. "Let's fill Suncorp and cheer our mighty Maroons on." And so, as top-flight football leagues in Europe play in front of empty stands and virtual crowds, real ones piled into Suncorp Stadium, hardly a 1.5m gap in sight under bright lights and dancing flames that lit up social media with



a mass bewilderment reflecting the challenges of so many living in graver circumstances. With the Queensland borders still closed to the greater Sydney region - the location of a recent cluster - there were precious few Blues scarves speckled in stands otherwise flooded by Maroons regalia, at a venue where NSW have won just twice since 2010. Fists were shaken and arms flailed, players heckled, and humanity momentarily replaced with shrieks for blood that only intensified 20 minutes in when James Tedesco's head ran into Josh Papalii's frighteningly large knee, knocking out the stand-in NSW captain and ending his night immediately. If that was not evidence of normality resumed, a streaker gave support marshals a

surprise second-half workout. Andrew Johns had predicted pre-match the support would give the Maroons a 12-point head start. The NSW great turned pundit was not too far wide of the mark, for they were up 6-0 inside four minutes. Some five minutes later the scores were level, though parity was fleeting. Queensland health authorities did not go so far as to let in Ray Warren, the voice of rugby league who, in all his 77 years, had never called a game remotely. Without permission to avoid the compulsory 14-day quarantine, Warren and his commentary team provided play-by-play updates from the Nine Network's Sydney studio. Those at home could not hear the vocal directives between players and officials with anywhere near the same clarity as a Premier League game with the crowd noise disabled. Maybe that is the point. Wayne Bennett, dressed in a tailored maroon blazer befitting his position as Queensland coach, remarked that "the whole city was gridlocked as we were trying to get to Suncorp". There was traffic at the turnstiles, too, proving everyday fans have not addressed matters of punctuality during their time off. Many had made it to their seats in time for the Welcome to Country, and more still for the Australian national anthem, controversial in its very presence after the NRL reneged on its decision not to play it during this year's series. Some 80 minutes later, by the time some of Bennett's triumphant squad members had poured a celebratory tub of blue Powerade onto his head and that suave blazer, most fans had departed. But they had been there, and the world had seen it.

Casey Stoney's focus keeping high-flying Manchester United grounded

Manchester, November 19 : It is impossible to predict the outcome of a Women's Super League season that, a third of the way through, sees the top five teams separated by only five points. What we can tell, though, is that predictions that this would be the WSL's most competitive season are starting to be borne out. The traditional big three of Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester City have had slips and there is an unpredictability that makes this season's title race tantalising. The not-so-surprise package are Manchester United. Having ended up fourth after last season's premature finish, United sit top after seven games. Casey Stoney's side are unbeaten



and their climb from nothing to the top has been quick and relatively pain-free. Having launched the side in 2018, the club handed Stoney, a well-decorated player and experienced coach but new to management, enough of a budget to ensure they would have an instant impact in the Championship. Promotion and a title were secured in their first season, that top-four finish in their second and now they are rattling the established order. It is a rise even Stoney could not have predicted would come so quickly. Champions League football was and is the ambition, the number of qualifying places increasing from two to three this season to aid that mission. A steady chipping away at the 13-point gap that separated United from third-placed Arsenal (albeit having played a game fewer) would have been expected. On Saturday, though, 800 days into Stoney's tenure, a swerving, rasping strike from the World Cup winner Tobin Heath and a close-range equaliser from Kirsty Hanson earned a draw against Manchester City and confirmed United as serious title contenders. They have taken five points off the traditional top three, having also drawn with Chelsea and beaten Arsenal. At this stage last year, Stoney's side had suffered three defeats from three games against those teams. Those fixtures were tight;

three 1-0 defeats offering a hint at how narrow the margin was. Each time United were left to regret missed chances. The shrewd recruitment of the US internationals Heath and Christen Press, the highly rated England youngster Alessia Russo from North Carolina Tar Heels and the forward Ivana Fuso from Basel has sharpened the attack. Their presence has also elevated the performances of the existing squad. It says a lot that players did not make way for the entrance of the bigger names. Only one forward, Scotland's Lizzie Arnot, departed in the summer. Ella Toone, Hanson and the now-injured Russo have three goals apiece and are United's top league scorers. In many ways Stoney's biggest managerial triumph to date is not the climb itself but how she has taken players from the Championship and fringes of the WSL and turned them into a team of title challengers in three years. "It says a huge amount

about how hard they work day-in, day-out to improve, how open-minded they are, how coachable they are," Stoney said after the derby of the players who have risen with the team. "The way they have developed over the last two years, they're coming on in games against top opposition and not only coping they're thriving. It's really pleasing to see." Now, the manager has a problem because she and her team, who face City again in the League Cup on Thursday, have somewhat revelled in their outsider, newcomer, underdog tags. The fans have loved adopting an "everybody hates us but we don't care" attitude. They have used it to fuel their fire on the pitch and played with a swagger that has almost dared you to underestimate them. Except nobody is underestimating Stoney's side and she has to train them to cope with the tag of title contenders or, say it quietly, even favourites. She is doing that ground work. Players are not allowed to enjoy their victory over Arsenal "for too long", "one game doesn't define our season" is the mantra and the derby is just "another game and it keeps us in and around it". "No," Stoney says sharply when asked whether United are in the title race. It is a clever and consistent management of the mental attitude of her players, a drive to keep things the way they are,

keep the hunger, fight and focus that are enabling this run. It is a run that should be welcomed, too. Because by pushing the bar higher, the spending, vision and drive of United will push up the standards of those around them. That is what is needed: constant challenge to fuel growth.

Rice key to Southgate's new England

A team hard to beat and hard to love

Paris, November 19 : The West Ham midfielder has quietly become the linchpin of Gareth Southgate's increasingly conservative England side. Declan Rice is the only outfield player to have started all five of England's competitive matches this year. Anybody stumbling upon Wembley Stadium on Wednesday night after a long deep sleep would probably be wildly confused by the spectacle greeting them. And in a sense England v Iceland - a Nations League dead rubber played in silence in the midst of a lockdown city - is the football game as philosophical paradox, a fixture whose meaning essentially derives from having none. An ancient folk ritual whose true origins are long forgotten to history. Ask not why, child. As our fathers bequeathed to us, and their fathers before them: it is written on the Uefa website, and so it will be done. England, who can no longer progress from their League A group, will be without Jordan Henderson and Raheem Sterling in addition to an already lengthy injury list. Iceland, who have already been relegated to League B, are on a run of six defeats in seven games. Last week they missed out on qualification for next summer's European Championship in heartbreaking circumstances, conceding two late goals to Hungary. And so for Gareth Southgate, a game that threatens to teach him dangerously little. Iceland may be best remembered on these islands as the team who inflicted such humiliation on Roy Hodgson's side at Euro 2016, but they have regressed sharply in the last two years, slipping down the world rankings and now in search of a new manager. Anything less than a routine win will invite some

extremely uncomfortable questions. Anything more will invite the accusation that this was no sort of test at all. In the absence of most of his first-choice XI, Southgate will thus use this game as an opportunity to drill some existing combinations and perhaps forge some new ones. The in-form Dominic Calvert-Lewin should get another chance. Jadon Sancho and Phil Foden could rekindle the partnership they enjoyed at Manchester City academy. And in the centre of the pitch, the absence of Henderson gives Southgate a



chance to make a bold and thrilling statement of intent, to retool England's midfield into a radical and dynamic attacking force. Only joking. Most likely England will employ the now-familiar double pivot, the two-man screen whose main function will be to protect the back three, block the opposition's passing lanes and funnel the ball to other, more exciting players. Jude Bellingham, the promising 17-year-old from Borussia Dortmund, may be deemed just a little too raw for a full start, and so the honours are likely to go to Harry Winks and Declan Rice. Over the last year,

Rice has quietly become the linchpin of Southgate's England. The West Ham midfielder is the only outfield player to have started all five of England's competitive games this year, and it's probably fair to say people have mixed feelings about this. For some, Rice epitomises the tepid caution and safe sideways passing of a team that have wilfully shed their attacking brio. England have scored just three goals in those five fixtures; no top-tier side has scored fewer. There was a moment in Sunday's 2-0 defeat by Belgium

that encapsulated this. Midway through the second half Rice got the ball in an advanced position on the left, with plenty of players in the box and just enough time to play a first-time cross. Rice looked up, weighed his options ... and decided to go backwards instead. For Rice's critics, this was exactly the reason he needs to make way: a promising opening spurned through a painful lack of ambition. But once you assess the situation from Rice's perspective, it begins to make more sense. He was off-balance and out of position. If Belgium managed to clear the cross, the counterattack was

Ishant Sharma starts bowling full tilt at NCA ahead of Australia Test series

New Delhi, November 19 : India's senior-most fast bowler Ishant Sharma on Wednesday bowled full tilt at the National Cricket Academy with an aim to get fit for India's four-match Test series in Australia, starting December 17. Ishant was ruled out of the Indian Premier League after playing just one game for Delhi Capitals against Sunrisers Hyderabad before a "left internal oblique muscle tear" ended his campaign prematurely. The injury in common language is side strain and Ishant has been at the NCA doing his extensive rehabilitation work under the watchful eyes of Director Rahul Dravid and head physio Ashish Kaushik. On Wednesday, ESPNcricinfo on their twitter handle, posted a minute-long clip of the 32-year-old, who was seen bowling from his full run-up. Dravid and chief selector Sunil Joshi watched Ishant bowl. He was mainly bowling single stump with NCA coaching staff like Paras Mhambrey and Mansur Khan also in attendance. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly in a recent interview to PTI had said that they are expecting Ishant to get fit before the first Test in



Adelaide. "Yes, we are expecting Ishant to be back for the Test matches. He has already started bowling from shorter run-ups and short spells. He has bowled at NCA." But as there is a BCCI protocol for fast bowlers, Ishant will be playing the two first-class games in Australia," Ganguly had said. If Ishant manages to play three games in Australia, he will join Kapil Dev as the second Indian fast bowler to play 100 Tests. He is also three wickets shy of reaching 300 wickets, which will also be a landmark achievement even though slowest among all speedsters who have reached that particular milestone.

Wriddhiman Saha back at India nets, on road to recovery



New Delhi, November 19 : Veteran wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha was back at the Indian team nets on Wednesday, showing signs of recovery from an injury with four weeks still left for the much-anticipated December 17-21 Test series opener against Australia in Adelaide. Saha, one of the finest of glovesmen ever to have donned the national colours, had damaged both his hamstrings during a short but successful IPL campaign for Sunrisers Hyderabad, in which he scored two match-winning half-centuries. Thanks to the injury, the 36-year-old keeper missed the eliminator as well as the second qualifier of the Indian Premier League. On Wednesday, Saha was seen facing throwdowns at the nets from the Sri Lankan left-arm specialist Nuwan Seneviratne and Indian right-arm bowler Dayananda Garani for a consider-

able period of time. He didn't keep wickets though and the extent of recovery couldn't be ascertained from the video uploaded by the BCCI media. There wasn't any pronounced forward press or footwork involved while driving the half-volleys, which could be an indicator of how quickly his hamstring is healing. However, the man who has so far played 37 Tests and scored 1238 runs for the country, didn't look uncomfortable during his time at the nets. From the video it seemed that both the throwdown specialists didn't go full tilt at the batsman, who is trying to gradually get into the groove after the injury. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly recently expressed confidence that Saha would be fully fit before the first Test with both Nitin Patel and Nick Webb working on his injury management. During the last Test series in New Zealand, Saha was confined to the sidelines with Rishabh Pant getting an opportunity for his superior batting skills. However, this time around Pant's dreadful batting form in the IPL has not helped his cause. He is also being "slightly overweight" and that has certainly not gone down well with the team management. In case Saha fully recovers, he will be the favourite to don the big gloves in the four-match series.

Joachim Loew to stay on as Germany coach despite loss to Spain : Oliver Bierhoff

Berlin, November 19 : Germany coach Joachim Loew is not in danger of losing his job after they were thrashed 6-0 by Spain in their final Nations League group

Spain ran riot and a shell-shocked Loew was at a loss to explain his side's capitulation in Seville which prevented their qualification for the Nations League semi-

Euros next year. When asked if Loew would remain the coach until next year's Euros, Bierhoff told ARD TV: "Absolutely, yes. This game changes nothing. We still trust Joachim

mum at next year's Euros." The Euros were originally scheduled for June-July this year but the tournament was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Germany needed only a draw to progress to the Nations League semi-finals but the result ensured Spain advanced as the top ranked team in the group. Germany's overhaul far from complete after Spain demolition Germany, planning to have an overhauled and tournament-ready team at next year's European soccer championships, are running out of time, with coach Joachim Loew's changes so far failing to deliver. A 6-0 demolition by Spain on Tuesday was their heaviest defeat in almost 90 years and only added to their fluctuating form in recent months. Loew brushed the defeat off as a "disastrous day" but the coach, in his 14th year in charge, has now seen his team exit in the first

round of a tournament for the third straight time. Winners of the 2014 World Cup, Germany crashed out in the tournament group stage four years later. They were then relegated from the Nations League competition a few months later after failing to win a single game and eventually stayed up only thanks to a rule change. That exit prompted the start of Loew's overhaul as he dropped several world champions - including Thomas Mueller, Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels - in favour of younger players. But their loss to Spain meant they are again out of the Nations League competition from the group stage. "We saw today that we are not as far down the road as we had hoped to be," Loew said of his team's dismal performance against the Spaniards. "After the first goal we just gave up being organised. That was deadly. We charged out

and just opened up all the spaces. We forgot about our game plan and just ran around out there." With falling TV figures, mounting criticism and Loew's refusal to recall Boateng and Thomas Mueller, who won five titles this year with Bayern Munich, and Hummels, the coach has worked himself in a corner. Germany will next play again in March before a few more warm-up matches prior to the tournament start in June. With a large pool of players to choose from but without a finetuned core of starting players, the overhaul that started in 2018, is still largely a construction site seven months before the tournament. "I have faith in my players," Loew said. "Now our responsibility is to question everything and question ourselves as well. We have to draw the right conclusions."



match on Tuesday, national team director Oliver Bierhoff has said. Germany suffered their worst defeat in a competitive game as

finals. Germany have hit a rough patch this year, winning only three of their last eight matches, but Bierhoff said Loew would remain in charge at least until the

Loew, no doubt about that. "With the national team, you have to think and analyse from tournament to tournament. We want to achieve the maxi-

India's red-ball tour of England could have spectators as ECB unveils fixtures

London, November 19 : A five-match Test series against India will headline England's bumper home summer in 2021 as the country's cricket board on Wednesday unveiled a provisional fixture with plans to get crowds back into the stadiums. The matches against India are scheduled for August-September. Earlier this year, England hosted Pakistan and the West Indies in twin Test series behind closed doors due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic, before welcoming Australia for a series of limited-overs matches. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) now seems eager to stage the return of fans into the playing arena from the next season onwards depending on the COVID-19 situation. "We had an amazing summer of international cricket this year with some memorable performances, and we know how much enjoyment it brought to people whilst staying at home," ECB chief executive officer, Tom Harrison, said in a release issued by the board. "Next year we've got another big international programme to look forward to, with the thrill of a five-

Test series against India as the centrepiece, compelling white ball series for our men and women, and an Ashes Series for our Visually Impaired team." Much to the delight of English cricket fans craving for live action, the CEO added, "It's an exciting prospect for England fans, and while COVID-19 means there's still a great deal

of uncertainty, we really hope to be able to welcome fans back into the grounds safely next year to bring that unique atmosphere to stadia across the country." The Test series against India is due to conclude the men's international summer, with matches at Trent Bridge, Lord's, Headingley, the Kia Oval, and Old Trafford. The series is due to



get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley, and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14. During their last tour of the country in 2018, a Virat Kohli-led India lost the Test series 1-4. Before the assignments against India, Sri Lanka are due to play three ODIs from June 29 to July 4, with Pakistan arriving for three T20Is and three ODIs between July 8 and 20. Pakistan will play three one-day matches of the ICC's men's World Cup Super League and three T20 internationals in England next July. The ODIs will be played in Cardiff, London (Lord's) and Birmingham on July 8, 10 and 13 respectively, while the T20Is will be held in Nottingham, Leeds and Manchester on July 16, 18 and 20 respectively. The proposed fixture calendar also sees England women in action against South Africa before Heather Knight's side hosts New Zealand. As per the ECB release, the England visually impaired team is also planning to host Australia in a limited-overs series in August, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

Josh Hazlewood prefers Gabba move if Australia cannot host India in Adelaide

Melbourn, November 19 : Australia would prefer to play India in the first Test at the Gabba in Brisbane if the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Adelaide forces a change in venue, fast bowler Josh Hazlewood said on Wednesday. Adelaide Oval on Dec. 17 but a new cluster of coronavirus cases in the state has cast doubts on whether the match will ahead as neighbouring states closed their borders with South Australia. Hazlewood said if they were to play at the Gabba, the fast bowlers would

rather get the game out of the way before it became hotter and favoured the batsmen. "It probably would be (the Gabba) to be fair," Hazlewood told reporters. "I think the longer we wait the hotter it gets up there so the quicks would all be happy to get that game done in early December. We obviously have a really good record (in Brisbane) and it's a great place to start." Australia have not lost a Test match at the Gabba since 1988. The outbreak in Adelaide forced players such as captain Tim

Paine into self-isolation while others preparing for the domestic Big Bash League were moved to a training camp on the New South Wales coast. Cricket Australia, who had hoped to fill the Adelaide Oval with 27,000 fans - half its capacity - said on Tuesday that they "re-mained committed" to playing the day-night Test match at the venue and were monitoring the situation. Australia will first face India in three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 matches starting Nov. 27 in Sydney.



ICC, CGF unveil qualifying process for 2022 Commonwealth Games

... The deadline for the Qualifier is January 31, 2022. "Cricket at the Commonwealth Games is a fantastic opportunity for us to continue to grow the women's game globally," ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said in the release...

London, November 19 : Six highest-placed teams in the ICC rankings as on April 1 next year along with hosts England will get direct qualification to the 2022 Commonwealth Games' women's T20 competition, which will make its debut at the quadrennial showpiece in Birmingham. Women's cricket will be a part of the Commonwealth Games for the first time ever when the 2022 edition gets underway in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8. The ICC and the Commonwealth Games Federation unveiled the qualification process for the event on Wednesday. Besides England, six other highest ranked teams in ICC Women's T20I Rankings as of April 1 next year will also qualify directly for the

mentum we have created over the past few years... I thank the Commonwealth Games Federation for their support and for making this possible. "We share with them the vision of greater equality, fairness and opportunity in sport and I am sure Birmingham 2022 will go a long way towards us achieving our common objectives. "Since athletes from the Caribbean will be representing their countries and not the West Indies (as they are affiliated with the ICC), the winner of a designated qualifying tournament will decide which country gets to compete if the West Indies get a slot, the release said. Commonwealth Games Federation President Dame Louise Martin said: "We are absolutely delighted to have



eight-team tournament, which will be held in Edgbaston," the ICC said in a statement. It will only be the second time that cricket will feature in the event after a men's competition was part of the Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. The Indian women's team is currently placed third in the ICC standings behind England. The remaining one place will be allocated to the winner of a Commonwealth Games Qualifier, the format and details of which will be announced in due course. The deadline for the Qualifier is January 31, 2022. "Cricket at the Commonwealth Games is a fantastic opportunity for us to continue to grow the women's game globally," ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said in the release. "We are committed to accelerating this growth and maintaining the mo-

women's T20 cricket debut at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. "Cricket has always been one of the Commonwealth's most popular sports and it is so special to have it back at our Games for the first time since the men's competition at Kuala Lumpur... Now is the turn of the women and I can't wait to see the next generation of stars take centre stage." Captains of leading women's teams, including India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, were thrilled at the prospect of women's cricket featuring in the Games. "The inclusion of cricket at the Commonwealth Games is huge for all players and the game in general," Kaur said. "I hope to be there at the games and wish that it is a great success with some engrossing matches and high quality of cricket."





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