

The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Financial assistance to temple priests

Assam Rising News Desk Guwahati, August 21 :

In a bid to reduce carbon emission, the Assam government on Friday decided to procure 200 electric and 100 CNG buses, adding that these buses will be pressed into service in Guwahati city. The government has also decided to provide one-time financial assistance of ₹10000 to inter-district bus drivers and handymen who have been hit hard by Covid-induced lockdown. The government will also provide ₹15,000 to temple priests and naamghorias. Financial assistance under Orunodoi Scheme will be enhanced from ₹830 to ₹1,000 from September 10, said a press statement.

Modern foot over bridges

Assam Rising News Desk Guwahati, August 21 :

On the completion of 100 days of the BJP-led government in Assam, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated three, modern foot over bridges (FOB) in Guwahati. The three foot over bridges built by PWD under SOPD Fund are located at Adabari-AT Road, Boripara-AT Road and Shukreshwar Temple. Dedicating the FOBs to the public, chief minister Dr. Sarma expressed satisfaction over timely completion of the projects and said that these FOBs would greatly facilitate movement of pedestrians, specially during peak traffic hours. GDD Minister Ashok Singhal, MP Queen Oja, M L A Siddhartha Bhattacharya were present at the occasion. The Adabari-AT Road foot over bridge measuring 28 metres has been constructed at a cost of Rs 10 crore 38 lakhs. The construction began in February 2020 and the job ended on 30th July 2021. The Boripara-AT Road foot over bridge measuring 28 metres has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 9 crore 70 lakh.

Need for strong opposition

Assam Rising News Desk Guwahati, August 21 :

Former Lok Sabha MP Sushmita Dev, who has recently joined All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), has said that there is a need for a strong opposition in Assam. The former Congress leader said that she will strive to strengthen the foundation of AITC at the grassroots. "Since I joined the AITC, there has been a rush of calls and messages from people not only in Assam but from various parts of Northeast and also from other states asking about how to approach the AITC chairperson. After this year's Assembly election in West Bengal, the entire nation is looking towards Mamata didi and I believe, people no longer perceive her as only being the Chief Minister of a state," Sushmita told reporters in Silchar on Friday.

Assam will implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022 : Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma

Staff Reporter Assam Rising, Guwahati, August 21 :

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state government will implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022. He said that this process would be completed by the end of March next year. Chief Minister Sarma said, "The state government is gearing up to implement the



New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022. Under NEP all high schools would be upgraded to senior secondary school. The government would upgrade the academic

infrastructure of the educational institutions for this purpose within a year. "Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said, "The state government after coming to power made a pledge to provide employment to 1 lakh youth of the state. While fulfilling this promise the state government today launched the appointment process and soon advertisements would be published for several thousand jobs in the education department besides conducting TET." He also distributed appointment letters to 767 candidates in different directorates of the education department at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati. Out of 767 candidates, 616 applicants were appointed under the Directorate of elementary education, 32, under the

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Assam Governor wishes on Raksha Bandhan

Staff Reporter Assam Rising, Guwahati, August 21 :

Assam Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi conveyed his greetings to the people of Assam on the eve of Raksha Bandhan. In a state-

ment here today, Governor Prof. Mukhi said, "Raksha Bandhan is an occasion which celebrates the special bond between sisters and brothers, the bond which makes our society a unique one". On this occasion, sisters of Prajapita Brahmakumari, members of Marwari Mahila Ekta Manch, Akhil Bharatiya Marwari Mahila Sammilan, Marwari Sammelan Guwahati, Mahila Sakha and Kalyan Ashram today tied

rakhi to the Governor at Raj Bhavan. Prof. Mukhi while expressing his gratitude thanked the sisters for tying him 'Rakhi'. He also spent time and interacted with them and as a true Indian

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Naga couple set to trek to Everest Base Camp to raise funds for orphanage library

Staff Reporter Assam Rising, Guwahati, August 21 :

Thejakielie Zuyie and Verakholu Veyie from Nagaland are planning a trek to the Base Camp of Mount Everest in Nepal next month to raise funds for an orphanage in the state. The couple has earlier scaled some of the highest mountains in Nagaland such as Saramati, Japfu and Pauna. "Since we have been doing a lot of adventures, we thought why not do it for a cause instead of just doing it for ourselves," Zuyie told. He went on to talk about setting up a library at an orphanage in Nagaland. "We felt that would be a good cause. We do not read much, but that

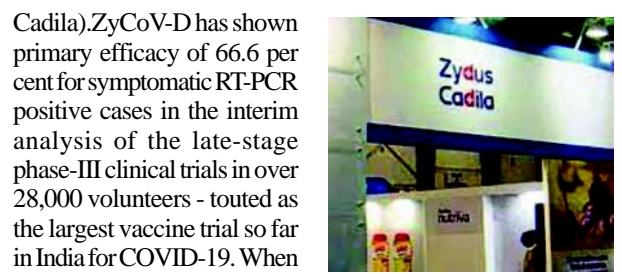


would help the children in the home." A group of researchers from the Wildlife Institute of India and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science have discovered a new species of frog in Arunachal Pradesh and it has been named after the Adi tribe in the state. Named Adi Cascade Frog or Amolops Adicola, the new species belongs to a group of cascade frogs that are found near small waterfalls or cascades in flowing hill streams. "The new species was discovered while revisiting the century-old Adi expedition in the year 2018 and named after the land of Adi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh where this species dwells, particularly during the post-monsoon season," Abhijit Das from Wildlife Institute of India, has been quoted. The findings have been published in the Journal of Natural History. Dr H. Gor

Ahmedabad, August 21 :

The world's first needle-free, plasmid DNA Covid-19 vaccine is ready to roll out from Gujarat's Zydus Cadila. The home-grown drugmaker's three-dose vaccine, ZyCoV-D, received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the regulator Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) on Friday. The much anticipated vaccine is a breakthrough of sorts, as ZyCoV-D is an intradermal vaccine and will help those hesitant to take an in-

jection. It becomes India's first Covid-19 vaccine for adolescents in the 12-18 age group, and sixth in the pack of vaccines for adults. The vaccine is also the second indigenous one after Bharat Biotech-ICMR's Covaxin. "This is a historic milestone with ZyCoV-D, a product of Indian innovation becoming the world's first DNA vaccine being offered for human use and supporting the world's largest immunisation drive," said Pankaj R Patel, Chairman, Cadila Healthcare Ltd (Zydus



Cadila). ZyCoV-D has shown primary efficacy of 66.6 per cent for symptomatic RT-PCR positive cases in the interim analysis of the late-stage phase-III clinical trials in over 28,000 volunteers - touted as the largest vaccine trial so far in India for COVID-19. When administered, it produces the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and elicits an immune response mediated by the cellular and humoral arms of the human immune system, which play a vital role in protection from disease as well

as viral clearance. It is given at an interval of 0-28-56-days using The PharmaJet - a needle-free applicator for painless intradermal vaccine delivery. The vaccine is stored at

'Ashraf Ghani is a total crook, never had full confidence in him': Donald Trump

New Delhi, August 21 :

Former United States president Donald Trump, who has emerged as one of the strongest critics of the current US administration over the worsening situation in

Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover, hit out at former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani. Ghani, who fled Afghanistan on August 15 after the Taliban took over the capital city of Kabul, has been facing glo-

bal criticism for abandoning the people of his country. A slew of allegations has surfaced against him, including fleeing Kabul with four cars and a helicopter full of cash and stealing \$169 million from state coffers. Donald

Trump, who was giving an interview to Fox News on Tuesday night, said he "never had full confidence in Ashraf Ghani". "I said that openly and plainly I thought he was a total

Assam Plans To Replace Diesel Buses With CNG, Electric In Guwahati

Staff Reporter Assam Rising, Guwahati, August 21 :

The Assam government today announced a plan to replace diesel buses in Guwahati with electric and compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles within a

year. "The Assam cabinet has approved the purchase of 200 electric and 100 CNG buses for Guwahati. We aim to apply that rule to private bus operators in the city in a phased manner," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

Assam's Youth will fly with development, not drugs : IPS GP Singh tells

Staff Reporter Assam Rising, Guwahati, August 21 :

Assam Police are moving ahead with a three-pronged strategy to break the drug cartel flourishing in the 'Golden Triangle' and bring those caught into the trap back on the track, said GP Singh, IPS and Special DGP, Law and Order, and Director, Vigi-

lance and Anti-Corruption, in an exclusive interview to Bureaucrats India. "Youths in particular and common people in general are determined to eradicate the menace of drug abuse from Assam. The 'Team Assam' is working in a coordinated manner with all stakeholders. We are confident that the North East states youths would fly high by being partners of develop-



ment and not taking drugs," he told Dr Navneet Anand, Editor in Chief of Bureaucrats India. Singh said that

going with the Assam

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Desperate crowds, empty flights and rage in Afghanistan at governments who failed to plan

Kabul, August 21 : The Kabul airport gates were a path not to escape but to hospital for one Afghan human rights activist this week. A relative was shot in the head in the melee of people trying to leave, and so she spent the evening trudging to a market to buy alcohol and gauze for his wounds. The hospital had run out. Every day, people are shot, beaten and choked with teargas as they gather outside the concrete barricades that shutter off the last tiny sliver of western-held territory in Afghanistan, and the last hopes of escaping the Taliban regime. At least 12 people have died trying to reach the airport this week, from gunshots or in stampedes. While the US and UK say their evacuations are gathering pace, there seems to be little sign of that on the ground in Kabul, where many Afghans are stuck outside the airport or behind checkpoints that seem impossible to pass. Still the crowds are gathering in their thousands, willing to risk their lives, and their children's lives, for fear of what lies ahead at home now. Almost none are getting out. Flights are leaving Afghanistan empty, or carrying mostly foreign citizens. There are some Afghans who manage to successfully run the gauntlet of Taliban checkpoints, surging crowds and foreign military to make it inside the compound. But they are mostly people with links to the western military and its embassies. An expanded US scheme covers those who worked for western media or NGOs. But Britain has excluded many, including contractors and those who worked for embassy affiliates such as the British Council. This is the reality of what has unfolded in Afghanistan this week, as the Taliban has returned to govern the country after 20 years. For Afghans who have spent all that time fighting within Afghan organisations for the values the west claimed to promote, including democracy and women's rights, there is even less chance of getting out. They have no foreign organisations to sponsor the visas they need to flee. "I am devastated. It is failure upon failure," said Shaharazad Akbar, who leads the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. Her organisation has spearheaded the fight against both Taliban and government abuses for two decades, and some of its staff have paid the ultimate price; several of its activists have been killed in targeted assassinations in recent years. Not a single one had been evacuated from Kabul yet,



she said. Some have been offered flights, and tried to reach the airport, some - including elderly and disabled people - have been twice, to no avail. They were now poised, Akbar said, in a horrible balance of fear: terrified of staying, and terrified of the consequences of trying to leave. "Right now when colleagues have flights, I have to convince them to go to the airport. They have tried once, twice and they have failed and so they dread going again," she said. And the journey is only getting harder, as the Taliban consolidate control of the city. "Female heads of household, women travelling alone, they are getting more and more harassment." Inside and outside Kabul there is growing rage and despair at the failures of a crippled evacuation programme that in its current state risks leaving most of the most vulnerable Afghans behind. "What's happening is a fiasco. We should all hang our heads in shame," said Rachel Reid, a human rights consultant working with Afghan organisations. "Thousands of Afghans who have stood up to the Taliban for years

are at risk. But they are being pushed out of the way at the airport gate as the US and UK and other states fly their citizens out over the heads of vulnerable Afghans." The anger was directed at the governments that failed to plan, and the international organisations that are letting their staff down. UN employees have resorted to begging friends and former colleagues for help, as they say the international institution has no plans to evacuate most of them. "Dear Antonio Guterres. I worked for the UN in Afghanistan for four years and my inbox is full of Afghans I worked with at the UN desperately pleading for my help in escaping. Kindly advise me who I should refer them to," said Heather Barr, from Human Rights Watch, on Twitter. Despite the Taliban's promises of general "amnesty" in press conferences, Afghans have lived with the group before, and heard reports of atrocities that trailed their advance across the country. There has already been a massacre documented in the last week, and in Kabul the Taliban are going house to house, looking for people with links to both the government and foreigners. It is fear of this record, this pattern of behaviour, that drove a young

football star to risk, and lose his life, clinging to the side of a US military plane in a desperate bid to escape. The same terror drives crowds to surge to the sides of the airport, day after day, despite shootings, beatings. As the scale of the government vacuum became clear, a network of individuals tried to fill the gap, including international figures such as Hillary Clinton. "Last week, the evacuation options to get women's rights activists out came largely from an informal network of powerful, connected, some very wealthy people, some trying to literally charter private jets to evacuate women thought to be Taliban targets," said Marie Clarke, the vice-president of global programmes at Women for Women International, which has operated in Afghanistan for nearly two decades. "It is amazing that private individuals and concerned citizens of America are organising themselves together to try and protect Afghan women, because of this vacuum of official, government-run mechanisms for those most at risk to have safe passage out of the country. Like almost anyone who has worked in the field, she was moved by the scale of mobilisation, but seemed furious that the initiative was necessary, that governments had failed. "It really says something about this moment. It also meant that countless hours were wasted in cross-checking lists governments could have drawn up

months ago, or with organisers ringing individual NGO workers asking if they would be able to support a planeload of refugees arriving in a country where they operated. And for all the money, and goodwill, very few people have managed to get out, because of the logistics of getting to the airport, and then the logistics of getting planes in. There are still just a few thousand people a day being flown out, and human rights groups estimate that tens, maybe hundreds of thousands of Afghans are now at risk. For people in Kabul there is perhaps a hope, if a slim one, that the west might reach a deal with the Taliban to smooth evacuations. For those outside the capital, there is almost no hope at all. One former British Council educator from another major city wrote in a message to a colleague: "I am in a very worst situation than before because now I am hiding myself under the ground in a deeper and narrow hole and there is also lack of oxygen. I can't take my wife to doctor and I can't stay with my kids because I am selfish, I want to save my life from Taliban." "All day my mum is standing near to the hole and calling, 'Son, are you OK?' and throwing bottles of water to drink. Just at night I can come out of hole and if we hear knocking on the door of my home, then I go down as soon as I can."



Passengers take subway line No. 3 in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province

Rain falls on peak of Greenland ice cap for first time on record

London, August 21 : Rain has fallen on the summit of Greenland's huge ice cap for the first time on record. Temperatures are normally well below freezing on the 3,216-metre (10,551ft) peak, and the precipitation is a stark sign of the climate crisis. Scientists at the US National Science Foundation's summit station saw rain falling throughout 14 August but had no gauges to measure the fall because the precipitation was so unexpected. Across Greenland, an estimated 7bn tonnes of water was released from the clouds. The rain fell during an exceptionally hot three days in Greenland when temperatures were 18C higher than average in places. As a result, melting was seen in most of Greenland, across an area about four times the size of

the UK. The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded it was "unequivocal" that carbon emissions from human activities were heating the planet and causing impacts such as melting ice and rising sea level. In May, researchers reported that a significant part of the Greenland ice sheet was nearing a tipping point, after which accelerated melting would become inevitable even if global heating was halted. Ted Scambos, a scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado, which reported the summit rain, told CNN: "What is going on is not simply a warm decade or two in a wandering climate pattern. This is unprecedented. We are crossing thresholds not seen in millennia, and frankly this is not going to change until we adjust what we're doing to the air." Greenland also had a large-scale melting episode in July, making 2021 one of just four years in the past century to see such

widespread melting. The other years were 2019, 2012 and 1995. The rain and melt on 14-16 August came at the latest point in the year a major event has been recorded. The cause of the July and August melting was the same - warm air being pushed up over Greenland and held there. These "blocking" events are not uncommon but seem to be becoming more severe, according to scientists. Global sea level would rise by about 6 metres if all of Greenland's ice melted, although this would take centuries or millennia to occur. But the trillions of tonnes lost from Greenland since 1994 is pushing up sea levels and endangering the world's coastal cities. Sea level has already risen by 20cm, and the IPCC said the likely range by the end of the century was a further 28-100cm, though it could be 200cm. Greenland's ice is melting faster than any time in the past 12,000 years, scientists have estimated, with the ice loss running at a rate of about 1m tonnes a minute in 2019.

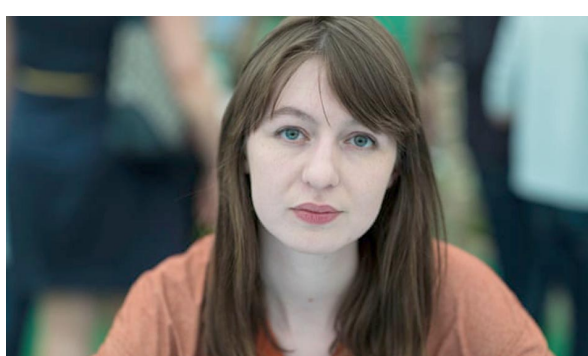
Biden confirms plan to nominate Rahm Emanuel as ambassador to Japan

Washington, August 21 : Joe Biden plans to nominate Rahm Emanuel, a former US lawmaker who served as chief of staff to President Barack Obama and as mayor of Chicago, to be ambassador to Japan, the White House said in a statement on Friday. White House officials lauded Emanuel's experience and long years of public service in announcing the nomination. Emanuel, 61, headed the finance committee for Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992 and later served as a senior adviser to Clinton on policy and strategy. He was Obama's chief of staff for over a year before resigning to run for election as mayor of Chicago, the third largest US city. The White House highlighted Emanuel's work on revitalizing Chicago, which hosted the 2012 Nato summit and led the country in attracting foreign direct investment for six consecutive years. He is currently national chair of the Advisory Council of Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man (BAM) mentoring program. Emanuel said he was honored to be tapped for the job. "The alliance between the United States and Japan is the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in a free and open Indo-Pacific," he said in a statement. The longtime Democratic politician joins a long list of ambassadors nominated by Biden who are awaiting confirmation hearings and confirmation by the US Senate. The White House has grown increasingly frustrated about the slow pace of confirmations for nearly 300 of Biden's nominees, with many nominations being held up by Senator Ted Cruz and other Republican senators to register frustration over various issues.

Advance copies of Sally Rooney's unpublished book sold for hundreds of dollars

London, August 21 : When advance reading copies (ARCs) of Sally Rooney's new novel Beautiful World, Where Are You were sent out in May, there was a flurry of social media posts. A lucky selection of editors, writers and influencers flaunted their copies; others bemoaned not having been granted one. Soon listings for proof copies (which are clearly marked "not for resale") started to appear on trading sites such as eBay and Depop. One copy, listed on eBay by a seller in North Carolina, sold in June for \$209.16. Even the canvas tote bag that Rooney's publicists had been sending out with the ARC copies was fetching prices in the region of \$80. And this growing market for unpublished novels is not just a product of Rooneymania: Jonathan Franzen's Crossroads, which will be published in October, sold earlier this month on eBay for \$124. Advance copies of popular and classic

novels have long been collector's items. A rare proof copy of JK Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, for example, or classics by authors such as Ernest Hemingway or John Steinbeck can sell for up to £30,000. But this high demand for ARCs of books that are yet to be published has only emerged recently, fuelled in part by the rise of book bloggers and influencers. "Part of the purpose of proofs is to make people get to feel like they're in an exclusive club," said Adam Howard, who works for Scribe Publications. "But it happened with the Sally Rooney on a scale we've never seen before." Posting under hashtags such as #Galleybrag, Instagram influencers show off the advanced copies of novels to which they were granted access. Among these, Rooney's forthcoming Beautiful World, Where Are You is by far the most prized. Given the social currency that a selfie with an advance copy of the novel can carry, Howard is not surprised that people are



prepared to pay large sums to get their hands on it. "When a book appears on social media months before official release, other bloggers and readers go mad for it," said Dan Bassett, a Bristol bookseller and blogger who is regularly sent galley copies of forthcoming titles. "This has led to people selling them through market places, with others asking people like myself if I would sell it to them." However, the sale of ARCs is a legal grey area. Advance copies are clearly marked as not for sale, and publishers remain their legal owners. This means that technically, a publishing house could

commerce giant eBay, on the other hand, is far more lax. In fact, multiple copies of Rooney's novel were sold by one eBay seller based in the United States, where the practice of selling on proofs for profit seems to be more common than in the UK. The increase in demand for advance copies of books has forced publishers to change the way they think about ARCs. "Our focus has to be: how can we make our books as visible as possible in this new media landscape," said Howard. "At Scribe, we no longer produce generic proofs - every one of them is specially designed to be eye-catching, striking and shareable, and we invest our limited budgets into making sure that people on social media have a good reason to share a book with their followers." Both Sally Rooney's publisher Faber & Faber and Jonathan Franzen's publisher 4th Estate declined to comment.

BBC inquiry dismisses Rupert Murdoch complaints about documentary series

London, August 21 : Rupert Murdoch has largely lost a year-long dispute with the BBC after he objected to a documentary series that "implied he posed a threat to liberal democracy". Murdoch's News UK business complained that a BBC Two documentary unfairly suggested the Australian-born media mogul "exercised malign political influence" through his ownership of news outlets. It said the BBC programme was biased and failed to give enough weight to more positive appraisals of Murdoch's career. In particular, News UK objected to the lack

of coverage of Murdoch's financial successes in the world of business, which might have led viewers to reach a different conclusion about the relative success of his career. Although criticisms of Murdoch's impact on the media industry around the world are common, it is rare for the 90-year-old to pursue an objection to such coverage through a formal complaints process. He now intends to take the relatively rare step of rejecting the BBC's internal conclusions and elevating the complaint to the external body Ofcom,

setting up a clash between three of the biggest forces in UK media. The three-part series, entitled The Rise of the Murdoch Dynasty, was first broadcast in July 2020 but the BBC's internal editorial complaints unit has only just ruled on whether its content met the public broadcaster's standards. It dismissed most of News UK's objections that the documentary was unfair because it gave too much weight to Murdoch's opponents, gave too much credence to the views of people associated with the press regulation campaign



Hacked Off, or that the programmes substantially misrepresented the scandal that led to the closure of the News of the World. "Some contributors did express concern about the nature of Mr Murdoch's influence, but it was a matter of personal opinion, which individual

contributors were entitled to express, and not a basis for inferring an editorial line on the part of the programme makers," the BBC investigation concluded. However, the complaints unit did find in Murdoch's favour on one aspect. They accepted that the documentary went too far in implying that a series of tabloid "sleaze" stories in the Murdoch-owned Sun and News of the World, exposing the private lives of Conservative MPs in the run-up to the 1997 general election, were related to Murdoch's decision to back Tony Blair's New Labour.



Passengers of a flight of Lufthansa bringing evacuees from Afghanistan arrive at Frankfurt International Airport, in Frankfurt

Kudmali Sahitya Sabha to start Certificate courses in Kurmali language



ACORRESPONDENT, Orang, Aug 21: Assam Kudmali Sahitya Sabha to soon start the Six months Certificate Course in Kurmali language, the most prevalent among the tribal tea community of Assam. Kudmali Sahitya Sabha Chief Secretary Suresh Kudmi said that the course will be introduced in a total of 13 districts of Assam in the tribal tea community areas of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, East Karbi Anglong, Nagaon,

Hojai, Sonitpur, Vishwanath, Lakhimpur and Udalguri districts respectively. The Chief Secretary said that the kudmali sahitya sabha held online on Aug 18 will include a subject like history of tribal tea community and Tal-Matra of madal in jhumoir song etc in the Kudmali Certificate Course. He added that teaching will be arranged both online and offline. Application form has to be filled online. The admission fee will be Rs 500, monthly fee Rs. 100 and exam fee Rs. 200.

People of any age who have passed Class X can get admission. You can contact 9957450689 to know the details. Kudmali language is one of the Dravidian language families in India. The storehouse of its own basic words in this language is very rich. The Kudmali language is used by the agronomy Kudmi community as well as various occupations like Rajwar, Goala, Kairi, Pan Tanti, Teli, Musi, Dom, Ghasi, Napit, Dhuvi, Kumar, Kamhar or Lahar, Tasa, Jalha etc as a cultural and exchange language. Ranchi University in Jharkhand state has provided post graduate department teaching of Kurmali language since 1980. Kudmali language is being taught in 6 Universities of Jharkhand and one University in West Bengal. In Assam, about 40 lac people from those communities speak the language.

World 1st Covid Vaccine for children approved In India

Abhijit Chaliha Guwahati, Aug 21: In a major breakthrough, Zydus Cadila has received approval for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for ZyCoV-D on Friday, the world's first and India's indigenously developed DNA based vaccine for Covid-19 to be administered in children and adults 12 years and above. Developed in partnership with the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India under the 'Mission COVID Suraksha' and implemented by BIRAC, ZyCoV-D has been supported under Covid-19 Research Consortia through National Biopharma Mission for Preclinical studies, Phase I and Phase II Clinical Trials and under the Mission COVID Suraksha for Phase III Clinical Trial. "This three dose vaccine which when injected produces the spike protein of

the SARS-CoV-2 virus and elicits an immune response, which plays a vital role in protection from disease as well as viral clearance. The plug-and-play technology on which the plasmid DNA platform is based can be easily adapted to deal with mutations in the virus, such as those already occurring," said the Ministry of Science & Technology in a statement. Speaking on the development, Chairman of the Zydus Group, Pankaj R. Patel said, "We are extremely happy that our efforts to put out a safe, well tolerated and efficacious vaccine to fight Covid-19 has become a reality with ZyCoV-D. To create the world's first DNA vaccine at such a crucial juncture and despite all the challenges, is a tribute to the Indian research scientists and their spirit of innovation." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the approval for world's first DNA based

'ZyCoV-D' vaccine of Zydus Universe is a testimony to the innovative zeal of India's scientists. In response to a tweet by CDSCO India Info, the Prime Minister said, "India is fighting Covid-19 with full vigour. The approval for world's first DNA based 'ZyCoV-D' vaccine of Zydus Universe is a testimony to the innovative zeal of India's scientists. A momentous feat indeed."

NEP will be implemented from the next year

Abhijit Chaliha Guwahati, Aug 21: The Assam government will implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said. Sarma said that this process would be completed by the end of March next year. "The state government is gearing up to implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022. Under NEP, all high schools would be upgraded to senior secondary school," chief minister Sarma told reporters in Guwahati on Friday. He said the government would upgrade the academic infrastructure of the educational institutions for this purpose within a year. "The state government after coming to power made a pledge to provide employ-

ment to 1 lakh youth of the state. While fulfilling this promise the state government today launched the appointment process and soon advertisements would be published for several thousand jobs in the education department besides conducting TET," the chief minister said. He also distributed appointment letters to 767 candidates in different directorates of the education department in Guwahati. Sarma said that the state government would continue implementing new provisions of the policy every year to bring about a transformative change in the education department in the next five years. Science, Maths and English would be taught in the English language and the rest of the subjects in the mother tongue, he added.

Huge hand sawn timbers seized at Samaguri



ACORRESPONDENT, NAGAON, August 21: Based on a tip off, forest personnel from Salna forest range led by range officer Nepal Mandal seized a huge quantity of manually sawn timbers, estimated worth of around Rs one lakh from Rangagora area under Samaguri PS early this morning. Sources claimed that the timbers

were carried on bicycles to Rangagora area from Borjuri forest in Karbi Anglong district and stored in hidden for trafficking the timbers to some unknown destinations by a gang of timber smugglers. Later, the timbers were brought to the range office for further legal action, sources added further.

CM Dr. Sarma holds meeting with Revenue Department



STAFFREPORTER Dispur, Aug 21: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today held a meeting with the officials of Revenue & Disaster Management Department to discuss various issues for streamlining the revenue administration of the State. Issues like survey of non-cadastral villages, drafting service rule and inter district transfer of lot mandals, simplification of partition of ejmali patta and hereditary transfer of land etc. were discussed during the meeting. Advocating for total reforms of State's revenue administration, the

present government. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma also asked the department to expedite the process of cadastral survey of all remaining non-cadastral villages and to detail survey of lands in 27 districts of Assam excluding the sixth schedule areas. He directed the department to achieve the goal of completely digitizing the land records of the state within 2023. Issues of inter-district transfer of lot mandals were also discussed in the meeting.

Chief Minister asked the department to complete all pending partition and mutation cases in a mission mode by opening a portal, organizing Rajah Adalat etc. within the next few months. For that, a mission namely "Mission

Basundhara" would be launched on October 2 this year, the Chief Minister said. Dr. Sarma further stressed on solving all such pending matters within May 10, 2022, which will mark the first anniversary of the

PEC expresses concern over continued harassment to Burmese journalists

NEWSDESK

Guwahati, Aug 21: Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), the Switzerland based global media rights body, expresses serious concern over the continued harassments to journalists and other media workers of Myanmar (also known as Burma or Brahmadash), by the Burmese junta, which de-throned the democratically elected government in NayPieTaw with a military coup on 1st February 2021. The military rulers have detained nearly one hundred journalists, who dared to question their credentials to rule the south-east Asian nation and over 40 of them are still behind the bars. The generals, led by Min Aung Hlaing, who has recently declared himself as the Premier of Myanmar, continue to target the media persons with arbitrary raids, detention and arrests. In reality, they have tried to destroy the entity of free press. "Not

only the local Burmese journalists, the junta now wants to dictate the foreign media outlets with a proper way of describing the military regime, which grabbed the political power deposing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi led National League for Democracy (NLD) government of Myanmar," said Blaise Lempen, general secretary of PEC. Recently, the military officials expressed their resentments as the media outlets continued using the term 'military junta' to describe the regime and they warned not to repeat the mistake. Indicating the foreign news agencies, which are reporting about Myanmar, they asked the correspondents to stop using wrong terms and also avoid spreading 'fake news'. Otherwise, the military generals threatened to take necessary actions against them. "Lately, two more journalists were detained, which increases the

number of scribes and other media workers arrested up to 95 since the coup took place. Military personnel had recently arrested outspoken freelance journalist U Sithu Aung Myint and the foreign media contributor Ma Htet Htet Khine from Yangon on August 15," said Aung Zaw, a senior Burmese journalist, while speaking to PEC's India representative Naba Thakuria from an undisclosed location. He also added that three women journalists were arrested in the month of July. Released media persons described how they were tortured in the name of interrogation during their detentions. Families of journalists under detention like Han Thar Nyein, Min Nyo, Mya Wunn Yangon, Myo Myat Myat Pan, Thin Thin Aung, Tu Tu Tha, Than Htike Aung, etc are worried about their safety and se-

curity as the Covid-19 is also spreading across the developing country. Over one thousand Burmese nationals have lost their lives participating in various protest-demonstrations against the military regime, said the PEC adding that more than seven thousand people have been arrested and over five thousand individuals are either detained or sentenced, whereas nearly 230,000 ethnic minorities have been displaced since the recent military takeover in the land of golden pagodas.

Facebook post in support of Talibans: Retired teacher arrested

A CORRESPONDENT Nagaon, Aug 21: Hojai police today arrested a retired teacher from Daboka township for uploading a facebook post in support of Talibans. The teacher has been identified as Moulana Basir Uddin Laskar of ward no 10 in Daboka township. Sources said adding that Daboka police forwarded him to Sankar nagar based Hojai district court this afternoon and court sent him under 14 days judicial custody.

Anupam Choudhury takes charge as the New DC of Hojai District



A CORRESPONDENT, Hojai, Aug 21: Director of Information and Public Relations Department, Assam Anupam Choudhury, ACS took the charge as the new Deputy Commissioner of Hojai District on Saturday evening here. He was warmly welcomed here. On the other hand, Hojai district bade farewell to its outgoing deputy commissioner Dr. Sadnek Singh, IAS. Notably, a farewell programme to honour the outgoing officer was held on Saturday in the DC's conference hall at Sankardev Nagar in Hojai. Talking to this Correspondent, New DC Choudhury appealed to the denizens of Hojai District to cooperate with the district administration for the overall development of the district. Meanwhile, after taking the charge the incoming DC started working.

Road Safety Awareness Campaign by Golaghat Transport Department

A CORRESPONDENT, Golaghat, Aug 21: As per the directions received from Chief Minister of Assam and Transport Minister today District Transport Officer of Golaghat along with his team started a road safety awareness campaign at Panbari Animal Corridor of Kaziranga National Park under Bokakhat Subdivision in Golaghat. The campaign was mainly on overspeed of vehicles plying through National Park and other forest areas. District Transport Officer Golaghat Dibyajyoti Karji, Director of Kaziranga National Park, SDO (Civil) Bokakhat, DFO (Eastern Assam Wildlife Division), SDPO Bokakhat, NCC Cadets of JDSG College along with several other social activists took part in the awareness campaign. They distributed leaflets and some books on road safety and requested the vehicle owners to follow the speed limit prescribed by National Green Tribunal in Kaziranga National Park Area.

Senior Pediatrician Announces Free Treatment for Children



A CORRESPONDENT Guwahati, Aug 21: Dr Gokul Bora, a renowned Pediatrician of Assam, has announced free medical treatment for children who lost their parents to Covid-19. Dr. Bora made the announcement to mark his 50 years of service as a Pediatrician. Dr. Bora has selflessly contributed to building a healthy and sound society. He has

years of my professionally journey, it's time to give something more to the society, so I have decided to provide free treatments to children who lost their parents due to Covid. I will be available at Bora Children's Clinic, R.G Baruah Road, Guwahati from Monday to Saturday." Dr. Bora is a popular pediatrician who is loved by his patients for his humility and simple lifestyle. Always willing to lend a helping hand, Dr. Bora continues to treat the weaker section of society free of cost and provide them with free medicine whenever possible. His presence in the medical field and his uplifting actions has brought laurels to this land and continues to do so.

Public meeting held on completion of 100 days of Assam govt.



A CORRESPONDENT, Kajalgaon, Aug 21: On the completion of 100 days of the present Assam government, led by Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Chirang district administration organized a public meeting inviting leading citizens and media persons of the district to discuss various achievements made by the state government in the last 100 days at the conference hall of office of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Chirang, Kajalgaon on Friday. The programme started with the National Anthem of Assam was conducted by Rakhisri

Lekharu, Assistant Commissioner, Chirang, and attended by Abhiram Mahanayak, Deputy Speaker of Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA) as Chief Guest. In his welcome address, Narendra Kumar Shah, Deputy Commissioner, Chirang, congratulated the Government of Assam led by Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for the successful completion of hundred days at the power. He said that during these 100 days, the present state government had been able to bring all round development by taking up various welfare schemes and implementing

all these properly. Stressing on the importance of creating public awareness regarding various public welfare schemes of the state government, he also urged the media representatives to extend their cooperation for wide circulation of all schemes. "In the last 100 days, the government of Assam has done a lot of works by taking notable measures in regard to protection of livestock, taking process for engaging one lakh youths in government departments, a drug free and healthy Assam in the next five years, protection of children and women, safe repatriation of a total of 72 children trafficked from Chirang, providing financial assistance to women and children, who had lost their husbands and parents due to COVID-19 pandemic. The chief guest of the programme, Deputy Speaker of BTCLA Abhiram Mahanayake claimed that

under the leadership of Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam state would be one of the best states in India within a year. He also said that the Arunodoi scheme and other pension schemes for elderly people and widows would be able to solve the major problems of the public. On the occasion, distribution of booklets containing development stories and interaction with the media persons on the issues pertaining to developmental activities in the district were also witnessed. Chirang Superintendent of Police Pranjit Bora, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Bijni Civil Sub-Divisional Officer Dibakar Nath, other Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Circle Officers, all heads of departments, social leadership personalities and a host of media persons were present at the meeting.

Frequent Transfer of IAS and IPS Officers in Golaghat

A CORRESPONDENT, Golaghat, Aug 21: As soon as the Independence Day celebration in Golaghat got over, the SP Farewell ceremony was all set. The Home Department of State

issued a notification which stated SP Dr. Robin Kumar is transferred to Assam Police Head Office, New SP from Sadiya Sumit Sharma was transferred to Golaghat as new SP. Diganta Barah, IPS Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Home & Political Departments in an order stated Dr. Robin Kumar, IPS (RR-2013), Superintendent of Police, Golaghat is transferred and attached to Assam Police Headquarters and will report to Director General of Police, Assam Police Headquarters for further instruction. Also in the order Sumeet Sharma, IPS (RR-2015), Superintendent of Police, Sadiya was trans-

ferred and posted as Superintendent of Police, Golaghat. It is to be known that SP Dr Robin Kumar too held office as SP Golaghat for less than 90 days. It is to be known that earlier Manavendra Pratap Singh, IAS t Deputy Commissioner of Golaghat too chaired DC Golaghat for 48 days. Everyone was surprised as then too a meeting was going on in DC Office Golaghat when Minister Chandra Mohan Patwari was on his visit to Golaghat came to review Covid situation and messages of his transfer flashed in various whatsapp groups in the very ongoing meeting.

THE ASSAM RISING

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Taliban retribution

Britain's MPs this week uttered one long howl of anguish over Afghanistan. Their immediate targets were Joe Biden and Boris Johnson, politicians who just happened to be on the watch when Kabul's pack of cards collapsed. But their real concern was that a collective 20-year experiment in "exporting western values" to Afghanistan had fallen into chaos. MPs wanted someone other than themselves to blame. A politician is never so angry as when proved wrong. Like their fellow representatives in Congress, MPs somehow hoped the end would be nice and tidy, with speeches and flags, much like Britain's exit from Hong Kong. Instead, tens of thousands of Afghans who had lived in an effective colony under years of Nato occupation had come to believe the west would either never leave or somehow protect them from Taliban retribution. They were swiftly disabused. In 2006 I stood at dusk on a castle wall overlooking Kabul with a young UN official. He had just heard the Kandahar road was no longer safe. "Why," he sighed, "can't Afghanistan be more like Sweden?" I tried to see if he was smiling, but he was grimacing. For another 15 years, armies of western soldiers and civilians hurled stupefying amounts of money at the country. They created a wildly corrupt western dependency, where some 50,000 Afghans have links with the west that are now lethal. As for the "western-trained" army, one of its trainers told me it was mostly for show. An occupying power could not possibly motivate local youths to kill their fellow countrymen who might soon be ruling them. He rightly predicted: "They will just walk home." It is now 22 years since Tony Blair gave a speech in Chicago lecturing the US on his doctrine of international intervention. He wanted the west to invade countries across the world not in self-defence, but to save people everywhere from oppression. It was a reformulation of Alfred Milner's Victorian concept of moral imperialism. British politicians on both the left and the right have long been uncomfortable about the abandonment of Milnerism as the acceptable face of empire. Global policing is somehow embedded in Britain's political DNA. All Blair's wars of aggression were cheered on in the House of Commons. Many people have spoken this week of the "decline of the west", lamenting the collapse of US moral authority. Yet these theories are beside the point. The belief that our moral values are somehow meaningless unless they are enforced upon those who do not share them is imperialist bigotry. It also leads to absurd biases. Iraq is now thought of as "bad interventionism", as opposed to Afghanistan's "good" version. The virtue of the latter invasion led President Obama in 2009 to bless the war in Afghanistan with a "surge" of soldiers, taking the US total to 110,000, mere target practice for the Taliban. American gunboat diplomacy, initially supposed to save the wounds of 9/11 in 2001, opened the door to fake morality and a trillion-dollar nation-building fantasy. The catastrophic return of Taliban autonomy became its inevitable conclusion. The US - with Britain as its lackey - committed liberal interventionism's cardinal sin: half-heartedness. The craving to intervene is always followed by a craving to withdraw. Traditional empires at least pretended they would never leave. As it was, Afghanistan replicated departures from India, South Africa, Hong Kong and Iraq. If you invade and conquer an alien state, you own it, but must then disown it. Western rule has killed an estimated 240,000 in Afghanistan since 2001, more than the Taliban ever did. It has not left morality, just a mess. We must assume strategists in Washington and London are now planning interventions in Taiwan and Ukraine against possible Chinese and Russian expansion. If you ask taxpayers to spend billions on defence, you need something to show for it. So you pretend, as Johnson did in his bizarre conversation with Biden this week, that "gains" were made in Afghanistan. You accuse non-interventionists, as did the former Tory leader William Hague, of demonstrating "the enfeeblement of the western mind". In a recent column, Hague called on Britain to continue invading foreign countries when "our common humanity demands it". In doing so, he sounded like Pope Urban summoning the First Crusade. The concept of a global police force, so often cited, requires some framework of global consent. When the United Nations was founded, that consent was rooted in the first chapter of its charter.

Only action against corruption can solve the world's biggest problems



Exactly one year ago, I did not die from poisoning by a chemical weapon, and it would seem that corruption played no small part in my survival. Having contaminated Russia's state system, corruption has also contaminated the intelligence services. When a country's senior management is preoccupied with protection rackets and extortion from businesses, the quality of covert operations inevitably suffers. A group of FSB agents applied the nerve agent to my underwear just as shoddily as they incompetently dogged my footsteps for three and a half years - in violation of all instructions from above - allowing civil investigating activists to expose them at every turn. To be fair, a regime based on corruption can perform more elementary tasks to perfection. The judicial system - the first thing autocrats intent on robbing their nation take control of - functions perfectly on a quid pro quo basis. That is why, when I went back to Russia after medical treatment, I was taken straight from the plane to prison. There is not much to celebrate in that, but at least I now have time to read the memoirs of world leaders. In those books, the world's leaders write terribly interestingly about how they solved the main problems facing humankind: wars, poverty, migration, the climate crisis, weapons of mass destruction. These are the issues on the "big agenda". The fight against corruption, on the other hand, rarely figures as part of what they hope will be their legacy. This is not surprising; it is a "secondary agenda" item. Amazingly enough, though, corruption nearly always merits a mention when the world's leaders are describing failures - whether their own or, more commonly, those of their predecessors. "We spent years, hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of human lives in Iraq [or Afghanistan, you name it] - but the corrupt government of al-Maliki [or Karzai, you name them] alienated the people with its thieving, opening the path to victory to radicals armed with slogans about honest, fair government and RPGs." This leads to an obvious question. Guys, if corruption is preventing us from finding solutions to the problems of the "big agenda", has the time perhaps come to raise it to a priority on that agenda? It is not difficult to see why that has not already been done. Corruption is a tricky issue to discuss at global summits. Suppose you are discussing Syria and cyber-attacks with Vladimir Putin. Everyone finds

that interesting, everyone knows where they are. At the concluding news conference everyone will have something to say. Now imagine a meeting with Putin on the issue of corruption. The very fact it has been raised represents a move to personalities. The whole thing, from start to finish, is awkward. The richest leader in the world, who has fleeced his own country, is being invited to discuss how to deal with the problem of himself. Very tricky, very awkward. Now turn on the news. It is precisely the fact that the west "failed to notice" the total corruption in Afghanistan - that western leaders preferred not to talk about a topic they found embarrassing - which was the most crucial factor in the victory of the Taliban (with the support of the population). The west did not want to discuss the plundering of the budget; it was much better to focus on people being stoned to death or execution by beheading. After the implosion of the USSR and the end of the global ideological confrontation, it was corruption - in its classical definition, "the exploitation of an official position for personal gain" - that became the universal, ideology-free basis for the flourishing of a new Authoritarian International, from Russia to Eritrea, Myanmar to Venezuela. And corruption has long ceased to be merely an internal problem of those countries. It is almost invariably one of the main causes of the global challenges that face the west. A new "hot" war in Europe with the use of airstrikes and artillery? That is Putin taking revenge on Ukraine for the anti-corruption revolution that deposed his protégé, Viktor Yanukovich. Religious extremists of all stripes find it easier to conduct propaganda when their opponents are driving Rolls-Royces through the streets of penniless countries. Migration crises are caused by poverty, and poverty is almost always caused by corruption. "It's just as well climate change is unrelated to corruption!" you may ironically reflect. I invite you to say that in the face of the millions of hectares of Siberian forest that burn every year because of barbaric total clearance, violating the fire regulations for forest management. I am reluctant to make this prediction, but fear the next big terrorist attack will not be just another bomb blast by religious fanatics but, for example, a chemical weapon in the water supply network of a major city or a devastating attack on the IT infrastructure of

an entire country, and that those commissioning the terrorism will be one or other of the people in possession of a golden palace. The reason for perpetrating it will be to divert the world's attention from golden palaces to global security issues. So it is not we who should feel awkward about confronting corrupt authoritarians with tough questions and getting personal but, on the contrary, they who should know that their shady dealings will invariably be the main focus of discussion at world summits. That would be a crucial step towards eliminating the root cause of many "big" issues. OK, but what are we supposed to do? Surely there isn't much that people in Washington or Berlin can do to combat the corruption of officials in Minsk or Caracas? True, but it is also the case that an important aspect of corruption in authoritarian countries is the use it makes of the west's financial infrastructure - and in 90% of cases, what has been stolen is stored in the west. An official working for an autocrat knows better than anyone how important it is to keep his capital well away from his colleagues and boss. All it takes to get started is for western leaders to show determination and political will. The first step is for corruption to be transformed from a source of limitless opportunities into an onerous burden for at least some of the elites surrounding autocrats. That will split them, and increase the voices in favour of modernisation and scaling back corruption - who will be strengthened and provided with new arguments to put forward in elite circles. The following five steps are entirely realistic, easy to implement, and can make a highly effective start to combating global corruption. First, the west should formulate and recognise a special category of "countries that encourage corruption", which will enable the taking of uniform measures against groups of countries, rather than imposing sanctions on particular states. Second, the main sanction - the main tax on corruption, if you will - for this group of countries should be "enforced transparency". All documentation relating to contracts concluded between western companies and partners from countries representing corruption risks should be published if the contracts are to the slightest degree connected with the state, its officials, or their relatives. You work for a state-owned company in a country at high risk of corruption and want to buy a villa on the French Riviera? Fine, go ahead, but you should know that all the information about the deal will be publicly available. You want to have dealings with an official in Minsk or the aunt of a Russian governor? No problem, but you will have to publish the entire paper trail of the transaction, and will no longer be able to conceal the bribe you pay through that "regional representative" or "local partner". Third, combating corruption without combating corrupt individuals is the merest hypocrisy and undermines voters' trust. Until personal sanctions are imposed on oligarchs, primarily those in the entourage of Putin - the role model for all the world's

corrupt officials and businessmen - any anti-corruption rhetoric from the west will be perceived as game-playing and hot air. There is nothing more frustrating than reading the latest sanctions list, replete with the names of intelligence service colonels and generals nobody has ever heard of, but meticulously cleared of the people in whose interests these colonels act. The west needs to free itself of a semantic mindset where the label "businessman" acts as an indulgence, making it very difficult for them to figure on sanctions lists. Putin's oligarchs, those heading "state-owned" companies and companies that are formally private but whose prosperity is linked to Putin's group, are not businessmen but leaders of organised crime groups. At present, alas, the western establishment acts like Pavlov's dog: you show them a colonel of the intelligence services and they yell, "Sanction him!"; you show them the oligarch paying the colonel, and they yell, "Invite him to Davos!" Fourth, the US, UK and Germany already have excellent tools for combating foreign corruption, such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the Bribery Act, and so on. Guess how many cases have been brought following reports by our Anti-Corruption Foundation, now categorised as an extremist organisation by Putin's government? That's right, none. The sad fact is that even western law enforcement agencies treat corrupt foreign officials with kid gloves. With a little political will on the part of the government (and pressure from public opinion) that situation can be put right. Fifth, obstructing the export of political corruption clearly deserves the establishment of an international body or commission. Take a look at what is going on right now. By investing relatively small sums of money, the redoubtable Putin is buying up extreme-right and extreme-left movements throughout Europe - turning their politicians into oligarchs and agents of his own. Legalised bribery is flourishing, often in the form of board memberships at state-owned companies. A former German chancellor, or a former Italian prime minister, or a former Austrian foreign minister, can act as background dancers for the Russian dictator, normalising corrupt practices. All contracts linking former or current western politicians with business partners from corrupt authoritarian countries should also have to be open to public scrutiny. These are first steps, but even they will have a significant impact, creating elite groups within authoritarian countries for whom campaigning to reduce levels of corruption will become a rational choice. No money, no soldiers, no reconfiguration of industry or world politics are needed in order to start taking action. Only political will - which, unfortunately, is often in short supply. Public opinion and the wishes of voters are what can finally get things moving. Then some day world leaders will be able to write in their memoirs that they solved many major problems on the "big agenda" simply by eliminating their root cause - without troops, without billions of dollars, and without wasted decades.

Did India rely too much on US? Taliban siege of Kabul is affecting our regional power status



Soon after former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani fled Kabul Sunday evening, even as the Taliban walked into the city - he has since reached Oman, via Uzbekistan, after his escape plane was refused landing rights in Tajikistan - Russian embassy spokesperson Nikita Ischenko in Kabul described the scene thus to Russian news agency Sputnik: "As for the collapse of the regime, it is most eloquently characterised by the way Ghani fled from Afghanistan: four cars were full of money, they tried to put part of the money into a helicopter, but everything did not fit. And

to ingratiate themselves with the new power in Kabul. It is expected that Ghani will soon wend his way to the US - he is rumoured to have a Green Card. Travelling with Ghani was the powerful Fazel Fazly, the director of his office and his National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib, who recently accused the Pakistan military establishment of being the equivalent of "Heera Mandi," a red-light area in Lahore, insinuating that the Pakistanis will sell themselves to the highest bidder, in this case, the Taliban. Mohib has a British passport. But what is equally interesting is the special flight Monday

evening carrying several Afghan leaders to Rawalpindi - men like former Speaker Younis Qanooni, brother of the legendary commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, Ahmad Zia Massoud, Hazara leaders like Ustad Mohaqiq and Karim Khalili, former foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani and current Speaker Rahman Rahmani - even as the Taliban walked into the presidential palace in Kabul and took pictures of themselves sitting on Ghani's chair. Several of these men, like Qanooni and Massoud, had once been

Jyoti Malhotra

vocal about Pakistan's role in arming and instigating the Taliban insurgency; they now seemed to be handing themselves over to their former enemy for protection. And so on 15 August, as India celebrated the 75th anniversary of its Independence, a friend, ally and South Asian nation fell to the hands of the Taliban. The event sent shock waves through the region. India was supposed to be the big power in the sub-continent, but it had lost this round to a militia that has been armed, weaponised and supported by Pakistan next door. Now,

Ashraf Ghani has released his first video on Facebook since landing in UAE, saying he did not take cash and was forced to leave to prevent bloodshed. Ghani also said he was "in talks" to return to Afghanistan. As Indian diplomats evacuate out of Kabul, shutting down the embassy as they did in 1996 when the Taliban first took Afghanistan, another chapter in the Great Game in inner Asia has come to an end. So what went wrong? How did this come to pass? What does this event do to India's image as a regional power? And how does it change global politics? First, the Americans betrayed Afghanistan. Much has been written about US President Joe Biden's determination to go ahead and exit from the "forever war," but as US South Asia expert Christine Fair writes, Biden benefited from a "raft of experts" when he served on the Obama administration as to how "Pakistan, which benefitted handsomely from U.S. emoluments, aided and abetted the Taliban and undermined U.S. efforts." "Not only did Biden ignore the advice, he kept Zalmay Khalilzad as special envoy and underwrote the pact that

Khalilzad had signed with the Taliban. The Taliban never kept their side of the bargain to end the violence; Khalilzad never called their bluff, but repeatedly agreed to their enhanced demands. Second, the Afghans betrayed themselves. Several Afghan leaders in Kabul, who spoke to me on the condition of anonymity, said that even as the Taliban waited at the gates of Kabul Sunday evening, their leaders in Doha could still have been persuaded to form an interim government - with former interior minister Ali Ahmad Jalali as a compromise presidential candidate - but Ashraf Ghani knocked the bottom out of the plan by quitting and escaping with his two key aides. As Kabul fell to the Taliban, panic set in. Ghani's key aides knew they were marked and would be lynched by the Taliban if they had decided to stay. Even as I write this, many are trying to make their way to Istanbul or Tashkent. The media is being especially targeted, being told to fall in line, or else. Journalists are destroying papers, and stories, just in case incriminating notes fall into the hands of the Taliban. Fear rules the city.

Contd. From Page 1

Former Assam Chief Minister

charge of Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and also Minister of AYUSH. He is also a member of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs. Sonowal was welcomed by Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma at the LGBI airport at Borjhar. Taking to Twitter CM Sarma wrote, "On his first visit to Assam after joining the Union Cabinet, I had the great honour of welcoming Sri @sarbandsonowal at Guwahati airport. Sri Sonowal will seek blessings of people as part of Jan Ashirvad Yatra. Welcomed Union Minister Sri @Rameswar_Teli also". Sonowal was accompanied by Union Minister of State Rameswar Teli. The Assam unit of BJP will carry out the three-day 'Axirbaad Yatra' to welcome Union Minister Sarbanda Sonowal. The program will be held at 18 places across the State during his Yatra from August 21 to August 23. The Yatra will proceed through the party's organisation districts of Guwahati, Morigaon, Kaliabar, Nagaon, Jorhat, and Sibsagar. It will cover 375.5 km. The Yatra will be held by strictly following the COVID-19 protocols.

Assam will implement the New

secondary education directorate. 113 nominees were designated under the higher education directorate and six were elected under the directorate of the state council of educational research and training. While speaking about the NEP and additional equipping in the state education department, the Minister said that the state government would continue implementing new provisions of the policy every year to bring about a transformative change in the education department in the next five years. Science, maths and English would be taught in the English language and the rest of the subjects in the mother tongue. The programme was also addressed by Education Minister Dr. Ranaj Pegu. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state government will implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022. Chief Minister Sarma said, "The state government is gearing up to implement the New Education Policy (NEP) from April 1, 2022. Under NEP, all high schools would be upgraded to senior secondary school. The government would upgrade the academic infrastructure of the educational institutions for this purpose within a year." Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr Sarma said, "The state government after coming to power made a pledge to provide employment to 1 lakh youth of the state. While fulfilling this promise the state government today launched the appointment process and soon advertisements would be published for several thousand jobs in the education department besides conducting TET." He also distributed appointment letters to 767 candidates in different directorates of the education department at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati. Out of 767 candidates, 616 applicants were appointed under the Directorate of elementary education, 32 under the secondary education directorate. 113 nominees were designated under the higher education directorate and six were elected under the directorate of the state council of educational research and training. While speaking about the NEP and additional equipping in the state education department, the Minister said that the state government would continue implementing new provisions of the policy every year to bring about a transformative change in the education department in the next five years.

Cannot promise what final

lies around the world," Biden said, adding the United States was in "close operational coordination with NATO" on the evacuation operation in Kabul. Meanwhile, two top human rights organisations called on President Biden Friday, requesting him to extend the August 31 deadline for the US troops to leave Kabul in order to help evacuate Afghans fearing Taliban reprisals. Sarah Holewinski, head of the Washington bureau at Human Rights Watch, told a news conference the most at-risk Afghans would not be able to get out before the deadline unless flights out of Kabul are ramped up. Shaharazad Akbar, head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, who is at an undisclosed location, said Afghans feared being abandoned by Washington.

Zydus Cadila's needle-free

2-8 degrees Celsius and has shown good stability at 25-degrees C for at least three months, the company said. This makes it easy to transport and store for supplies to remote locations. And while the company had started production at risk, sources say the stocks can be released into the market starting next month, i.e. September, while there's still no word on pricing. Cadila's MD, Sharvil Patel had recently informed BusinessLine that the company plans to produce about a crore doses a month by mid-August or September and five crore doses by December. "The company is investing in a new plant to manufacture about 10-12 crore doses annually. And it has a 20-crore production target on the applicator used to administer this vaccine. The company had invested 7500 crore till date, between trials and manufacturing," Patel had said. The vaccine is developed in partnership with India's Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under its 'Mission Covid Suraksha' and implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC). Calling it a matter of pride for India, Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT and Chairperson, BIRAC said, "The Indian Vaccine Mission Covid Suraksha was launched under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0 being implemented by BIRAC. (and) is aimed at developing safe and efficacious Covid-19 vaccines for public health. This is an important milestone in our indigenous vaccine development mission and positions India on the global map for novel vaccine development." The vaccine has been supported by Covid-19 research consortia through National Biopharma Mission for preclinical studies, Phase I and Phase II Clinical Trials and under the Mission Covid Suraksha for Phase III clinical trial. The platform because of its rapid plug and play technology can be easily adapted to deal with mutations in the virus, such as those already occurring. ZyCoV-D becomes the sixth in the Covid-19 vaccine pack to be made available in the Indian market, after Covishield from Serum Institute of India (SII), Covaxin from Bharat Biotech, Sputnik from Russia's Gamaleya Institute, Moderna's vaccine and the most recent Johnson and Johnson's one-dose vaccine. India has set itself a steep task of vaccinating at least 90 lakh people a day and the Zydus vaccine will feed into it. Meanwhile, Zydus also plans to seek approval for a two-dose regimen of the vaccine. DNA vaccines are a valuable form of antigen-specific immunotherapy, as they are safe, stable and can be easily produced, the company said.

'Ashraf Ghani is a total crook

crook. He spent all his time wining and dining our senators," Trump said, adding the senators were always in Ghani's pockets. The Republican leader accused Ghani of getting away with murder in many, many different ways. However, he didn't elaborate on what these ways were. Trump also echoed the above allegations against Ghani and said that he suspected that the former Afghan president did leave Kabul on Sunday with cash. Meanwhile, Ashraf Ghani, who is currently in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with his family on 'humanitarian grounds', said that he is currently in talks to come back home. Releasing a video statement on Wednesday, Ghani said he was forced to leave Afghanistan "with one set of traditional clothes, a vest and the sandals", adding he also left the country in an attempt to avoid bloodshed. The former president also dismissed allegations of fleeing Kabul with suitcases full of cash by calling them baseless. "Do not believe whoever tells you that your president sold you out and fled for his own advantage and to save his own life," he said in the video statement.

Assam Plans To Replace Diesel

told reporters on completing 100 days of his government. The BJP retained power in Assam for a second term after winning the assembly election this year. "Everyone is contributing in the process of reduction of carbon emissions. This will be Assam's contribution towards the same," Mr Sarma said. The state government announced cash relief to bus operators who have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions in the state. This includes a one-time relief of ₹ 10,000 each for drivers, conductors and helpers. Some 60,000 people in the bus transport sector in Assam have been affected due to ban on inter-district movement in the last three months, aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the state. The government will purchase a total of 200 electric buses and 100 CNG buses, which will eventually replace ASTC's diesel-run city buses. The announcement was made by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati on Friday. "Assam Government is planning to replace present city buses in Guwahati with electric and CNG buses only," said Sarma. "There are plans to purchase 200 electric buses and 100 CNG buses. ASTC city buses will cease to operate diesel-run city buses. Our goal is to completely replace diesel-run buses with electric and CNG buses in Guwahati by the day this government completes one year," he added. CM Sarma informed that the replacement process will be completed within six months to one year.

Web Portal Janani Live Observed its 1st anniversary

A CORRESPONDENT, Golaghat, Aug 21: A popular web news portal from Golaghat named Janani Live today observed its first anniversary. On August 21 last year Janani Live started its journey in the web media world. Within a year this web news portal became popular among viewers for its brave, unbiased journalism and for its way of presentation. To mark the occasion of its first anniversary a ceremony was held today at the Conference Hall of Nambor Guest House in Golaghat. In the ceremony retired professor and filmmaker Dinesh Gogoi, writer and intellectual Hiren Gogoi, retired professor and social activist Dr. Lukumoni Goswami, Assistant Commissioner of Golaghat District administration Mayurakshi Dutta and District Information and Public Relation Officer Pompi Devi were made to sit on the dias and were felicitated. Senior journalist, environmental activist and Chief Editor of Janani Live Apurba Ballav Goswami welcomed all the guests. Special felicitations were given to Dinesh Gogoi and Hiren Gogoi from Janani Live team for their immense contributions to the society. Senior journalists Dwipen Dutta, Dipmoni Khatoniar and Diganta Bora, young journalists Siddhartha Handique, Amit Nagori, Devashish Saha, Samim Ali, Bhaskarjyoti Rajkhowa, Samarjit Sharma, Rubul Ahmed, Jayanta Phukan, Mustak Hussain, Saranga Tamuli along with several other citizens and well wishers of Janani Live were present in the ceremony. The ceremony was anchored by Papori Saikia.

Social media post in support of Taliban: one arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Hojai, Aug 21: Of the 14 people who were arrested by Assam Police for the objectionable post in social media relating to Taliban on Saturday. One person namely Maulana Basiruddin Laskar, resident of Daboka under Hojai District was arrested by Daboka Police. Acting promptly a case was registered under Daboka PS bearing Case No. 421/21 under Section 120(B), 153A (1)(a), 153B(1)(a)(c), 298, 505(1)(b)(c), 505(2) of Indian Penal Code read with Section 39 in The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Laskar was produced before Sankardevnagar Court, which sent him to 14 days Judicial Custody.

Assam's Youth will fly with

government's mission of breaking the drug menace in its 100 days of government under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the police are working on a three-pronged strategy - reducing the supply, demand of drugs and its harm. "If the cartel is strategically broken, then naturally the supply will fall. We are also working on cutting demand by several ways and also harm reduction by taking the youths to the rehabilitation centres," he said, adding in past 100 days the Assam police had made huge seizures worth over Rs 200 crore in the international market. Giving credit to Assam's CM Himanta Biswa Sarma for driving the campaign, Singh said he had rarely seen a CM having such zeal to work hard. "The CM has tremendous knowledge of the state and is a hard task master. He has his goals clear," he said. It is worth mentioning that the Assam Government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma completed its 100-day on Friday. Praising the Assam police for their coordinated effort, he said, "The police force that has faced bullets for over 30 years is fearless and working in a team spirit with other departments." Citing the example of the dedication of Assam police, he said that disclosure of a Home Guard jawan, who was offered Rs 1 lakh bribe by a bus driver, led to the seizure of a large amount of drugs. "The government honoured him by absorbing him in the Assam Police and he was even given CM's Award for outstanding service," Singh responded to Rajeev R, Editor of Bureaucrats India. Singh said that about 80 per cent of nexus that worked to make Guwahati as a transit point for drugs coming from 'Golden Triangle' had been broken. "Yet, lots more work has to be done. The history of drugs business is very old and the channel that originates from Laos, East Asian countries and Myanmar passes through North Eastern states. The challenge is not to curb the local menace but knocking off the national and international cartels that work with money funded by many agencies. However, the best part is that all the seven North Eastern states are working in a coordinated manner and are strongly against it," he said. Acknowledging the cooperation of Central agencies, Singh, an Assam cadre IPS officer, who earlier headed key units in SPG and was also involved in major terrorist operations in Kashmir and other parts of the country while being part of NIA, said that agencies like Narcotics Control Bureau and Intelligence Bureau were cooperating in identifying the 'trouble spots and agencies working for them.' "The challenge is tough here, as there is convergence of drugs and wild life syndicates and extremists," said Singh. "Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his recent visit had reviewed the preparedness of all agencies in tackling the drug menace. Discussion was also held on backward and forward linkages," he said. Applauding the support of local people, he said the mission of tightening the noose around the drug cartel would not have been possible without the support of parents and members of civil society. "People come with complaints of youth taking to drugs. Now-a-days, people are informing us on social media channels and to police control rooms. There is total cooperation from people, who have seen ruining of families and increase of crime because of drugs. We won't let down the aspirations of people down and assure that Assam youths will fly high by becoming partners of development," he said. To a question on the rising police and people gap, he said the police's job was to maintain law and order and responding to any emergency. "If the police stick to the basic job of maintaining law and order, the rest things will fall in line," Singh said, adding the young lot of the officers of the country were bright and lots of works were being done on capacity building. He, however, expressed concern that the officers were hard pressed and overburdened. "On an average if one officer is handling about 250 cases of investigation, it is too much. If investigated properly, an officer can probe up to three-four cases in a month. Now, imagine the kind of pressure he or she is undergoing," he said. Singh, who is originally from Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, gave credit to all his success to his mother and father and his supportive family. "The seed of joining civil service was sown by my father whom I lost to cancer in 2005 and my mother passed away in 2017. My family including my wife, who quit civil service to look after the family, has been tremendously supportive. I remember roaming in jungles for weeks and my wife waiting at doorstep awake for many days," Singh added.

Assam Governor wishes on Raksha

tradition shared sweets with them. Since Raksha Bandhan is a bond of protection between brothers and sisters which serves as a symbol of love, trust, togetherness, Prof. Mukhi thanked the organisations for promoting this age-old bond of the society to make life even better and more meaningful.

Naga couple set to trek to Everest

don Roberts Hospital in Meghalaya recently got an ATM installed in its premises, 96 years after the inventor of the cash dispenser was born here. John Adrian Shepherd-Barron, an Indian-born Englishman who invented the ATM, was born in 1925 in this hospital. The hospital turns 100 next year and ATMs were first installed globally around 54 years ago. "The teller machine was installed on 7 August after a petition was submitted to State Bank of India for setting up an ATM on the premises before the centennial celebrations of our facility next year," the hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr Roken Nongrum has been quoted as saying. Nongrum also said that an ATM in the premises will help patients and staffers immensely. The Meghalaya government has finally handed over the Manipur Rajbari, an erstwhile home of the Manipur royal family, to the Manipur government. The property has been handed over after several rounds of talks between successive governments of the two states. Situated in Shillong, the heritage property is still inhabited by descendants of the erstwhile Manipur king. It will now be converted into a Manipur State Bhawan. In a tweet last week, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said, "The historic Manipur Rajbari at Shillong belonged to the Maharaja of Manipur & it was here that Maharaja Bodhachandra stayed during the signing (of) the Manipur Merger Agreement to Dominion of India in Sept 1949. Sadly, the plot no longer belonged to the Royal family of Manipur."

Covid awareness and vaccination drive at Boginadi

A CORRESPONDENT, North Lakhimpur, Aug 21: Women Development Centre (WDC), Guwahati, in collaboration with Lakhimpur District Administration and Seajuli Model Public Health Center, and supported by Arise Foundation through NEWRAN project, has organized a six-day long Covid awareness and vaccination program from today at six villages under Boginadi Development Block in Lakhimpur district. Accordingly, the first day program was held today at Bhabari ME School at Moringdigha village where a total 210 persons were vaccinated. In the beginning of the program, the Project Director of WDC, Guwahati, Bhagyawati Bhuyan introduced the conducting team of the six-day long program and briefed the objectives of the program on behalf of WDC Director Sr. Betsy. Two officials of WDC Chandrajit Pegu and Sanju Singh felicitated the team. They also extended gratitude on behalf of WDC to everyone for the support and cooperation. "The awareness and vaccination campaign will continue for remaining 5 villages, namely, Bhabari, Silingbasti, Pratapgarh, Lalpani Dirghapathar and Akorabasti in the next week," WDC Project Director Bhagyawati Bhuyan informed. "The vaccination is organised especially for the poor marginalized who are temporary workers in the tea gardens, daily wage earners and migrant returnees," she further informed. The members of the medical team of this six-day long Covid awareness and vaccination program are Dr. Naruttam Borah, Sanjay Kumar Sah (accountant-cum-ABPM), Biju Mili, Ranjan Doley (MPN), Rina Saikia (ANM), Jayanti Kukur (ANM) and Nawami Ganak (the ASHA worker for today's program).

Narrow Gauge Train services resumed

STAFF REPORTER, Guwahati, Aug 21: It has been decided to restore the much awaited Narrow Gauge train services between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling in the World Heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway w.e.f. 25 th August, 21. Tourists and passengers will now be able to enjoy the services of the narrow gauge trains from New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling and Darjeeling to New Jalpaiguri by travelling through the hills of the Himalayas having enchantic views. Narrow Gauge train number 52541 will leave from New Jalpaiguri and train number 52540 will leave from Darjeeling. Detail timings are being notified. There will be 17 seats in the first class and 29 seats in the general class for passengers. With the introduction of these services, tourism and hospitality sectors of the area are expected to get benefitted; thereby helping the local economy. Passengers will have to observe all preventive measures and guidelines related to Covid-19 during the journey.

Hundred families of suspected nationals evicted in Nagaon

A CORRESPONDENT, Nagaon, Aug 21: District Administration in association with district police administration today evicted a large crowded area, being marked as hub of various crimes and criminals which was allotted earlier to Nagaon Khagarijan college on Fancy road at Nagaon Madhupur in the town. Some suspected nationals encroached on large areas of land, allotted to Nagaon Khagarijan college for construction of college stadium as well as other projects by district administration and lived illegally there by constructing houses for decades without any prior permission. It was being alleged for over years that many of these illegal inhabitants were running illegal trade of drugs, narcotics substances and also involved in various other anti-social activities in the town for over years. Significantly, police frequently arrested males as well as females on a daily basis from the area on change of various criminal activities including trading of drugs and other narcotics substances. But on Saturday morning, the district administration along with the police administration launched a bold eviction drive in the area and evicted all the illegal residents from there, sources added.

As Taliban take charge, fear, uncertainty grip Afghan students in both Kabul & Delhi

New Delhi, August 21 : Esmael Sakhi Zada, a 27-year-old student who secured admission into the South Asian University (SAU) in Delhi this year, hasn't stepped out of his house in Kabul for a week now. He told ThePrint that the Taliban are everywhere and that it has become dangerous for them to even venture out. Esmael is among many Afghan students who have been admitted into the South Asian University. Although he wants to continue his education, studying in a stressful environment is getting increasingly difficult for him, and he now wants to come to India to attend classes. "We are living under a threat and are struggling for survival," he told ThePrint over the phone. "Our student visas are ready but the airport has shut down and we have no means to go anywhere." The Taliban has taken over the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul and has reportedly told local residents flocking it with hopes of escaping, to go back home. Esmael's helplessness is shared by several such students stuck in Afghanistan. They are now waiting for the Indian government to start commercial flights out of the country. Another SAU student stuck in Kabul, Mohammad Shafiq Shayan, appealed to SAARC countries to help them "out of the anarchy and chaos". "Some Afghan students, including me, have received their visas. But due to the human crisis in the Kabul airport, we don't have any way to get out of this chaos and uncertainty," he told ThePrint over the phone. "We ask all those who wish to help us, especially SAU authorities, to focus their efforts on arranging a flight for us. If the request is made to SAARC officials, they may be able to implement it with the cooperation of the Indian foreign affairs ministry. We are going through a failed-state situation, anarchy, chaos and uncertainty in the capital." The uncertainty, however, isn't confined to just those stuck in Kabul. Afghan students already in Delhi and studying at the Delhi University have reached out to the university administration seeking help regarding Visa extension and jobs. "Our families are fighting death every single day. Although they are suffering, they don't want us to suffer," one such DU student, who did not want to be named, told ThePrint. "We want our visas extended to be able to get jobs and two square meals a day. We are not asking for much." Afghan students at JNU have also reached out to their Indian counterparts asking for help from their university administration. While these students wait for the Indian government to make their move, a spokesperson of South Asian University told ThePrint that there is "very little" that they can do at this point. "The MEA is our nodal agency; the situation is such that they are no longer physically there so there isn't much that can be done," the SAU spokesperson said. "As and when these developments were taking place, we had asked several of our students to come to India then itself. Most of our students have received their visas, so the university has done everything on its part to help them come back to India. The situation is such that there are currently no flights coming out of Afghanistan as of now." Most of our research students and alumni have managed to come back and recently six more students have come in. They are under quarantine right now," he added. Administration members at the Delhi University too had a similar response. Dr Amarjiva Lochan, deputy dean of DU's foreign students department, told ThePrint, "There were about 150 plus Afghan students in DU this year, about 30-40 students went back to their homeland after finishing their course on 1 July. The rest of the students whose courses are about to get over in a month's time met with us on Thursday evening to discuss their concerns." Among the concerns raised by the students was the request for extension of their student visa. Speaking of the request, Prof Lochan said, "Since this issue comes under the purview of the Ministry of external affairs, we can only make a recommendation, which we will." The students also raised concerns regarding the safety of their families and job availability. Vikas Gupta, the registrar of Delhi University, said, "Finding placements at such a short notice will be a challenging task given the pandemic-induced uncertainty in the market."

Wigan lose their cool as Grace and Dodd inspire St Helens to emphatic derby win



London, August 21: There has been no shortage of unforgettable performances to settle derby matches between Wigan and St Helens in years gone by. And while this was a comprehensive victory for the reigning Super League champions, the clearest indicator yet about the gulf in class between these two famous clubs at present is that, really, St Helens had to be nowhere near faultless to inflict such an embarrassing defeat on their great rivals. Wigan's inconsistency has haunted them throughout 2021 while the Saints have lost only three games in all competitions as they relentlessly kept up their push for the treble here. But one stat above all else sums up this miserable performance from the Warriors: on the night they received more yellow cards than they scored points. The reception from

both sets of supporters at full-time was also significant; while the Saints players celebrated with a packed away end, there were barely any home fans left to hear the final hooter. They, in truth, had seen enough. Humiliated, outplayed and well-beaten by a St Helens side who were good, but certainly not great. But they did more than enough to further strengthen their position inside Super League's top two, all the while maintaining the pressure on league leaders Catalans ahead of the run-in to the play-offs. Such was Wigan's impotency in attack, one felt the derby was almost won by half-time. Tries from Regan Grace and Lewis Dodd, the latter following a superb ball steal on Oliver Partington, put the visitors

12-2 ahead at the interval. All Wigan could muster was a penalty from the boot of Harry Smith, while John Bateman was sin-binned following an altercation with James Bentley, who was also shown a yellow card. But while the Saints kept their cool for the rest of the evening, Wigan picked up another two yellow cards. A second one went to Bateman for dissent and Willie Isa, who was walking a disciplinary tightrope all evening, eventually got the sin-binning his aggressive play perhaps merited. "I'm disappointed with their discipline," Adrian Lam, Wigan's coach, said. "I love emotion and would promote that within the group but you've got to carry some intelligence with that. It came back to hurt us." Playing half an hour a man light would put any side on the back foot against most teams but especially against the reigning champions. They dominated field position and the ball for most of the second half, eventually getting the try their dominance merited when Mark Percival finished a wonderful flowing move shortly after Isa had been sin-binned.

James Vince leads from front as Brave breeze past Rockets into Hundred final

London, August 21: On a cool, translucent night at The Oval, Trent Rockets were bowled out for 96 and trounced by seven wickets in a performance that will go down as one of the most ignominious in the venerable and storied history of the Rockets franchise. For the long-suffering Rockets fans, the agonising wait for a Lord's final goes on for another year. For the Southern Brave, meanwhile, their progress to Saturday's final at Lord's marks the emotional culmination of a project weeks in the making. Following in the footsteps of the all-conquering, table-topping women's team, the Brave's unprecedented era of Hundred success will raise legitimate questions over the competitive balance of the tournament. Simply put, have the Brave simply become too dominant? And is there anyone out there who can break their stranglehold? Here, certainly, the Rockets had few answers to the Brave's classic, time-honoured formula: wickets with the new ball, clever changes of pace in the middle and then whacking it to all parts with the bat. And for all the competition's many detractors, you can't argue with the whacking. Presumably this is what analysts and pundits are

referring to when they talk about the endless, fascinating tactical nuances of the 100-ball format: whacking the ball straight, whacking it over midwicket, whacking it over point. When the moment comes to debrief this painful defeat, the Rockets and their coaching staff will surely conclude that the game was ultimately won and lost on their ability to whack the ball quite as far, or quite as often, as their opponents. Truly, this is a game of fine margins. Indeed, one of the subtler and often overlooked aspects of 100-ball cricket is the crucial importance not just of whacking it, but trying to avoid getting whacked. This the Brave accomplished to perfection with the ball, as a storming opening spell from the left-arm quick George Garton claimed the early wickets of Dawid Malan and Alex Hales, swiftly followed up by that of Darcy Short caught at midwicket. With Steven Mullaney out-bowled by Craig Overton, the Rockets ended their Powerplay on 31 for four, and in need of some considerable whacking to turn the game in their favour. Instead, what followed from the



Brave was a sort of relentless constrictor: an object lesson in not getting whacked at the very highest level. After Garton and Overton came the sprightly Tymal Mills with his mixture of rib-jarring pace and wicked floaters. Then the awkward, unorthodox left-arm spin of Jake Lintott. Then the finely tuned craft of Chris Jordan. The only real pocket of resistance came from Tom Moores, who briefly threatened to shift the momentum with a couple of hard, well-timed whacks. But from the moment he was caught by Overton on the boundary off Jordan, the Rockets never remotely threatened to get close to a whack-proof score. Still, the spectacular implosion of the Birmingham women earlier in the day had underlined one of the truisms of the format. Namely: it ain't set of five balls, until it's set of

five balls. And in a brutal, cold-blooded display of early violence, Paul Stirling whacked at the very highest level. It was all downhill for the Rockets from that point. Samit Patel at short fine leg let the ball run between his legs and away to the boundary. The great Rashid Khan's first ball was a horrible full-toss that was clouted to the midwicket fence by James Vince. Vince applied the finishing touches with an unbeaten 45 off 27 balls, victory sealed with almost a third of the innings unbowed. Their final against the Birmingham Phoenix promises to be a fascinating, high-ammunition affair, assuming the forecast rain holds off (if not, the teams would try again on Sunday). Ultimately, you feel, it will come down to who can execute their whacks most successfully on the day.

Khalida Popal: 'The Afghanistan women's team was built to fight Taliban ideology'

London, August 21: 'My power is my voice but international governments have real power,' says Khalida Popal, the former Afghanistan women's team captain. In the wake of the Taliban's seizure of power last Sunday Popal and her former international teammates and coaching staff have called for the sporting community to join them in "being a voice for the voiceless women of Afghanistan". They want to secure "protection and support" for the hugely at-risk athletes who have defied the Taliban's interpretation of sharia law just by stepping on to a pitch and using their voices to advocate for the rights of women to play sport. Popal lives in Denmark after she was forced to flee her home country in 2011 in fear for her life because of her role in establishing the national team. She played a central role in the 2018 exposure of abuse suffered by women's national team players at the hands of Keramuudin Karim, then president of the Afghanistan football federation, that forced Fifa to investigate and subsequently ban him from office. Now, after years of elevating the voices and profiles of Afghanistan's

female footballers, Popal is advising them to burn their national team shirts and remove all images and references to them being involved in football from social media to attempt to avoid repercussions for their activism through sport. Popal says: "For so long I have been fighting to bring visibility to women of Afghanistan and to encourage women of Afghanistan to use their voices. Now I'm telling them to silence that voice, to not talk, to not meet people, to take everything down, to remove their identities. That is very painful." It is so painful for me to use these words, telling them that the jersey they have earned, their national identity, has to go - I remember the day that we first wore the national jersey. I can't describe it - it was maybe a bigger feeling than winning a World Cup would be to many other countries. To be able to wear and earn that national team shirt of the country after such a long time and such a long fight was the most beautiful moment in my life. We were happy and proud. We felt like winners. And now I'm having to tell girls to burn their jerseys and remove their photos?" The former head coach of the women's national team, former USA international Kelly Lindsey, echoes Popal in calling on the world to help these women and girls: "The international sporting community has asked them to stand up for their rights. We've told them it's the right thing to do. We have a responsibility as sportspeople to make sure they're safe now. They are an important part of the journey for all women's equality throughout the world - if they can do it in Afghanistan they can do it anywhere. Sport's

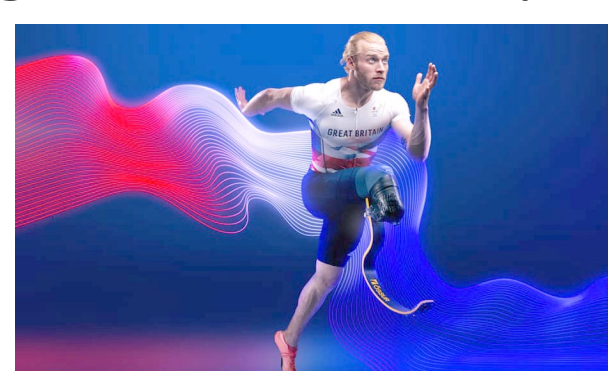


governing bodies - boxing, taekwondo, football, all of them - need to take responsibility." And who am I to say that my girls are more important than this female journalist or this activist? Get them all out." Claims that the Taliban have softened their approach are hugely concerning to Popal, who had her right to an education taken away in the 1990s, saw her mother's right to work taken away and her father beaten for working with the government. "It's traumatising for my generation to see history repeating itself," she says. "This time it comes with added revenge. They say they follow sharia law but under their previous regime we have experienced what type of democracy they want for women." Human Rights Watch has similarly urged caution and said the Taliban should be judged "on their track record, not their current comments that they will allow women to work and participate in society." Minky Worden, the director of global initiatives for the organisation, which is working on documenting the full range of abuses and protection for all civilians, warned that female athletes and their families but also

now and in the future. "A Fifa spokesperson called the situation faced by female footballers in Afghanistan 'very worrying' and said it was monitoring it closely and would offer support where it can: "It is clear that the situation on the ground is moving very quickly. In this respect, we are in contact with the Afghanistan Football Federation, and other stakeholders, and will continue to monitor the local situation and to offer our support where possible in the weeks and months to come." Lindsey is fearful that international governments and sporting bodies do not realise the extent to which women playing sport is a form of action and protest. "Just playing and participating in sports is a violation of sharia law," she says. "Even one time. If the law is strict, that means death of execution. Every time our players went to the pitch there were stories of being spat on and of the stoning, or the terrible comments. They've been living this for 20 years. If that was acceptable under a so-called democracy, what's it going to be like now?" Popal adds: "The Afghanistan women's national team was built to fight against the Taliban and against the Taliban ideology, against the people that took the right to education and the right to social participation from women and kept women in silence, in dark houses, unable to leave, imprisoned. The foundation of the team, of which I was one of the founders, was a way of activism for us, a way to stand up and send a message to the Taliban that the women of Afghanistan stand together."

Jonnie Peacock: 'I don't need to win another gold medal for my happiness'

London August 21: Jonnie Peacock has a new look for 2021. His blond hair is no longer in a nice schoolboy short back and sides, but tied in an unruly topknot. He has a wiry beard to go with it too. He looks less like he's about to challenge for a third consecutive sprint title at the Paralympics, than lead a horde of Vikings on a spot of light pillaging. "To be fair most of it is to do with lockdown," Peacock says. "I wasn't planning on growing the hair again and I don't think my girlfriend ever wanted me to do so... it's just laziness. I've got to keep it while it's here." Any sense of the laid-back in Peacock's looks might just be reflective of other changes too. The 28-year-old, who took time



out from sport after the Rio Games, says that the step away has given him a sense of perspective, that he has learned "just to do the things that make you happy". It's an instinct that has only been reinforced by the pandemic. "Don't get me wrong, the competitor inside me is coming for those bonuses, I want more gold medals," he says. "But ever

since I stepped off the track in 2017, life for me has been about enjoyment. I'm very happy and content and I've realised that... I think Covid has forced everyone to take a different view on their life, to have a different outlook. For me that outlook is that I'm very happy at home and that's what is important. "I don't need to go and win another gold medal for my happiness. I would like to, it would probably help - it would probably help the bank more than anything else to be honest - but yeah I'm just happy competing, training full time for a living now and getting enough to live off. I'll do whatever makes me happy, but that's probably less work." Peacock adds that this message is probably not one his agents would want to hear. That's a little reminder that his break from competition allowed him to become a poster boy for more than Paraspport. He was the first disabled contestant on Strictly Come Dancing, eliminated in week nine of 2017's series after a dance-off against Debbie McGee.

Tash Farrant exploits Phoenix batting to send Invincibles into Hundred final



London, August 21: In front of a boisterous home crowd Oval Invincibles triumphed in the eliminator of the women's Hundred, setting up a tantalising final against Southern Brave at Lord's on Saturday

afternoon. But it would be just as accurate to point out that Birmingham Phoenix threw this game away: from a dominant position at the halfway stage of their chase, they were bowled out for 94 to lose by 20 runs,

their last eight wickets falling for 28 runs in a flurry of desperate hitting, scrambled tactics and superb fielding. Set 115 to win, Birmingham reached a largely untroubled 66 for two off 49 balls, at which point the game took a sharp tilt. Erin Burns and Amy Jones were dismissed off successive deliveries and, even though the required rate was still only around a run a ball, the lack of big-game experience in their middle order quickly became a problem. The last boundary of their innings came off the 66th ball, after which Oval's bowlers expertly tightened the screw. Tash Farrant deservedly took the player of the match award. Her four for 10 off 19 balls, claimed with an irresistible mixture of change-ups and slower balls, was the best bowling analysis of the tournament. In addition it was her inspired diving catch at mid-off to dismiss Burns that

precipitated Birmingham's collapse. "We knew if we got a few wickets that we were into the tail," Farrant said afterwards. "We've bowled really well all tournament and that's paid off today." But in reality Oval's win was very much a collective effort, spearheaded by Marizanne Kapp with bat and ball and gilded by some terrific clutch catching by Dane van Niekerk and Alice Capsey off their own bowling. It was Kapp and Capsey who had hewed Oval to a defensible total in the first place. Their partnership of 54 from 44 balls undid some of the damage of a tentative start,

and even after Capsey perished with nine balls remaining a late smash from Grace Gibbs lifted Oval to 114 for seven: a little below par but a testing little chase nonetheless. Certainly 114 felt a little light once Jones and Burns got going. The dangerous Eve Jones had feathered a catch behind first ball but her namesake wasted no time in asserting herself, with a classy square drive to get off the mark and a powerful pull for four over midwicket. She stepped across her stumps to sweep the pace of Shabnim Ismail and, with Burns in tow, the pair brought up the 50 partnership in 35 balls. Enter

Farrant, whose acrobatic catch to pluck out Burns's lofted drive will surely be remembered as one of the moments of the tournament. Now 25 and having rebuilt her career after losing her England contract in 2019, Farrant is a smarter and more streetwise cricketer these days, back in the England set-up and with a better idea of how to influence games. After she caught Burns the very next ball she snared Jones with a slower ball to join Kirstie Gordon and Sammy-Jo Johnson as the tournament's leading wicket-taker. There was more to come. As the balls began to run out and Birmingham

began to panic, one could sense Oval beginning to turn up the heat. Van Niekerk decided to bowl 10 balls in a row and was rewarded with the wicket of Marie Kelly. Farrant reeled in Gwenan Davies with another slower ball, before returning to mop up the tail. And so to an enthralling final. The Brave have been the best team of the tournament by some distance and will start as strong favourites, particularly with their star-studded batting line-up: Danni Wyatt, Smriti Mandhana, Stafanie Taylor, Sophia Dunkley.

'It's all about them': Wallabies fume after All Blacks pull pin on Bledisloe Cup Test

London, August 21 :

Wallabies coach Dave Rennie says he's "bloody angry" at New Zealand Rugby's decision not to send the All Blacks to Perth as relations between the trans-Tasman rivals continue to unravel. The Rugby Championship fixture was thrown into chaos by NZR's announcement on Friday, which Rugby Australia called a "unilateral decision". The All Blacks were initially scheduled to fly to Perth on Sunday in preparation for the third Test at Optus Stadium on 28 August, which also doubled as a Rugby Championship fixture.

But with New Zealand in lockdown due to rising Covid cases and the uncertainty around the schedule, NZR pulled the pin. The Black Ferns' two Tests against the Wallaroos in New Zealand have also been canned as well as the All Blacks' two home Tests against South Africa. Furious RA boss Andy Marinos said they were informed by the media of the decision despite ongoing discussions with his New Zealand opposite Mark Robinson. "It's incredibly disappointing to be informed of this decision via the media, despite having a conversation with the CEO moments

before and there [was] no mention that this was the intention," Marinos said in a statement. He felt that discussions between all parties, including the Western Australian government, had been positive and they were "close to finding a solution" with a meeting scheduled with Sanzaar later for Friday. Rennie, who is a New Zealander, was filthy at the manner in which NZR had gone about the whole process. "Bloody angry," Rennie said in the opening salvo of his press conference on Friday. "It's disappointing how it's been communicated. Our boys all found out

through social media. "NZ Rugby didn't even have the respect to consult RA about their decision, so that's hugely disappointing. I'm not sure shocked is the right word, because I'm not surprised." Rennie was particularly upset given the way the Wallabies have bent over backwards over the past 15 months to accommodate the All Blacks. That included changing fixtures last year to ensure All Blacks players would not have to quarantine during Christmas. "I just feel there's only one of us who are interested in doing what's best for the game," Rennie said. "We've all made sacrifices to ensure that the games are played for the financial benefit of everyone and the good of the game. If they're playing the welfare card, well our NSW guys haven't been home for eight weeks already with no clear end in sight either, with the likelihood that guys won't get home until late November. NZ's attitude to not honouring their commitment is really disappointing. It's all about them and without any concept of what it's doing over here." It is be-

lieved that the WA government was set to allow the All Blacks into the state, provided they arrived seven days before the match and completed "soft" quarantine, as interstate AFL teams currently do. But NZR chief executive Mark Robinson said that they were not prepared to send the team to Perth with so much uncertainty around travel and scheduling, with Queensland and even Europe mooted as possible host locations for the Rugby Championship. Robinson defended the last-minute decision not to send the All Blacks to Perth. "We certainly don't accept this has been a unilateral decision," Robinson said in response to RA's statement. "We have been communicating right through the week with Sanzaar and Rugby Australia and made very clear to them the risks and concerns we had. So while we understand the emotion coming out of it... we are really comfortable with communication, the rationale that we've put in behind the decision and very comfortable with the fact that we're standing behind their people."



My allegation against TOPS is they directly oversee training decisions: WFI's Brij Bhushan

Delhi, August 21 :

Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), said he wants to make an example of wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who was served a show-cause for allegedly refusing to stay with the Indian team at the Tokyo Olympics and not wearing the team's official uniform for her bouts. Singh also demanded a bigger say in the planning for the Paris Olympics while accusing the Target Olympic Podium Scheme as well as private bodies like the Olympic Gold Quest and JSW Sports for sidelining the federation. Excerpts from an interview: We have referred it to our disciplinary committee, which will call Vinesh, Sonam and Divya Kakran. It's easy to say 'I've made mistake'. But what made you commit that mistake, and why? These are senior wrestlers. Vinesh has replied through her lawyer and said she did not stay with the Indian team for the betterment of the other wrestlers so that they don't get exposed to the virus. Okay, maybe it was for others' good. But then why didn't she wear the costume? Because of that mistake, she has to know what all I had to undergo, what happened to me. After Deepak Punia's incident happened, when his coach beat up one official, I had to appear before a commission that had members from the United World Wrestling and International Olympic Committee. I had to ensure the team did not get debarred. I told them there has never been a case where our wrestlers have flouted any rules and expressed regret but they questioned me, 'how do you run the federation. Your wrestler isn't wearing the (official) cos-

ture'. She could have lost a medal had she won. This isn't a small incident. I had to beg and plead. This you can ask (assistant secretary Vinod) Tomar ji [Tomar: "We had one chief coach and common freestyle coaches for both teams."] And if you are coming to the issue of Vinesh not having her personal physio at the Olympics, she did not tell the federation who her physio was. How are we supposed to know unless she tells us? It has never happened that Vinesh approached the federation. This is my allegation against TOPS. They are directly overseeing issues like where the athlete should go for training. If it was our plan then I could have sent my whole team. Bajrang and Vinesh were two very senior wrestlers. Their ranking was first-class going into the Olympics. They thought a certain plan was better for their future so they told TOPS, who then told us. About planning, the federation had held just one national camp for women wrestlers since April. That's a different topic. Between April and July, there was just one national camp for women that lasted for less than two weeks. I don't remember exactly. Anshu (Malik) went to some country for training after national camp, Poland I think and after that either Russia or Belarus. I had sent the entire team. Vinesh was training in Hungary before that. I don't have any problem with them training abroad but neither the India coach nor federation was taken into confidence. They took TOPS into confidence. That Tomarji will tell you. [Tomar: He was there at the pre-departure camp in Sonapat. Since there is no difference in men's and women's freestyle wrestling, we had common coaches for both teams and he was one of them.] I am not her enemy and I have nothing personal

against her. But IOC ke saamne jo jaleel aur bejjat hona pada... how could she wear a different costume? She is senior enough to understand there is a proper costume for every tournament. We have to look at other wrestlers too. India's wrestling isn't dependent on one wrestler. We have to make sure no one makes such mistakes in the future. READ | Vinesh Phogat breaks silence, says everyone outside is treating me like I am a dead thing... One medal (lost) and everything is finished. But then, WFI too has made mistakes in the past. What mistake has the WFI made? WFI has never made a mistake in life. No one can point out even one mistake we have ever made. One example is during the Olympic qualifier earlier this year. The women's team reached hours before their bout, had to cut weight at an airport terminal, couldn't sleep, couldn't eat... There was another instance a few years ago where in a qualifier for the Rio Olympics, a physio had to compete in a bout because India did not have enough representatives. I don't have enough documents during this time. But if WFI is making mistakes, then you should know that every other federation in the country is making 10 times more mistakes. Yes, they are needed. But whatever programme they make, chief coach and federation should be taken into confidence. We do not need OGC and JSW. They have spoilt three wrestlers, I won't name them. When the Indian government is ready to spend on the athletes, then why do we need them? They can support junior and cadet wrestlers who actually need support.

Lexi Thompson finds form at Women's Open with borrowed caddie

London, August 21 :

It doesn't seem to have been much of a hardship for Paul Drummond to take a week off from his family's car sales business in Carnoustie. Drummond, a 31-year-old plus-two handicap who caddies at the championship links in his spare time, finds himself on the bag for Lexi Thompson at the Women's Open. The spontaneous alliance is working a treat thus far; Thompson added a 70 to Thursday's 69 to ease into contention on the Angus coast. Drummond, in branded gear, looks every bit the tour caddie. Thompson's regular looper, Jack Fulghum, was unwell amid severe heat at the Olympics. It appears the partnership may have formally ended in any case. Thompson made contact with the Carnoustie caddie master last weekend, with Drummond duly recommended for the highest-profile role of his "other" job. Even the language barrier has delivered no problems. "He speaks very slowly to me," said the Floridian Thompson of her Scottish assistant. "I'm fully trusting him on his num-

bers and whether to hit it left or right of the pin and he has been spot on." It would be intriguing, in fact, if Thompson wanted this temporary arrangement to become permanent. The prospect has not been completely ruled out. "I was prepared to get a bag for the week if needed, but I certainly never expected it to be Lexi Thompson," Drummond said. "There is no real plan. I have a business here in Carnoustie just now and do a bit of caddying on the side, so we'll just see how it goes." On the greens is where I have probably helped the most. If you've played here that often, you know the greens like the back of your hand. I just pass on that knowledge. So I'm reading the greens and giving yardages, pretty much. "The broader Thompson story relates to a painful collapse at this year's US Women's Open. Thompson led the event after 54 holes but stumbled to a closing 75. Now 26, Thompson is yet to add to her maiden major victory at the ANA Inspiration in 2014. Glory at Carnoustie, which over the weekend is likely to provide a sterner test than has been the case up to now, would prove

a quick redemption tale for the exuberant Thompson. "I don't feel like I have any point to prove," Thompson said. "I feel like I've done that already in my career. I don't think I really, honestly have to prove anything out here. Things like the US Open happen but I played some great golf the whole week." Golf is such a crazy, up-and-down game. You just have to take the downs and go with a positive attitude going into the next one and don't let it compound.

"Thompson's older brother, Curtis, earned PGA Tour status just days ago via the Korn Ferry Tour. "He has worked extremely hard and gone through slumps as well," she said. "Just the last few years between the workouts and practice and working with his coach, it has paid off. I think he'll do so good out there and he's just in a good head space. He's the most talented out of us all and we're very proud of him." Thompson finds herself two shy of Georgia Hall at the

halfway point. Hall is seeking a second women's open triumph, three years after lifting the trophy at Royal Lytham & St Annes. "There's a lot of golf to play but I'm happy with where I am," said Hall after her 69. "I have a bit more experience now [versus 2018] and there's a few shots here and there which I might have hit back then which I don't do now. Apart from that I'm fairly similar. I handle the pressure better. I just feel in my head, I'm more stable." Mina Harigae's 67 meant she matched Hall's aggregate. Brooke Henderson lurks with menace at four under with Leona Maguire, Yuka Saso and Yealimi Noh among those to join Thompson as one stroke better off. Lizette Salas has Kim Sei-young for company at minus six. Sophia Popov, the defending champion, produced a painful double bogey at the 18th for a three-over aggregate to trigger an early exit from Scotland. Popov will always have Royal Troon. Laura Davies, who will turn 58 in October, produced a terrific performance to sail into the closing 36 holes at even par. Louise Duncan, the 21-year-old Scottish amateur, did likewise at three under.



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