

The Assam Rising

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Under-Fire Zinedine Zidane Asks Real Madrid Players To Stand Up...

Mick Schumacher's family name is blessing and ...



NEWS

IN BRIEF

Road Accident in Morigaon

Morigaon, December 5: A youth was killed in a road accident on Saturday morning in Morigaon's Laharighat area. One Rajiv Deka (26) from Palashguri succumbed to his injuries at the site of the incident, when his two-wheeler had a head-on-collision with a heavy vehicle at Bhoomtala.

Two More Die In Assam

Guwahati, December 5: Assam registered two coronavirus related deaths on Friday. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma informed on twitter. Out of the two deaths, one was reported from Sivasagar and the other was reported from Dibrugarh. "Sad to share the demise of two COVID patients today~ Late Bibeka Rajkhowa (93) of Dibrugarh and Late Rumi Cheleng (65) of Sivasagar."

CISF jawan killed

Guwahati, December 5: A Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) jawan from Assam was reportedly killed in a road mishap in Delhi. The CISF jawan identified as Jayanta Doley hailed from 1 number Balijan Adarsha Mishing Gaon in Bokakhat under Golaghat district. Taking to social media platforms, Assam minister Atul Bora who represents the Bokakhat constituency has condoled the demise of Doley.

Bans on plastic bags

Guwahati, December 5: With an initiative to ban plastic bags the Kamrup Metro District Administration has directed the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) to ensure strict compliance with plastics that are below the recommended standard. On Thursday, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kamrup Metro Biswajit Pegu issued a directive banning the use of plastics below 40 microns.

Centre to invest Rs 3,000 crore to boost water transport in the region



Guwahati, December 5: The move would improve institutional capacity and existing framework of water transportation in the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers to achieve scalable height in trade and commerce

In a bid to improve Assam's water transportation in Brahmaputra and Barak rivers and improve trade across Northeast India, the Central government is likely to spend Rs 3,000 on various projects. Union minister of state for ports, shipping and waterways Mansukh L Mandaviya and Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal held a virtual discussion to improve water transports. "The Union Minister shared a detailed

framework of a nearly Rs 3,000 crore project for improving navigability, transportation, trade and commerce of the rivers Brahmaputra and Barak, the national waterways 2 and 16," said an official statement. The move would improve institutional capacity and existing framework of water transportation in the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers to achieve scalable height in trade and commerce, the statement added. Assuring total cooperation from the Assam government, Sonowal said once fully implemented, the entire 891-km stretch of the Brahmaputra from Sadiya to Dhubri, and Barak would receive new lease of life in providing gateways to

neighbouring countries which would also catapult to the success of the 'Act-East Policy'. Mandaviya said that true to the spirit of the Central government for the development of Assam and other northeastern states under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the multi-crore project would encompass all critical areas like development of multimodal logistic hubs with last-mile connectivity, passenger and cargo terminals, and construction of new jetties, among others. "During the discussion, the Union Minister shared a detailed framework of a nearly Rs 3,000 crore project for improving navigability, transportation, Contd...Page 6

Weapons recovered ahead of BTAD elections in Assam's Kokrajhar



Kokrajhar, December 5: On receiving specific input from sources about the location of weapon cache, a joint team of Indian Army, SSB and Assam Police conducted a successful search operation in which a huge cache of arms, ammunition, high explosives and grenades were recovered in

Akshiguri in Ripu Reserve Forest of Kokrajhar District, Assam. Assisted by Army Dogs, the successful operation held on Friday (December 4), will go a long way in ensuring peace in BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Region) and Assam in general and thwart any nefarious designs Contd...Page 6

Terror links, FIR filed against AIUDF Chief Badruddin Ajmal

Guwahati, December 5: Assam BJP leader Satya Ranjan Borah on Friday lodged a police complaint against the Lok Sabha MP and chief of All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) Badruddin Ajmal for receiving funds from some foreign agencies, allegedly linked to terror groups. In the FIR lodged by Borah at Dispur police station in Assam capital Guwahati, alleges that the organisation got funds from foreign agencies linked



with terror outfits. Reportedly, Borah's complaint is based on allegations levelled against Ajmal Foundation by an NGO called Legal Rights Observatory (LRO) that had put out some documents on Twitter. It alleged Contd...Page 6

Tamulpur to be declared as new district of Assam: Himanta Biswa



Guwahati, December 5: Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced to declare Tamulpur as a new district of the state. The decision has been taken that keeping in mind the greater interests of the local people, Himanta added. Tamulpur is currently a sub-division of Baksa district under the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). While addressing an election rally at Ghagrachak, Goibari Sarma said, "We will create Tamulpur district. Tamulpur district will include Darangajuli, Goibari, Nagrijuli and Suklai Serfang constituencies of the BTC. There will be five districts in BTC. Currently there are four districts under the BTC." The existing four districts under the BTC are—Kokrajhar, Chirang, Udalguri

and Tamulpur. "A medical college will be established at Tamulpur; a new bridge over the Pagladia will be constructed. There will be a government college at Darangajuli. A stadium will also be constructed," Sarma added. He also highlighted other welfare schemes taken by the Assam government. On the other hand, the minister took on Hagrama Mohilary-led Bodoland People's Front (BPF) for widespread corruption and anomalies in the government schemes in their 15 years of reign. Baksa and Udalguri district will go for polls in the first phase on December 7. On the other hand, Kokrajhar and Chirang districts will vote on December 12. The votes will be counted on December 12. Meanwhile a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed before the Gauhati High Court against Contd...Page 6

Jaishankar to skip Canada-led Covid strategy meet days after Justin Trudeau's remarks on farmers' protest

New Delhi, December 5: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will skip Canada-led meetings to formulate strategies on the coronavirus pandemic amid the fresh row between the two nations over remarks made by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on the ongoing farmers' protest in India. India Today TV has learned that New Delhi has informed Ottawa that Jaishankar will not attend the meeting that is to take place on December 7 due to "scheduling issues". The government sources said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) told the Canadian government that Jaishankar is not available to attend the December 7 meeting organised by Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne because of "scheduling" issues. Jaishankar had



participated in a virtual meet last month of the Ministerial Coordination Group of Covid-19 (MCGC), led by Canadian foreign minister Francois-Philippe Champagne. The minister has tweeted, "Pleased to participate in the Group of Foreign Ministers Meeting to exchange experiences on COVID-related challenges. Thank FM @FP_Champagne of Canada for convening the meeting." With the remarks made by Canadian

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over the farmers' protest, sources say the Indian administration is unhappy with the "ill-informed" and "unwarranted" comments being made in Ottawa that could impact bilateral relations Contd...Page 6

'Govt will benefit from farm laws, not us': Farmers' leaders at meeting with centre

New Delhi, December 5: As the deadlock over contentious farm laws entered ninth day on Saturday, farmers' leaders and government are holding a fifth round of talks at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi. During the meeting, the farm-

government wants us to stay on road, we've no problem. We won't take path of non-violence," news agency ANI quoted farmer leaders as saying at the meeting. "We do not want corporate farming. The government will

the laws are in favour of the agriculture sector, farmers have raised concerns regarding the Minimum Support Price (MSP). They also fear that after these laws will leave them at the mercy of big corporates. Before



ers insisted on a commitment from the government's side while asserting that they "don't want any further discussion and want to know what they have decided". We have material with us to last a year. We've been on road for past several days. If

benefit from this law, not the farmer," they also said. Thousands of farmers from Haryana and Punjab are protesting in and around Delhi against the three farm laws, passed by Parliament in September. While the Central government has assured that

Saturday's talks, four rounds of negotiations have taken place between Union ministers and farmers' representatives. Among them, two rounds of talks took place amid the ongoing protests. So far, the Contd...Page 6

Vaccine Maker Clarifies As Haryana Minister, A Volunteer, Tests Covid+



New Delhi, December 5: Covaxin, India's first indigenous vaccine for the highly infectious coronavirus, has been designed to be effective if a person takes two doses,

Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical firm Bharat Biotech clarified in a statement today, stressing that the "efficacy can be determined 14 days after the second dose". The clarification came soon after

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij, who was a volunteer in the third phase of vaccine trials in his state, said he has tested positive for COVID-19. "Safety is our primary criteria in vaccine development," the pharma firm assured. "Covaxin clinical trials are based on a 2-dose schedule, given 28 days apart. The vaccine efficacy will be determined 14 days post the 2nd dose," the Hyderabad firm said in an official statement. One of the three Covid vaccine candidates being tested in India, Covaxin - in its third phase of trials - will be administered to "26,000 subjects across 25 sites", the Contd...Page 6

NFR achieves improved freight loading during November

Guwahati, December 5: Loading in freight carrying trains from NFR have been showing increasing trend. During the month of November 2020 NFR loaded 8.768 million tonnes of goods, which is 2.8% more than the load-



ing done during the corresponding month of 2019. During the month of November Cement loading increased by 925% and P.O.L loading increased by 68.6% and Container loading increased by 16.7% in comparison to the corresponding month of 2019. It may be mentioned here that

freight figures continue to maintain the higher momentum in terms of earnings and loading in the month of November 2020 for Indian Railways. Working on mission mode, Indian Railways & #39; Freight loading for the month of November 2020 crossed last year's loading and earnings for the same period. During the period of November the average wagon loading per day was 58726 which is 4.6% higher than 56128 wagons (average/day) loaded during October. The impressive figure of increase Contd...Page 6

Jahnu Barua to direct Hindi movie on Lachit Borphukan

Guwahati, December 5: Popular filmmaker Jahnu Barua is all set to direct a Hindi film on legendary Ahom general Lachit Borphukan in a bid to project the exploits of Assam's war hero in the national and global limelight. The film to be produced by the Guwahati-based Dream House Productionz, besides top

production houses of the country, is expected to hit the screens by the end of 2022. "For well over 20-

years, I have been living with this dream of doing a film on, my favourite war hero Contd...Page 6



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Burnt out by the present, I'm self-soothing with Bake Off and old novels



For a long time in the spring, I found I couldn't read. My concentration was shot from too much scrolling, and I was thoroughly hooked on the adrenalin of bad news. The consolations of fiction seemed, by comparison, very weak and uninviting. Besides which, any spare time - and there was no spare time, during those first weeks and months after the schools chucked out - was, I knew, supposed to be spent on rigorous plans for self-improvement. Nine months later, and here we are, dragging ourselves towards the end of the year, various types of burnout

Emma Brookes raving. With the number of hospitalisations in the US at almost double the spring peak, the appeal of listlessly absorbing one dire headline after another has, for many of us, waned. These days, I don't want to stay up past midnight immersed in the latest developments from the pandemic. In fact, I don't want to spend time in the contemporary world at all. For me, the only reliable escape right now is to be found in two locations: painfully slow novels that are at least 40 years old, or the equally out-of-time-and-place space of the tent in Bake Off. The escapism of the minutely observed past can, we know, be more outlandish a journey than ostensibly much wilder departures. Every few years, an overlooked literary masterpiece is rediscovered, illuminating some aspect of life a generation or two ago and taken up with wild enthusiasm by those born after it. A few years back, it was *Desperate Characters*, the 1970 novel by Paula Fox, all but forgotten until Jonathan Franzen took it up as a cause, and for a while it seemed to be all anyone was reading. The lockdown equivalent has been Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont, a novel written in 1971 by Elizabeth Taylor, a writer I associate so exclusively with the 1940s that it came as a shock to discover she was still writing in the decade I was born. In both of these novels, there is that vertiginous sense of looking back at a world disappeared - in the Fox novel, a late 60s version of Brooklyn, full of gloom and foreboding, in which a couple's malaise is expressed through the lens of a random bite by a cat; in Mrs Palfrey, a depiction of a frayed, genteel London of the same period, saturated in alienation and loneliness. I'm not sure why I found Mrs Palfrey so consoling, but it sent me down a rabbit hole of mid-to late-20th-century novels that, in the past few weeks, had had me rabidly reserving from the library all the Penelope Lively and Elizabeth Jane Howards I can find. The crises in these novels of the very recent past remind one simultaneously that everything, even the worst things, will pass, while reassuring us that no matter what happens or how wildly alien the world is, human preoccupations remain broadly the same. Which brings us to Bake Off. In America, large numbers of friends have clung to the British baking show - that, and 12 seasons of RuPaul's Drag Race - as the only way to self-soothe over the past few months, and I can see why. A couple of weeks ago I dropped into the most recent series, after emerging, blinking, from a period of only wanting to watch horror. I didn't intend to stay. I like Bake Off, but I couldn't imagine the mild drama of the tent would match my mood. And yet half way through the first episode, something like a riptide effect took hold, and now I'm hours in and hungry for more. It's a new phase, not unconnected to my enjoyment of the novels, those acutely observed pieces that turn not on wild plot twists but, more often than not, on small acts of unkindness. For so long, the news has been neon and exclamatory. All I want, now, is to be reminded that most lives don't unfold in this way; that our most intense pleasures hit at the level of a cake coming out of the oven, or the warmth of Noel Fielding gently teasing a contestant. I want a reminder, I suppose, that the drama of our lives exists for the most part separately from what's going on out there; that it's in here, with these people, inside the tent, that it happens; and that these small fluctuations, captured in the best novels and least dramatic TV shows, are where we live and what we will remember.

Boris Johnson must give up on fishing: it's the only way to get a Brexit deal

Hold the fish. But has Boris Johnson the guts to do it? If one thing screams from the current, final trade talks between Britain and the European Union, it is that fishing cannot become a deal-breaker. It is an industry alive with romance, but it occupies just 0.02% of the British domestic output and employs just 12,000 people, fewer than benighted Debenhams. The reality is that British negotiators have proved so incompetent in the talks so far - playing hard and soft throughout as if it were a poker game - that the EU now has all the cards in its hand. Messages emerging from the Brexit talks indicate that two of the last three "blockages" have reached plausible solution. Britain's fantasy that it could go on trading freely with Europe while subsidising its competition and disregarding EU standards on health and welfare has been overridden. Only fish remains. And while the nuances of level playing fields may be beyond the pay grade of many French, Dutch and Spanish politicians, they all know a lobster and a cod. They also know the benefits their fleets have enjoyed at Britain's expense under existing EU quotas. Britain in this matter is in the right. For Channel cod the British quota is 9% against France's 84%, and other fish likewise. Its territorial waters are plundered by European fishing fleets and it is currently demanding

the "return" of only 60% of that plunder. The EU has offered just 18% - a huge gap. Various bridges have been devised, such as annual quota renegotiation or a phased transition towards the British position. None has proved acceptable. The reality, which Britain refuses to admit, is that Brexit is not about rectitude but power. In Washington, president-elect Joe Biden said this week that he has no interest in an urgent trade deal with Britain, but rather that he must concentrate on his own economy. Likewise, the EU is more concerned with recovering from coronavirus than worrying over Johnson's self-inflicted Brexit wounds. France's President Macron has no desire to add to his internal problems just now, and certainly no interest in upsetting his fishermen. He says he is ready for no deal with Britain, and is happy to discuss trade into the new year, even as pandemonium breaks out at the Strait of Dover and in Britain's supermarkets and pharmacies. The French are rubbing hands with glee at Johnson's plight. Every official assessment of Brexit shows no deal (and indeed most sorts of deal) to be disastrous. There must be a deal. But the issue is Johnson. On what should be the central issue of this week's talks - minimising Brexit's cost through sustaining open-border trade - he is vulnerable to the charge of lying. He and Theresa May both

promised a Brexit that would be "frictionless". Of all Johnson's whoppers this was the most outrageous, as it was untrue from the moment he insisted on leaving the customs union. The insistence had no purpose except in helping him become his party's leader. It was a classic case of pre-emptive narcissism. Johnson not only knew that frictionless was impossible, he then proved it by his concession last year to the Irish government on a border down the Irish Sea. That border remains floating in agonised suspension: it will be explosive with no deal. Meanwhile, we have the **Simon Jenkins** Brexit superno, Michael Gove, issuing 208-page exporters' manuals and posting frantic advertisements warning the country "to get prepared" for his regulatory tsunami. Anyone who thinks this does not constitute friction should tune into Radio 4's early-morning horror show, *Farming Today*. By conceding on fish, Johnson could just about salvage a deal. He could order Gove to rescue some sanity from the Brexit shambles. He would have to shower his fishermen with millions of pounds. But he could proclaim tariff-free trade and avoid too much disruption to business with Europe. This would protect financial services, security liaison, science, academic ties and a



hundred other dealings between Britain and its European neighbours. The government can then struggle to bring Britain back into a sensible relationship with Europe's community of states, at a time when that community needs sober co-operation, not comic-book boosterism. We could surely move on from ministers such as Matt Hancock claiming vaccines for Brexit, and Gavin Williamson pretending these proved Britain to be "a much better country" than everywhere else. Britain's current vaccines were invented in the United States and manufactured in Belgium. Deal or no deal, Britain will next week learn what Brexit really means. It means impotence. The country will have chosen between a minor humiliation over fish or the catastrophe of the EU states walking away from the table with no deal at all. Either way, Britain will

have declined under Johnson's command from being a leading member of one of the world's three great politico-economic blocs to being an irrelevant presence off the coast of one of them. It will have been forced to accept a miserable fishing deal by its neighbours or it will have imposed on its already battered citizens the savage economic sanction of a tariff wall. The talk of Whitehall is that Johnson is still not fully fit to govern. He has shown a startling lack of grip on his Downing Street team since the summer, with chaotic comings and goings worthy of Donald Trump's White House. With the virtual collapse of his coronavirus track-and-trace strategy, and constant changes in lockdown policy, he must know that the efficient wheeling out of Covid vaccinations is now his absolute priority. Fishing is not.

The inhumanity of the UK's deportation flights is part of a far bigger problem

"People are making decisions about my dad... the decisions they make mean I won't have a dad with me. Please let my dad stay with me." Neatly written but unmistakably the work of a child, this is the plea of a 10-year-old asking a judge to stop his father being deported to Jamaica. The letter is accompanied by two drawings: one marked "good", showing him with his dad, happy and together in the same country, the other "bad", where they're separated and both in tears. Despite this, his dad was put on a plane anyway. At around 1am on Wednesday morning he was sent more than 4,000 miles away. As the letter explains, it means his father will miss his birthday - instead of a day together, all they'll have is a phone call. This little boy's dad was one of 13 people who were deported to Jamaica this week, all torn away from the life they know. This was not the government's plan; it wanted it to be many more: 50 black residents of Britain in total. But its hopes were dashed at the last minute in the face of significant resistance. Eighty-two black public figures - Naomi Campbell, Bernardine Evaristo and Thandie Newton among them - signed a letter opposing the charter flight, as did more than 60 politicians, many

of whom are backbench Labour MPs, and a collection of QCs and NGOs. At the same time, 180,000 people signed a petition from BARAC UK and Bame Lawyers for Justice. Groups such as Detention Action and Manchester Immigration Detainee Support were supporting the people involved and several legal challenges were launched - some of them succeeding in the final hours, with a number of people being taken off the plane before the flight took off. "It is disappointing that immigration law firms continued to use last-minute tactics to remove a significant number of offenders from this flight," Tory MP Chris Philp complained. Such "last-minute tactics" included simply trying to provide people with the legal support that they should have already had access to, and stopping the deportation of someone who is believed to be a victim of trafficking. This is a government that cares little for learning the lessons from the Windrush scandal, for "due

process" or for addressing the racism its own policies produce. "I don't know what I would've done if I was sent out there. I would've been stuck in limbo," one of the people who was successfully taken off the flight told the Independent, "I would've had to leave my family behind." They're often hidden from sight, but the



Maya Goodfellow

human impact of the government's policies matter - they matter a lot. But the problem with this isn't just that it affects the "wrong people", those who've spent most of their lives here or those with children. To appeal to certain individuals' "relative innocence" does "nothing to challenge the carceral logic that claims that the initial criminalisation, punishment and incarceration is legitimate when

applied to the right people". Gracie Mae Bradley and Luke de Noronha have written, dissecting some of the limitations in how deportations are challenged. "In fighting mass deportations, we cannot shore up the prison." A narrative that consistently focuses on the idea that some people are "worthy" of staying in Britain implicitly positions these people against the "unworthy", while often not clearly enough showing how the racism of criminal justice system can be connected to the racism in the UK's immigration regime. Arguments against current immigration policy don't have to be made from the position of a supposed "good" or "deserving" side. This isn't true only for deportation. It was, and is, possible to speak of the specific cruelty exacted on the Windrush generation without implicitly positioning them against a problem non-citizen or "illegal immigrant"; or to successfully campaign to end the immigration surcharge for health and care staff, but then loudly and persistently continue the fight to demand it is abolished altogether for everyone. I don't just dislike dividing up the "good" from the "bad" or the "contributor" from the "drain" because I'm obsessed

with words. "Language acts as a supporting structure, stoking our basest of emotions - fear and hatred", the writer Lola Okolosie argues: "These are sentiments translated into policy which institutionalises inhumanity." These categories, then, help justify and produce regressive policy. And when they're folded into resistance long-term, even if in altered forms, they can limit the wins - and the way we understand what's possible. Certain groups continue to be deported, detained and made to pay the NHS surcharge, which just over a month ago increased from £400 a person each year to £624. There continues to be the concept of the useful, innocent migrant versus the threatening one. Meanwhile, the Conservative government doesn't caveat its cruelty or put many limits on its political imagination. In the middle of a pandemic, the deportations have not stopped: there are another three flights scheduled for next week alone. It has continued to put people in detention, even amid a current outbreak of coronavirus at Morton Hall. It has begun keeping people seeking asylum in squalid former military barracks. And the hostile environment is still shutting people out of basic but essential services.

The inevitable collapse of Arcadia is a cautionary tale for British capitalism

Philip Green favoured making a fast buck over investing in response to retail's changing landscape - and he paid the price. Philip Green wasn't much cop at capitalism. That may sound a strange way to describe a very wealthy man who lives on an ocean-going yacht moored in the tax haven of Monaco. It perhaps sounds doubly weird given that Arcadia consists of some of the best known names on the high street: Topshop, Wallis, Miss Selfridge and Dorothy Perkins among them. But even a halfway decent capitalist should have seen that the writing was on the wall for large swathes of traditional bricks-and-mortar retailing years ago. Green was unaware of, or indifferent to, this week's collapse of Arcadia and the wrenching structural change in his own industry. Sure, life on the high street and in shopping malls has been tough this year. No question, the Covid-19 pandemic has put paid to businesses that would otherwise have been viable. These are unprecedented times, and it is a sign of how difficult life continues to be that Green has not even waited until after the Christmas sales before calling in the administrators. That



said, the challenge from online retailers has been real and growing for the best part of two decades. Digital disruption is not a new phenomenon. It is now a quarter of a century since Jeff Bezos started Amazon from the garage of his rented home, time enough for the savvy to sense the way the wind was blowing and prepare. Tough social distancing rules are the proximate cause of Arcadia's demise, but in truth the events of 2020 have merely turbocharged a process that was already

happening. The trend will not be altered by the arrival of vaccines and the merciful end of lockdown, because the change is big and permanent. It also threatens to be brutal. For manufacturing in the 1980s, read retailing in the 2020s. Arcadia is one example of the new reality; Debenhams, this week's other big retail casualty, is the other. While it's convenient to blame the virus for the liquidation of the department store chain, its future looked bleak when the

Larry Elliott

crisis began. As my colleague Zoe Wood has noted, Debenhams never really recovered after a debilitating period in the hands of private equity in the early 2000s. In a textbook example of short-termism, 23 stores were sold and the sites leased back on terms that have made Debenhams unattractive to potential buyers. Such are the perils of doing business the British way. Green bought Arcadia in 2002 - mostly with borrowed money - cut costs aggressively to raise profits, refinanced on better terms, and extracted a whopping £1.2bn dividend for the company's biggest shareholder: his wife. In the early 2000s, this approach was all the rage. Load up on private equity debt, pare investment to the bare minimum, increase short-term profits, and top things off with a bit of financial engineering. With the City of London geared up for these sort of transactions, why waste time and effort innovating and planning for the long term? Green certainly had an eye for a deal; what he lacked was the nous to reinvest some of the profits into

building a company strong enough to see off more nimble rivals. Early on, it came from Primark and Zara, but more recently from the pure online retailers, which paid much lower rent and business rates and were even better at cutting costs. Are there other Arcadias or Debenhams lurking out there? It would be brave to assume otherwise. Corporate debt had been rising for eight years ahead of the pandemic, much of it used to keep shareholders sweet. After the US, the UK was one of the biggest users of share buybacks in 2019, according to the Bank for International Settlements. There is certainly no evidence that rising corporate debt has been funding an investment boom. The loans that the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has provided have saved many retailers from bankruptcy but the crunch will come when that debt has to be repaid. Clearly, some retailers have responded to what the economist Joseph Schumpeter once called gales of creative destruction. They have provided a digital offering to a new breed of more discerning consumers, who demand speed, ease of purchase,

range and competitive prices. Next has responded to the existential threat posed by companies such as Asos and Boohoo, and is making money. For some retailers, 2020 has been a good year because consumers have diverted money they would have spent on eating out or going on holiday into buying things for the home or to keep them amused during lockdown. The official measure of retail sales for October showed volumes 8% above February's pre-pandemic levels, but it is the breakdown that matters. Online sales are up 53%, while in-store spending is down by 3%. The crisis in retailing is exposing how the alleged strengths of Britain's economic model are in fact weaknesses. A flexible labour market is supposed to ensure that workers made redundant by one firm quickly find employment elsewhere, but it is not immediately obvious how the 25,000 workers whose jobs are at risk at Arcadia and Debenhams will easily get other jobs in retailing or in the other sector of the economy that traditionally employs large numbers of low-paid workers: hospitality.

NSCN (I-M), NSF hit out at Nagaland Governor RN Ravi

DIMAPUR, December 05: NSCN (I-M) has again hit out at the Governor of Nagaland, RN Ravi, for the latter's speech saying that "any person on Earth that runs the blood of the Nagas" would "certainly have been provoked" by his "irresponsible statement" made on the anniversary of 58th Nagaland Statehood Day. NSCN (I-M) through its MIP said that Ravi's statement reminded Naga people "of how under the leadership of AZ Phizo the war of resistance of the Nagas against the Indian colonialists were manipulated by the IB (Intelligence Bureau) officials who roped in some of the treacherous Naga individuals, mostly Indian government employees that formed a superfluous body called the Naga People's Convention (NPC)." NSCN (I-M) claimed that NPC came out of nowhere and signed the 16-Point Agreement that hijacked Naga solution and a state under the Indian Constitution was accepted and "giving a foothold to the Indian government to claim that from thence Nagas were a part of India." NSCN (I-M) said the agreement was "nothing less than a calculated plan of the Indian government" to backstab the leadership of AZ Phizo and the Naga National Movement through NPC and reducing to nothingness the untold sufferings of the Nagas, loss of lives, properties and dignity. NSCN (I-M) said Phizo and the Naga nationalists and the entire Naga people "instantly condemned and rejected NPC and the 16-Point Agreement". It said that today, Ravi's statement "clearly exposed" that another NPC was in the making. NSCN (I-M) said Ravi's assertion that some of the civil societies "under his payroll are the main stakeholders on the Indo-Naga Issue and therefore their decision must be supreme is farce". It said when the Government of India and the Naga people were fully committed to resolve the issue which was at its concluding stage and through peaceful means, "once more the ex-IB official RN Ravi is planning to hijack the more than seven decades of war and 23 years of peace talks in the same style of the NPC." NSCN (I-M) accused Ravi of attempting to "murder" the fu-

ture of the Nagas and the vital national interest of India. It warned that "Nagas must wake up and should not allow us to be fooled twice with the same trick." While agreeing with Ravi's assertion that India as a nation should have a sovereign territory, one constitution and one national flag, NSCN (I-M) said in the same breath, "Nagaland/Nagalim too must have sovereign territory, one constitution and one national flag within which the two must share sovereign powers and coexist peacefully as two entities as agreed upon in the Framework



Agreement where he himself is a signatory." NSCN (I-M) advised Ravi as Governor of Nagaland "not to bite off more than he can chew as far as the Indo Naga Issue is concerned." It also asked if Ravi, the interlocutor, would speak in the same "bipolar language as this RN Ravi the governor of Nagaland state does?" Citing Phizo's November 22, 1948 letter written to C. Raja Gopalachari, the Governor General of India, "I am certain about one thing, my turbulent Naga people cannot be frightened into submission", the NSCN (I-M) said "The same is gently reminded to Ravi today that we are underdressed by your threat." DIMAPUR, DEC 1 (NPN): Naga Students' Federation (NSF) Tuesday condemned what it described as "shallow attempt" by the Governor of Nagaland and Government of India representative and interlocutor for Naga peace talks, RN Ravi, to "mislead the Naga people" through his speech on the eve of 58th Nagaland Statehood Day. NSF president Ninoto Awomi and general secretary Liremo R

Kikon said they were "appalled" at Ravi's "blatant attempt to placate his alter-ego" by glorifying the 16-point agreement that had "long been disowned by the Naga people." NSF said creation of Nagaland did "reap in monetary dividends for a section of the Naga people besides other tangible and intangible perks", but it only resulted in a more fractious Naga society. It also said the Governor's claim that creation of Nagaland state has been the best thing to happen to the Naga people only revealed his "shallow understanding of the Naga history and

point agreement, the current peace process "becomes doubtful to be enduring if the real representatives of peoples' resistance are isolated like the past misadventures." NSF said that Naga people's assertion for self determination was in line with the inherent ethos, values and customary systems of the Naga society and not otherwise. SF slammed the policies of the government of India in attempting to muzzle the voices of Naga people through militarization which was causing much harm to the Naga society. Further, NSF said that wishes of the Naga people for early conclusion of the peace process should in no way be construed as their willingness to accept anything and everything that was handed over to them. The federation has appealed to interlocutor to "rise up from his self induced slumber" and realise that the NPC's 16-point agreement was a total failure and that it only sowed the seed for further division and confusion. It also reminded Ravi that the "obvious failure of the impugned agreement" to solve the Naga political issue led to the ceasefire and political dialogue with NNC in 1964 and "thereafter the endless political dialogue leading to this day." Meanwhile, NSF has appealed to the interlocutor to "refrain from furthering the old 'carrot and stick' policy" and adopt a more pragmatic approach in order to ensure that the "interests of the two entities are upheld through the political solution", which it said was in the interest of "both the Indians and the Naga people."

also the narrow walls within which he has been trying to solve the vexed Indo-Naga Political issue." NSF also said Ravi's claims undermines and belittles the "very people he has been assigned to have a political dialogue in order to pave the way for lasting peace and tranquillity all over the Naga homeland." The student body also reminded Ravi that the Naga people were spread across four Indian states and two Countries, without their consent. NSF said that Ravi's mandated role should be to find a common ground for all the Naga people and not instigate further division by "patronising an agreement brought about by declared 'traitors' of the Naga cause." NSF also said that Naga people had "outrightly rejected and disowned" the theories forwarded in "Bedrock of Naga society and that any attempt by governor to legitimize the same through his statement "reeks of insensitivity and disregard for the aspirations of the Naga people." NSF maintained that with his patronising of the illegitimate 16-

Police station in Manipur awarded India's best police station



IMPHAL, December 05: Nongpok Sekmai police station of Manipur's Thoubal district bagged this year's India's best police station trophy. This was the third consecutive year that state's police station was awarded the best police station of the country conferred by the Union ministry of home affairs. Earlier, Nambol police station of Bishnupur district bagged the best police station trophy in 2018 and City police station of Imphal West district was selected for the same trophy in 2019. Union home minister on Wednesday virtually presented the trophy to inspector Keisam Premkumar Mangang who is the officer in-charge (OC) of the police station during DsGP and IGsP Conference 2020 held at the conference hall of SIB (Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau) office in New Delhi, state police PRO informed in a statement. The trophy was given in recognition of the professionalism, hard work, dedication and community oriented policing by Manipur police, the PRO said, and added that the department will continue to work hard with commitment and professionalism in the service of the people of the state in the years ahead. The police station was able to bag the trophy due to sincere efforts of the OC

and his team under the strict guidance of Thoubal district SP Dr S Ibomcha and under the supervision of senior officers of Manipur police department under the able leadership of state DGP LM Khoute and overall supervision of chief minister N Biren Singh who is also home minister of the state, the statement asserted. The trophy for best police station in India was instituted after a directive of the Prime Minister. Prime Minister during his address to a DsGP conference in Kutch, Gujarat in 2015 directed to lay down parameters for grading of police stations on their performance as well as feedback by citizens. Accordingly, the annual assessment of the best police stations scheme was undertaken to identify and recognise 10 best police stations of the country and also the best police station in a particular state or union territory. Under the initiative of the Union ministry of home affairs, in a view to encourage excellence in police work, Nongpok Sekmai police station was selected as the best police station of the country. The selection was done after a team of officials of Union home ministry inspected the police station on October 10, 2020 and checked various parameters.

Bust of Dr. Imkongliba Aounveiled at Raj Bhavan



Kohima, December 05: As part of the 58th Nagaland Statehood Day celebration, a memorial to commemorate the contributions of the Founding Fathers and the Martyrs was inaugurated in the Lawns of Dr. Imkongliba Aoun Hall, Raj Bhavan with unveiling a bust of Naga Peoples' Convention (NPC) president Dr. Imkongliba Aoun. Nagaland Governor RN Ravi felicitated family members of the NPC leaders at the programme. Extending warm Statehood Day greetings to the people, governor RN Ravi paid rich tributes to the NPC leaders and countless Nagas whose blood, sweat and sacrifices created Nagaland. Mentioning that the

NPC leaders through a peaceful democratic process for over three years and intensely extensive socio-political churning of Naga society helped crystallise the free-will of Naga people on their political future, Ravi said they united the Nagas living in Assam and NEFA. He added that Nagas, through centuries, had been a freedom loving people and fiercely resisted any attempt of encroachment on their way of life. According to the governor, the bold and far-sighted NPC leaders secured the people of Nagaland their freedom from any interference in their way of life, including customs, cultures, traditions, religion, system of justice and land and resources through a constitutional safeguard. He hailed them as true heroes of Nagaland. Lamenting that people of Nagaland have not yet been able

to fully enjoy the fruits of Statehood due to some people, mostly from outside the State who, in pursuance of a perverse political ideology, are creating roadblocks for enduring peace, he alleged that these people have been peddling preposterous lies to mislead the public. While unveiling the bust of Dr. Imkongliba Aoun, Ravi urged the people of Nagaland to renew their sense of gratitude to the founding fathers and commit themselves to build a Nagaland of their dreams where genus of Naga people will blossom to the fullest. Chief minister Neiphiu Rio, who too was present on the occasion, extended Statehood greetings to the people and paid tributes to architect of Nagaland Dr. Imkongliba Aoun. Recalling the progress made by the State in various fields, he reiterated the State government's commitment to the seven-point resolution adopted by the consultative meeting of October 15, 2020 wherein all stakeholders of Naga society unanimously resolved to support "one solution".

HIV & AIDS epidemic in NE alarming: NACO Report



AGARTALA, December 05: The status of HIV/AIDS epidemic in north-eastern States of India is indeed alarming, says a report of the 'National AIDS Control Organisation' (NACO). The AIDS-related mortality per 1,00,000 population in India was estimated to be the highest in Manipur (36.86), followed by Mizoram (28.34), Nagaland (26.20), Andhra Pradesh (21.76), Puducherry (15.33), Meghalaya (11.08) and Telangana (10.79), added the NACO report. Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Joint Secretary, Alok Saxena — in his observation incorporated in the recent NACO report — said that evidence has emerged globally that HIV-infected people are more at COVID-19 death risk as compared to HIV-negative patients. "The challenges for the 'National AIDS Control Programme' have multiplied with the COVID-19 pandemic," added Saxena in the NACO report. In another disturbing development, the trend of 'Intravenous Drug Users' (IDU) is rising at a rocket speed among the youth

between 15 and 20 years in several north-eastern States, especially in Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland. "The IDU or the HIV/AIDS prevalence are now a major public health problem instead of a simple health issue. To check the rapidly rising trend, we are robustly working with other 11 departments of Tripura government, including Education, Social Education and Welfare, Sports, Police," said Tripura State AIDS Control Society's Project Director Phanindra Kumar Majumder. According to the Excise and Narcotics Department officials from Mizoram, nearly 1,645 people have died of drug abuse in the State since 1984 when the first case was reported. "Sharing of a common syringe by injecting drug users is a key reason for Mizoram becoming one of the leading states of HIV/AIDS prevalent in India, registering an average of five to six HIV positive cases a day," said an Excise and Narcotics Department official on condition of anonymity. Besides, Mizoram with 2.04 per cent, in two other north-eastern States — Manipur and Nagaland — the HIV prevalence rates are 1.43 per cent and 1.15 per cent per one million people respectively. Mizoram recorded more than 20,000 HIV positive cases and nearly 2,000 deaths since the first case in 1990. Smuggling of drugs, arms and other contraband worth thousands of crores takes place frequently in the north-eastern region from across the borders, especially from Myanmar. Officials said the drugs were smuggled from Myanmar which shares 1,643 km of unfenced border with four north-eastern States — Mizoram (510 km), Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Manipur (398 km) and Nagaland (215 km). The drugs, mainly the Methamphetamine tablets (also called Yaba tablet or party tablet), contain a mix of methamphetamine and caffeine and are misused as high-dosage drugs in Bangladesh and neighbouring countries, besides India. A recent 100-page study report submitted to the 'Mizoram State AIDS Control So-

ciety' said that the problem of drugs and substance abuse in Mizo society probably started as a spill over of international drug trafficking. "Mizoram shares two long international borders — one with Myanmar and the 'Golden Triangle' in the east and with Bangladesh in the west. The geographical location of the State provides an easy route for trafficking of heroin. Being adjacent to the 'Golden Triangle', Mizoram is one of the drug-trafficking routes from the 'Golden Triangle' to India and elsewhere. Drug abuse has become a rampant problem among the youth with the initial drug abuse of heroin. The report said that before 1978, social evils like drug addiction and substance abuse were not much known; even though, it cannot be said that there was no such problem. However, after half a decade the first death due to overdose of heroin injection was witnessed when a 24-year-old youth died due to heroin overdose in 1984. Since then, there was a noticeable rise in the growth of substance abuse population and heroin, Proxynon, cough syrup, sedatives, Nitrozapam and volatile are the preferred drugs of choice. The 100-page NACO report said that nationally HIV incidence was estimated at 0.05 per 1,000 uninfected population in 2019. It had declined from 0.54 in 1995 to 0.05 in 2019. "State and Union Territory (UT)-wise, incidence per 1,000 uninfected population was estimated to be the highest in the three north-eastern states of Mizoram (1.18 per 1,000 uninfected population), Nagaland (0.73) and Manipur (0.34) in 2019. Among Female Sex Worker (FSW), incidence (percentage) in the country was as high as 2.12 per cent in Meghalaya, followed by 1.14 per cent in Mizoram and Nagaland." The report said that the State and UT-wise, annual AIDS-related deaths were estimated to have declined from 2010 to 2019 across the country excluding Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand and Assam. Nationally, the annual new HIV infections had decreased by 37 per cent since 2010. The decline in the annual new HIV infections had been witnessed in all States and UTs except Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Chandigarh. "Except Manipur, HIV prevalence in the north-eastern States has shown a stable-to-rising trend due to a relatively higher number of annual new HIV infections. Annual new HIV infections have increased in Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura while being almost stable in Mizoram and Nagaland during 2010-2019." There is a need for community-driven integrated AIDS response in these States on an urgent basis to respond to the growing HIV problem in the region," said the NACO report.

Naga Hoho flays Gov's statehood day message

DIMAPUR, December 05: Naga Hoho (NH) has expressed shock at Government of India's (GoI) interlocutor and governor RN Ravi's statement on the eve of 58th Statehood Day glorifying the "controversial Naga People's Convention (NPC) and creation of controversial Statehood." Hoho president HK Zhimomi and general secretary K Elu Ndong in a press communique declared that they cannot support such "abusive statement" from the interlocutor and condemn it outright. NH said they had the notion that Ravi was unlike other interlocutors in the past and had great hope that during his tenure something could be worked

out as he had understood the Naga political problem and its history of more than 70 years. "We never expected such antagonistic statement from a brilliant, intelligent and self-respecting interlocutor who is supposed to be a harbinger of peace," they added. NH said Ravi's entire utterances were meant to create division among the Nagas in line with regional and artificial territory, adding it left it to the conscience of tribe hohos, student and women associations and civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly from Nagaland, to reflect at this crucial moment and ponder upon with all seriousness the issue it was raising and come out with an

open mind whether his "antipathic statement" was acceptable to the Nagas. Mentioning that no governor in the past had resuscitated the 16-point charter of demands, the hoho asked Ravi what prompted him to take keen interest on the contentious issues after 57 years of statehood when Government of India and Naga negotiators were trying to rise above the 16-point resolution. Questioning whether the founding fathers of Nagaland spent a single night in the jungle fighting for freedom and what they were doing when the 16-point charter of demand was submitted to GoI, NH asked Ravi whether he thought Naga problem was related to armed insurgencies. It asked him why

GoI signed ceasefire agreements in 1964 and 1997, if the 16-point resolution was final. "Who are the guns of people from outside the State of Nagaland inspired by Maoist ideology and tactics? Who raped our mothers and sisters and destroyed and burnt down scores of our churches? Is it not the occupational forces?" the communique asked, asserting that Naga political issue belonged to Naga people alone and not outsiders. Further asking which single entity was claiming the sole franchise over it and who were the primary stakeholders on Naga issue, the hoho questioned the interlocutor whether he did not create primary and secondary stakeholders.

THE ASSAM RISING

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Gitanjali Rao, the 'kid of the year'

A 15-year-old scientist and inventor has been named as Time magazine's first "kid of the year". Gitanjali Rao, from Denver, Colorado, has invented new technologies across a range of fields, including a device that can identify lead in drinking water, and an app and Chrome extension that uses artificial intelligence to detect cyberbullying. She said she hoped she could inspire others to dream up ideas to "solve the world's problems". Gitanjali was chosen from a field of 5,000 US-based nominees, which was whittled down to five finalists by a committee of young people alongside comedian and TV presenter Trevor Noah. She and the other four finalists will be honoured in a TV special next Friday. In an interview with actor and humanitarian Angelina Jolie, Gitanjali said: "I don't look like your typical scientist. Everything I see on TV is that it's an older, usually white, man as a scientist. My goal has really shifted, not only from creating my own devices to solve the world's problems, but inspiring others to do the same as well. Because, from personal experience, it's not easy when you don't see anyone else like you. So I really want to put out that message: If I can do it, you can do it, and anyone can do it." Time began awarding its man of the year honour in 1927, later updating it to person of the year, but this is the first time it has named a kid of the year. Time, which also produces the child-friendly Time For Kids, teamed up with children's TV channel Nickelodeon for the new award. Last year, climate activist Greta Thunberg became the youngest ever person of the year when she was given the honour at age 16. Rao was named last year to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, according to NPR. In 2017, Gitanjali earned the title of "America's Top Young Scientist" while attending the seventh grade at STEM School Highlands Ranch, the Post reported. She won the award for her invention of a device she called Tethys, named for the Greek goddess of fresh water. Rao told the newspaper she entered the project into the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge to try to find a solution to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Tethys uses carbon nanotube sensors to detect lead in water. "Everyone should know what is in their water and everyone should have access to clean water," Rao told Rao's latest invention is called Kindly, which is an app and a Chrome extension, which can detect cyberbullying at an early stage based on artificial intelligence technology. "I started to hard-code in some words that could be considered bullying, and then my engine took those words and identified words that are similar," Rao told the magazine. "You type in a word or phrase, and it's able to pick it up if it's bullying, and it gives you the option to edit it or send it the way it is. The goal is not to punish. As a teenager, I know teenagers tend to lash out sometimes. Instead, it gives you the chance to rethink what you're saying so that you know what to do next time around." Each of the finalists will get a cash prize from Viacom, Nickelodeon's parent company, and will appear with Noah on a TV special. The other finalists, who are also profiled in the Time article, are Tyler Gordon, 14, of San Jose, California; Jordan Reeves, 14, of Columbia, Missouri; Bellen Woodard, 10, of Leesburg, Virginia; and Ian McKenna, 16, of Austin, Texas. Rao said her message to other young people was not to attempt to fix every problem, but focus on the one that excites. Gitanjali Rao (born 2005) is an American inventor, author, and a STEM promoter. She won the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge in 2017. She was recognized as Forbes 30 U 30 for her innovations. [1] She was named TIME Top young innovator in 2020 for her innovations and "innovation workshops" she conducts across the globe. [2] On its December 4, 2020 cover, Time named Rao "Kid of the Year." Gitanjali is from Lone Tree, Colorado. She attends the STEM School Highlands Ranch. [3] She wants to study genetics and epidemiology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. [4][5][6] She has spoken up about the gender pay gap. Gitanjali heard about the Flint water crisis while watching the news. [8][9][10] She became interested in a device to measure the lead content in water. She developed a device based on carbon nanotubes that could send information via bluetooth. [11] Rao collaborated with a research scientist at 3M. [12] In 2017 Rao won the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge and was awarded \$25,000 for her invention. Tethys. [4][13][14] Tethys contains a 9-volt battery, a lead sensing unit, a bluetooth extension and a processor. [4] It uses carbon nanotubes, whose resistance changes in the presence of lead. [3][15] She learned about the carbon nanotubes while reading the Massachusetts Institute of Technology website. [16] She plans to work with scientists and medical professionals to investigate the potential of Tethys as a viable method. [17] She presented her idea at the 2018 MAKERS conference and raised a further \$25,000. [18] As of January 2019, she was working with the Denver water facility and hopes to have a prototype in the next two years. She is a 3-time TEDx Speaker. [20] In September 2018 Rao was awarded the United States Environmental Protection Agency President's Environmental Youth Award.

Major brands and the mainland appropriate, misrepresent traditional attires: Northeast Indians

In the last week of September, Parle-G, the Parle Products' flagship biscuit brand, ran a campaign on its Instagram page celebrating World Tourism Day, held annually on 27 September. The campaign comprised a series of posts, each of which aimed to depict one Indian state and featured an illustration of the young girl who has been the brand's face for decades. The Parle-G girl was dressed in the traditional attire of a state along with the supposed background from that state in each post. But in the illustration labelled "Assam," the brand clubbed identities of multiple northeast Indian states—the Parle-G girl wore a Kajenglei and a Kawrchei, a Manipuri headdress and a Mizo top, respectively, with a background that appeared to resemble the topography of Meghalaya. The post was uploaded on 27 September. As several people from these states started criticising Parle-G in the comments section, it was deleted within 24 hours. In its place, on 28 September, Parle-G uploaded three illustrations depicting Assam, Manipur and Mizoram accurately. But it did not issue an apology. "People outside of northeast have this tendency to 'assume' things about us, based on their limited understanding, and wrongly club all communities under one banner: 'northeast,'" Chichanbeni Kithan, a research fellow at Delhi Assembly Research Centre, told me. Kithan is from a Naga community. Several people from northeastern states spoke to me about how people from the rest of India often misrepresent their traditional attires and even culturally appropriate them without facing any consequences. They told me about a few such cases from this year, and explained why these incidents are not just offensive, but can also threaten the livelihoods of traditional weavers. One instance pertained to Levi Strauss & Co, an American clothing company, and created a furore among Mizos. On 11 September, a Facebook user posted a picture of a Levi's shirt on Mizo Special Report, a Facebook group with over three lakh members. The user pointed out that the shirt had a pattern very similar to the pattern used on Thangchhuah Diar, a traditional Mizo cloth which is tied around the head. "It is almost as if our identity has been stolen from us," Felnummawii, a research scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology's IDC School of Design in Mumbai, said. "I believe the shirt has been 'inspired,' if not copied from the Mizo Thangchhuah pattern, which is a case of cultural appropriation." Felnummawii and Tsa Khupchong, an author with a masters' degree in Mizo, told me about the significance of the pattern to the indigenous Mizo people. "Thangchhuah Diar was a symbol of dignity. Men earned the honour of wearing it by completing a certain kill list [of animals]," Felnummawii said. She added that it was akin to getting a title. "The title gave him a good place within the social hierarchy. This title also came with duties to maintain social order and codes of conduct like bravery and 'tlawmngaiha'—selfless service for others or society. The timeline of this tradition is unclear, but according to Khupchong, it slowly died out during the colonial period. "After we became Christians, our beliefs changed and the traditions such as Thangchhuah and Khuangchaw slowly faded away," he said. In recent years, it has been tailored into shirts within the state itself, and has become a must-have for

Mizo men. The fact that the design on the Levi's shirt looks so similar to Thangchhuah has already done harm, Felnummawii said. It can be found on the Levi's website and e-commerce marketplaces, such as Myntra and Flipkart. "A friend bought the shirt from Myntra because he did feel it looked like our traditional attire and he needed it for some office function," she told me. "We expect Levis to admit the mistake, if it even was unintentional, and acknowledge the inspiration behind the design." According to Felnummawii, this can potentially impact the livelihood of weavers in the state. According to the All India Handloom Census 2019-2020, there are

a scarf that was a smaller size of Leirum Phee and even used it to cover his mouth during his address, which had more than two hundred million viewers. Leirum Phee holds great cultural and historical significance in Manipur. Mostly handmade by locals of the state, it is used to honour dignitaries and given as a gift by the parent of a woman on her marriage. Some people from Manipur considered it a matter of pride that the prime minister had promoted the cloth on a national telecast. In fact, the cloth did receive attention after the address, but as the "Modi gamchha"—a thin, coarse cotton towel—which was being mass-produced in Barabanki, a town

writer for Mint Lounge, said food and clothes were close to the cultural roots of the people in northeastern states. Borah had visited Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya in 2019 to research on northeastern textiles. "Few broad examples: Bodos in Assam have this signature fern-like pattern; Muga Mekhela-sadors—a traditional Assamese dress—"with woven red patterns are an emotion for Assamese women; in Nagaland, motifs in bright orange are unique to the mekheles"—a traditional wrap-around skirt—"and shawls of Nagaland's Chakhesang community," she said. Borah added that more stories need to be written about the culture and traditions of northeast India. The importance of respecting the cultural roots of different communities in the region came up in the public discourse in July as well, when a Delhi-based company called Kaku Fancy Dress sold what they called a tribal Naga costume on Flipkart and Amazon. The costume consisted of a leopard-print dress with a red belt and red headwear. "For Nagas, traditional attires are sacred and it goes the same for different tribal or ethnic people," Neuto Justin Kinny, the information and publication secretary of the Gujarat chapter of the Naga Students Union, said. "For them to misinterpret our traditional attire just for business or profit at the expense of our sacred gift is not the right thing to do." According to a Nagaland-based newspaper, the Morung Express, a complaint was lodged against Amazon and Flipkart in July this year regarding the Kaku Fancy Dress case. Chunthailiu Gommei, one of the complainants, told me, such misrepresentation has far reaching consequences. "It reinforces stereotypes of tribal or Naga people as 'jungli,' who are uncultured, wild, and exotic," she said. She added that "no effort was made" to look at real traditional Naga attires. According to Gommei, legal notices had been served to Amazon and Flipkart, and the platforms had acknowledged that they received the notice via email, but did not take any action. The costume can still be found on the platforms as "Kaku Fancy Dresses Tribal Dance Costume for Kids." I emailed Amazon and Flipkart for a comment regarding the case, but did not receive a response. Kithan, the research fellow, explained why this was demeaning to the people who make traditional dresses in her home state. "I have seen my own mom and aunts painstakingly work for several weeks to produce one single wrap-around or shawl with intricate designs which are gender, age and tribe specific. The colours and designs signify different occasions and stages of a person's life in the tribal context," she said. Kithan added, "Platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart should take the responsibility of cross-checking facts provided by their sellers. They cannot simply wash their hands off the misinformation their sellers are providing." Kithan said limited knowledge of northeast India was the root of the problem. "The other day, I and my colleagues were discussing food habits and one of my colleagues simply stated, 'People eat chowmein in North East.' I had to rudely interrupt him and assert, 'No, our staple diet is rice,'" she said. "They don't understand that all the eight states are inhabited by hundreds of communities and groups with their distinctive dialects, cultural attires, food habits and religious practices."



27,402 handloom-worker households in Mizoram. Of

KIMI COLNEY

in Uttar Pradesh.

"For indigenous communities in these, 13,086 households earn less than Rs 5,000 per month. "Traditional attires in the northeastern states and many other states across the country are handloom. When brands commercialise these designs and do not acknowledge the region, they not only strip us of our identity but also affect our economy," she said. R Hmingthanzuala, the director of Mizoram's art and culture department, reiterated this point and said it can have "an adverse impact on the handloom and handicraft sector and the livelihood of the people involved in this sector." Hmingthanzuala told me that the directorate plans to register indigenous Mizo products, including the Thangchhuah pattern, for a Geographical Identification tag. Under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, a GI is a form of recognition granted to a particular product created in a particular region, whose specific properties are considered attributable to the conditions of its place of origin or whose reputation is associated with it. In August 2019, five patterns from Mizoram got the GI tag, but Hmingthanzuala said that the process of registration takes time. "I appeal to Levi's company to respect and understand that the Thangchhuah kawr"-cloth-"is a design that is native to the Mizo's and even though we have not processed it for a GI tag, if they mass produce this pattern, it will not be right. This is our prized cultural possession. "Similarly, the Manipur government is also planning to apply for a GI for "Leirum Phee," a traditional cloth of the state, in light of an instance that occurred in April this year. On 14 April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of the then ongoing nationwide lockdown to contain the novel coronavirus. Modi had donned

The Tory backbench rebellion is a problem of Boris Johnson's own making

If Boris Johnson was a better leader than he is, or if he had more intellectual grasp than he actually possesses, this could have been a week of vindication for the prime minister. Instead, a year after his general election triumph, Johnson is licking his parliamentary wounds, while his authority and judgment are being questioned within his own party as never before. Tuesday's Tory backbench revolt against the central issue of Johnson's premiership - his handling of the pandemic - was brutal. A total of 71 Conservative MPs either rebelled or abstained. Johnson's new tier system for England survived only because Labour also abstained en masse. Yet now Johnson faces something even

worse, in the shape of the gathering likelihood that he will be condemned to repeat the whole humiliating ordeal when Covid cases spike again after Christmas and he is advised to bring in a third national lockdown to protect the NHS. It could have been so different. In the past three weeks, three potentially game-changing vaccines have been submitted to the regulatory authorities. On Wednesday, Britain's regulators authorised the roll-out of the first of them, manufactured by Pfizer. The timing was extremely helpful to Johnson. Not only did it help distract from the previous evening's revolt. It was also trumpeted as an early Brexit dividend, as Britain getting a "head start" over the EU. A better leader than Johnson

would have grasped right from the start that the only way out of the pandemic would be through mass vaccination. In retrospect, this will be the global strategic takeaway from the grim experiences of 2020. In the future, "Hunker down, work on a vaccine and underwrite livelihoods" will become the principles that will dominate the pandemic planning that so many nations, Britain included, did not have in place when Covid struck. It may have been tough to discern these essential pillars of pandemic policy when Covid began. But it wasn't impossible. A majority of the public grasped them well enough from the start. Johnson could have grasped them too if he had chosen

Martin Kettle

to. If he had done that, his strategy message this winter would have been much clearer, although more austere, than it has been. Above all, it would have carried the authority not just of his office but of our accumulated collective experience. The vaccine news would have meant Johnson could say, "Stick with it. Christmas will be tough. But we can see daylight now, just as I promised. We are on the right course. We have come through so much. But we must not throw it away now." Bolshie backbenchers would have been humbled into obedience by such resolute leadership. Why did Johnson not follow this course when it was open to him? Why, in spite of the excellent news about

vaccines, does he still face a possible third wave in the new year, with all the management and political consequences that this would entail? Three aspects of any proper answer to this question have become familiar. The first is Johnson's own character and political failings. He always finds it difficult to make choices and stick to them, preferring to have it both ways. The second is that managing the Conservative party has become like herding cats. Tuesday confirmed that the class of 2019 is not nearly as closely bound together by loyalty to Johnson as was once claimed. The third reason, meanwhile, is that the deliberately diminished resources of the modern British state

were inadequate to provide the necessary resilience in the face of a crisis that, ultimately, only the state could deal with. These problems have bled into the simmering tensions on the Tory backbenches in recent weeks, culminating in Tuesday's revolt. The most toxic divide was caused by an English tier system imposed from Whitehall that takes no account of local communities and their different Covid experiences or needs, especially in counties including Kent or regions such as Humberside, both now in tier 3. This explains why the pro-European Kent MP Damian Green rebelled alongside the anti-European Humbersider David Davis on Tuesday.



Skaters take a selfie in Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, Canada.

Germany extends partial lockdown until 10 January to curb virus

Berlin, Dec 05: Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany will extend its partial lockdown by three more weeks as the country struggles to regain control of the coronavirus spread. Bars, gyms and cinemas will remain closed until Jan. 10 and the government will reconvene with regional leaders on Jan. 4 to reassess the restrictions, Merkel said on Wednesday after talks with the premiers of Germany's 16 states. Germany's infection rates are still far too high and need to come down faster, Merkel said in Berlin. "We have to bemoan a very high number of deaths every day, which shows the amount of responsibility that we have," she said. Merkel's administration last week already extended a partial shutdown until Dec. 20 while keeping schools and much of the economy open. This so-called "lockdown light" has yielded little progress in slowing the spread to levels the government has determined as manageable. Merkel on Wednesday reiterated that the seven-day incidence per 100,000 citizens needs to come down to around 50 - and stay there - before restrictions can be loosened. It was at 134 on Wednesday, according to the latest report from the RKI public health institute. Bavarian State Premier Markus

Soeder said restrictions might be tightened even further in January if the number of new cases doesn't come down fast enough. "We should not shy away from acting much more consequentially," said the conservative politician, who is seen as a candidate to succeed Merkel as chancellor next year. The German chancellor has said before that the country will likely prolong its partial shutdown into January unless there's an unexpectedly rapid decline in contagion rates. By contrast, France and Britain, which imposed tougher restrictions, are now cautiously moving to loosen curbs ahead of the Christmas holidays. The situation is increasing tension over how to protect the economy. Merkel said it can't continue to reimburse affected businesses for 75% of lost sales next year. The aid is costing Germany at least 15 billion euros (\$18.2 billion) a month, and Merkel's caucus leader Ralph Brinkhaus has attacked the states for not helping with funding. Merkel said it is unclear if a vaccine for the virus will be available before Christmas, but added that Pfizer Inc., BioNTech SE and Moderna Inc. will deliver 7 million doses in the first quarter of 2021. Governments across the world are hoping for a rapid rollout of such vaccines to bring an end to the pandemic.

New Delhi, December 05: At least 73 first information reports (FIRs) have been filed across Delhi against those violating home isolation guidelines amid the latest Covid-19 surge in the city. Several people are also being moved to Covid-19 care or quarantine centres and issued strict warnings to prevent them from turning 'super-spreaders'. An order was issued in the third week of November, after a meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), to take the "strictest possible action" against those violating the home isolation guidelines. "Patients under home isolation should be regularly evaluated and physically visited by health teams to ensure proper adherence to isolation standards," the order said. Taking note of instances where coronavirus patients under home isolation were found not following the norms, Delhi district authorities were directed to identify more human resources such as civil defence volunteers and municipal sanitary inspectors and deploy them to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour. District officials have been registering cases under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (disobedience to an order by government servants) against all these alleged violators. It carries a maximum punishment of one month or fine of Rs 200 or both. As of Wednesday afternoon, as many as 18,423 people were under home isolation, according to the latest health bulletin of Delhi government. Surveillance officers and chief district medical officers that ThePrint spoke to said it was difficult dealing with local residents who haven't been taking the home isolation module as seriously as they should. Covid-19 patients in Delhi are sent to 14-17 days of home isolation, during which teams of the

district health department are supposed to periodically check on their health and location - both through phone calls and physical visits. Additional District Magistrate (ADM), South-West, Rakesh Dahiya said many residents asked to be in home isolation were found to be stepping out. "Many of them feel they cannot afford to skip work, not realising that they are putting their employers also at risk if they are

said. Opposition parties in Delhi, however, have raised concerns over the lodging of FIRs. Talking to ThePrint, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said taking such insensitive crackdown measures was similar to the Narendra Modi government's decision to announce lockdown without warning the migrant labourers. "It is insensitive on part of not just the political leadership but also the government ma-

for 14 days, but I get my salary on the basis of the number of days I work, so how could I not get out." South district was among the first to start registering cases against violators, with some FIRs registered as early as in June. DCP South Atul Thakur told ThePrint that as of 30 November, the South district has recorded 50 cases against people for violating home isolation guidelines. In the North-West district, however, the focus is on conducting surprise inspections and counselling residents to stay indoors or be shifted to quarantine centres. District Magistrate Cheshta Yadav said she hasn't received any major complaint on this aspect from any of the SDMs in the district. It is a similar case in the South-East district. "I don't want to book criminal cases against residents until I am absolutely convinced that they won't adhere to guidelines after they're given warnings or moved to our Covid care centres or quarantine centres in the South-East district," DM Vishvendra Singh said. Surveillance officer, South-East District, Dr Stuti said at least 45-50 people found violating home isolation guidelines have been shifted to quarantine centres here. According to protocol laid down by the Centre, which is being followed by Delhi, a Covid-19 patient under home isolation is considered discharged after 10 days of the onset of symptoms, if the person has no fever for three consecutive days. Thereafter, the patient is advised to isolate at home and self-monitor for seven more days. There is no need for testing after the home isolation period is over, but every discharged person must receive a fitness certificate from the district officials, state the guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Health on 2 July.



Covid-19 positive or came in contact with a positive patient," Dahiya told. The district has registered eight FIRs under Section 188 of the IPC in the past fortnight ever since there was a spurt in Covid-19 cases here, he added. In the West district, where officials categorise the violation of home isolation guidelines as a "nuisance", 15 FIRs have been registered against people meant to be in home isolation and those found distributing wedding invites or visiting markets. "The pattern that we have noticed during surprise inspections is that ironically these violations are more common among the lower strata or in rural areas although cases among them are lesser here," ADM, West, Dharmendra Singh

chinery to ignore the ground realities," he said. When asked for an alternative, he said it was important to come up with out-of-the-box solutions to facilitate home isolation instead of threatening people, especially the poor, with criminal cases against them. Some of the stakeholders say livelihoods are at stake. Shalin, a 33-year-old domestic worker in Greater Kailash, said she could not afford to not step out if she had to ensure a living for a family of four members. "My husband works at RML Hospital and he obviously comes in contact with Covid-19 positive patients, so once he was asked to quarantine," she said. "Since he came in contact with us, we were also asked to not step

Modi govt must sweat in Parliament to avoid bleeding on street. Farmers' protest shows why

New Delhi, December 05: One lesson of civilised, constitutional politics is that the more you sweat in parliament, the less you bleed on the streets (or indeed, the jungles). The Narendra Modi government could have avoided farmer unrest and protests had it adopted a broad-based social consultation process and taken its time to put the farm bills through the parliamentary process. Yes, a number of farmers' associations, middlemen's lobbies, and civil society groups would have raised their voices against the changes. Yes, the Congress and other opposition parties would have opposed the bills in Parliament. But the Bharatiya Janata Party is neither short of supporters in the media and the Indian population, nor of seats in Parliament for the Modi government's reform proposals to fail. Skipping the journey and jumping to the destination merely meant that all stakeholders in the agricultural sector received a shock instead of an explanation, a ready-made decision instead of a hearing, and, in many cases, existential fears instead of positive expectation. Why it chose this path is a mystery. It is easy to attribute it to this government's 'style' of governance



and close the discussion. If we set the style argument aside, the question becomes one of political management of reform. Could Prime Minister Modi and the BJP's leadership have calculated that it is easier to get agricultural stakeholders to reconcile to a fait accompli than to build consensus first? The narrative dominance that the BJP currently enjoys might have encouraged the party's leaders to pursue the course they did. After all, every government knows that once you get the protesters to go back home, what they were protesting against remains standing. At their heart, the Narendra Modi government's package of agricultural reforms is a major step in lib-

erating farmers from the political economy that they have been trapped in — they provide legal and administrative basis to permit contract farming while protecting farmers' rights, and they promise to insulate the agricultural sector from price and stock controls. For decades, we have acknowledged that Indian agriculture needs reform, and the chronic distress that farmers face is a consequence of policy frameworks that keep them trapped in a cycle of low productivity, indebtedness, dependence on the monsoon, and ultimately on the government. We knew that the systemic shackles that trapped Indian farmers had to be broken. The central challenge facing any reformer is that even the intended beneficiaries of the reform usually fear the unknown god, and would rather live with the devil they have known. Cast back your memories — if you are old enough to have them — to the public debate of 1991-92 when the prospect of opening up

the Indian economy to the world was received with manifold anxieties and vehement resistance. Yet today, we take the unprecedented prosperity those reforms created for granted, so much that we are undermining the winning formula by deliberately cutting ourselves off from the global economy in an unthinking bout of misplaced nationalism. What we know from India's own experience of the past three decades is that structural reforms liberalising the economy are not only necessary, but tend to show results very quickly. That's because India's fundamental economic problem is one of lack of economic freedom and any reform that makes individuals, firms, and societies freer than before will lead to greater overall prosperity. But we also knew that structural reform of agriculture will entail rebalancing of Union-state relations, deepening inter-state cooperation, and above all, genuine, wide-ranging, democratic consultation with farmers and other stakeholders. If we have deep disquiet among farmers across the country today, it is because they have genuine fears that the mandi-middleman-MSP system that they know will be replaced with an unknown system of markets, corporates, and technology.

Covid-19 antibodies found in 72% samples, says ICMR study

Hyderabad, December 05: Neutralising antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, which causes Covid-19, were found in 72% of the samples tested at an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) institute, according to a study published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR). The study found antibodies were also present in asymptomatic Covid-19 patients. Neutralising antibodies defend cells from the virus. "...to say anything conclusively about protection against re-infection needs to be studied further," said one of the authors of the study, requesting not to be identified. A total of 343 blood samples, of which 89 were positive, 58 negative for Sars-Cov-2, 17 cross-reactive, and 179 serum from healthy individuals were collected and tested at ICMR's National Institute of Virology in Pune from March to May. "Among 89 serum samples from SARS-CoV-2 real-time RT-PCR confirmed patients... 64 (71.9%) were found positive and the remaining 25 serum samples (28.1% negative)," says the study. "Of the 89 COVID-19-positive patients, 59 (66.3%) were symptomatic and 30 (33.7%) were asymptomatic." Serum samples from Covid-19 confirmed patients (n=89) using real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) in Pune and Alappuzha in Kerala were taken for the study. The symptomatic patients had cough in 48 cases (81.4%), fever in 36 (61%), sore throat in 16 (7.1%), breathlessness in 11 (18.6%), body ache in 9 (15.3%), headache

in 5 (8.5%), nasal discharge 2 (3.4%) and diarrhoea in 2 (3.4%). Of the 59 symptomatic patients, 42 (71.2%) showed the presence of antibodies. Among 30 asymptomatic patients, 22 showed them (73.3%). Among the 25 (28.1%) neutralising antibody negatives, 11 patients were positive (7 symptomatic and 4 asymptomatic), according to the researchers. Samples were collected within 2 weeks after RT-PCR confirmation from 58 Sars-Cov-2 RT-PCR-negative patients. "Understanding NAb [neutralising antibody] response among Covid-19 patients is a crucial requirement because the presence of neutralizing antibodies would provide greater assurance of protection in the absence of approved and validated preventive and therapeutic options... The role of cellular immune responses (T cells or cytokines) in the recovery of such patients needs to be explored," the study says. "More systematic studies with controlled follow up of patients and titration of NAb among the recovered patients will provide useful information for passive antibody therapy against SARS-CoV-2 virus infection. Further, it is pertinent to study the protective role of NAb during reinfection in recovered Covid-19 patients." "What is crucial is to know the quality of antibodies, and whether these offer immunity against the disease, and for how long," said Dr Lalit Kant, former head, epidemiology and communicable disease division, ICMR.

'Chinese sugar' found in Indian honey, Dabur, Patanjali call CSE report 'bid to malign' brands

New Delhi, December 05: Major Indian brands including Dabur, Patanjali and Zandu are selling honey adulterated with a modified sugar from China, which can bypass some of the basic tests used to detect adulterated honey, researchers from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) have alleged. Responding to these allegations, spokespersons from Dabur, Patanjali and Zandu denied that their honey products were adulterated and pointed out that they meet regulatory requirements laid down by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). According to CSE director general Sunita Narain, the organisation launched an investigation when beekeepers in North India reported reduced profits despite a spike in honey sales during the Covid-19 pandemic. "It is a food fraud more nefarious and more sophisticated than what we found in our 2003 and 2006

investigations into soft drinks; more damaging to our health than perhaps anything that we have found till now - keeping in mind the fact that we are still fighting against a killer COVID-19 pandemic with our backs to the wall," Narain said in a statement Wednesday. The CSE study found that almost all brands of honey being sold in the Indian market are adulterated with sugar syrup. "This is immensely worrying, as it will further compromise health in the troubled times of Covid-19. We know that households today are consuming more honey because of its intrinsic goodness - antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties," Narain said. "Our research has found that most of the honey sold in the market is adulterated with sugar syrup. Therefore, instead of honey, people are eating more sugar, which will add to the risk of Covid-19." Sugar ingestion is directly linked to obesity, and obese

people are more vulnerable to life-threatening infections," added Narain. According to the CSE, the honey adulteration business has evolved to bypass existing tests. Initially, sugars from corn, sugarcane, rice and beetroot used to be added to honey to increase sweetness. Such adulteration is detected by what are known as C3 and C4 tests. The new modified 'Chinese sugar', however, can only be detected by a test called Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR). NMR tests have very recently been made mandatory in India for honey that is meant for export. Researchers at the CSE selected 13 top and smaller brands of processed and raw honey being sold in India. Samples from these were tested at the Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food (CALF) at the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in Gujarat. Almost all, except Apis Himalaya, passed the ba-

sic tests of purity, the CSE said. However, when the same brands were tested using NMR, which was conducted by a specialised laboratory in Germany, most brands failed. Of the 13 tested, only three brands passed the NMR test. "It shows how the business of adulteration has evolved so that it can pass the stipulated tests in India," said Amit Khurana, programme director of CSE's Food Safety and Toxins team. "Our concern is not just that the honey we eat is adulterated, but that this adulteration is difficult to catch. In fact, we have found that the sugar syrups are designed so that they can go undetected," Khurana added. Saffola, MarkfedSohna and Nature's Nectar were the brands that passed all tests. In an email statement to ThePrint, Dabur shared an independent test report of Dabur Honey from a lab in Germany, which shows that their product passes the NMR test. "The recent reports seem



motivated and aimed at maligning our brand. We assure our consumers that Dabur Honey is 100% Pure. It is 100% indigenous, collected naturally from Indian sources and packed with no added sugar or other adulterants," the spokesperson said. "Further, Dabur is the only company in India to have NMR testing equipment in our own labora-

tory, and the same is used to regularly test our Honey being sold in the Indian market. This is to ensure that Dabur Honey is 100% Pure without any adulteration," the statement added. Acharya Balkrishna, managing director of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd, called the report "an attempt to lower the market share of Indian honey in international trade".

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Weapons recovered ahead of BTAD

of anti-national elements with BTC elections being held this month on 10 December 2020. Two country-made rifles, one 7.65 mm pistol, one magazine and four rounds of live ammunition of 7.65 mm pistol were recovered from Ripu forest area. The recoveries have been handed over to Assam Police for further investigation. The Security Forces will continue to undertake all actions to end insurgency and create a peaceful atmosphere for the future generation. Acting on a tip-off, police on Friday recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunitions as well as explosives from a deep jungle area of Ripu Reserve Forest in Kokrajhar district. As per reports, the illegal arms and ammunition, which include 4 AK 47 rifles, 3 grenades, 10 pistols, 6 hand-made guns and many bullets, were concealed underground in a thick forest area about 300 meters away from Sundari Nala under Gossaigaon police station. The operation was conducted jointly by Kokrajhar police led by APS Mukut Rabha, border patrol (SSB) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at around 2pm yesterday.

Terror links, FIR filed against

that several Turkey and UK-based organisations have given Rs 69.55 crore to Ajmal Foundation, a philanthropic organisation, for education. But, according to LRO, only around Rs 2 crore of the total amount was spent on educational purposes. LRO also alleged that these funding agencies had links with Islamic terror groups such as Al Qaeda, Hamas and Hizbul Mujahideen. "Most of our foreign funds come from UK under strict compliance of FCRA regulations and are used in social, education and relief works. A false impression about our foundation is being created based on incorrect information. We want the thorough investigation, so that the truth is revealed," Khasrul Islam, director of Ajmal Foundation.

'Govt will benefit from farm laws

talks have been inconclusive. However, the Centre did agree to review the recently enacted legislation and bring amendments if required to address the farmers' demands after Thursday's discussion. The farmers, however, said that they did not want amendments to the new laws but want them rolled back entirely. The farmers are protesting against the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. Meanwhile, the agitating farmers called for a 'Bharat Bandh', a nationwide strike, on December 8 where they said they will block all toll plazas and roads leading to Delhi. The call for the Bharat Bandh was supported by various other farmers' organisations. Hanman Mollah, general secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, said, "We need to take this protest forward."

Centre to invest Rs 3,000 crore to

trade and commerce on the rivers Brahmaputra and Barak, the national waterways two and 16 respectively," said an official statement. The proposed project will include the development of passenger and cargo terminals, multimodal logistic hubs with last-mile connectivity, and the construction of new jetties. The project aims to boost trade in the northeastern region by enhancing the institutional capacity and existing framework of water transportation in Assam.

Tamulpur to be declared as new

BTC headed by its Chief Executive Member and Bodoland People's Front chairperson Hagrama Mohilary on charges on corruption and mismanagement. The PIL has been filed by Advocate Narapati Brahma of Kokrajhar and social worker Ranjan Kumar Baruah of Dispur. The PIL's other respondents are ministry of home affairs, state government of Assam and Governor of Assam. The PIL has been filed against the respondents in matters of illegal, unchecked and rampant corruption by which funds were embezzled in all the departments such as Panchayat and Rural Development, Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Sports, Agriculture, Textile and Handloom, Information and Public Relation, Transport, Education, Social Welfare, Fishery etc by the Executive Members of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), officials, suppliers, contractors etc causing great prejudice to the public at large. In the PIL, allegations have been leveled against the respondents for corruption in The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Both the petitioners have alleged that since last 15 years, more particularly from the year 2010, an unchecked and rampant corruption is taking place within the four (4) districts of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) i.e. Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa and Chirang. The petitioners in the PIL stated that "a social audit of MGNREGA in Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was conducted by involving Gram Sabha, eminent persons and groups of persons. It was found that most of the works sanctioned under MGNREGA within the four districts of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) had remained incomplete. The rate of completion of the works under MGNREGA is only 35.5% and job card holders get 27.5% of the wage that has been credited to their bank account". Also, the PIL mentioned 457 crores job card fraudulent allegations in the last two and a half years. Furthermore, allegations of a scam of Rs 1,500 crore were made by the petitioners in distribution of food and other essential supplies to the public. The PIL also mentioned corruption charges amounting to Rs. 30 crores in a scheme related to water supply in the region.

Jaishankar to skip Canada-led

between India and Canada. On Friday, Canadian envoy to New Delhi Nadir Patel was summoned by the MEA and a strong demarche was issued where India said that such remarks made by PM Justin Trudeau could have a "damaging" impact on relations between the two countries. "The Canadian High Commissioner was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs today and informed that comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs," a statement issued by the MEA said. Such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada, the MEA said. Despite the Canadian High Commissioner to India being summoned by the MEA over comments made by Canadian politicians, including the Canadian leadership, Justin Trudeau continued to maintain that he would stand for the rights of the Indian farmers to peacefully protest. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday reiterated his position on the ongoing farmers' protest against the farm bills in India. When asked about India saying that his remarks could impact ties he said, "Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protest and human rights". When asked again about relations with India, he maintained, "Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protest anywhere around the world. We are pleased to see moves towards de-escalation and dialogue." Taking serious note of the views of politicians in Canada, India has said that it has encouraged anti-India elements such as Khalistani supporters to protest outside the Indian missions in Canada, putting the security of diplomats and staff in danger. "These comments have encouraged gatherings of extremist activities in front of our High Commission and Consulates in Canada that raise issues of safety and security. We expect the Canadian Government to ensure the fullest security of Indian diplomatic personnel and its political leaders to refrain from pronouncements that legitimize extremist activism," the MEA said. The farmers' protests leaped overseas when on the occasion of Gurpurab, the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, PM Justin Trudeau in an online interaction with the Sikh community leaders and politicians of Canada, said Canada always stood for peaceful protests and would continue to "defend" the rights of peaceful protesters in India. "I would be remiss if I didn't start also by recognising the news coming out of India about the protest by farmers. The situation is concerning, and we're all very worried about family and friends," Justin Trudeau said. "We know that's a reality for many of you. Let me remind you, Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters. We believe in the process of dialogue. We've reached out through multiple means to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns. This is a moment for all of us to pull together," Justin Trudeau said.

Jahnu Barua to direct Hindi

Lachit. There were a number of government initiatives to this effect, including proposal from two former Governors, but because of budgetary constraint the production of such a mega project could not be taken up," Barua, a 12-time national film award winning filmmaker, said. The film will have a leading actor of the country playing the role of the Ahom general who defeated the Mughal army in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671. "It will be after more than seven decades of independent India that Assam's war hero and pride of India will get his overdue limelight on the national and international stage," he said. Barua now wants to depict the story of Borpuhan's life and times across India through a Hindi film because he was a national hero. In Assam, the legendary warrior is eulogised and revered for his leadership and heroism. The work on the film has already begun and the production on the film is likely to start by October 2021. Barua also said that research on the project has already begun, under the guidance of Prof JN Phukan, a scholar and former head of the Department of History, Gauhati University, to depict with accuracy the events leading to the Battle of Saraighat, which captured the Ahom General to the status of a legend. The 68-year-old filmmaker, who has been conferred Padma Shri (2003) and Padma Bhushan (2015), has written and directed a number of Assamese and Hindi films.

Vaccine Maker Clarifies As

statement reads. "The phase 3 trials are double blinded and randomised, where 50 per cent of subjects will receive vaccine and 50 per cent of subjects will receive placebo," the firm underlines. Earlier today, Anil Vij tweeted: "I have been tested Corona positive. I am admitted in Civil Hospital Ambala Cantt. All those who have come in close contact to me are advised to get themselves tested for corona." He had earlier been administered a single trial dose of the vaccine. In a statement, the Health Ministry said: "The antibodies against the infection build up in a human being only after a specific number of days pass after the second dose of the vaccine is taken. This is a two-dose vaccine. The minister in question has taken only one dose of the vaccine." Bharat Biotech has supplied more than 4 billion doses, to more than 80 countries, with an excellent track record of safety. The phase-3 trials of Covaxin is the only efficacy trial being conducted in India for COVID-19 vaccines, to determine its suitability to the diverse Indian population," the firm underlines. Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Hyderabad firm to personally review the development of Covaxin. Yesterday, he said that experts are hopeful that India will get a vaccine in the next few weeks. The country has logged over 96 lakh infections so far, the second-highest in the world after the United States.

NFR achieves improved

in freight loading during last few months indicates steady economic recovery. In the month of November 2020 Indian Railways loading was 109.68 million tonnes which is 9% higher compare to last year's loading for the same period (100.96 million tonnes). Loading includes 48.48 million tonnes of coal, 13.77 million tonnes of iron ore, 5.10 million tonnes of food grains, 5.41 million tonnes of fertilizers and 6.62 million tonnes of cement (excluding clinker). In this period Indian Railways earned Rs. 10657.66 Crores from freight loading which is also Rs. 449.79 Cr.(4%) higher compare to last year's earnings for the same period (Rs. 10207.87 crores). Various steps and initiatives are being taken by NFR to further improve the transportation of freight. This includes, opening of new stations for handling inward and outward goods traffic, regular virtual meetings with multinational companies and stakeholders for attracting piecemeal loading, initiatives by the Business Development units at HQ & Divisional levels and near doubling of freight speed due to continuous monitoring of assets. Transporters can dial Helpline number 139 from anywhere seeking help/guidance regarding transportation of materials through trains. It is worth mentioning that a number of concessions/discounts have also been introduced in Indian Railways to make Railway's Freight movement very attractive. It may be noted that improvements in freight movements will be institutionalized and incorporated in the upcoming zero based time table. COVID 19 has been used by Indian Railways as an opportunity to improve all round efficiencies and performances.

Tiwa Autonomous Council Poll 2020 Nagaon district administration gears up to conduct a free and fair poll : DC

Nagaon, December 5: District administration as well as District Election Official of Nagaon has geared up to conduct a free and fair poll for Tiwa Autonomous Council and also set almost all in this regard. Addressing a press conference held today at DC's Conference Hall, Election Officer cum Deputy Commissioner, Kabitha Padmanavan said all arrangements as well as preparedness for conducting a free and fair poll in 10 Tiwa Autonomous constituencies under 3 revenue circles - Kampur, Raha and Nagaon. For supervision as well as monitoring the electoral expenditures of the candidates in those constituencies, the administration has already deployed 3 flying squads units and 3 vedio surveillance teams in those 10 constituencies. Besides, a toll free number has been scheduled for control room for public grievance relating to expenditure of the candidates or other purposes, Padmanavan added. She however claimed that as per guidelines of the state election commission, the administration will strictly maintain the COVID protocols during the poll and sufficient COVID protection kits will be provided to all presiding, polling officials and polling assistants. Besides, all polling stations will be sanitized on the previous day of the poll. She asserted it too that a total of 22 sector officials have been engaged to review all in detail and around 600 officials and other employees are being appointed for smooth conducting the poll. These officials and employees will be trained up categorically in 3 training centres scheduled on December 7 and 12 next at Nowgong Girls' College, ADP College and Nagaon Natya Mandir. Similarly, counting, materials distribution and receipt venue has been scheduled at Nagaon Dowsan Higher Secondary and Multi purposes School, Padmanavan said adding further that the postal ballot papers have been already dispatched

Freshment social observed at Bhella CV Raman Academy

Barpeta, December 5: "Education should be acquired for the benefit of all sections of the society and not for one's own welfare. Earning money should not be the aim of education, acquiring high education anybody should think of the hardworker of society who provides us foods and daily necessary things. If the use of education does not benefit the society, the country, the nation and the neighbors, then that education is not worth it" - said Ansari Ali Ahmed, former principal of Bhella Higher Secondary School and present principal of CV Raman Academy. The former principal, who is known as one of the eloquent speakers in East Barpeta, addressed the students at the Fresher welcoming meeting of the CV Raman Academy today. "Being a doctor or an engineer is a small thing in a society, but being a good person with real human values is a difficult task, even though it is easier with real education," he also said. "In the society, doctors, engineers, teachers, rickshaw pullers, farmers should be given due respect". Speaking on the moral and spiritual duty of the students, Principal Ansari Ali Ahmed said, "Love is heavenly but the definition of this love is limited to younger men and women only. It will be a beautiful and creative society if our loves go to the neighbours, poor people of the society". Former Vice-Principal of Bhella Higher Secondary School Majibar Rahman was present as the guest of honor at the meeting. In the presence of the invited guests, Assistant Professor of BH College Abu Chayem Siddiqui said in his speech that even if the advice given by the parents is bitter, the child should accept it. Otherwise the child may be in danger if they look for sweets. Retired Vice-Principal of Bhella High School Abul Hussain and brilliant student Mirja Mehbooba also delivers their speech at the meeting. Today, CV Raman Academy is holding a meeting to honor the new students where Principal of Bhella Higher secondary school Ranendra Kumar Das, Dr. Pranab Chandra Devnath, Teacher Afzalur Rahman, Teacher Abdul Rachid Abdul Mannan, Bhella village panchayat president Afia Begum, regional member Yusuf Ali Ahmed, parents of the students, Bhella area journalists as well as prominent personalities of the area are present at the meeting. At least a cultural program is held.

Book release as part of the celebration of son's birthday

Sipajhar, December 5: An one act play book titled Balukat Bioli Bela written by Dibakar Barua was ceremonially released at a literary and cultural meet as part of the celebration of 1st year birthday day of his son Swapnil at Bonmaja in Darrang district. The literary and cultural meet was organized under the auspices of Bonmaja branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha was presided over by Rajat Chandra Kalita, President of Bonmaja branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha. Releasing the book Lakhyadhar Saikia, press Correspondent of Amar Assam discussed on the social influences of books specially in present social atmosphere and stressed on the need of book reading habit among students and younger generations to build a creative and peaceful society. Speaking on the occasion Dr Dipak Kakati, teacher of Haldha High School, prominent writer Jatun Kumar, retired teacher Ghana Kanta Deka and Journalist Dulal Deka were highly appreciated the initiative of Dibakar Barua. A group of writers read out their self composed literary articles in the meeting and among those mainly includes Dinesh Deka, Paresh Kumar and Himani Deka. The melodious song presented by Manju Rani Rajbansi enthralled the audience.

DC Hailakandi makes surprise visit to schools

Hailakandi, December 5: Deputy Commissioner, Megh Nidhi Dahal Saturday made a surprise visit to some schools across the district. Accompanied by District Development Commissioner, Ranajeet Kumar Laskar, Deputy Commissioner, Dahal visited Horkishore High School at Lakhisabar, Indrakumari Girls' High School in Hailakandi town and SK Deb High School at Sirishpur and inquired into teachers' attendance, teaching being imparted to the students and some important learning outcomes. Dahal underscored the need for holding regular classes, quality education and learning outcomes following the long hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The Deputy Commissioner urged the teachers to be proactive and dedicated while discharging their duties so as to improve the academic results in coming years. Later, he inspected the classrooms and campuses of the schools.

PRESS NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, PWD, Guwahati Building Circle-II, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of Governor of Assam invites item rate bids in two bid system for the work "Construction of Assam Type Seminar Hall above the Anatomy Building at Assam Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital Nagaon under Tejasvi Navadhitamastu Edu-infra fund (TNEIF) for the year 2017-18 (Balance works)" with an approximate value of work of Rs.34,17,003.00 from APWD registered Class-I (A/B/C) and class-II contractors (under this Circle) having experience of similar nature of work. Details of the bids may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours upto 09.12.2020.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer, P.W.D.,
Guwahati Building Circle-II,
Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

Janasanyog/C/7747/20

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE ADDL. DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE (HILLS)
KARBI ANGLONG ::::: DIPHU.

Dated : 04/12/2020.

NOTICE

This is for general information to all concerned eligible candidates who had applied for Grade-III post categories under Agriculture Department, Karbi Anglong published vide Advertisement No. Agri./Hills/Esstt./Posting/Pt-III/2018-19/19, Dated: 22/02/2019 and No. Agri./Hills/Esstt./Posting/Pt-III/2020-21/11, Dated: 14/10/2020 that the written examinations for all the Grade-III categories will be held as per detailed schedule below :-

Sl. No.	Name of Grade-III Posts	Venue of written Examination	Day & Date of Written Examination	Time of written Examinations (Morning/Afternoon Session)
1	Agriculture Extension Assistant	Diphu Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu.	20/12/2020 (Sunday)	Morning Session 10:am to 12:30pm
2	Agriculture Extension Assistant	Diphu Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Diphu.	20/12/2020 (Sunday)	
3	Agriculture Extension Assistant	Rengbonghom Higher Secondary School, Diphu	20/12/2020 (Sunday)	Evening Session 1:30pm to 4:00pm
4	Agriculture Demonstrator	Diphu Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu.	20/12/2020 (Sunday)	

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES :

- The eligible candidates must report at the venue atleast 1 (one) hour before commencement i.e at 9:00am in the morning and at 12:30pm in the afternoon and take their seats in their allotted Rooms for a short briefing by the invigilators of the examination process.
- No Call/Information letter/Admit Cards will be sent by post.
- Eligible candidates list for the written examination has been handed in the Notice Boards of the office of the Addl. Director of Agriculture (Hills), Diphu premises.
- Non-eligible candidates list is also being handed in the Notice Board.
- Eligible candidates Admit cards will be issued from 10/12/2020 to 18/12/2020 during office hours from 10:30am to 4:30pm in the office of the Addl. Director of Agriculture (Hills), Diphu (Near Diphu Treasury office) except during Second Saturday and fourth Saturday.
- Candidates must bring along 2 (two) recent passport colored passport size photographs to be pasted in the Admit Cards before issuing the same to the candidates.
- Candidates are Requested to collect/obtain their Admit Cards in person from the office because they must put their signatures in the Admit Cards before issuing the same.
- No Mobile Phones or any electronic gadgets will be allowed inside the examination rooms.
- Candidates must bring their Admit Cards issued by the office concerned to the examination rooms. Candidates who does not have Admit Cards will not be allowed to sit in the written examination.
- Photo ID proof like Driving Licence, PAN Card, Voter ID Cards, Passport and Bank Passbook with photograph should be brought along for verifying of the candidates by the invigilators.
- No TA and DA will be admissible to the candidates for appearing in the written examination.

Addl. Director of Agriculture (Hills)
Karbi Anglong ::::: Diphu.

Under-Fire Zinedine Zidane Asks Real Madrid Players To Stand Up And Be Counted



Real Madrid, December 05 : Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane takes his side to Sevilla in La Liga. Real Madrid have won just once in La Liga since October. Real Madrid are fourth in La Liga, 7 points off leaders Real Sociedad. Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane takes his side to Sevilla in La Liga this weekend days insisting he is not planning on resigning despite a disastrous recent run. Madrid have won just once in La Liga since October and also lost at Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League on Tuesday and must beat Borussia Muenchengladbach next week to advance. Real have drawn with in-form Villarreal, were edged out at lowly Alaves and were hammered at Valencia since their last league victory leaving the champions in fourth place, seven points off leaders Real Sociedad. "I have the strength needed to turn the situation around and I am going to give everything to do that, so are the players," Zidane said after the loss in Ukraine. "We have to lift ourselves up and think about the next match. We're on a bad run, there's nothing else to do other than think about the next match and go ahead." In difficult moments, you have to show character," he added. Local press have linked former Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino and ex-Madrid forward Raul forward to the Frenchman's job. According to newspaper AS captain Sergio Ramos called a squad meeting this week, with Zidane absent, telling team-mates to give "an extra push until the end of the year." "This is Real Madrid, gentlemen. Together, we've come out of worse," Ramos reportedly said ahead of the trip to Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan where they have lost on six of their last eight visits. Saturday's hosts went unbeaten in the Spanish top-flight throughout November after a sluggish start to the season under former Madrid boss Julen Lopetegui. Spain playmaker Suso is set to return for the Europa League champions after being sidelined for six weeks with a muscle injury. The Portugal attacker is on the verge of equalling his last season's goal tally for Atletico Madrid, when he hit nine. His 126 million euros fee, second for a teenager behind the amount Paris Saint-Germain paid for Kylian Mbappe, put pressure on Felix and he failed to settle in his first campaign in the Spanish capital missing 13 games through injury. On Saturday, Atletico host 17th-place Real Valladolid and a win could send them top temporarily with Sociedad heading to Alaves a day later.

Against all odds: South Sudan's daring drive on women's football

London, December 05 : South Sudan gained independence in 2011 and its history is so short that it is a regular low-scoring answer on the popular quiz show Pointless. Much less trivially, for a majority of its existence the country has been in civil war, with peace and a new national unity government in place only from February of this year. For a country clawing its way back from the devastating effects of a conflict that has seen hundreds of thousands killed and 1.5 million internally displaced, where nearly half of girls are married by 18, child marriages are increasing and sexual violence was used tactically during the war, it would be easy to assume that football, let alone women's football, would be nonexistent. Yet on Friday, just over a year after its women's national team competed for the first time, the South Sudan Football Association launched a four-year strategy for women's and girls' football. Stars Unite, that aims to increase the number of participants by at least 70%. South Sudan, where women were at the heart of the peace drive and a 35% quota has been set for women's participation in government, is not an outlier: the idea that women should not play football is as prevalent there as it is in many other parts of the world. The captain of the women's national team, Amy Lasu, who began playing in Kenya before returning to play in her home country, says: "It is challenging because for the longest time football has been considered a men's sport. It was considered a taboo for girls to play." Her mother played basketball and her father football, and they would buy her shirts and boots and take her to academies, but for Maryln James, a grassroots player, the story is a little different. "If you tell your parents that you are going to play football you get asked why you're going to play with men," she says. "I just had one person supporting

me, my mother. When I started my father would beat me when I came back from training. But my mother said this was not only for men, she can play." Far from bowing to the pressures and expectations on girls, the federation is challenging them. "We want to show to the world that South Sudan is growing in women football, and we also want change the mindset of some people who still don't believe that women can play football," says Helen Terso Aninyesi, the project manager for Stars Unite and women's development officer. The plans are bold. The FA has committed to training more female coaches, administrators, referees and scouts; girls' football will be promoted in schools; there will be community outreach programmes; it will launch a new national league with player licensing; and it promises increased participation for the national team in competitions. "This new women's football strategy is a very big step towards showing the SSFA's commitment towards promoting women's football in South Sudan and giving an opportunity for everyone to be involved in football," says the FA president, Francis Amin. The players feel it will be game-changing. "I think it's going to change society's view on football," says Lasu. "Most girls shy away from football because of societal views. This strategy will show people that girls can play and show girls that they can be involved and come out and play." It will especially help our sisters who have dropped out of football because of the challenges they have faced. Instead they will feel hope inside themselves when they see sisters playing and want to come back to play and train." The country's men's team launched in 2012 and have climbed to 163 (out of 210) in the Fifa rankings. The women's team have played three times since they began just over a year ago and are unranked.



Kendall Hinton is an amazing athlete. And he still failed at quarterback

London, December 05 : In Kendall Hinton, a practice squad receiver who due to a Covid outbreak was forced to start at quarterback for the Denver Broncos against the New Orleans Saints last Sunday, the NFL dropped any notion that it cares about the safety of players. An undercooked, under-skilled, unprepared player, a player who most members of the Broncos organization had never even met, was tossed to a professional defense, led by one of the league's finest defensive minds, consequences be damned. And yet one of those consequences was an extra point for those engaging in an age-old debate. Which sport, if summoned from your sofa, would you have a reasonable ability to succeed at, even by fluke? Could you survive a three-minute prize-fight round? Par a hole at The Masters? Hit a curveball? Score a penalty against a professional goalkeeper? Complete a pass in the NFL? Hinton's start added another mountain of evidence in favour of the professional quarterback. No other position in sports, save, perhaps, a hockey goalie, has such an influence on a team's play. And no position has such responsibility for a team scoring, because the quarterback handles the ball (barring some kind of trick play) on each and every snap. Hinton was objectively awful because he should have been awful. There is no shame in that; he was thrown into an impossible situation. He finished with one completion on nine attempts for 19 yards, and was intercepted twice, meaning he threw more complete passes to the opposition than his own teammates. And yet it should

be noted that Hinton was no novice. He played quarterback in college before transitioning to wide receiver in his final year at Wake Forest. He even broke school records as a quarterback. As pure athletes in the NFL go, Hinton ranks high. But even in the pace-and-space age playing quarterback at the pro level is about much more than just being able to run fast and hurl a ball 50 yards. In the modern

not in the pros. Everything is based on rhythm and timing in the NFL, not only between the quarterback and his targets but between the receiver's eyes and his feet. Every dropback has a specific spot — a "launch point", in coaching parlance — that the quarterback must hit before releasing the ball. On one play it might be a quick three-step drop, directly behind the center. On another play it will be three steps

it's their football intellect that makes them great. It's their ability to diagnose coverages pre- and post-snap, the knowledge of when to switch a play, and the subtleties needed to execute on each and every play, with those magical, only-players-who-can-throw-and-run-like-that plays sprinkled on top for good measure. Indeed, the NFL's all-time passing records were set by a nearly fossilized Peyton Manning, a man

positions that come close. Of course, we're talking about degrees of excellence and degrees of difficulty. Even some NFL coaches like Jim Schwartz argues that being a cornerback is, in fact, the most difficult position in all of sports. The argument being that at other positions, like quarterback, you know what you're going to do; whereas a cornerback is a detective, searching for clues and trying to figure out what the offense is doing. And they're doing it all by while starting backwards. Still, the ball may not be thrown anywhere near the corner, if it's even thrown at all. A quarterback is never able to evade the ball. Sometimes it's hard to comprehend what we're watching on the screen. The NFL is not like other sporting leagues around the world. Its challengers are either defunct, like the XFL and AAF, or far inferior in quality, like the CFL. All of the sport's best professional talent is concentrated in one place: the NFL. There is nothing like being a NFL quarterback. Where else are you forced to make decisions within 2.5 seconds with between three, four, or seven Hulk-sized human beings charging down. And where else are those decisions so religiously tied to your competence, your desire, work rate, and worth? And where else does the success or failure of that decision rely on your 10 co-workers to perform exactly as they're told? An NFL quarterback stands alone — it's what makes ascending to the top of the game so impressive. And even within the small fraction of players who make it, there are degrees of excellence, and players can go from future MVP candidate to laughing stock in the blink of a Carson Wentz season. Nowhere is there a wider gap between those playing a position and those viewing it.



game, more and more coaches — from high school on up — are putting their best athletes at quarterback. The theory is that if they don't see an easy completion, they can take off on a run, where they'll be as lethal as any running back or receiver in the open field. If one player is going to touch the ball on every snap, why not make it your best athlete? It's a smart tactic, and it has worked at lower levels. But

with a hitch. On another play, it's three steps, but for the timing to work with the receiver's pattern against a particular coverage, the quarterback has to slide to his left, but not so far to his left that he moves into pressure from the opposition pass rushers. Nuance is the name of the game. For all the physical gifts of Patrick Mahomes, Russell Wilson, Aaron Rodgers, Lamar Jackson, and Kyler Murray,

who, by the end of his career, could barely throw the ball 10 yards, couldn't run more than five, and who hit the deck before he was tackled to preserve his health. That version of Manning threw for close to 15,000 yards and 131 touchdowns in three seasons in Denver. All of it thanks to his computer brain, feel in the pocket, and sense of timing. In terms of mental and physical complexity, there aren't many other sporting

Mick Schumacher's family name is blessing and a curse, says Damon Hill

London, December 05 : Damon Hill has said Mick Schumacher deserves his shot at Formula One success but has warned the son of the seven-times world champion Michael that living up to a family name can be both a blessing and a curse. The 1996 world champion has empathy with the task Schumacher will be taking on when he joins the F1 grid with Haas in 2021. Hill's father, Graham, won two world championships before he was killed in a plane crash in 1975 when Hill was 15. When he decided to race himself, his background was impossible to ignore, just as Schumacher's F1 career will open in the looming shadow of his illustrious father, a burden he must face down. "There is a sense that some people don't want you to have a go," says Hill. "I felt like some people felt: 'Why is he doing this? He is never going to be as good as his dad.' It does not necessarily follow that because your dad was a world champion that you will be any good, but that should not prevent you from having a go. You should be able to have a go if you merit it, and F1 will find a way to see if you merit it." Hill persevered, racing for Williams and famously battling Schumacher for the title in 1994 and 1995 before securing it in 1996, becoming the first son of a world champion to win the championship.

Jacques Villeneuve would go on to follow his father, Gilles, into F1, and also won a title, while Nico Rosberg won after following in the footsteps of his title-winning father, Keke. Having a distinguished background in the sport is more than just an inspiration, says Hill. "I wanted to race, I loved racing, I loved competition and I loved the sport. But I also was determined to not let the side down with being a Hill. Some element of it when my dad died was, if you like, resurrecting or honouring the family name. So I very much took lessons from my dad's life and career and applied them to my racing." Jacques was very different. He never even talked about his dad; as far as he was concerned he was going to stand alone as Jacques, not as the son of Gilles. In some ways it is a blessing and in some ways a curse. "Schumacher, of course, has had to overcome his own trials beyond proving himself on track to get this far. He was just 14 when his father was injured in the skiing accident from which he has yet to recover. Understanding this loss as he went through his own at a similar age, Hill believes it has given Schumacher a greater sense of purpose. "It really is tragic what happened to Michael," he says. "Mick has experienced something in his life which has been very tough to bear, and I am sure it is a little bit of extra



motivation that he will have. "Schumacher has been in the spotlight since he began racing, particularly when he took to single seaters in 2014, and that level of scrutiny will intensify now. He not only carries the family name but also perhaps something no other driver has ever had to cope with, the intense interest in his father because of the accident he suffered. It is a weight he has borne well, says Hill. "I have been very impressed with how diplomatic he has been, and how he has asked people to be respectful — if you perform well, then all those problems melt away," says Hill. "I will be keen to see how he gets on. Everyone has been massively affected and appreciates the pain that the Schumacher family have gone through. They wish Mick well, they really do."

wants to race and he wants to win. "Schumacher is entering a maelstrom. As a rookie he will face pressure like no other. His every move will be analysed on and off the track, and, as Hill noted, there will doubtless be observers waiting to pounce on his errors. Yet he has already shown remarkable maturity and composure thus far in his career, and Schumacher's best answer is to maintain this and make his point on the track. There will be no shortage of earnest hope that he can do so. "In a way it's very simple — if you perform well, then all those problems melt away," says Hill. "I will be keen to see how he gets on. Everyone has been massively affected and appreciates the pain that the Schumacher family have gone through. They wish Mick well, they really do."

Max Verstappen Tests Negative For Coronavirus After Contact With Covid-Positive Lewis Hamilton



London, Dec 05 : Max Verstappen tested negative for coronavirus. He was tested as he was in contact with Lewis Hamilton. Lewis Hamilton tested positive for COVID-19 after the Bahrain

GPMax Verstappen has returned a negative test for COVID-19 ahead of this weekend's Sakhir Grand Prix amid concerns that he had been a 'close contact' of Lewis Hamilton last weekend. The newly-crowned seven-time champion Hamilton returned a positive test result on Monday following his victory at last Sunday's dramatic Bahrain Grand Prix, where he shared the podium and post-race media commitments with Verstappen. The Dutchman was tested on Wednesday and his result was negative, according to Dutch news reports. Verstappen also revealed on his website that he had

contacted his family during the stoppage last Sunday following Romain Grosjean's fireball crash and miraculous escape. "The Grosjean crash was fierce," he said. "I face-timed with my father and sister and had a chat and sent some messages." When the red flag was waved and we were still on our way to the pit lane, we saw the flames. "That was the worst moment. At the time, I didn't know what had happened or whether he was out of the car yet. "Once we got to the pit lane, we had seen on the screen that Grosjean had jumped out of the car. Then you

know that it is fortunately relatively okay." Crashes do happen, which is of course no nice. This was a huge hit that you hope never happens. "Verstappen will be bidding to take advantage of Hamilton's absence this weekend to claim victory and press home his bid to take the runners-up place in the drivers' championship ahead of the Briton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas. Briton George Russell has been released by Williams to replace Hamilton this weekend while Brazilian Pietro Fittipaldi makes his debut as Grosjean's substitute in the Haas team.

Jean-Michel Aulas : 'I realised I could do something about the inequalities in football'

London, December 5 : The Lyon president on learning about respect and equality from his parents, making the women's team the best in the world and the future in August the Lyon owner-president, Jean-Michel Aulas, felt he was close to realising an

incredibly ambitious dream. For the second time during his 33 years in charge he had the men's and women's teams competing in the latter stages of the Champions Leagues. Could a historic double be achieved? In 2010 the men failed to reach the final, while the women



emphatically defeated. The men had a period of ruthless domestic success in the 2000s after Aulas had bought the debt-ridden club in 1987 and began the process of lifting them out of the second division, but the Champions League had eluded them. For the women though, this was business as usual, a fifth consecutive

European title and seventh win overall. At the heart of a decade of dominance sits Aulas, who, in 2004, oversaw the acquisition of struggling women's side FC Lyon and embarked on another "great adventure" that would lead the team to become the envy of clubs around the world. He's

basic ally the game changer. I'm not talking about the game changer for Lyon, but for women's football in general. He's basically the gamechanger," says the Lyon forward and Champions League record scorer Ada Hegerberg. "I'm not talking about him being the gamechanger just for Lyon but for women's

football in general." Aulas has invested in women's football to an extent that few, if any, have before and it was not easy. "Within men's football there was a huge resistance, inside clubs, inside the federation and in society in a general sense," Aulas says. "I thought I had to take responsibility and proceed with those changes. "Change was motivated by seeing first hand the level of inequality that existed. He cites two examples. First, around 2006, a player made him aware of the fact the men's teams had complete freedom in choosing their kits, while the women's had theirs imposed on them. He collared the president of the France Football Federation and said that this "had to change immediately and that it didn't correspond at all to the vision that should exist about the treatment of women, both in sports clubs but in companies in general". Then, in 2011, he stood in the changing rooms at half-time of Lyon's Champions League semi-final second leg against Arsenal wringing out rainsoaked kits which would "again bring to light the unacceptable differences in the treatment that

existed". He set about changing things. "I thought that the best way to address these issues was to fight to get comparable and equal treatment between all players regardless of their gender by providing full and equal investment in equipment, infrastructure and logistics and [at Lyon] we had the means to make this happen," he says. These values feel somewhat unique to find in a man of his generation and influence, but they are deep rooted. There are essentially two factors that built the 71-year-old entrepreneur's ideological commitment to equality and the holistic values that have driven him in business and football. "My father was a French teacher and my mother a maths teacher, and the culture they raised me in was one of respect for rules and values," he says of the first. The second was a strong desire to remain independent and he actually filed for emancipation from his parents so that he could run his own business as a minor. The purchase of FC Lyon in 2004 and then the ongoing financial commitment was prompted by conversations with Uefa, Fifa and with the former chairman of Montpellier, Louis Nicollin, who died in 2017 and had

pioneered the women's team at the club, all of which gave Aulas an "understanding of the inequalities that existed in football" and "my personal ability to do something about it". Aulas, who founded Cegid, a company that specialises in the development of management and accounting software, has not just handed over cash and guidance though, he has built relationships with the players past and present in the same way he does on the men's side of the game. Ask Lucy Bronze, who played for Lyon between 2017 and 2020, or Megan Rapinoe, who embraced the Lyon president on the pitch after the US women's national team had won the World Cup in 2019, about his influence and they will gush in the same way Hegerberg does. That care is not just affection for the team, though that is there, but it is also strategic. "It is a personal investment I have in both the players from the academy but also with all the international players," he says. "It is very important for me not because it's absolutely necessary, but because it is something that can be very personally enriching, for both sides. It is something I do in all my companies because it is win-win.

Australia fall short in run chase as India open T20 series with 11-run win

New Delhi, December 5 : Justin Langer clashed with match referee David Boon before a controversial concussion substitution allowed Yuzvendra Chahal to spin India to victory in the opening Twenty20 international. In a dramatic match at Canberra's Manuka Oval, Australia fell 11 runs short of India's 161-7 - with the loss added to by a leg injury suffered by captain Aaron Finch. Australia's chase stumbled after a 56-run opening stand



between Finch and D'Arcy Short, with Chahal taking 3-25 to be named man of the match. After starting the game on the bench, Chahal was brought in to the match as a concussion replacement for Ravindra Jadeja at the change of innings. Jadeja top edged a Mitchell Starc bouncer into his helmet while batting in the final over of India's innings, but did not receive an on-field assessment. Under the ICC's rules, a doctor does not have to come on to the field immediately but would have had to at the end of the over had the

innings not concluded. Complicating the matter was that Jadeja had suffered an apparent hamstring injury in the previous over, and was clearly struggling to run during his unbeaten 44 from 23 balls. Langer could be seen in a heated discussion with Boon in the innings break, as Jadeja was replaced by Chahal. There was no confirmation from the Australian camp what the discussion was about, but Langer sat stony

Gregor Townsend seeks away win of note as Scotland aim to confirm revival

London, December 5 : There may not have been fluency in the Autumn Nations Cup so far, but there is symmetry. The fixtures involving the Six Nations teams are the same as on the opening weekend of this year's championship, apart from England having ground advantage over France, and if the outcome is another three home victories, the finishing positions will be the same as the tournament that concluded belatedly in October. The best chance of an upset, for all Wales's wobbling, looks to be in Dublin where Scotland seek the away victory of note that would confirm their revival. They won in Llanelli five weeks ago against a Wales team that was as mute as the atmosphere at Parc y Scarlets and drew at Twickenham in 2019 after a frenzied comeback, but their most recent visit to Dublin 10 months ago was another hard-luck story. They lost by seven

points having dominated for long periods and may have drawn had their full-back Stuart Hogg not dropped the ball over the line as he went to touch it down. And it was Hogg's failure to find touch late on against France in the Autumn Nations Cup at Murrayfield last month that cost his side another tilt at a draw. When the margins are fine, Scotland have tended to come out on the wrong side. They have in the last couple of years developed depth. Only two of the starting backs from Dublin in February remain, along with the front five and Jamie Ritchie in the back row. The South Africa-born outside-half Jaco van der Walt wins his first cap after qualifying on residency with Duncan Weir, who scored 23 points in two matches after being recalled following injuries to Finn Russell and Adam Hastings, not even making the bench. "Can anyone tell me why Duncan Weir is not starting?" asked the former Scotland outside-half Craig Chalmers. "He waited for

his opportunity to get back and played pretty well. We have too many project players in the team and giving away cheap caps to South Africans does not fit



with me." Van der Walt becomes Scotland's fifth 10 since the resumption of international rugby with Hogg finishing in the position in Llanelli. Their head coach, Gregor

Townsend, sees that as a sign of the depth they are developing which will be needed if they are to challenge the top sides. "I would never have thought we

second row. Ultimately, you want not just the top 15 or 23 to be at a very high level, but 30 players." Andy Farrell's report card from his union as his first year in charge nears its conclusion awarded the campaign average, rather than high marks. Their second-half display against Georgia last Sunday marked the low point when they drew the second-half 3-3 against opponents who had been shut out by England and Wales. "I am sure Scotland will be licking their lips and the challenge for us is to right the wrongs of last weekend and put it up to the Scots," said the Ireland scrum-half Conor Murray. "We reviewed the game and were harsh on each other. It was the way it needed to be and we did not shy away from it. If Scotland had played Georgia last week and struggled to put them to the sword, we would be more confident than we normally would."

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