

# The Assam Rising

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Two held with heroin

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

Officials of the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics department have seized 122 grams of heroin worth Rs 2.8 lakh and arrested two persons during raids at two different locations in Aizawl, an official statement said on Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, the officials raided a certain area between Vaivakawn and Hunthar localities in Aizawl on Wednesday and seized 26 grams of heroin from the possession of a peddler identified as B. Sangzuala (45), a resident of Chanmari West in Aizawl, the statement said. In another operation, excise officials also seized 96 grams of heroin from Chanmari neighbourhood in Aizawl on Tuesday. A drug peddler identified as Lalzarmawia (40), a resident of New Hruaikawn village in Champhai district has been arrested for possessing the contraband, it said.

### Researcher held

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

Police arrested a person working as a Research Scientist at the PM Cares laboratory of Silchar Medical College and Hospital for assaulting a laboratory assistant. According to police, the person identified as Supratik Roy was arrested on Monday night following the incident of assaulting the laboratory assistant F. I. Majharbhuiya who was hit on the jaw on Thursday and undergoing treatment at the hospital. On the other hand, SMCH authorities informed that on learning about the incident, an inquiry committee was formed and the research scientist was found guilty during the probe and accordingly he has been terminated from his contractual services.

### Vandalize newspaper office

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

A least four journalists were injured and several vehicles, computers and other properties were damaged when Tripura BJP workers allegedly attacked the office of a leading newspaper in Agartala on Wednesday. The BJP members allegedly vandalized the office of the local daily "Pratibadi Kalam" and set ablaze several vehicles, parked in front of the office. Anal Roy Chowdhury, the editor of the newspaper, alleged after a BJP rally, workers of the ruling party attacked and ransacked his office, and burnt the cars and two-wheelers parked in front of it. "At least four journalists were injured in the attack."

## CM visits Majuli, interacts with local organizations

**Govt. to institute high-level inquiry into the boat accident: CM**

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today visited the boat accident site and its surrounding areas near Nimatighat of Jorhat district and took stock of the present situation and rescue operations by NDRF and SDRF. The Chief Minister monitored the search operation for around 45 minutes from a machine boat. While interacting with media persons after visiting the accident site, the Chief Minister said that the Jorhat District Administration has been directed to register a criminal case on the boat accident. He also said that while three officials of the Inland Water Transport Department were placed under suspension, the government would also institute a high level inquiry into the accident. Moreover, the



Chief Minister said that from today, plying of all private ferries would be stopped as they don't have marine engines. However, if the owners wish to convert the single engine to marine engine, the state government would provide a grant of Rs. 10 lakh with 75% subsidy. He further informed

that from now onwards, four IWT ferries would provide service between Kamalabari and Nimatighat and soon two more ferries would be sent to Majuli. Apart from the ferries, two Ro-Pax would also be operationalized, he added. The Chief Minister also said that to ensure uninter-

rupted service of the Ro-Pax throughout the year, dredging between Kamalabari and Nimatighat would be carried out to create a navigation channel. The Chief

Minister further informed that the Deputy Commissioners of Jorhat and Majuli would reschedule timings of the ferry service and two magistrates, one each from Jorhat and Majuli would monitor timely playing of the ferries. The Govt. would also issue a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) to schedule health check-ups of those working on the boats. Informing about the status of construction of the bridge connecting Jorhat with Majuli, the Chief Minister said that a necessary process is underway and construction will start from November. It would take four years to complete the bridge; he said, adding that a Group of

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## Need to ensure that BRICS is more productive in next 15 years: PM Modi



News Desk  
Kabul, September 09 :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday chaired the 13th BRICS summit via video conferencing along with Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. The summit comes in wake of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Modi said that BRICS made many achievements in the last one and a half decades. "Today we are an influen-

tial voice for the emerging economies of the world," Modi said in his address. He also thanked members for providing full cooperation to India during its chairship. "Despite the Covid-19 situation this year, over 150 BRICS meetings and events were organised. Of these, over 20 were ministerial-level. We tried to expand the BRICS agenda. BRICS achieved many firsts this year... Our Water Resources Ministers will meet in BRICS format for the first time in November," Modi said. Meanwhile, Putin said the withdrawal of US forces

and its allies from Afghanistan has led to a new crisis. "It is still unclear how this will affect global and regional security. It is for good reason that our countries have paid special attention to this issue," Putin was quoted as saying. The withdrawal of US forces & its

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## Majuli boat accident, Assam government bans private ferries



AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

A day after the boat accident in Majuli district of Assam, the state government has banned operation of private ferries in the state. This big announcement was made by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during his visit to the boat accident spot. "From today, plying of

private ferries will be stopped as they don't have marine engine," Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said. However, CM Sarma gave an option to the private ferry owners to convert the engines of their boats to a marine engine. "If owners wish to convert single engine to marine engine, GoA will provide grant of Rs 10 lakh with 75% subsidy," CM

Sarma said. He added: "SoP will be issued to schedule health check-ups of those working on boats." He further informed that from now onwards, four IWT ferries would provide service between Kamalabari and Nimatighat and soon two more ferries would be sent to Majuli. The Assam chief minister also informed that dredging of River Brahmaputra will be done between Kamalabari and Nimatighat to create a navigational channel. "To ensure uninterrupted service of Ro-Pax throughout the year, dredging between Kamalabari & Nimatighat will be carried out to create a

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## Election Commission announces bypolls to six Rajya Sabha seats including Assam ; polling on October 4



News Desk  
New Delhi, September 09 :

The Election Commission on Thursday announced bypolls to six Rajya Sabha seats - including two in Tamil Nadu and one seat each in West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The polls to all these seats will take place on October 4, the EC said. The two seats in Tamil Nadu fell vacant due to the resignation of AIADMK leaders K P

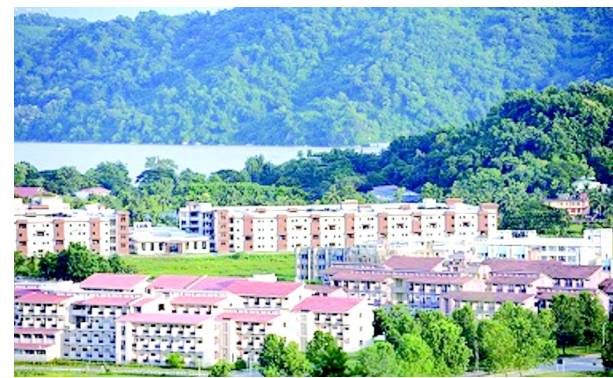
Munusamy and R. Vaithilingam who are now members of the state legislative assembly. The West Bengal Rajya Sabha seat fell vacant after resignation of TMC leader and cabinet minister Manas Ranjan Bhunia. In Assam, the seat held by assembly speaker Biswajit Daimary fell vacant after he resigned from the membership of the upper house of Parliament and his earlier party, the

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## IIT Guwahati retains 7th position in the NIRF Rankings

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati has retained its position in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) achieving 07 Rank in 'Engineering' Category this year and ranked 08 in India in 'Overall' Category in NIRF 2021. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India, announced NIRF 2021 results today (9th September 2021). Announcing the



NIRF 2021 Ranking Results, Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India, said, "In India especially

the public Institutions should come out with their own ranking framework as the state fully supports the Institutes. The entire ecosystem is primarily qualitative in India but we are little hesitant in nature. In India we never consider education as a commodity but in western world it is slightly commercialized. The ranking prac-

tice around the globe was a surprise to me, the quality of research work, the quality of knowledge power in our institutions was a pleasant surprise to me." Congratulating the Institute on its performance, Prof. T. G. Sitharam, Director, IIT Guwahati, said, "This is a reflection of the dedicated effort by the institute faculty, staff and students despite the pandemic. This is clearly reflected in both overall and engineering ranks over the past several years and seen in international rankings as well." Highlighting the Academic and Research plans for the coming year, Prof. T. G. Sitharam said, "The Institute has been working in

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## Allegation of Plagiarism against me is completely intentional & baseless : Dr. P.K. Nath

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 09 :

On charge of plagiarism, Dr. Jyotirmoy Jana, former Associate Professor, Nowgong Girls' College, filed a case against Dr. Prafulla Kumar Nath, an Associate Professor, Department of Assamese, Gauhati University in Nagaon Police station. As per his claim, Dr. Jana discovered an old Assamese drama - 'Bongal-Bongaloni' by Rudram Bordoloi

(1871). Dr. Jana compiled and republished the book in 2014. The book was accepted by Gauhati University in 2016 for the second semester in the Master Degree course in the department of Assamese. Significantly, Dr. Prafulla Kumar Nath, Associate Professor, Assamese Department, Gauhati University in association with Bookland Publication and Aditya Publication published the same book (edited) in his own

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## 'Love jihad' case, Gujarat High Court asks why government has problems ?

News Desk  
Mumbai, September 09 :

Court asks the State government to file an affidavit explaining its objections in an interfaith marriage case. The Gujarat High Court on September 9 asked the State government to file an affidavit explaining its objections in an interfaith marriage case in which the police have lodged an FIR booking husband, in-laws and priests for solemnising the marriage. The

victim in the case has categorically stated that the contents of the FIR the Vadodara Police have lodged are not true and she wanted to remain married to the person who has been booked under the amended Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act 2021 for forcible conversion through marriage. This is the first case the State police lodged after the Act was notified into the law to stop religious conversion through

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# Emergency landing strip for IAF planes on Barmer national highway inaugurated



Barmer, September 09

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari on Thursday inaugurated an emergency landing strip at Satta-Gandhav stretch on National Highway 925 for Indian Air Force (IAF) planes. A Hercules C-130J plane of the IAF, carrying the two ministers and Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat, conducted a mock emergency landing on Thursday. NH-925 is India's first national highway to be used for emergency landing

of IAF aircraft. The two Union Ministers also witnessed multiple aircraft operations on the emergency landing facility (ELF) of NH-295 on Thursday. Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet also conducted a mock emergency landing at the ELF in front of the two ministers. n-32 military transport aircraft and Mi-17v5 helicopter of the IAF also landed at the ELF, showing its complete operational readiness to act as an auxiliary military airbase. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has de-

veloped the 3-km section of Satta-Gandhav stretch of NH-925 as an ELF for the IAF. In October 2017, fighter jets and transport planes of the IAF had conducted mock landings on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway to show that such highways can be used by the IAF planes for landing in case of an emergency. The Lucknow-Agra Expressway, which is not a national highway, comes under the Uttar Pradesh government. Officials said a total of 27 other highways, apart from the one in Barmer, are being cur-

rently studied jointly by the IAF and the NHAI to see if emergency landing strips can be developed on them. The emergency landing strip, which was inaugurated on Thursday, is part of newly developed two-lane paved shoulder of Gagariya-Bakhasar and Satta-Gandhav section having total length of 196.97 km and costing Rs 765.52 crore under the Bharatmala Pariyojana. This highway project will improve connectivity between villages of Barmer and Jalore districts located on the international border. Apart from the emergency landing strip, three helipads (size 100x30 metres each) have been constructed in Kundanpura, Singhania and Bakhasar villages under this project, ac-

ording to the requirements of the IAF and the Indian Army. The ELF and three helipads have been developed so as to strengthen the security network on the western international border of the country. During normal time, the ELF will be used for smooth flow of road traffic and during the operations of ELF for the IAF, the service road will be used for smooth flow of road traffic. The ELF was constructed in 19 months. The work commenced in July 2019 and was completed in January 2021. The work was carried out by GHV India Pvt Ltd under the supervision of the IAF and the NHAI.

## Bangladesh's RAB arrests suspected JMB leader from Dhaka, arms and ammunition seized

New Delhi, September 09

Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) on Thursday (September 9, 2021) arrested a top leader of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) Imdadul Haque alias Uzzwal Master from Dhaka's Basila area. In an operation launched at midnight, the RAB raided a house in Mohammadpur area where he had taken shelter. Acting on a tip-off, the RAB team cordoned off a nearby building early Thursday morning,

RAB Spokesperson Commander Khandaker Al Moin told Dhaka Tribune. RAB seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition, a bullet-proof vest, 3 lac Bangladeshi taka and some jihadi literature. He is being questioned. Imdadul Haque was living on rent and had introduced himself as a worker at a printing press. He had even told the landlord that soon his family members will stay with him.

## Taliban ban protests and slogans that don't have their approval

Kabul, September 09:

The Taliban has moved to tighten its crackdown on escalating protests against its rule, banning any demonstrations that do not have official approval for both the gathering itself and for any slogans that might be used. In the first decree issued by the hardline Islamist group's new interior ministry, which is led by Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is wanted by the United States on terrorism charges, the Taliban warned opponents that they must secure permission before any protests or face "severe legal consequences". Wednesday's formal ban follows violent and sometimes lethal confrontations between Taliban fighters and demonstrators in several cities since the group swept to power, with women often at the forefront of the protests. Hundreds protested on Tuesday, both in the capital and in the city of Herat, where two people at the demonstration site were shot dead. The move follows other signs that Afghanistan's new all-male interim cabinet - made up entirely of Taliban loyalists - is moving rapidly away from earlier promises of moderation and inclusivity. The prohibition on protests came amid evidence that the Taliban is rapidly consolidating its grip on power after its recent conquest of the last areas opposing it in the Panshvir Valley, north of Kabul. In another indication of the darkening situation for human rights, another senior Taliban figure



said on Wednesday that Afghan women, including the country's women's cricket team, will be banned from playing sport. The ban was announced as the international community responded warily to the new Taliban government, which began work on Wednesday. The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, echoed other international figures in saying that the provisional Afghan cabinet was not the inclusive government the Taliban had promised and that the Islamist group needs to earn the international legitimacy and support it seeks. Blinken, who made his remarks alongside the German foreign minister, Heiko Maas, while visiting a US airbase in Germany that has been a transit point for evacuees from Afghanistan, also called on the Taliban to allow charter flights carrying Americans and at-risk Afghans to depart from the country. Maas and Blinken had chaired a virtual meeting with as many



People enjoy the sunshine in St. James's Park in London, Britain

## Trump White House tried to play down US injuries in attack by Iran, says ex-official

Washington, September 09

Donald Trump's White House asked the Pentagon to play down and delay reports of brain injuries suffered by US troops from an Iranian missile attack on Iraq last year, according to a former defense spokeswoman. Alyssa Farah said she fended off the pressure from the White House, which came after Trump had first claimed there had been no casualties and then dismissed the injuries as "headaches" and "not very serious". More than 100 US troops were ultimately diagnosed as having suffered traumatic brain injuries in the missile attack on two bases in Iraq housing US troops on 8

January 2020, launched by Tehran in retaliation for the US drone killing of Revolutionary Guard general Qassem Suleimani five days earlier. Roughly 80% of the American casualties from the missile attack were able to return to duty within days, but dozens had to be evacuated to Germany and then the US for treatment. A crowd at the tomb of Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force commander Qassem Suleimani Farah described the attack as the "heaviest several hours of my life" in an interview with a new podcast, One Decision, hosted by former CNN journalist Michelle Kosinski and the former head of Britain's MI6 intel-

ligence agency, Sir Richard Dearlove. Farah, who went on to work in the White House, said that when Trump claimed there had been no casualties in the wake of the attack it was "true at the time that we gave those facts to the president". But she added: "I think where things got shaky was there was an effort from the White House to want to say, this was not successful - the Iranians were not successful in harming our targets in response. And I think that went too far." And I think that it ended up glossing over what ended up being very significant injuries on US troops after the fact," Farah told the podcast, due to air on Thursday.

## China property market rocked as giant Evergrande struggles to repay \$300bn debts

Beijing, September 09

Shares in the embattled Chinese property giant Evergrande have slumped again after two credit downgrades in two days amid concerns that it will default on parts of its massive \$300bn debt pile. Evergrande, which is one of the world's most indebted companies, has seen its shares tumble 75% this year. They fell by almost 10% on Thursday morning to HK\$3.35, which is below the listing price when the company floated on the Hong Kong market in 2009. Trading in one of the company's bonds was suspended by the Shenzhen stock exchange on Thursday morning after the price plunged 20%. The online market trading platform IG said Evergrande posed "a risk of contagion" after Bloomberg reported that Credit Suisse and Citibank were no longer accepting the bonds of another highly indebted Chinese property developer, Fantasia, as collateral. There

were also reports from China on Wednesday of employees protesting outside the company's offices about salaries not being paid. Evergrande claims to employ 200,000 people and indirectly generate 3.8 million jobs in China. The company has run up a mountain of liabilities totalling more than \$300bn after years of borrowing to fund rapid growth and a string of real estate acquisitions as well as other assets including a Chinese football team. But the firm has struggled to service its debts and a crackdown on the property sector by Beijing has made it even harder to raise cash, fuelling concerns it will go bankrupt. The value of new home sales has fallen 20% in China since the peak in the first three months of this year, and the value of land sales are also sharply down. Along with Beijing's tougher regulation, these factors have made it much harder for Evergrande to dispose of unsold properties even with huge discounts.



## Under Opposition fire, CM Yogi Adityanath sends second team to Firozabad to check dengue outbreak

Lucknow, September 09

The Yogi Adityanath government has sent a second team of health experts to Firozabad within a week, to identify the dengue variant causing the outbreak which appears to be more dangerous for children. The three-member team from Lucknow's King

George Medical University (KGMU), led by senior paediatrician Dr S N Singh, has started investigating the cases. The team will also guide local doctors on how to control the spread of the disease and plan treatment protocols. Additional director of the state health

department, AK Singh, said, "There are four serotypes of dengue viruses, designated as DENV-1, 2, 3 and 4. All are transmitted human-to-human through the bite of some species of Aedes mosquitoes." The DENV-3 infections cause dengue haemorrhagic fever which is a severe and fatal form of

the disease. It causes a sudden drop in platelet count and bleeding in the gums. Dengue shock syndrome is the most severe form of dengue haemorrhagic fever." Firozabad has been the worst-hit district with the number of dengue cases rising alarmingly. The National Centre for Disease

Control (NCDC) had earlier confirmed that the viral disease cases were primarily dengue, along with a few cases of malaria, scrub typhus and leptospirosis. The World Health Organisation had also alerted the district administration that the outbreak might be one of dengue haemorrhagic fever.

## Priti Patel to send boats carrying migrants to UK back across Channel

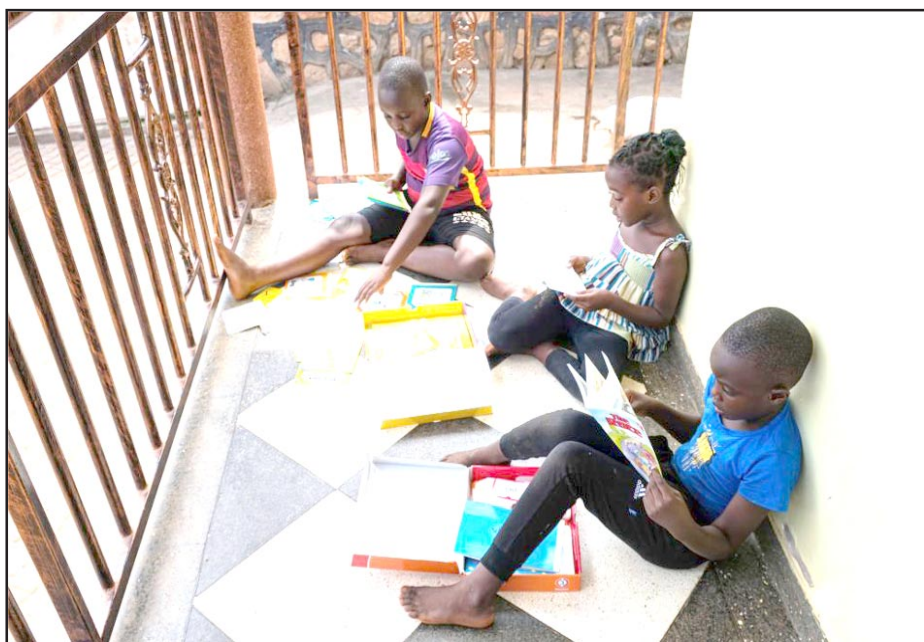


New York, September 09

Priti Patel is preparing to send back small boats carrying migrants in the Channel despite warnings from the French authorities that it could endanger lives. Border Force staff are being trained to employ "turn-around" tactics at sea under plans developed for two years, a statement from the Home Office said. It would allow UK officers to force small boats back into French waters. It is unclear if the proposals would include taking migrants back to French shores. The proposals have already been rejected by the French government. A letter released on Wednesday showed they could not be accepted by the interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, on the grounds that "safeguarding human lives at sea takes priority

over considerations of nationality, status and migratory policy". The tactics will be used, the Home Office has said, with the intention of redirecting migrant vessels away from UK waters and back towards France. Training, which is due to conclude this month, with use of the tactics ready to deploy as soon as practical and safe. Border Force has informed ministers they will only be able to deploy the tactics, which have been developed in consultation with maritime experts, when they deem it safe to do so. In a statement, the Home Office said Patel had become "the first home secretary to establish a legal basis for the sea tactics, working with acting attorney general Michael Ellis and expert QCs." In a letter

released after a bilateral meeting broke up on Wednesday, Darmanin made clear to Patel that the proposals would damage bilateral relations. "The French position on intervention at sea remains unchanged. Safeguarding human lives at sea takes priority over considerations of nationality, status and migratory policy, out of strict respect for the international maritime law governing search and rescue at sea. With regard to traffic and conditions for crossing the Channel, France has no other solution than to intervene most often on the basis of the provisions in international law governing search and rescue at sea." The use of maritime refoulements [the practice of sending back asylum seekers] to French territorial waters would risk having a negative impact on our cooperation," he wrote. Conservative MPs have called for the home secretary to break international law and send all migrants arriving illegally by boat straight back to France. Darmanin's letter says that the French authorities have agreed with the UK to "double the number of personnel deployed on the Channel coast" and had been offered the use of a UK plane to monitor the coast. Darmanin also rejected a suggestion from the UK to form a single force to stop people smugglers from using boats.



Children read storybooks at home in Seguku, Wakiso District, Uganda



# CM Dr. Sarma attends review meeting with CCTOA



**STAFFREPORTER**

**Guwahati, Sep 8:** Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today said that the State government would form a three member cabinet committee to discuss and resolve all issues of the tribal people. The Chief Minister said this while tak-

ing part in a review meeting with the representatives of Coordination Committee of Tribal Organizations of Assam (CCTOA) to discuss various issues of the tribal people, which was held at No. 1 State Guest House, Koinadhara in Guwahati today. Altogether 24 students

and social organizations of the ST communities took part in the meeting. The CCTOA representatives submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister underscoring ten demands including preservation of tribal belt and blocks, land rights of forest dwellers,

## Cabinet committee to be formed to deal with issues of tribal people

implementation of post based reservation policy and filling up of backlog posts, constitutional status to tribal Autonomous Councils etc. The Chief Minister after going through the demands announced that a three member cabinet committee will be formed to engage with CCTOA to discuss and resolve all issues of the tribal people. The Cabinet Committee will frequently hold discussions with CCTOA and take expeditious steps for settlement of land rights and other issues of the tribal people. The Chief

Minister also informed that he will hold discussion with CCTOA on progress of the issues in next six months. Education and WPT&P; BC Minister Dr. Ranoj Pegu, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Ashok Singhal, BTC Chief Pramod Bodo, Principal Secretaries and other senior officers of the state government were present in the meeting.

# High Level meeting on the implementation of Assam Adarsh Gram Yojana held in Hojai

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Hojai, Sep 9 :** Under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner of Hojai district Anupam Choudhury a high level meeting was organised in order to discuss the implementation work of the Assam Adarsh Gram Yojana. The meeting was held at DC's Conference room in the presence of three legislators namely MLA from 90 No. Jamunamukh. Constituency Sirajuddin Ajmal, 91 No. Hojai Constituency MLA Ramkrishna Ghosh and 92 No. Lumding Constituency MLA Sibumishra at District head-quarter Sankardevnagar in Hojai on Thursday. During the meeting a detailed interactive discussion



was held with all the enlisted departments under the Assam Adarsh Gram Yojana regarding the draft plan and budget to implement the mentioned scheme. Notably, in the session the discussions were held on two villages each which are selected from the three LACs of the district for development under Assam Gramin Yojana. Meanwhile, the legislators gave their valuable suggestions and ensured full support and cooperation in

implementation of the scheme. Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner called upon the officers and employees to work dedicatedly for the upliftment of the society. Chief Executive Officer of Zila Parishad Devashish Baishya, Additional Deputy Commissioner Gokul Chandra Brahma, Zilla Parishad President Rama Bala Devi, Circle Officer along with other officials were present in the meet.

# ECI Announced By-poll Dates For Rajya Sabha in Assam

**STAFFREPORTER**

**Guwahati, Sep 9:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) has decided to hold six bye-elections in six states including in Assam. These by-polls would be held in Rajya Sabha seats which fell vacant due to various reasons. According to the press note of ECI, polls would be held in two seats in Tamil Nadu and one each in West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Madhya Pradesh. The polls to all these seven seats will take place on October 4, the EC said. In Assam, the Rajya Sabha seat fell vacant after speaker Biswajit Daimary resigned from the membership of the upper house of Parliament.

## CRPF jawan commits suicide after firing at his colleague

**Correspondent**

**Nagaon, Sep 9:** A CRPF jawan named Vijay Kr Mishra of Nagaon Katimari based CRPF battalion Camp, committed suicide with his service arms after firing at one of his fellow jawan Pranjal Dutta at the 34th CRPF battalion camp itself this morning, sources added. Sources claimed that CRPF head constable Vijay Kumar Mishra

went to their Kote to deposit his arms and ammunition this morning and in a mysterious situation, he shot at the Kote incharge Pranjal Dutta and injured him on his legs following which Vijay Kumar Mishra himself shot at his own head. He died on the spot. Meanwhile the injured Pranjal Dutta was immediately admitted to hospital, sources added further.

## Serves eviction notice to village adjacent to LGBI airport

**Correspondent**

**Palasbari, Sep 9:** The Kamrup administration has served a notice to evacuate 55 bigha land of Kaitasidhi village under Palasbari LAC near the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport. However, the people who own the land clarified that they would not evacuate their land under any circumstance. "We have been served a notice to evacuate 55 bighas, 2 katha and 3.50 lecha land near the Airport. We heard that the Adani group which has been given charge of the Airport for 50 years under a lease agreement by the Government of India wants

to do expansion work here. But we want to clarify that we will not leave our land even if we are given adequate compensation", said a local person. Some other people in the area also said that they will not hand over their land to the Adani group." It may be mentioned here that in 2018, in a meeting with the district administration, we accepted their proposal to give permission to uproot or cut our trees. Since then, they have been cutting our trees. But we will not give our land to them," they said. Some local women also categorically stated that they are ready to become daily wage earners but never give their land



letter to party president Hagrama Mohilary. "While my aim and purpose remain the same it has always been from the very beginning to serve the people of my State and country. I think I am unable to do this anymore within this party," Daimary said, adding that there is a possibility that he might join the BJP.

# IIT Madras Sweeps Top Honours in NIRF Ranking

**NEWSDESK**

**CHENNAI, Sep 9:** Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has, once again, swept the top honours in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), emerging as the undisputed leader in education in the country. The results of NIRF 2021 were announced today by Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India. IIT Madras has been ranked as No. 1 institute in India in both 'Overall' and 'Engineering' Categories in NIRF 2021. IIT Madras has bagged the Top Rank in 'Overall' Category for the third consecutive year and No. 1 in 'Engineering' category for the sixth consecutive year. In the newly-launched category of 'Research Institutions,' IIT Madras was Ranked 2 in the country, behind only the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. Congratulating all the Institutes that took part in NIRF Ranking, Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India, said, "I am happy to be part of the India Rankings 2021 along the sidelines of the Shiksha Parv initiatives envisioned by our visionary Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. He arranged for the Education Sector to have rankings in the country. This is the sixth year we are having this ranking framework. This is very essential in the 21st Century." Further, Dharmendra Pradhan said, "We have 50,000 educational Institutions and 50 million higher education students. Ranking is inevitable and must. This year, 6,000 institutions took part. In the future, almost all institutions must come forward." Moreover, IIT Madras has been recognized as an 'Institution of Emi-



nence' (IoE) in September 2019, by the Government of India. As an Institute of Eminence, IIT Madras has set certain targets for the next 5, 10 and 15 years in Academics, Research and Development, and Internationalization, among others. Congratulating students, faculty members and other employees for their hard work that has resulted in such extraordinary performance, Prof. Bhaskar Ramamurthy, Director, IIT Madras, said, "We are delighted to maintain our pre-eminent position in the NIRF rankings yet again. IIT Madras continues to excel in teaching, research, and innovation, and has launched several new initiatives to implement the NEP." Over the years the institute has grown from strength-to-strength. In February 2021, the Satellite Campus of IIT Madras was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. Coming up at a cost of Rs. 1,000 Crore in the first phase, the upcoming 'Discovery Campus,' located at Thaiyur near Chennai, will accommodate the growing research infrastructure requirements of the institute. With IoE funding, IIT Madras is creating Centres of Excellence to encourage inter-disciplinary research that can lead to path-breaking discoveries and innovations. These Centres are in emerging areas of science and technology, have strong international linkages, are highly outcome-focused, and will have inti-

mate networks with the IITM Research Park and IITM Incubation Cell for commercialization of ideas, and with the Institute's IP Office for patent filings and technology transfer/licensing. As an endeavor towards taking quality education to masses, the Institute also launched the World's first-ever Online B.Sc. Degree in Programming and Data Science in June 2020. This unique offering removes all barriers of age, discipline or geographic location and provides access to a world-class curriculum in data science which is in huge demand for skilled professionals. The Institute is steadily increasing the number of inter-disciplinary dual-degree (DD-ID) programmes, and online certification programmes for professionals, in emerging technology areas and those relevant to the development of the country. IIT Madras, which has also bagged the top position in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) for the last two years, has created a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem that encourages students to become job-generators. Started in 2015, NIRF outlines a methodology to rank educational institutions across the country. The parameters used for ranking broadly cover "Teaching, Learning and Resources," "Research and Professional Practices," "Graduation Outcome," "Outreach and Inclusivity," and "Perception."

motorable condition. He has issued instructions to National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) to immediately undertake repair work on the current road so that commuters do not face discomfort while travelling on the stretch. He has also directed the Deputy Commissioner of Biswanath to make regular visits to assess the progress of work. He also asked NHIDCL to expedite four-laning work on the stretch. With regard to implementation of projects under the Public Works Department (PWD) in the district, the minister asked the department to construct high-quality roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). He said the government will not tolerate any compromise on quality of work and the contractors should be issued direc-

tions accordingly. "If the public is not satisfied with the quality of work, the government will not sit idle. Action would be initiated against contractors who construct poor-quality roads," said Hazarika. The minister has decided to hold another meeting exclusively with PWD officials and contractors in the next 15 days to further assess the quality of work under various road projects. Reviewing the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Mr. Hazarika said the concerned department should ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left out from availing benefit under the scheme. He also issued instructions to speed-up implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district so that every household is provided with tap-water connection by 2024. He also asked the agriculture department to ensure that all

eligible farmers in the district avail the benefits under PM-KISAN scheme. Further, the minister has asked the social welfare department to identify 50 most malnourished children in the district and those children would be adopted by the minister, local MP and MLAs and all their expenses with regard to nutrition and diet would be taken care of by them. The minister also reviewed the progress of work of Medical and Engineering Colleges in the district. Today's meeting was also attended by Tezpur MP Mr. Pallab Lochan Das, Biswanath MLA Mr. Promod Borthakur, Gohpur MLA Utpal Borah, Behali MLA Ranjit Dutta, DC Biswanath Pranab Kumar Sarmah, SP Biswanath Leena Doley, SDO(C) Gohpur Aditya Vikram Yadav, ADCs, administrative officers and heads of concerned departments

# DC Holds Interactive Meetings with Govt. Officers

**STAFFREPORTER**

**Aalo Sep 9:** The West Siang Deputy Commissioner Shri Penga Tato had a series of Interactive meetings with Branch Officers and officials of the DC Office at the Conference of DC Office today. While speaking to Officers and officials the DC stressed on punctuality, prompt disposal of works as per Citizen's Charter, people friendly attitude, sincerity and transparent manner of rendering services as per AP Right to Public Service

Act, 2016 and AP Right to Public Service Rules, 2017. He said that our services are meant for the people whom we serve and no one govt. officials should indulge in unwanted activities that give bad name and image to the administration at any cost and all should work diligently to facilitate benefits meant for the people. The govt. servants should apply leave or tour in advance unless warranted in emergency cases. The DC has to get a well knit team to take administration in the right direction and take up is-

ssues concerning welfare of the district assuring that administration too will be there to take into the problems faced by the officials. The ADC Shri Liyi Bagra spelt out the list of designated services, designated officer, stipulated time for service delivery, appellate authority and conduct rules as enshrined in Citizen's Charter. He also laid stress on punctuality, commitment among all strata of officials and rotation of officials in various officials to acquaint them with various nature of works.

# Matru Vandana Saptah concluded in Hojai

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Hojai, Sep 8:** Along with the rest of the Country, under the aegis of Social Welfare Department in association with Hojai District Administration the closing ceremony of week long Matru Vandana Saptah (September 1 to September 7) under Prime Minister Matru Vandana Yojana concluded here at DC's conference room in Sankardev Nagar on Tuesday. The objective of the meeting was explained by District Program Coordinator Queen Bora. Deputy Commissioner Shri Anupam Choudhury graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Addressing the officers and employees, DC Choudhury said, "We have to keep working for the public interest with integrity and a positive mindset. DC said



Our work will speak up and find true places in the hearts of the people, it will be our true accomplishment and satisfaction in our working life. He further said District Administration will ensure all kinds of possible help for the successful implementation of this program. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner honoured the best compatible child upgrade project for

transparency in the successful implementation of this scheme along with Anganwadi Worker, Anganwadi Helper, Data Entry Operator, Supervisor, Lanka ICDS Block. The Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad Devashish Vaish, Additional Deputy Commissioner Raktim Barua, along with several other officials were present in the meeting.



## THE ASSAM RISING

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## Terrible reason to skip the vaccine

There a terrible reason to skip the vaccine - 100% of people who have "natural immunity" suffered from at least one bout of the disease, putting them at risk of severe illness, lingering symptoms and the prospect of spreading the virus to others. The point of the vaccine, after all, is to cut back on the risk of getting sick at all and to reduce the severity of symptoms if a so-called breakthrough occurs. But there's still a lot to be learned, and a lot of public-health policy that should be subject to adjustment. The new data, which come out of Israel, show that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control erred by telling people in early August that vaccine-induced immunity is better than immunity acquired from past infection. People who had two Pfizer shots were about 27 times more likely to get symptomatic Covid-19 and eight times more likely to be hospitalized than were people who'd been infected, scientists citing that earlier data, saying that vaccine-induced immunity might be better than protection from a past infection. I was wrong, and stand corrected. While not officially published, a scientific paper announcing the new data has impressed the medical community because it's based on a study of tens of thousands of people conducted this summer when the delta variant was dominant, and because the researchers measured what matters most: whether people got sick or were hospitalized, not just whether their antibodies changed or some tiny amount of virus was detected in their noses. The new findings might force a rethinking of the current U.S. policy of recommending full vaccination to people who've already had a documented case of Covid-19. And, while it still makes sense to encourage anyone who hasn't had the virus to get the shots, doctors might want to reconsider whether the Moderna version would be a better bet. Several studies, including one out of the Mayo Clinic, show it might offer more durable protection against the delta variant. The immunity from infection may explain, in part, why the delta wave has leveled off or started to drop in Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida, where it had risen highest. The phenomenon also complicates the study of long-term vaccine efficacy because unvaccinated people are becoming increasingly immune as delta spreads through them. That means the unvaccinated are becoming inadvertently inoculated, though at the high cost of putting pressure on hospitals and killing people. That natural immunity works isn't a surprise. In the summer of 2020, scary stories about waning post-infection immunity were dampening hopes that vaccines would work - as the persistence of immunity was taken as a sign that the same effect could occur with a vaccine. Since last December, I've asked different experts how natural immunity might compare with vaccine-induced immunity, and it turns out that for some diseases, vaccines can be more protective than past infection. But not always. People who've had Covid-19 wondered whether the risk-benefit ratio of getting the shots might be different for them. Last December, nobody knew whether vaccine-induced immunity would be better than infection-induced immunity, but it was always understood that past infection incurred some degree of protection. There was an emergency, the risks of the shots looked minimal, and it would have been slow and cumbersome to determine who had actually had the virus. It's also not clear whether all the so-called asymptomatic cases elicited immunity or whether the body's first lines of defense killed the virus off before any antibodies were created. It's also likely that at least a few people who were never tested just assume they've had Covid-19, and others may have had a false positive test. But now, perhaps the sensible approach is the one taken in France, Germany, Italy and other countries - to offer people who've been infected a single dose of a two-shot vaccine. Data from some previous studies as well as conclusions drawn from the Israeli data show that a single shot can boost post-infection immunity to even higher levels. Other studies suggest that a previous infection combined with a single-dose vaccine will be better than vaccines alone at protecting against new variants.

## Boris Johnson has created a 'social care plan' without any plan for social care

Two years after Boris Johnson promised a plan for social care, it can hardly be said that today's announcement was "worth the wait". As one Tory backbencher put it, "If the 'big reveal' of a decade of thinking is this, then some people want sacking." Unlike the NHS, social care - be it long-term support for elderly people in residential homes, or assistance to disabled people in their own homes - is not free at the point of use in England. Instead, it has been means-tested and provided by a patchwork of individuals, charities and private companies all overseen by local authorities. The last decade has seen state funding recede by £8bn under austerity at the same time as demand has risen, with older people living longer and more working age adults living with disabilities. The result has been squeezed budgets, underappreciated staff, and a decrease in the standard of care. Some disabled or older people and their families have had to foot bills that can run into the hundreds of thousands, while others have been left to endure inhumane conditions because they have no care at all. Currently, anyone with assets (usually a home) over £23,250 has to pay their care costs in full, but Johnson's proposed changes will mean that anyone with assets below £20,000 will have their fees covered in full. Those with assets between £20,000 and £100,000 will be expected to contribute to their cost of care up to £86,000, but will be eligible for support on a sliding scale. In a deeply regressive move, these changes are to be funded by a 1.25 percentage point increase in national insurance contributions and tax dividends - putting the burden on young workers, but not wealthy pensioners. Further still, social care will continue to

play second fiddle to the NHS: much of the initial funding will go to reducing the healthcare backlog. These proposed changes will reduce the amount some people pay for care - and importantly for the Tory base, will mean preserving people's inheritances. But the plans do little to address the systemic issues facing the sector. The problem with the government's efforts is not simply the lack of adequate cash - it's a lack of vision for how to use it. Johnson has managed to create a social care plan that essentially has no plan for social care. The mass outsourcing of social care to the private sector in recent decades is in many ways the elephant in the room. There is no point increasing government funding if the money goes to lining the pockets of private eq-

 **Frances Ryan**

uity magnates who own our care homes and services, rather than improving care workers' wages or patients' care packages. Few could claim outsourcing brings good value or high standards. Last year, the Care Quality Commission found that one in six care providers in England were not meeting acceptable standards. It's time for a conversation about bringing more services in-house and expanding social care co-ops run by communities - and at the very least, some accountability on profits and waste. Then there is the issue of staff shortages. Recent debate over the sensible "no jab, no job" policy distracts from the real causes of the staffing crisis: more than 70% of care workers are currently paid less than the real living wage, and a quarter are on zero-hours contracts, meaning no sick pay for back-breaking work. If Johnson is to fix care shortages, care staff

must be brought into parity with their NHS colleagues, paid the living wage, and given the right to a staff contract. When a growing number of carers prefer to work in the conditions of an Amazon warehouse rather than care homes, something is seriously wrong. Disabled care users have similarly been ignored in the new plan, despite half of all care budgets going on working age disabled people. Johnson's pledge for a cap on care costs that protects a pensioner from selling their home is little use to a 30-year-old with a learning disability. Ministers must put an end to astronomical care charges in England that are seeing some working-age people living off little more than £3 a day. Equally, younger disabled people should be given the right to - and funding for - independent living, which means support at home to live with dignity and fulfilment like anyone else. It is not enough for the government to offer "personal care"; after all, life is not just about having a shower, but also seeing friends and getting the kids to school. No reform of social care can be complete without helping unpaid carers too, millions of whom will still be needed even in an improved system. Family carers (largely women) work around the clock and, at £67 a week benefit, receive less than the paltry sum given to jobseekers, while many get nothing due to harsh qualifying criteria. Carer's allowance must be raised to lift carers out of poverty, and outside help given for their physical and mental health. These plans are affordable - and fair - with the right long-term funding plan. Research by the TUC found increasing capital gains tax to the same level as income tax, and getting rid of exemptions, could raise up to £17bn a year for social care.



 **Rachel Shabi**

Food banks and volunteers have put into practice the universalist principle that once underpinned the welfare state. When Slung Low theatre in Leeds closed during the first lockdown in March last year, its five core staff decided to stay put. The publicly funded theatre had cash and a van, so the staff leafleted the theatre's neighbourhood in Holbeck, an impoverished area in south Leeds, offering to help with everyday tasks that had suddenly become impossible for many people. Requests piled in for grocery shopping, dog-walking and prescription pick-ups. As workplaces closed, people started asking for food support. Before long, the local council approached Slung Low, which normally stages large-scale theatre shows in castles and town centres, to organise a food bank for a ward of 7,500 residents. So it did, supplying around 15,000 deliveries over 15 months: thousands of eggs, cereal boxes, tins of beans and pints of milk. Slung Low's food bank was, like its theatre performances, a large-scale production. But it was by no means the only initiative of its kind to emerge during the pandemic. Over the past 18 months, 4,000 mutual aid groups formed across the country, staffed by millions of volunteers, who patched together safety nets for those in need. Whether delivering food, helping elderly people

or supporting those with deteriorating mental health, many mutual aiders fast realised that help is a two-way street. For some, it provided an immediate way to practise political values. Other volunteers I spoke with said it offered them meaning and purpose in a way that actual, paid work did not. Could this flourishing of mutual aid and volunteering have a sustainable effect on the way we do politics, or will it simply evaporate as the pandemic recedes from view? Regular contact with Holbeck's community, many of whom live in deprivation, has been an altering experience for Slung Low volunteers, one they can neither forget nor untie themselves from. Food banking is an exchange of much more than groceries: care, connection and trust passes between people, too. "We are part of the community and beholden to each other now," Alan Lane, the theatre's artistic director, told me when I visited the food bank in June. In a neighbourhood such as Holbeck, which has been ground down by neglect over the years, sticking around is a vital currency. The theatre has received letters of thanks from one family, who included a photo "to show who you helped", and from an ex-prisoner who wrote that, despite a history of falling into crime: "I personally believe due to your help I

haven't reoffended." Lane told me it took constant work, "shitloads of cash" and hundreds of volunteers to keep the food bank running. Alongside funding from the council and volunteers from Leeds community hub, the theatre was able to access cash, goods and people. Furloughed ballet dancers and TV producers turned up to pack food and drive deliveries. An online community chipped in £5s and £10s. Initially, the supplies of food were erratic: months of tortilla chips, then giant bags of popcorn; 2,000 avocados one day, 10,000 frozen vegan burgers the next, and piles of chocolate just after Easter and Halloween. Soon, Slung Low started buying its own food wholesale, warehousing produce, tins and packets at the theatre. Disaster movies typically depict crisis-hit societies collapsing into selfish chaos, but in reality the opposite seems true. In A Paradise Built in Hell, her book about the goodwill that shines amid crises and emergencies, Rebecca Solnit describes how these moments show us the depth of "the desire for connection, participation, altruism and purposefulness in all of us". Helping others seems to tap into something at the very core of our nature as social beings. Mutual aid can also show us an altogether different way of doing politics. Slung Low, like other pandemic food banks I spoke to, refused to ask people for proof of eligibility. Typically, food support is based on referrals from a health visitor or social worker, which means that individuals have to show evidence of their hardship. Naysayers told Slung Low's volunteers that they would be overwhelmed; that people would take advantage of the service, or that it could create dependence. These bad faith assumptions govern much of the UK's welfare system, where assistance is means-tested and those who need help are frequently treated with suspicion, such as when Matt Hancock explained those who were told to self-isolate after testing positive for Covid-19 would not receive financial support because the system might be "gamed". Instead, Slung Low

was effectively practising the universalism that once underpinned the welfare state but has long been eroded: the idea that the only way to ensure everyone has what they need is to give to anyone who asks. Lane told me the food bank felt much like holding a finger in a river and hoping that someone upstream - the government - would stem the flood. But nobody was fixing the problems that had led so many to require the food bank's assistance in the first place. There's a fine balance between finding ways to make this sort of volunteering more sustainable and turning it into an excuse for the government to devolve its welfare responsibilities. Meanwhile, as people return to full-time work and other obligations loom, it gets harder to keep the commitment going - one volunteer I met at a vaccine centre told me it was always a struggle to squeeze a shift into her diary, but always rewarding to have done so. Still, something shifted during the past 18 months, for individuals as well as for communities. Some pandemic projects across the country have planted roots and are now seeking more permanent solutions to long-term issues. The real change may occur if such projects connect communities to politics with a big P, altering both the perception of what's politically possible and the demands made of elected politicians. In Holbeck, Slung Low eventually transferred the food bank to local services and has since reopened its doors as a theatre. It has also set up a football club, Holbeck Moor, which offers free childcare and has several men's and women's teams that now meet weekly. The football club is an enduring legacy of the theatre's pandemic volunteering. But perhaps the most significant shift is the connective tissue that grew between the theatre and the community it serves. That people in the neighbourhood are coming to the theatre - to events, to make suggestions, to engage in learning activities or ask for help - is part of a shift in Holbeck's social fabric that could take many new forms in the future.

## The alphabet soup of terrorists that an ill-governed Afghanistan can launch against India

With the last American gone, and Afghanistan in chaos, counter-terrorism professionals are justifiably alarmed, particularly as congratulatory messages to the Taliban pour in from terrorist and extremist religious groups, indicating a degree of triumphalism that bodes ill for democracies everywhere. It certainly doesn't look good. As television channels pick up on the threat and magnify it, what is needed is a sober assessment of the nuances rather than the noise, and then sifting out future counter-terrorism directions. In some



ways, the more things change, the more they may remain the same. In other ar-

 **Tara Kartha**

reas, prepare for the worst. First, regardless of the US now deciding to work with the Taliban and coordinating on a 'daily basis', the truth of the matter is this. As Taliban leaders make propitiating statements to the international community, there is absolutely no clarity as to whether these leaders are at all positioned to speak for the group itself, at a time when it is even unclear as to who heads it. The continued absence of Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada is perplexing; Mullah Baradar is far from having undisputed control, and the dreaded Haqqanis seem to have taken charge of security through Khalil Haqqani, without any order being issued from the 'Emirate'. Sources similarly point to the presence of Red units, (elite Taliban units created for the provinces), and others like it in Kabul without any authorisation. Appointment lists so far inspire no confidence at all in any 'inclusivity'. Some of the mullahs, such as Haji Mohammad Idris, were known to be 'expert' in laundering drug money, among other things. On the upside, it may be remembered that many of the ministers of the Ashraf Ghani government were hardly pillars of respectability. Then Defence Minister Asadullah Khalid, for instance, had a record of rights abuses, not to mention warlords like Abdul Rashid Dostum and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Kabul under Ghani was a centre for infighting, where almost everyone with a war history had little commitment to reasonably honest governance. In that respect, nothing much has changed in the situation at the top. Expect more of the same, with additional extremist characteristics, as the Chinese would say, moderated by the need for foreign assistance. Second, don't expect a Taliban government to have any

greater power than either the Ghani government, or even the Soviet-backed government of President Mohammed Daoud in the far reaches of Afghanistan. Each of these managed under a system of loose fealty, warlordism and threat. Even while the US was at the height of its deployment, it had little actual control over any activity in districts elsewhere, other than Kabul and its immediate environs. A new 'government' in Kabul, even if willing to act against terrorists, will not have the capability for some years yet, if at all. Many have marvelled at Taliban resilience, and its apparent unity even in adversity. That strength has come from the group's willingness to recognise and accept local loyalties and power centres, and coopting them into the overall structure. That includes criminal activity of all kinds, including not just narcotics, but also kidnapping, money laundering and sheer banditry, all of which is detailed in an earlier UN Report. It forms the foundation of what it means to be 'Taliban', and it's highly unlikely that Mullah Baradar or anyone else will be able to even want to eliminate such elements. In addition, analysts point out that the Taliban unity also held due to the single threat of 'foreign occupation'. With that gone, it is unlikely whether the structure will sustain enough to carry out Kabul's orders. More likely, local commanders will operate to sustain themselves and Kabul, as before, will just have to lump it. So, anyone expecting Kabul to act strongly against terrorists is whistling in the wind. Third, there are so many of these groups about. There's the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), led by Shahab al Mujahid, reportedly appointed by the Raqqa-based leadership. There's the al-Qaeda, still present in some 15 provinces; the al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), a cause of considerable unease to India, Myanmar and Bangladesh, since it includes their nationals; the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which worries Pakistan, and a medley of Central Asian and Chinese groups numbering in total some 8,000-10,000. The trouble is that all these also are operationally in support of the Taliban. In February 2021, a directive from the Taliban appeared on social media clearly aimed at Western audiences. The directive barred cadres from sheltering 'foreign fighters' on threat of punishment.



# Myntra partners with Urbanic; deepens its connect with fashion-forward Gen-Z by bolstering its fashion-in-trend portfolio



Guwahati, Sept 09

Urbanic, a London-based digital fashion brand and the ultimate one-stop-shop for edgy, chic yet economical fashion, was launched on Myntra on September 1, marking the latter's first-ever partnership with an e-commerce platform. The brand is an emerging favorite among fashion-first Gen-Z shoppers and beyond in India, for women's western wear, while also being popular in several countries, with its trendy and stylish offerings across categories. Urbanic

is offering a differentiated collection of 2000+ styles to shoppers on Myntra, targeted at the young fashion-conscious consumers looking for trendy, affordable, far-from-basic styles across categories, including apparel, loungewear and accessories. The selection includes tops, denims, winter wear, lingerie, swimwear and accessories. The association between Urbanic and Myntra gives an edge to one of the world's biggest bases of Gen-Z fashion shoppers as it creates wider accessibility, espe-

cially with Myntra being the preferred launchpad and platform for fashion brands in engaging with digitally native audiences across the country. Gen-Z is one of the primary consumer segments that Myntra focuses on considering their wide-ranging expression of fashion and the enormity of this fast-growing segment. Myntra's association with Urbanic, which is a favourite among this particular generation of shoppers, intensifies its bond by bolstering its relevant portfolio, while Urbanic, can enhance its reach and foothold in the country, offering the perfect opportunity for consumers to access a wide range of trendy 'grammable pieces. Founded in 2019, Urbanic was born with a strong grasp of the tenets of contemporary fashion catering to Gen-Z. The brand acts as a link between imagination and reality for young fashion experimenters by putting up and delivering the trendiest styles. Urbanic also resonates at a deep level with the spirited, outspoken and fashion conscious cohort of young Indians by being vocal about causes such as self expression, body positivity and defying gender norms, among others. The brand's community of style icons in the making enjoy unparalleled access to a plethora of bold, experimental and affordable lines of Urbanic's clothing and accessories.

# Kaspersky and Airtel join forces to make online journeys more secure for customers

Guwahati, Sept 9

Airtel customers now purchase Kaspersky security solutions for PC and Smartphones via Airtel Thanks app. Global cybersecurity company Kaspersky has partnered with Bharti Airtel ("Airtel") - India's premier communications solutions provider, to ensure instant security for internet users in India. The collaboration between the two companies will allow Airtel customers to purchase Kaspersky Total Security solution directly from the Airtel Thanks app in a matter of few clicks. What's more! Airtel customers also enjoy exclusive deals on these advanced solutions from Kaspersky. Airtel customers simply need to download the latest version of Airtel Thanks app> Go to 'Shop' section> Go to lifestyle offers> Click on the Kaspersky banner and get started. Airtel Thanks also enables seamless payments through cards, net banking and UPI. The alliance is formed with the aim to increase the cybersecurity awareness amongst Indian internet users and encourage them to practice cyber safety in the wake of growing cyberthreats. Cyberthreats

are constantly evolving and cybercriminals in the past 2 years have been actively targeting internet users in India. In the first quarter of 2021 Kaspersky products detected 37,650,472 different Internet-borne cyberthreats. Mobile users are also at risk as cybercriminals are constantly targeting them for financial gains, as well as to obtain important private data. Mobile threats in India have drastically increased since 2019 and are becoming more targeted and sophisticated in nature. India ranked 7th amongst the countries attacked with Mobile Threats in 2020. The top mobile threats targeted at the smartphone users globally were, Adware which topped the list with 57% (3, 2 5 4 , 3 8 7 detections). Talking about the other threats, the number of backdoors detected almost tripled from 28,889 in 2019 to 84,495 in 2020. The number of detected Android exploits increased seventeen fold, and the number of Trojan- Proxy threats had increased by twelve times. Kaspersky solutions detected 156,710 installations packages for mobile banking Trojans in 2020, which is twice the

number of attacks detected in 2019. However, a decline in ransomware trojans was witnessed as we found 20,708 installation packages for ransomware Trojans in 2020, a decrease of 3.5 times as compared to the previous year. Eugene Kaspersky, CEO of Kaspersky, said: "We're very much looking forward to supporting Bharti Airtel, the leading global telecommunications company and one of the biggest mobile service providers, in its goal to protect their users, create a more secure internet, and build a safer digital world together with Kaspersky. I'm convinced that this partnership will further contribute to establishing Airtel as an innovative pioneer and a leader in its industry." Pradipt Kapoor, CIO, Bharti Airtel said: "As customer lifestyles become increasingly integrated with digital platforms, it becomes paramount for all of us to secure these journeys with the right solutions. Airtel is working round the clock to deliver a secure network experience through world-class infrastructure and partnerships. We are delighted to partner with Kaspersky and make their solutions easily accessible for Airtel customers, who can purchase and install these in a matter of minutes and enjoy complete peace of mind."

# Ford to stop manufacturing cars in India - sources



**New Delhi, Sep 9:** Ford Motor Co (F.N) will stop manufacturing cars in India and shut down its plants in the country, two sources told Reuters, becoming the latest automaker to quit a market still domi-

nated by Asian rivals. The U.S. automaker made the decision because it was not profitable for it to continue, said one of the sources, adding that the process is expected to take about a year to complete. Ford is the latest vehicle maker to cease production in India, following U.S. companies such as General Motors (GM.N) and Harley Davidson

London, Sep 9

World share markets slipped for a third straight day on Thursday as Beijing took another swipe at its big tech firms, while bond markets steered for European Central Bank signals later about a gradual withdrawal of its stimulus. Europe's regional STOXX 600 (.STOXX) flirted with a six-week low in early trading, while Chinese tech giants Tencent, NetEase and Alibaba had slumped 6%, 7% and 4% respectively overnight after online gaming chiefs were summoned by authorities to check they are sticking to strict new rules for the sector. Analysts anticipate the ECB will announce a token step towards reducing its emergency economic support later. The central bank has pulled out all the stops to prop up the euro zone through the coronavirus pandemic, but with inflation at a 10-year high and unemployment falling and as normal life resumes, policymakers are now facing a balancing act. "The market consensus now is that there will be some ECB tapering (withdrawal of stimulus)," Rabobank senior currency strategist, Jane Foley, said. Investors had initially been spooked by the idea of tapering, but ECB officials have been working hard in recent weeks to reassure markets that the process will

# Samsung Expands 5G Portfolio in India with Galaxy A52s 5G; Makes Powerful Innovations Accessible to Broader Audience

Guwahati, September 09

Samsung, India's most trusted smartphone brand, today announced the launch of Galaxy A52s 5G in India, making powerful innovations accessible to a broader audience. Galaxy A52s 5G is the second 5G smartphone in Samsung's Galaxy A Series portfolio to offer Samsung 5G guarantee, making it the ideal choice for consumers looking to #BeFutureReady. Galaxy A52s 5G comes with popular innovations like 120Hz refresh rate, Infinity-O display, 64MP quad camera with OIS, water and dust resistant IP67 rating and more. Galaxy A52s 5G is priced at INR 35999 for 6GB+128GB and INR 37499 for 8GB+128GB variant and is available across retail stores, Samsung.com and leading online portals from September 1, 2021. "Continuing the philosophy of Galaxy A Series of making innovations accessible to all, we are delighted to launch the Galaxy A52s 5G in India. The stylish design is complemented with powerful Snapdragon 778G processor and best in segment features like 120Hz refresh rate display, OIS enabled camera and IP67 rating, thereby making it a perfect package for gaming, content creation and more. With Samsung 5G guarantee of 12 bands' support and 3 years of OS upgrades, consumers can be assured that they will be among the first to experience the benefits of 5G," said Aditya Babbar, Senior Director and Head, Mobile Marketing, Samsung India. Awesome Design. Galaxy A52s 5G features an awesome design that is simple yet purposeful. The matte back and haze finish along with minimal camera housing result in a premium rear design. Galaxy A52s 5G is available in three striking colours - Awesome Black, Awesome White and Awesome Violet. Galaxy A52s 5G comes with IP67 rating making it dust and water resistant (up to 1m fresh water for 30 minutes). Awesome Display. Galaxy A52s 5G features bright and vivid Super AMOLED Infinity-O display for an immersive visual experience. Galaxy A52s 5G sports large 6.5-inch FHD+ screen with minimized punch hole allowing you to binge on your favourite content comfortably. The best in segment 120Hz refresh rate display ensures super smooth scrolling and gaming experience. The display also comes with Gorilla Glass 5 for superior durability.



be very gradual. A Reuters poll expects only a slight slowdown in money printing -- to 70 billion euros a month from the current 80 billion euros -- and this would remain a high pace by historical standards. "I think now the conclusion is that this will be a pretty dovish Lagarde," Foley added. "Which means the euro can't get a lot of support," even if there is a knee-jerk push higher. Euro zone bond yields, which reflect governments' borrowing costs and drive lending rates throughout financial markets, were holding near eight-week highs. Germany's 10-year yield, the benchmark for the bloc, was unchanged at -0.32%. Italy's 10-year yield was up less than a basis point at 0.76% while the euro climbed for the first time in four days to be worth \$1.1827. Back in the equity markets it wasn't just about the ECB. The UK's FTSE 100 (.FTSE) led Europe's

losses with a 1.1% drop. Low-cost airline easyJet (EZJ.L) tumbled nearly 14% as it tapped shareholders for 1.2 billion pounds (\$1.66 billion). The broader travel sector was down 1.8%. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares (MIAP00000PUS) was last down 1%, which would be its worst daily performance since Aug. 19, the last time markets decided they were worried about the U.S. Federal Reserve tapering its massive asset purchase programme. U.S. stock futures, the S&P 500 e-minis, were down 0.25% after falls from Apple and Facebook on Wednesday and after one of the Federal Reserve's policymakers had urged the central bank to get on with its own stimulus wind-down plans. "The global story is looking soft and it's being hit by the Delta variant plus concern about potentially the Fed still moving towards a taper," said Rob Carnell Asia head of research at ING. "It's an un-

# Shriram City Union Finance launches AI-enabled express two-wheeler loans: Here is how to apply

New Delhi, Sep 9:

Shriram City Union Finance Ltd. (Shriram City), India's largest two-wheeler financier and part of the Shriram Group, has launched an AI-enabled lending platform - Express Two-wheeler Loans (E2L). The platform will allow instant loan approval of up to 100 percent on-road price of the two-wheelers, said the company. Customers can avail a fully digital and paperless two-wheeler loan facility round the clock in just a few minutes, without visiting a branch and submitting physical documents. Salient Features of Shriram City Union Finance 'Express Two-wheeler Loans An Online Platform giving customers an In-principal approval for a loan in just a few minutes Customers will have to up-



load bank statements and provide basic details BRE supported AI-based tool calculates eligibility and generates an in-principal sanction letter/ voucher Customers can present the voucher number to the dealer Dealer can review all the relevant customer details on the handheld device The customer is given maximum eligibility, thereby allowing them to choose a costlier brand if needed Here are the

steps to avail of the Shriram City Union Finance loan in a few simple steps: Log in to Shriram City Union Finance, click on two-wheeler loans - Apply now or download My ShriramCity App. Step 1: Provide basic details Step 2: Select Vehicle Step 3: Provide financial details Step 4: Upload documents Step 5: Get an online voucher (in-principal sanction letter) Step 6: Visit dealer for your bike delivery

# OPPO launches Enco Buds: Battery beast with 24 hours of concert-like music playtime, only at INR 1,999

**Guwahati, Sept 9 :** OPPO, the leading global smart device brand, today, announced the launch of its entry-level OPPO Enco Buds. The new TWS allows for true wireless freedom and high-quality concert-like audio, and provides you the best option for your first wireless earbuds. This budget offering



packs AI-based call noise-cancellation technology with 24-hour battery life and is built for users who want to upgrade from their wired and traditional Bluetooth earphones to their first truly wireless earbuds. Speaking about the all-new OPPO Enco Buds, Damyant Singh Khanoria, Chief Marketing Officer, OPPO India, said "OPPO is committed to providing an integrated ecosystem of smartphones and

IoT products. The Enco Buds leverage on OPPO's decades of experience and expertise in developing award-winning audio products as diverse as MP3 and MP4 players, music phones, and Blu-ray players to cater to young consumers who want to upgrade from wired earphones to TWS for the first time without compromising on premium features and great design." 24

hours long-lasting battery life with Water and dust resistance. The OPPO Enco Buds-rated IP54 for dust and water resistance-are perfect for sessions at the gym, on commutes, and for everything in between. To avoid frequent recharge cycles, its case packs a powerful 400 mAh battery? that can support 24-hours music playtime, when fully charged along with the earbuds. On a single charge, the buds themselves-with their internal battery of 40 mAh offer up to six hours of nonstop music playback. Stable, crystal-clear audio experience. For strong wireless performance, the OPPO Enco Buds' uses Bluetooth 5.2 that allows users to be 10 meters away from their phone while they listen to music or make a phone call. Additionally, the Bluetooth 5.2 chipset supports binaural low-latency transmission that solves the prob-

lems of interference and disconnection to provide quick and stable connections. For mobile gamers, the Enco Buds come with a super-low 80ms-latency Game Mode that improves audio-visual sync in twitch-action games; users just need to triple-tap the earbuds to activate this mode. AI-based noise cancellation that surpasses the competition. OPPO Enco Buds earphones use a 2-layer composite diaphragm as well as the AAC (Advanced Audio Coding), a high-definition audio transmission protocol for crisper sound. To ensure crystal-clear phone calls, these TWS supports an AI-based intelligent call noise-cancellation feature that can differentiate between ambient sounds and human voices to effectively block out background noises, while you are on phone calls.



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## CM visits Majuli, interacts

Ministers (GoM) would be formed to review the progress of construction. The Chief Minister also expressed profound grief on the demise of Parimita Das of Kahilipara, Guwahati in the boat accident and said that he would meet her parents and extend all needful support to them from the government. Transport Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Revenue & Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan and Power Minister Bimal Bora, MPs Topon Kumar Gogoi and Pradan Baruah, MLAs Hitendra Nath Goswami, Bhaben Bharali and Renukama Rajkhowa and DGP Bhaskarjyoti Mahanta were also present during the visit of the Chief Minister. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma also visited Jorhat Medical College & Hospital today and met those injured in the boat accident and enquired about their health condition. He asked the doctors to ensure the best treatment for them. The Chief Minister also thanked and expressed deep gratitude to the people who showed exemplary courage and humanitarian zeal in rescuing the passengers of the capsized boat. Chief Minister Dr. Sarma also visited Majuli today and interacted with representatives of AASU, TMPK, AJYCP and other local organizations to have an understanding of their concerns and listened to the issues raised by them. He assured that the government would take all necessary steps to ensure passenger safety and hassle-free movement of ferries between Kamalabari and Nimatighat. The CM said that the government would fix the number of passengers per boat and ensure strict vigilance. He also said that stringent action would be taken if the number of passengers exceeds the limit. Transport Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Revenue & Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan and Power Minister Bimal Bora were also present during the visit of the Chief Minister.

## Election Commission announces

Bodoland People's Front, and joined the BJP. In addition, biennial election to RS seat from Pudukcherry which fell vacant due to retirement of sitting MP N. Gokulakrishnan will also be held on October 4, the Election Commission added. "Broad guidelines of Covid-19" have to be followed during the election process, that is from the time of issue of notification to the counting of votes, the EC order said. The chief secretaries of states concerned are being directed to depute a senior officer from the state to ensure that instructions regarding Covid-19 containment measures are complied with while making arrangements for conducting the election. The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday announced by-polls dates to seven Rajya Sabha seats including one from Assam that has fallen vacant due to various reasons. According to EC's notification, there are two such seats in Tamil Nadu and one each in West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Madhya Pradesh. The polls to all these seven seats will take place on October 4, the EC said. In Assam, the Rajya Sabha seat held by assembly speaker Biswajit Daimary fell vacant after he resigned from the membership of the upper house of Parliament and his earlier party, the Bodoland People's Front, and joined the BJP before the recent polls in the state. The BJP is likely to field Union minister and former CM Sarbananda Sonowal from the Assam seat as he is yet to become a member of either house of Parliament. The press release by the Election Commission revealed that the issue of notification will be on September 15, 2021, while the last date till candidates can file their nominations is September 22. The last date for withdrawal of the candidature is September 27, 2021. The counting of votes will be done on the election day, October 5, 2020, till 5 pm. The Election Commission has said that polls shall be complete by October 6, 2021. The EC said in its order that all "broad guidelines of COVID-19" have to be followed during the election process, that is from the time of issue of notification to the counting of votes.

## IIT Guwahati retains 7th position

multiple fronts of academic and industry to attract the best brains across the world and industry leaders, who have been given appointments as honorary and visiting faculty members and this has intensified both the academic collaboration and industry interaction, thereby allowing more technology transfers and better publications. This has also resulted in attracting higher research funds, opening newer academic interdisciplinary schools and centers and engaging more closely with government organizations for socially relevant projects as well as implementing the NEP2020." IIT Guwahati is the only academic institution in India that occupied a place among the top 100 world universities – under 50 years of age – ranked by the London-based Times Higher Education (THE) in the year 2014 and continues to maintain its superior position even today in various International Rankings. IIT Guwahati has eleven departments, five interdisciplinary academic centres and four schools covering all the major engineering, science and humanities disciplines, offering BTech, BDes, MA, MDes, MTech, MSc/MS and PhD programmes. The institute offers a residential campus to 412 faculty members and more than 6,000 students at present. IIT Guwahati gained rank 41 globally in the 'Research Citations per Faculty' category and overall 395 rank in the QS World University Rankings 2022 released recently. Among other frontier areas of research and innovation, IIT Guwahati is working towards augmenting critical science research initiatives in Genomics, Developmental Biology, Health Care and Bioinformatics, Flexible Electronics, Advanced Functional Materials, Sustainable Polymers, Rural Technologies, Disaster Resilience and Risk Reduction, and Water Resources and Management. Started in 2015, NIRF outlines a methodology to rank educational institutions across the country. The parameters used for ranking broadly cover "Teaching, Learning and Resources," "Research and Professional Practices," "Graduation Outcome," "Outreach and Inclusivity," and "Perception."

## Need to ensure that BRICS

allies from Afghanistan has led to a new crisis, and it's still unclear how this will affect global & regional security. It is for good reason that our countries have paid special attention to this issue: Russian Pres Vladimir Putin pic.twitter.com/u8HA16Yeb3" Afghanistan should not become a threat to its neighbouring countries, a source of terrorism and drug trafficking," Putin added. The BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade. India hosted the summit in its capacity as its chair. This is the second time Prime Minister Modi is chairing the BRICS Summit. Earlier he had chaired the Goa Summit in 2016.

## Allegation of Plagiarism against

name in 2017. Claiming it an offence, Dr. Jana filed a case against Dr. P.K. Nath and circulated the news in most of the newspapers and other social media platforms. The Assam Rising met Dr. Nath to know his reaction regarding the matter. Dr. Nath clarified that he had edited the 'Bongal-Bongaloni' (1871) by Rudraram Bordoloi namely "Bongal-Bongaloni Natok" (2017) where he clearly acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Jyotirmoy Jana. Moreover in the preface of the book Dr. Nath also mentioned the citation and reference of Dr. Jana's book. Dr. Jana's complaint is not valid as this book is not composed or created by himself. Moreover the original book 'Bongal-Bongaloni' by Rudraram Bordoloi, had crossed the validity to claim copyright. Dr. Nath also stated that "on June 4, 1957 an act to amend and consolidate the law relating to copyright was implemented in India. Works published after 1923, but before 1978 are protected for 95 years from the date of publication. If the work was created, but not published, before 1978, the copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years. For works published after 1977, the copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years. Works created before 1978, the copyright duration rules are complicated." "I am not violating any copyright law by any means. Dr. Jana was influenced by a third party and intentionally tried to pull down his reputation and social status" - he added. Dr. P.K. Nath also urged Dr. Jyotirmoy Jana to withdraw the case regarding this false allegation on him and come to an amicable settlement, otherwise legal action will be taken for such a false allegation against him.

## Majuli boat accident, Assam

navigation channel," said CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. Assam Power Minister Bimal Bora on Thursday faced a massive protest by residents at Majuli when he had gone to the river island to take stock of the situation following the boat capsizing in the Brahmaputra near Nimatighat in Jorhat district. "The Assam government is fully responsible for this and it is a case of culpable homicide. It should be treated as a planned crime committed by the Assam government," said a woman protester. She also questioned why the Ro-Pax vessels, which were launched in October last year, have not operated in the Nimatighat-Kamalabari route of the Brahmaputra. They also demanded action against the deputy commissioner of Majuli for his alleged 'negligence to his duties'. As per the Assam government record, 87 persons travelling in the boat have been rescued and two persons still remain missing. Among the rescued person, a 28-year-old woman identified as Parimita Das from Guwahati died at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH). Parimita worked as an associate professor at a College in Majuli.

## N.F. R. unloads 1019 rakes

2021 and unloaded them in different goods sheds in its jurisdiction. Goods like FCI rice, sugar, salt, edible oil, POL, food grains, fertilizer, cement, stone chips, iron/steel, onion, maize, auto, container and other items have been transported during the month. During August, 526 rakes of freight carrying trains were unloaded in Assam out of which 317 were loaded with essential commodities. 85 rakes in Tripura, 31 rakes in Nagaland, 10 rakes in Manipur, 4 rakes in Arunachal Pradesh and 4 rakes in Mizoram were unloaded during last month. 211 freight rakes in West Bengal and 148 freight rakes in Bihar were also unloaded during last month within the jurisdiction of NFR to meet the requirement of people of these regions. Improved terminal handling facility and improvement in mobility due to enhanced maintenance efforts & continuous monitoring at all levels resulted in reduction in turnaround time and increased unloading. Average speed of goods carrying trains in the NFR also increased. It is worth mentioning that a number of concessions/ discounts are also being given by Indian Railways to make Railway's Freight movement very attractive for its customers.

## 'Love jihad' case, Gujarat High

interfaith marriage using force, allurement or fraudulent means. Last month, provisions of the amended law dealing with interfaith marriages were stayed by the High Court. According to the details of the first case, seven persons were booked, including husband, in-laws and the priest who solemnised the marriage. All four have been arrested and are behind the bars. On Wednesday, the victim came to the High Court and stated before Justice I.J. Vora that she had voluntarily filed the petition seeking to quash the FIR and proceedings against her husband and others and also told the court that "she wants to live together as married couple" with her husband. In her petition in the High Court, the petitioner stated that when she had approached a local police station in Vadodara regarding petty and trivial matrimonial discord, the police, under the pressure of certain elements, brought in the "love jihad" angle and also registered the FIR under the new law. The police also added the charges of "rape and sodomy" in the FIR which she categorically denied and was even shocked that the police added such charges without asking her. In her petition, she also denied the charge of forceful conversion as mentioned by the police in the FIR and submitted that her affidavit in this regard denying such charges of forceful conversion and others was not accepted by the lower court while denying bails to the accused. She and her husband have stated that both were in a relationship and were aware of each other's religion and both decided to solemnise their marriage as per the Islamic rites and the same was notarised and subsequently it was registered as per the Special Marriage Act. The couple have submitted that the girl's father stood a witness in their marriage and both families had no issues but certain "religio-political" groups and over zealous police communalised and sensationalised their marriage. Now, the High Court has directed the State government to file an affidavit and explain its objections regarding the quashing of charges and criminal proceedings in the case by September 20.

## International Literacy Day observed in Hojai

## CORRESPONDENT

**Hojai, Sep 9 :** With an effort to create mass awareness on the significance of education, the District Legal Service Authority, Hojai observed 'International Literacy Day' with a 'Door to Door Awareness Campaign'.

The campaign was organised in collaboration with Robin Hood Army at Borphukori Village in Hojai on Wednesday. Around 32 youths took part in this noble mission, which consisted of four groups of eight members' each, including students of Ajmal Law College and members of Robin Hood Army. Under the supervision of DLSA General Secretary Saleh Ahammad the groups held mass legal awareness on the importance of education in our life. They interacted with about 75 families in the Borphukori and apprised them about the Right to Education Act, 2009. Further they distributed awareness leaflets and highlighted the working of DLSA, Hojai and Robin Hood Army.

## AAEA bats for complete revamping of water transport services

## Abhijit Chaliha

**Guwahati, Sep 9:** Expressing profound grief over the demise of a college teacher Parimita Das, who drowned following the boat accident on mighty river Brahmaputra near Nimatighat in Jorhat on Wednesday, All Assam Engineer's Association (AAEA) demands a complete revamping of water transport services in the State. The Assam government has already suspended three officials belonging to the Inland Water Transport department following the incident of boat capsizing and instituted a high-level probe into the accident. The mishap occurred following a head-on collision between a ferry and a machine-boat in the afternoon hours. NDRF and SDRF personnel have rescued the lives of over 100 passengers (some are still missing). The forum of graduate engineers, in a media statement, argues that the Nimatighat boat capsizing was an example of complete failure in the traffic management where the authorised officials avoided their call (to decide) on time. Moreover, the IWT department should have increased the number of ramps at the site according to the demand of daily passengers on Nimatighat-Majuli water route, it added. Unlike a motor vehicle, the machine boat uses its propeller (that moves in one direction to produce forward thrust) without a braking device, pointed out by the forum, adding that it is always a difficult task for the rider to suddenly stop a machine boat (also turn into a particular direction) while sailing on water. On the other hand, a mechanised ferryboat has the arrangement to move its propeller in the opposite direction. "So, the double engine arrangement, as prescribed by State chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, will not serve the purpose fully unless it has the mechanism to move the propeller in opposite direction too," said AAEA president Er Kailash Sarma, working president Er Nava J. Thakuria and secretary Er Inamul Hye added that the department should technically supervise the private boat service, particularly on Brahmaputra because of its specific water flow. AAEA finally appeals to passengers to demand life jackets compulsorily from the operators and check the availability of sufficient number of life-saving buoys (designed to be thrown to a person in water to provide buoyancy and prevent drowning) while boarding on ferry boats for their own safety. Moreover, the forum added, passengers should be offered tickets before the journey and the ongoing system of providing tickets in the middle of it must be stopped.

## Assam CM Dr. Sarma flags off 15 mobile vaccination vans

## Abhijit Chaliha

**Guwahati, Sep 9:** Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today opened and inaugurated a vaccination centre at the premises of Interstate Bus Terminus at Betkuchi here today. The vaccination centre has been opened to bring the unvaccinated passengers under total vaccination following the re-opening of inter-district and inter-state transportation services which were closed following a spike in COVID 19 positive cases. It may be noted that the vaccination centre would prove to be a great help for the passengers who will be coming to Guwahati without receiving any job for the coronavirus. The Health and Family Welfare Department with the help of the National Health Mission has opened the vaccination centre. On the other hand, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma also flagged off mobile vaccination vans to be pressed into service in different districts of the state to target the unvaccinated people. Under the programme Chief Minister flagged off 15 mobile vans to be pressed into service for Kokrajhar, Baksa and Bajali districts. These vaccination vans will provide vaccination services at the door step of the targeted eligible population. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma thanked all the functionaries associated with COVID vaccination process, as they endured a lot for making the vaccination drives in the state a success. He also said that 1.91 crore people were covered under the vaccination process, as 1.5 crore people have already received their first dose. He also asked the Health Department to intensify the vaccination drive so that all the eligible people of the state can be brought under vaccination coverage at least the first dose by 30 October, 2021. Health and Family Welfare Minister Keshab Mahanta, Guwahati Development and Urban Development Minister Ashok Singhal, Chairman Assam State Transport Corporation Ashok Bhatta Roy, Mission Director NHM Dr. S. Lakshmanan, Nodal Officer COVID Vaccination Munindra Nagaty and other senior officers were present during the event.

## CSR: ONGC Donated Toilet Block and Furnitures to Sildubi LP School

## Correspondent

**Golaghat, Sep 9:** Under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, 'ONGC, Jorhat Work Center' donated a Toilet Block and furniture to the students of Sildubi LP school, Borholla, Jorhat. ONGC spent Rs 10.02 lakhs for construction of urinals and latrines and procurement of school furniture. In a brief function held at Sildubi LP School yesterday, following all Covid protocols, Executive Director- Basin Manager of ONGC's Assam and Assam Arakan Basin, Jorhat, Sushma Rawat inaugurated the toilet block in the presence of SDO, Titabar, Gayatri Devidas, IAS, who appreciated ONGC for the dedicated welfare social activities. The School Headmaster expressed his gratitude to ONGC for providing a much needed toilet block and school furniture. He expressed that there are many families below poverty line in the half kilometre radius from the ONGC setup GGS. He also mentioned that when the storm hit many are rendered homeless. He appealed to ONGC to come forward and help the destitute during such disasters. ONGC, apart from being the black gold explorers for the nation, endeavours to provide quality education to the future responsible citizens of India. Health and hygiene awareness is also kept in very high priority by the top management of ONGC. Speaking on the occasion, Rawat mentioned that as ONGC has been in this soil for the last 66 years, it is committed to provide basic amenities for the ONGC operated surrounding areas, in the field of education. She is a firm believer that education is the building block for the children's progress who are the precious assets of this nation. She wishes to work together with the local administration in uplifting the needy in whatever possible way.

## 95th birth anniversary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika celebrated at Nagaon

## Correspondent

**Nagaon, Sep 9 :** Along with the rest of the state, various cultural as well as social organizations of the district celebrated the 95th birth anniversary of Assamese musical maestro and 'Bharat Ratna' Dr Bhupen Hazarika with his own songs and music. Silpi Somaj Asom, Sangeet Silpi Mancha, Nagaon, Silpi Kanon, Nagaon Lions Club and other organizations celebrated the 95th birth anniversary of Dr Bhupen Hazarika and paid homage to the great soul of the soil. Silpi Somaj Asom organized a function on the occasion near at Nagaon Chailai where the members of Silpi Somaj garlanded at the portrait of Dr Hazarika and paid tribute to him and also sang Dr Hazarika's evergreen song - 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe'. The organization also felicitated noted artistes as well as educationists - Aboni Muktiar, Bidhan Boruah, Pabitra Pran Sarma, Jatindra Kr. Das, Dipak Khnhar, Hiranya Kakoti, Nirupoma Sahariya, Deepjyoti Medhi and Archana Nath. Besides, Silpi Somaj Asom also felicitated a dozen of perfectionists - children during the celebration. Meanwhile Sangeet Silpi Mancha, Nagaon too celebrated the birth anniversary of Dr Hazarika with a day long agenda. Local MLA and the chief patron of Sangeet Silpi Mancha, Nagaon, Rupak Sarma graced the occasion and paid homage to the great legendary singer Dr Bhupen Hazarika. Addressing the occasion, Sarma said that Dr Hazarika took the Assamese nation to the world and introduced it to the world body. Dr Hazarika enriched the Assamese culture and its year-long traditions with his universal appeal for humanity, Sarma added. Two audio cassettes of Dr Hazarika's selected songs by artistes Nabanita Sarma, Rimli Sarma Bora and Gautom Bora were also released in the function. Artistes Krishna Moni Nath, Ariful Haque, Pankaj Bezbaruah and Ranjit Bora (Dadu) and other members of the organization were present in the function. Similarly, Nagaon Lions Club also celebrated the birth anniversary of Dr Hazarika at its office in the town. The club members lit the earthen lamps at the portrait of Dr Hazarika and paid tribute to the great soul of the soil. Ex-president and secretary of the club Pralay Kr Shaha, Ajoy Mittal, Biswajit Mahanta, Pranab Das, Gurusharan Singh and other members were present in the programme.

## International Webinar on Conservation of Indian Vultures

## CORRESPONDENT

**Golaghat, Sep 9:** A popular quiz club and youth organisation from Golaghat named Equinox is going to organise an International Webinar on September 12 Sunday at 6 PM. The topic of the Webinar is 'Captive Breeding and Conservation of Indian Vulture Species'. Dr Sachin P. Ranade, Assistant Director, Bombay Natural History Society will be the Resource Person and Chief Speaker in the Webinar. The Webinar will be inaugurated by Dr Rimen Bordoloi, Retired HoD, Dept of Zoology, Debraj Roy College Golaghat. Interested persons can contact Sayed Nekib and Joyrved Baruah from Team Equinox on the numbers 7002365006 and 8638245282.



FIFA World Cup Qualifiers

England held by Poland; Germany, Italy dominant



**London, September 09 :** Damian Szymanski headed in a stoppage-time equaliser as Poland ended England's 100% record in Group I to draw their World Cup qualifier 1-1 on Wednesday. Harry Kane had fired England ahead with a swerving strike in the 72nd minute as Gareth Southgate's side looked set for a sixth straight win. But in the second minute of stoppage time, substitute Szymanski rose well at the back post to nod in a floated cross from Robert Lewandowski as Poland kept their hopes of qualification alive. "An

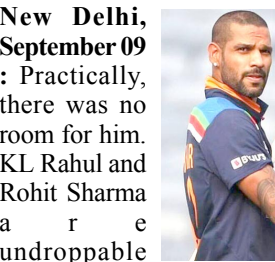
amazing feeling. I'm glad we managed to score that goal in the last minutes. I'm happy," said Symanski. "I've worked hard for this, struggled with injuries. To play against England, to score a goal, it's a dream come true." England has 16 points from six games with Albania second on 12 points, Poland on 11 and Hungary on 10 points. The top team in the group qualifies for next year's World Cup in Qatar with the second-place team heading into the playoffs. Winger Leroy Sane scored one goal and made another as Germany made it three wins

in a row with a resounding 4-0 victory over Iceland in World Cup qualifying Group J on Wednesday. The Germans took the lead in the fifth minute when Sane played in Serge Gnabry to score, and after a lengthy VAR review for a possible offside, the goal stood. The visitor added a second 20 minutes later when Antonio Rudiger was left unmarked to score with a header from a Joshua Kimmich free kick. A constant threat with his quick dribbling and precise passing, Sane effectively killed the game off when he rifled the ball into the roof of the net after another flowing

German attack 11 minutes into the second half. Werner added a late fourth that hit the left-hand post and bounced out before spinning back across the line to round off an encouraging team performance. The Germans have taken a maximum nine points from their first three games under new coach Hansi Flick, scoring 12 goals and conceding none. Germany tops the group on 15 points, four ahead of Armenia. Romania is hird on 10 points with four games left to play, with Iceland fifth on four points. Italy recorded its first win since being

crowned European champion as strikers Moise Kean and Giacomo Raspadori inspired a crushing 5-0 win over Lithuania to strengthen its grip on top spot in World Cup qualifying Group C. The two 21-year-olds impressed their manager by lighting up the first half, as Kean netted twice either side of an Edgaras Utkus own goal and Raspadori, making his first start for his country, also scored. "Everything is in their heads and their feet. If they are committed and work seriously, they have great futures. But it is up to them," Italy manager Roberto Mancini told RAI.

T20 World Cup selection: Why big-match player Shikhar Dhawan missed out



**New Delhi, September 09 :** Practically, there was no room for him. KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma are undroppable names, consistently providing turbocharged starts to their franchises. With the terrific touch Rahul has been in, it would be unwise to push him down the order. That would disrupt the team's balance. Had the event been held outside Asia, maybe Dhawan, with his vast experience, would have been included as a replacement opener. But in UAE, in case either of them do get injured, the team management could ask one

o f Suryakumar Yadav of Ishan Kishan to open. Yadav has often batted at No 3 while Kishan has

opened several times for his franchise, Mumbai Indians. There is also Virat Kohli, who has frequently opened for Royal Challengers Bangalore. In the end, Dhawan might have missed out to Kishan, who offers more utility with his keeping skills, outweighing his big-tournament, big-match temperament. The southpaw is often a slow-starter, almost starts in the ODI mould, biding time to get his eye in and then gradually accelerating.

**Chelsea fined £25,000 for failing to control players in draw against Liverpool**  
**London, September 09 :** Chelsea has been fined 25,000 pounds (\$34,000) for failing to control its players in the 1-1 Premier League draw against Liverpool at Anfield last month, the Football Association (FA) said on Wednesday. Chelsea players clashed with their Liverpool counterparts and referee Anthony Taylor after the latter decided to send off defender Reece James in first-half stoppage time for handball and award a penalty, which Mohamed Salah converted. "The club admitted failing to ensure that its players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion during both the 48th minute of the first half and following the half-time whistle," the FA said in a statement. Chelsea hosts Aston Villa on Saturday and Liverpool travels to Leeds United on Sunday.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is back in Team India dugout - as mentor for World T20

**New Delhi, September 09 :** Former captain MS Dhoni will soon be back in the Team India dugout - this time, as a mentor for the T20 World Cup. The Indian Express has learnt that the BCCI's announcement on Dhoni's inclusion took some of its own office-bearers by surprise, and even the selectors came to know about it just minutes before the press conference to announce the squad for the October-November tournament in the UAE. Sources said India's dismal white-ball record in ICC events under captain Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri is one of the key factors behind the decision. The team has either fallen at the final hurdle or failed to make it to the final in the Champions Trophy, and World T20 and 50-over World Cups. Kohli hasn't even led Royal Challengers Bangalore to an IPL title. Dhoni, who leads Chennai Super Kings, is a three-time IPL-winning captain and has

brought home three major ICC trophies - World T20, Champions Trophy and World Cup. At the media briefing Wednesday, BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said the decision to call up the 40-year-old retired international and the country's most-celebrated white-ball cricketer was taken after he met Dhoni in Dubai, where IPL teams have started converging to complete the unfinished Covid-hit Season 12. "He was okay with my decision and agreed to be a Team Mentor of Team India for the T20 World Cup only. I am glad that MS (Dhoni) has accepted the BCCI's offer and he is keen to contribute to the national team once again. MS will work closely with Ravi Shastri as well as other support staff to provide support and direction to Team India," Shah said. Asked if Kohli and Shastri were consulted, Shah said: "I spoke to the captain and vice-captain, as well as Ravi Shastri. They all are on the same page, so that's why this matter has reached this conclusion."

Szymanski denies England as Poland snatch late draw after Kane's rocket

**London, September 09 :** With 72 minutes on the clock, the thought occurred that Harry Kane had not had much service. It was partly because the England captain was trying to provide it for others, dropping back from his centre-forward's position to pick his passes. It was time for Kane to take matters into his own hands. The ball was worked to him at the top of the midfield and, with little on and Poland players backing off rather too respectfully, Kane unloaded

with murderous intent. The 30 yarder would have rearranged Jan Bednarek's senses had it been slightly lower. Instead it flew over the centre-half before dipping and fading viciously away from Wojciech Szczesny's left hand and into the bottom corner. At that point England looked well set for the victory that would have virtually assured them direct qualification to the finals of the Qatar World Cup next year. It had been a performance of growing control amid a frenzied atmosphere at this

magnificent arena. England contained Poland in the first part of the first half, when the home team flew at them, and they were dominant when Kane registered his 41st international goal. Slowly but surely he is reeling in Wayne Rooney's England record of 53. Declan Rice was a tower of strength in central midfield and the late twist had not really been advertised - apart from when Jordan Pickford had an 82nd-minute clearance charged down by the substitute, Karol Swiderski.



Emma Raducanu admits she expected an early exit at US Open

**New York, September 09 :** Emma Raducanu's searing run from the depths of the US Open qualifying tournament to the highest levels of the sport continued on Wednesday as she defeated Belinda Bencic, the Olympic gold medalist and 11th seed, 6-3, 6-4 to reach the semi-finals on her debut appearance in New York. As she basked in the glory of her unexpected run, Raducanu revealed that such were her realistic expectations, her flights were booked for the end of the qualifying tournament. She has overstayed her original plans by a week and a half. "I have just been focusing one day at a time, taking care of each day," Raducanu said. "When you're playing tournaments, you just get

into this sort of autopilot mode of your routines, recovering on the day off in between. I didn't expect to be here at all. I mean, I think my flights were booked at the end of qualifying, so it's a nice problem to have. "With her success, Raducanu continued a breakout tournament for teenagers by joining Leylah Annie Fernandez in the semi-final. The pair are only two months apart in age and Raducanu says she has known the Canadian since they were competing in Under-12 tournaments. Yet as she was asked about her, Raducanu stressed that each player is on their own path. "I think to compare yourself and your results against anyone is probably like the thief of happiness, and everyone is doing their

own thing. I mean, I didn't compete for 18 months, but here I am, and it just shows that, if you believe in yourself, then anything is possible. "Along with her quality and belief, Raducanu's composure has been striking throughout the tournament and, as she trailed 0-30 in her final two service games against Bencic, she found a way to escape each time. She says her calmness is a product of her no-nonsense upbringing. "I think my parents have both instilled in me from a very young age to definitely have a positive attitude on court, because, yeah, when I was younger, it was definitely an absolute no-go if I had any sort of bad attitude. So from a young age I definitely learned that and it's followed me until now."

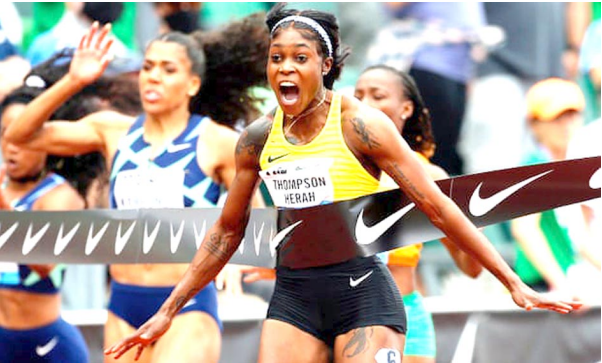
Michael Schumacher's wife provides update on former F1 world champion

**London, September 09 :** Michael Schumacher's wife Corinna has revealed the former seven-times world F1 champion is still battling to

recover from brain injury caused by a skiing accident but remains "here but different", in a Netflix documentary to be aired next week. Updates on the former Ferrari driver's health have been infrequent since his accident in 2013, especially from his family and this is the most expansive public statement about his condition since 2014. "Everybody misses Michael, but Michael is here, different, but here," Corinna says in the documentary, entitled "Schumacher", which is released on 15 September. "He still shows me how strong he is every day. We're together. We live together at home. We do therapy. We do everything we can to make Michael better and to make sure he's comfortable. And to simply

make him feel our family, our bond. And no matter what, I will do everything I can. We all will. We're trying to carry on as a family, the way Michael liked it and still does. And we are getting on with our lives." Schumacher is now 52 years old, while his son Mick, who was 14 and with him at the time of the accident now races for Haas in F1. Corinna married Schumacher in 1995 and they also have a daughter, Gina, but have always been fiercely protective of their privacy. He has been in recovery in private care at the family home on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Schumacher is still much admired in the sport but it is the accident that has had the great impact on those closest to him. "I miss Michael every day," says Corinna.

De Grasse backs Thompson-Herah to break 100m world record in Zurich final



**London, September 09 :** The double Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah has the talent, the track, and the conditions to finally break Florence Griffith Joyner's 100m world record at the Diamond League final in Zurich, her fellow sprinter Andre De Grasse has predicted. A fortnight ago Thompson-Herah ran 10.54 sec in Eugene - the second fastest time in history and just 0.05sec off

Flo-Jo's record. And De Grasse, who won 200m gold in Tokyo, believes it is possible she can make history given the warm weather and the newly resurfaced track at the Letzigrund Stadium. "The track is really nice," said De Grasse. "I did a couple sprint sessions on it on Tuesday so I think it's possible. I saw Elaine run at Prefontaine on a very fast track and she ran exceptionally well. So I think

with the right conditions, the way the weather is, the crowd, I think everything is just gonna amplify that. It's definitely possible." Thompson-Herah, who spent lockdown studying Griffith Joyner and Usain Bolt's old races to look for technical improvements, is now the fastest woman alive as well as the 100m and 200m champion. But she believes there is still room for improvement. "I need to nail my start for the 100m and I haven't nailed it yet," she said. The Jamaican will meet Britain's Dina Asher-Smith, who is close to her best again after sustaining a hamstring injury five weeks out from the Olympics. Barely an hour later, Asher-Smith will resurface in the 200m, where she will face the 18-year-old Namibian sensation Christine Mboma and Jamaica's Shericka Jackson.

**London, September 09 :** What should, on paper, have been Wales's easiest game of this World Cup qualifying campaign turned into a taxing assignment as they were held to a goalless draw at home to Estonia. Gareth Bale and Ethan Ampadu rattled the woodwork late on but Wales plateaued to allow the visitors to pick up their first point. Robert Page prowlled his technical area as Wales huffed and puffed but they could not find a way past the inspired Estonia goalkeeper Karl Hein, rendering their faint hopes of automatic qualification slim. The most frustrating moment arrived seven minutes from time when Bale mapped out a route towards goal but the Arsenal teenager Hein repelled his shot and then, from the rebound, the Wales captain headed

against a post. The most moving aspect of a balmy evening was no contest. In the 52nd minute supporters stood for a minute's applause on what would have been the late Wales captain and manager Gary Speed's 52nd birthday. The Wales support enjoyed returning in their numbers for the first time since witnessing Aaron Ramsey, absent here through injury, seal qualification for Euro 2020 but they were powerless as Bale, Tyler Roberts and Harry Wilson passed up inviting first-half openings. After the interval Bale made a monstrous leap at the front post to meet a free-kick by Ben Davies but Hein soared to his right to paw his header clear, before Ampadu sent a looping header against a post, leaving Wales flummoxed at the final whistle. "It was just one of those nights where



we didn't take our chances and obviously we are very disappointed," Bale said. "We had quite a few clear-cut ones as well. I felt like we played well, we moved the ball well but, if you don't finish your chances, you don't win games. We had a chance right at the start. It was just frustrating. Everything seemed to hit the

goalkeeper, hit the post or go wide. We need to be more ruthless in the next game." In the buildup to this game Bale had stressed how Wales had grand plans of ousting Belgium from top spot in Group E and they made a blistering start. Chris Gunter, on his 104th appearance, flew down the right flank before playing a

superb pass into the box for Wilson but the Fulham forward shot wide with only 37 seconds gone. Bale, fresh from bringing the match ball home from Kazan after victory over Belarus on Sunday, was busy but sent a first-time shot sailing over after Wales shifted the ball from left to right. Estonia were obdurate opponents but they came within inches of opening the scoring before the interval when Mattias Kait clipped the crossbar and would have snatched victory as the game ticked into stoppage time but for Danny Ward's intervention. Ward shook his head in disbelief after sprawling to his right to deny Konstantin Vassiljev from scoring from distance. In the end Wales had to settle for a point that keeps their destiny in their own hands, though the play-offs now seem the most likely route to Qatar.



# B-Girl Jo, India's best, riffing off Bharatanatyam and Kalaripayattu

Mumbai, September 9 :

Johanna Rodrigues found her first dance-heroes in Tyler, Nora, Moose and Andie from the Step Up streets franchise. But for the Red Bull BC One Cypher B-Girl champion from last weekend, who craves originality, pursues and meditates after it, training in Bharatanatyam and Kalaripayattu gave her a distinct advantage. Winning her second India title last Saturday, B-Girl Jo reckons she's more self-assured now. And as Breaking erupts its way into multidisciplinary games like Asiad and Olympics, Jo is excited to carve her niche, while exploring her roots in the two Indian art-forms that started her dance journey. Before she joined up with the Black Ice Crew in Bengaluru and went off jamming to hip hop beats



along the borders like HBR Layout, B-Girl Jo did a one-year stint with Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts, located at Wilson Garden in the business district, off MG Road. It was behind the glass facade of the four-storey dance studios, stacked one on top of another, that Jo dipped her toes into something totally unfamiliar. "There isn't another dance form that uses the floor as

much as Breaking. My one year in Bharatanatyam helped; it's similar in the sense of holding poses ('freezes' in B-Girling), precision and patterns. Kalar is ofcourse the martial art and all about responding, reacting, and holding breath. And when I seek originality, I draw from these two dance forms," Jo explains. The 25-year-old, now established as India's best B-Girl, recalls

quitting her degree, pursuing dance, initially as a dabbler. Her footwork and flows are her signatures, lighting up cyphers, but it's taken her a while to arrive at a style she says affirms her conviction. Hip Hop started out as an import into streets of the world, and each city paints the acrobatics in their own colours. B-Girl Jo was aware of forming her own style even if it was American fic-

tional characters, Nora and Andie who had piqued her interest. "I come from a Catholic upbringing background. You have to understand my dancing was nothing like my Hindu and Muslim contemporaries - India's best B-Boys. So I set about finding my footing, to understand everything about one part of India's dance culture that I didn't know about," she says, about seeking diverse influences - folk and formal - and doing the community classes at Attakkalari - which dabbles at Bollywood, Contemporary, Kalari and classical Indian dance forms. Breaking though, has some universal moves. And equally universal bloopers too. "Look, first couple of years were trial and error. There were times no doubt when I must've looked silly performing. In a couple of Battles, it was goofy even," she recalls. While in Japan on

her first international, she even blanked out. "That can happen, you just don't remember the moves, you freeze or slip out of a move," she says. Joining Black Ice Crew would get her the sort of community composure that comes from being among fellow Breakers - all experimenting, all perfecting, all gunning for the bold. She had played basketball at school, but not much else of dance or sport. "My parents were confused initially about what I was doing. They warned me asking me what I'd do in a sport like this, when I got older," Jo says. She kept getting home prizes and is now headed to Poland, after the BC One triumph. Off for a

fortnight of silence in Vipassana, the champion B-Girl, also a yoga instructor says Breaking has come a long way for Indian women, even if they remain novices internationally. "Numbers have increased. Skill levels are high, and basically girls have realised it's best to focus on improving strong points. Breaking remains a power-heavy dance form, and as it sidles into the Olympic mainstream, with North America and Europe at the forefront, the macho, strength-move vibe of hip hop remains all-pervasive on the sport." Everyone has their own style. But I think girls compensate for the technical

skills with a lot of (movement) threads (relying on agility) and details," Jo reckons. She's excited about the sport being at the Paris Games. "The underground scene for Breaking will always remain strong. But the Olympics open up avenues as a career opportunity and to travel internationally and meet different dancers," she says. The grounding might come from the classical Indian dance forms, but a new style in B-Girling is underway, she says, when riffing off multiple influences. "Thing is I know what I'm doing, learning from everywhere." And winning to boot.

## Real Madrid knock Manchester City out of Women's Champions League

Manchester City, September 9 :

Gareth Taylor, the Manchester City manager, refused to lay the blame for his side's Champions League exit on a lack of pre-season action after they crashed out of qualifying against Real Madrid. A 1-0 home defeat dealt by Claudia Zornoza's first-half strike was enough for the newcomers, Real Madrid, following a first-leg 1-1 away draw for City in Spain. They have now been knocked out by Spanish opposition for the fourth season in a row. "We didn't do any games in preseason and that was the situation we were in," Taylor said. "Our pre-season preparation wasn't great and the Olympics probably hurt us more than most teams in terms of the return to train-



ing for most of the girls." He was loath to use it as an excuse. "If you don't defend in the right manner and you don't take your chances at the other end of the pitch, you're always leaving yourself vulnerable like that." In addition to a lack of pre-season football, they have been forced to navigate the early stage of the season without much of the spine

of the team. The goalkeeper Ellie Roebuck, midfielder Keira Walsh, forward Chloe Kelly and Fifa best player of the year Lucy Bronze are all out of action, while Ellen White and Georgia Stanway have yet to start a game as they shake off knocks. A 4-0 defeat of Everton demonstrated they have the ability to overcome the absences but at

the Academy Stadium they started to come undone again against Madrid having conceded late in the away leg cancelling out Caroline Weir's effort. City struggled to contain Real Madrid and the visiting team should have taken the lead just past the half-hour when Nahikari Garcia slotted in after being played through but she was inexplicably flagged offside. Just shy of half-time they took a deserved lead, though. Lauren Hemp got in the way of Babett Peter's shot but Zornoza whipped a vicious shot in from the right that took a deflection off Shaw as it flew in. At half-time Taylor turned to the tried and tested, swapping the recruit Khadija Shaw for the England forward White. Twice City went close to an equaliser. First, the keeper Misa

Rodriguez gifted the ball to White, who squared for Caroline Weir but the Scottish forward was not expecting the pass unaware and the ball rolled past her. Then Hayley Raso, recruited from Everton in the summer, snaked in from the right and hit the bar. City ramped up the pressure and White went agonisingly close in the 79th minute, stretching to head Hemp's ball over the outstretched hands of Rodriguez only for Peter to power the ball off the line with City fans in half celebration. The crowd urged City to push forward for the goal that would take the tie to extra-time but for all the pressure they could not find the finish. The early exit is a crushing blow to Taylor's ambitious team and also means they will enter the Continental League Cup at the group stage.

## Australia's Test against Afghanistan set to be cancelled over Taliban ban on women's sport

Melbourn, September 9 :

Australia's one-off men's Test match against Afghanistan, scheduled to start in Hobart on 27 November, is set to be cancelled after the Taliban banned women from playing sport, including cricket. Cricket Australia had come under increasing pressure to call off what would be the first Test match

head of the Taliban's cultural commission, told SBS on Wednesday that women will be banned from playing sport. "In cricket, they might face a situation where their face and body will not be covered. Islam does not allow women to be seen like this," Wasiq said. Federal sports minister Richard Colbeck and federal MP Andrew Hastie, a former SAS troop commander who fought in Afghanistan, are

up for a fortnight of quarantine. Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley banned from playing sport. "In cricket, they might face a situation where their face and body will not be covered. Islam does not allow women to be seen like this," Wasiq said. Federal sports minister Richard Colbeck and federal MP Andrew Hastie, a former SAS troop commander who fought in Afghanistan, are



between the two nations. It was meant to serve as a vital red-ball tune-up for Tim Paine's team ahead of this summer's Ashes series. The sport's national governing body on Wednesday issued a statement indicating it was willing to pull the plug on the game given the Taliban's stance on women and sport. "If recent media reports that women's cricket will not be supported in Afghanistan are substantiated, Cricket Australia would have no alternative but to not host Afghanistan for the proposed Test match due to be played in Hobart," the statement read. "Driving the growth of women's cricket globally is incredibly important to Cricket Australia. Our vision for cricket is that it is a sport for all and we support the game unequivocally for women at every level." Ahmadullah Wasiq, deputy

among several politicians to express reservations about the Test. Tasmania premier Peter Gutwein flagged his own concerns on Monday. Organising a replacement match in the soon-to-be vacant spot on the calendar will be easier said than done, especially with Australia's border rules ensuring tourists might have to sign

has invested more in women's cricket than any other nation, has made its thoughts clear to the global governing body. The ICC says it is concerned about reports the Taliban will ban women from playing cricket and the matter will be discussed at its next board meeting.

## Soccer leagues resist FIFA plan for World Cup every 2 years

Zurich, September 9 :

The global group of national soccer leagues said Wednesday it will oppose FIFA's plans to play the men's World Cup every two years. "A biennial World Cup would negatively disrupt the football economy and undermine players' welfare in a calendar that is already overloaded," the World Leagues Forum said in a statement. The leagues



joined European clubs and European soccer body UEFA in resisting the pro-

posal being pushed by FIFA's president, Gianni Infantino, and shaped by

its director of global development, Arsène Wenger. "FIFA's leadership cannot be able to turn something exceptional into a commonplace event purely to serve their short-term interests," said the Zurich-based leagues group, which includes the most influential leagues in soccer's five major continents. Playing every two years would also "dilute the historical and traditional values of a competition that

means so much to fans and players," the leagues said. Wenger will detail the biennial plans Thursday after a two-day conference of retired soccer greats hosted by FIFA in Qatar, the 2022 World Cup host nation. The former Arsenal coach has said a decision could be made as soon as December, though the next FIFA congress of 211 member federations is likely in May.

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