

The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

Vol. No. V ■ Issue No. 304 ■ RNI-ASSEN/2014/58385 | GUWAHATI ■ WEDNESDAY ■ DECEMBER 09, 2020 | PAGES 8 ■ PRICE RS. 7.00

Boris Johnson's Brexit deal will light the fuse for a Tory civil war

02

South Africa left to count the cost after edgy England opt for safety first

07

NEWS IN BRIEF

3 Rohingya Apprehended

Guwahati, Dec 08: Assam police on Sunday evening apprehended three Rohingya women who fled from Vairengte police station in Mizoram. They were caught in Dholaikhal in Cachar district and were later handed over to Mizoram police. The women were identified as Toyaba (22), Atarija (16) and Senuara (20). They belong to different villages in Myanmar's Rakhine and had entered the country without valid documents. A case (number 42/2019) under Section 14 of Foreigners Act 1946 was also registered against the three women at Vairengte police station.

Big Cattle Seized

Dhubri, Dec 08: A special team of Dhubri police on Monday night raided Bailla Char area of the district and seized around 10 big cattle, which were about to be smuggled across into Bangladesh via boats. A case has also been registered. Dhubri police took to twitter and informed about the same. "Dhubri Police Special Team raided Bailla Char area amidst foggy night and seized 10 Big cattle which were being accumulated in ones and twos to smuggle across into Bangladesh!! Case Registered," it tweeted.

Lighting a lamp

New Delhi, Dec 08: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tweet about lighting a lamp to join the country in a drive to mark the fight against COVID-19 pandemic has become the most retweeted post in politics on the micro-blogging website for the year. Twitter India in a blog post on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's April 5, 2020 tweet about lighting lamps of hope and good health during the COVID-19 pandemic became the most retweeted tweet in politics. "During his 9 PM-9 Mins' public address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi requested the people of India to light lamps from the safety of their homes as a symbolic gesture of solidarity towards one other."

Anna Hazare on fast to support farmers



New Delhi, December 08: Social activist Anna Hazare on December 8 sat on a day-long hunger strike to support agitating farmers who have called Bharat Bandh demanding repeal of the Centre's agri laws. Hazare also said the agitation should spread across the country so that

Bharat Bandh: Normal Life Hits In Assam



GUWAHATI, December 08: Farmers' "Bandh Bandh" called today across India has crippled life in several parts of Assam, with several farmers' organizations and workers' bodies extending their support to the 4-hours-long shutdown. Many of these organizations' members also took to the streets, demanding the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government to roll back its controversial laws that have triggered massive uprisings in North India. Life in Jorhat district of Upper Assam was badly affected, with protests being spearheaded by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), which was

also joined by other organizations. For the most part, streets wore a deserted look as movement of vehicles was severely restricted and most of the shops were closed down. "Rajior Dal", the new regional party from Assam formed under the aegis of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) also joined the agitation in Jorhat. "We condemn the Bills and stand in solidarity with the farmers protesting these anti-farmer law. We urge the farmers' unions to intensify the protest as the Modi-led Government has enacted several anti-people's law," a Rajior Dal activist told Inside Northeast at the protest site.

In lower Assam's Rangia town also, several organizations came together to protest the Centre's farm laws, while at the same time appealing the Government to roll back the same. "The BJP-led Government has already passed the anti-farmer bills, and the farmers have been protesting near Delhi. The Government is not willing to repeal the laws. Therefore, we have joined the protest on this day of Bharat Bandh to extend solidarity to the protesting farmers," a CITU leader told Inside Northeast on the sidelines of the protest. Similar scenes were witnessed all over Tinsukia town, where all commercial

establishments were closed and people stayed home for the most part, extending their support to the 'bandh' called by the farmers' organizations. "You can hear a pin drop in Tinsukia as the streets - usually bustling with trade and commerce - have become quiet as people are supporting the farmers' bodies in their protest. 13 organizations in Assam have also extended their moral support to the bandh, which is why townsfolk have stayed indoors," a source in Tinsukia told. With no sign of any agreement between the government and the protesting farmers even after the fifth round of talks

on Saturday, and the next meeting scheduled for December 9, farmers are sticking to their first and major point - that the three "anti-farmer" laws passed in September be repealed. The Bharat Bandh called by the Farmers' Association has affected the normal life in Assam as vehicles go off roads creating problems for the commuters. Several trade and transport unions have extended support to the bandh and almost all opposition parties have backed their demands. As many as 13 opposition parties from Assam including Congress, AJP and Left parties have extended support to the nationwide strike. Police patrolling across the state has been increased to ensure

Contd...Page 6

'CAA'-AASU announces protest on Dec 12



GUWAHATI, December 08: To mark the 1st anniversary of the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act that rocked Assam and later reached other parts of the country, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) has announced a massive protest on December 12 next. The apex students' body, which played a key role in the agitation last year, has resolved to launch the protest

in all parts of the state demanding 'justice' for the 5 martyrs of the movement, reports said. "Since 12 December will mark exactly a year since the protests were launched against the unpopular 'CAA', the AASU has decided to recall the 5 martyrs of the movement in public places across the State. In this, I believe, we will be joined by people from across

Contd...Page 6

"Previous BPF government indulged in large scale corruption"



Kokrajhar, December 08: Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal who campaigned for the BTR election, requested the voters to cast their valuable votes in favor of BJP candidates to ensure overall development in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) areas. Chief Minister Sonowal also said that in the last 15 years for the development of BTR the Central and State governments

released a huge chunk of money. However, contrary to development, the previous BPF government indulged in large scale corruption. He also said that the corrupt BPF government never hesitated to indulge in corrupt practices at the cost of the state.

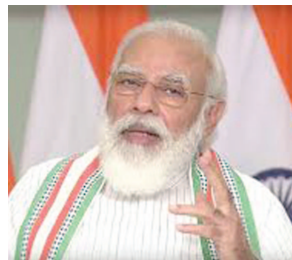
Mukesh Ambani Plans Jio's 5G Rollout In Second Half Of 2021

Mumbai, December 08: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani today hinted at rolling out 5G telecom services in the second half of 2021 and said policy steps are needed to accelerate the early rollout of ultra-high-speed 5G services that are affordable and available everywhere. Mukesh Ambani, whose four-year-old telecom venture Jio has captured the No.1 spot offering free voice calling and data at very affordable tariffs, also pitched for developing hardware manufacturing in India, saying the nation cannot rely on imports in such a critical area. 5G is the 5th generation mobile network that enables connecting virtually everyone and everything to-

gether including machines, objects, and devices. India, he said, is today among the best digitally connected nations in the world. "In order to maintain this lead, policy steps are needed to accelerate the early rollout of 5G, and to make it affordable and available everywhere," he said. "I assure you that Jio will pioneer the 5G Revolution in India in the second half of 2021. Jio's 5G will be powered by the indigenously-developed network, hardware and technology components. Jio's 5G service will be a testimony to your inspiring vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat." Jio and other service

Contd...Page 6

Mobile technology will help India embark on one of the largest Covid-19 vaccination drives': Prime Minister Narendra Modi at IMC 2020



New Delhi, December 08: Prime Minister Modi said on Tuesday India will use mobile technology for mass inoculation against the coronavirus disease in the country as chances of the availability of a Covid-19 vaccine soon going up. The Prime Minister said mobile technology has enabled benefits worth billions of dollars to reach the deserving and also helped the poor and vulnerable during the pandemic. "It is also with the help of mobile technology that we will embark on one of the world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drive," he said without giving details. PM Modi was speaking at the India Mobile Congress (IMC), considered the largest digital technology event in India and the biggest international technology conference in South Asia. Three leading vaccine developers - Pfizer Inc, Serum Institute of India Ltd and Bharat Biotech International Lim-

ited - have applied for emergency use authorisation in India. Pfizer India has applied to the drug regulator for permission to import its experimental mRNA vaccine for sale and distribution without the requirement for

local clinical trials. SII, AstraZeneca's India vaccine partner, has applied for emergency use authorisation using data from Phase-III trials that were conducted locally, as well as in Brazil and the UK. Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech has sought a nod for Covaxin, which is being indigenously developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The applications mean that a mass vaccine effort could be

shortly underway in India that has the world's second-largest coronavirus caseload. The Prime Minister also pitched for making India a global hub for telecom equipment, design, development, manufacturing. "We need to work together to ensure a timely roll-out of 5G to leapfrog into the future and empower millions of Indians," he said. Speaking on mobile technology, he said it was because of this that the government

Contd...Page 6

90-year-old woman from Northern Ireland becomes first patient in UK to receive Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine

London, December 08: The United Kingdom kicked off its biggest-ever vaccine campaign in history on Tuesday, as 90-year-old grandmother Margaret Keenan became the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer/BioNTech jab against COVID-19. At 6:31 am GMT early riser Maggie was given the life-saving jab by nurse May Parsons at her local hospital in Coventry to mark what the National



Health Service (NHS) has dubbed a "landmark moment" on V-Day or Vaccine Day in the fight against the

deadly virus. "I feel so privileged to be the first person vaccinated against COVID-19, it's the best early birth-

day present I could wish for because it means I can finally look forward to spending time with my family and friends in the New Year after being on my own for most of the year," said Maggie, who turns 91 next week. The former jewellery shop assistant who retired four years ago has a daughter, a son and four grandchildren and is looking forward to being able to go out

Contd...Page 6

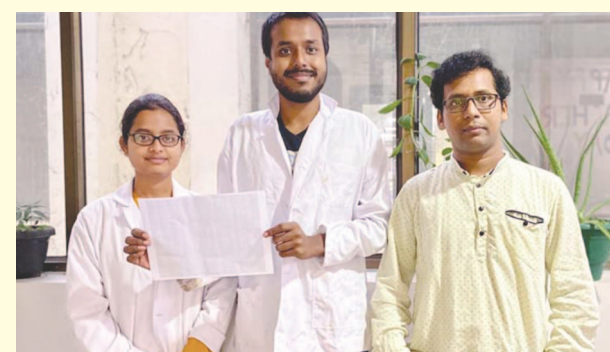
IIT Guwahati researchers developed materials that can harvest water from air

GUWAHATI, December 08: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G) have developed novel materials that can efficiently harvest water from humid air. A research team led by Dr. Uttam Manna, Associate Professor, Chemistry department and Centre of Nanotechnology, IIT Guwahati, along with his research scholars Mr. Kousik Maji, Mr. Avijit

Das, and Ms. Manideepa Dhar, has published the results of this path-breaking work in the prestigious journal of The Royal Society of Chemistry. With increasing water scarcity throughout the world, there have been attempts to collect and conserve water through non-traditional means. Scientists have turned to nature to design ways of water harvesting. For example, in regions of the world with naturally

scanty rainfall, plants and insects have devised ingenious strategies to pull and collect water right out of the air. Mimicking this, scientists worldwide are trying to build technologies that can pull out water from thin air, both literally and figuratively. "Such water-harvesting techniques use the concept of hydrophobicity or water-repelling nature of some materials", explains Dr. Manna. The concept of hydrophobicity can be understood by looking at the lotus leaf. The lotus leaf is water repellent because there is a layer of trapped air between the leaf surface and the water droplet, which causes the droplet to slide off the leaf. However simple hydrophobicity such as this is unsuitable for water harvesting from highly humid environments because high mois-

ture content can displace the trapped air and cause permanent damage. Instead, researchers mimic the pitcher plant, an 'insect-eating' plant,



Contd...Page 6

Contd...Page 6

Boris Johnson's Brexit deal will light the fuse for a Tory civil war



As I write, no puff of white smoke proclaims a done deal. Boris Johnson may drag out his excruciating psychodrama a few days longer, postponing the moment his Brexit is exposed as a sham. The infinite patience of EU negotiators never flags, as they wait for him to succumb to the inevitable, like adults waiting for a child having a tantrum to calm

down. In the final charade, Britain dances its defiant haka with tongues out at those across the Channel, still displaying bogus no-deal bravado. "Cabinet backs Johnson over no-deal Brexit," splashed the Sunday Times. Of course it does: this Brexit moment is the sole reason most of this ship of fools ever got their feet under that august table. Today's Daily Mail declared that "Bullish Boris" was "ready to walk away". The Metro had: "Frosty the NO man: UK's chief negotiator holding out." The Express went with: "PM: No deal if we can't take back control." One pathetic minister bleated: "We hold all the cards." Brussels isn't quaking in its boots: the EU's team are well used to Brexit sabre-rattling. They sigh politely at Johnson's bad faith in pushing through his law-breaking internal market bill as egotiations approach the endgame: they know the UK will sign a trade deal because it must. Trading with the single market always meant following European single market rules. It's our choice to make, but now with no seat at their table to change those rules. Forget a "Canada deal": our trade with the EU is 10 times Canada's. As the EU's largest outside trader by far, if we flood their market with lower standard or unfairly subsidised goods, we risk doing greater damage than anyone. I presume Sunday night's leaking of the official "reasonable worst case" scenario for no deal was timed to frighten Brexiters who want to leave at any cost: it risks a reduction of between 20% and 40% in medicine imports, fishing boats clashing at sea, fresh food supplies cut, low-income households hit worst by price rises, oil shortages, 20 local authorities collapsing under costs, and between 40% and 70% of trucks travelling to the EU not having paperwork ready, while public protests overstretch the police. All these run alongside the old familiars: tariffs

would kill off the car industry, farming, fishing and finance, while at the same time creating a hard border in Ireland and earning the enmity of the new US president. That is why Johnson will sign, but the moment pen touches paper, watch the nuclear explosion among those who put him in Downing Street. He will finally have to betray his Brexit no pasarans, while grinning gargoyle Nigel Farage sharpens his teeth, anticipating his next comeback. "There's no reasonable negotiation on offer," he tweeted. Johnson must sell the deal to both Brextremists and to moderate

leave voters, either as the hardest of crash-outs or as the smoothest for future EU relations - but not both. His bare-bones, worst-of-all-worlds deal will please no one. He will proclaim it "fantastic", "world-beating" and all the rest of his limited vocabulary of weary superlatives. The only upside is avoiding the apocalypse the Tories pretended was "better than a bad deal". Labour's task is easy: this bad deal excludes the vital 80% of the UK economy reliant on services and finance. The Road Haulage Association expects "between shocking and catastrophe", the National Audit Office warns of "widespread disruption", while the British Retail Consortium calls this "the biggest imposition of red tape that businesses have had to deal with in 50 years". Every effect of this Brexit belongs to the Tories: this day of reckoning may break them. Where is the promised soft landing in sunlit uplands? Instead of "exact same benefits", there will be none. Damage stretching years ahead may merge with Covid, but by 2024's election those lost Labour seats will not rank Brexit as a reason to vote Tory. Polling finds red wall seats backing away, with Labour ahead in 36 of the 45, and Brexit is already outweighed by indignation over Dominic Cummings' trip to Barnard Castle and Covid mishandling. In voting on the deal, remember this isn't Labour's fight. The final battle is between Tory Brexiters - the betrayers and betrayed - tearing into each other over an ideal Brexit that never was. Labour's task is to ask where the Tories' good deal went. To vote for this economy-wrecking deal risks owning it: better by far to abstain. Keir Starmer has the chance to make the speech of a lifetime, describing the betrayal of all who believed what Johnson promised. He can list the failures - and show the way to rebuild out of this chaos. Remember this vote only concerns political tactics, not high principle. Whether Labour abstains or votes to save the country from no-deal calamity, it must try for unity. A minor Labour split over strategy should not be allowed to steal any airtime from the resounding crash of the Tory party falling to earth, its delusions shattered.

We have realised too late the abstract and concrete realities of Brexit can't be reconciled

On Sunday afternoon, an anonymous government insider passed to ITV's Robert Peston a 34-page document detailing the "reasonable worst case scenario planning assumptions ... for the end of the transition period". It's angled towards what might happen if the Brexit trade talks collapse and we end up with no deal, yet makes the point that many businesses are so unprepared that even in the event of a deal some of the chaos will transpire anyway. You can't blame businesses: they have no concrete information from the government to plan around. The billboards enjoining them to get ahead with Brexit prep for January 2021 feel almost abusive - those of us old enough to remember the Protect and Survive broadcasts will recall the sharp indignation of being handed a horrific burden (I have a better idea than me, a citizen, learning how to make a bomb shelter using a door and my kitchen table: why don't you, a government, avoid nuclear war?) But this goes one step further: it's like being reminded to file your tax return by an HMRC that has yet to devise a system of taxation. Anyway, back to Peston's leaked document: we should brace for shortages in medical supplies, food and the chemicals used in the supply of essential services such as water and energy; civil unrest; job losses; price rises; tailbacks and border delays; the financial collapse of one in 20 local authorities; and reduced capability in tackling crime and terrorism. And we definitely shouldn't be complacent about our ongoing "zoonotic disease control". If there were a single good thing about either a thin deal or no deal, you would be able to find at least one conservative MP, somewhere, trying to take credit for the outcome. Instead, they scramble between Brussels, Paris and Berlin looking for a culprit, while figures on the left (Len McCluskey) bemoan the fact that if we'd only accepted Theresa May's softer Brexit, none of this would be happening. This is lazy revisionism, and works on the premise that, because Boris Johnson uses harder rhetoric than May, her deal must have been softer, and therefore - in this binary world we now inhabit - must have been the ultimate in "soft". From her Lancaster House speech at the start of 2017 onwards, May was anything but. Let's not re-litigate the overwhelming pointlessness of

what she proposed. Unarguably, we have ended up at the most extreme point, caught between the worst imaginable outcome and the second worst, the final decision resting upon the shoulders of the nation's worst ever prime minister. So what on earth made any of us think this project, which has hurtled so surely towards its nadir, could have been stopped? As the academic David Runciman once described, we overestimated the space we had to play in: the referendum was such a

economic consequences, most of which were never even mentioned during the campaign, let alone acknowledged by Brexit's proponents. The sheer magnitude of the disastrous potentiality made it seem almost inevitable that it would be averted: surely, now we've realised this, we won't go through with it? Surely, now with every sector waking up to the bald practical realities, the pressure on politicians will become irresistible? If the first mistake was

another. The 2017 election appeared to have created a new world: a much narrower majority for a far weaker prime minister, greater scope for the opposition to actually oppose. Alongside hardcore remain elements in Labour, there were important figures who were open to persuasion, notably John McDonnell, who was thinking seriously post-2017 about how to prepare for being a radical, reforming chancellor, and weighing up how much more difficult that would be in a post-Brexit economic environment. Yet ultimately, Labour was in the same concrete-abstract dyad as everyone else - do you care about mackerel, or do you respect democracy? It took many of us far too long to realise that it was no longer possible to do both. Without calling this project totalitarian, there is a redolent line in Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*: "To yield to the mere process of disintegration has become an irresistible temptation, not only because it has assumed the spurious grandeur of 'historical necessity', but also because everything outside it has begun to appear lifeless, bloodless, meaningless and unreal." I didn't realise how patriotic I was until after the referendum: I knew I cared about my compatriots, and therefore jobs, freedom of movement, food prices. But I didn't realise how much I cared about the United Kingdom, about the Union, about peace within it and the historical scars that built that peace, about our international standing, about our universities, constitution, landscape, rule of law. I just didn't realise how precious it all was. Brexit is a process of disintegration, and opposing it was, it transpires, meaningless and unreal. Those abstracted arguments had a nihilistic fervour that it simply wasn't possible to match, and we drained the life out of ourselves in the attempt. But I suspect we could have yielded immediately and still ended up exactly where we are now, except more ashamed.



breach of what was considered possible that,

after it, we thought anything might be. In fact, parliamentary reality still held. If parliament couldn't agree on Brexit, it would never agree to a second referendum; and if it could agree, it wouldn't need one. That misapprehension was fuelled in part by the prime minister herself, who could undo her own arguments even as she made them, could turn allies into enemies without noticing, could lose a 30-point lead with a coughing fit. She really was remarkable - often it didn't seem unreasonable to wonder whether she might stop Brexit herself by accident. Meanwhile, there was this cascade of revelations about what leaving the EU might actually look like: its contradictions, its broken promises, its ramifications both sought and unintended, all these vast and terrible constitutional, legal and

Zoe Williams

to misconceive parliament as somehow having been changed by Brexit, the second was to see it as a microcosm of the wider world, subject to the same logic, the same anxieties, the same interests: in fact, parliamentary logic is quite different. So there emerged two discrete, parallel contexts for the discussion: one completely abstract, in which democracy must be upheld and sovereignty restored; the other completely concrete: who do you sell herring to if you don't want to eat it, and where on earth do you have an Irish border? Never able to knit those two spheres back together, we had instead this jarring dualism, where we'd talk grace notes in Westminster (take control of our money, borders and laws!), and car plant closures outside Westminster, and those discussions never progressed since they were never informed by one

It's Time For A Hero! Warner Bros. Pictures To Release 'Wonder Woman 1984' Pan India On December 24 In English, Hindi, Tamil & Telugu

Wonder Woman 1984 is all set to release in Indian cinemas on December 24 in English, Hindi, Tamil & Telugu. Fast forward to the 1980s as Wonder Woman's next big screen adventure finds her facing two all-new foes: Max Lord and The Cheetah. With director Patty Jenkins back at the helm and Gal Gadot returning in the title role, "Wonder Woman 1984" is Warner Bros. Pictures' follow up to the DC Super Hero's first outing, 2017's record-breaking "Wonder Woman". The film also stars Chris Pine as Steve Trevor, Kristen Wiig as The Cheetah, Pedro Pascal as Max Lord, Robin Wright as Antiope, and Connie Nielsen as Hippolyta. Talking about the film, director Patty Jenkins

says, "This is a classic tale told through a great SuperHero with a true "superhero" cast, and it's an incredibly epic journey, but... What the story is and how it unfolds? I think less is more, the less I say, the more surprised the audiences will be." "After 'Tenet', we are very proud to release another crowd pleaser in December. It is a perfect seasonal family entertainer, one that can best be enjoyed only on the Big Screen." - Denzil Dias, VP & MD, Warner Bros. Pictures (India) Warner Bros. Pictures Presents an Atlas Entertainment/Stone Quarry Production, a Patty Jenkins Film, "Wonder Woman 1984." It will be distributed in theatres and IMAX worldwide.



Amazon India deploys AI powered 'Distance Assistant' across its Operational sites to bolster preventive safety measures

Leveraging Artificial intelligence, Augmented Reality and Machine Learning, the smart solution reminds associates to maintain social distancing in real-time through visual cues and sensors

India : Amazon India today announced the deployment of 'Distance Assistant' across its operational sites in the country, following the successful rollout of the technology in the US and a few other countries. The AI powered innovation will remind associates while on site to maintain a safe proximity from others by providing social distancing feedback, in real-time. With social distancing continuing to be a preventive safety measure amid the pandemic, the smart solution is another step towards ensuring the safety of tens of thousands of Amazon India's associates across buildings. 'Distance Assistant' leverages artificial intelligence, augmented reality and machine learning to track individual movements and gauge their physical distance from others. Similar to the radar speed check

mechanism, the innovation creates a magic-mirror-like experience to provide associates with immediate visual feedback via a monitor, camera, and local computing device when moving in an Amazon India site. The



standalone unit uses machine learning models to differentiate people from their surroundings. Combined with depth sensors, the algorithm creates an accurate distance measurement between associates giving them proximity indicators on the monitor. The self-contained standalone units will be stationed across entrances and high traffic areas across Amazon India's Fulfilment

Centres, Sort Centres and Delivery Stations. As people walk past the camera, the monitor will display a live video feed with visual cues to show if associates are within 6 feet of one another. The on-screen indicators have been designed to remind associates to maintain appropriate distance from those around them. Individuals remaining 6 feet apart are highlighted with green circles, while those who are closer are highlighted in red. Dr. Karuna Shankar Pande, Director - Fulfilment Centers and Safety, Amazon India, said "With a safety-first approach, we have been investing in scalable technology solutions to prioritize safety of our teams at all times. We are pleased to introduce this global innovation across all our sites in India. 'Distance Assistant' will continue to enhance our safety practices and also empower our efforts to implement additional measures to improve social distancing. As our associates continue to deliver smiles to customers, we remain steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding their health and will consistently expand our health and safety processes for our people." Amazon India places tremendous value and focus on the well-being and safety of its people across its operations network and this innovative solution is the most recent addition to the company's safety measures. The company has already implemented close to 100 changes in its operational processes, including process flow changes, mandatory wearing of masks at all times, and daily temperature checks, among others.

Invest in the world's biggest companies with international mutual funds on ETMONEY



Imagine a day in your life - you work on Microsoft Word or Gmail on a Dell or ASUS laptop, wear clothes from Nike or Adidas, drive a Hyundai car, watch movies on Netflix and shop on Amazon. We use these products in our daily lives

without realising most of these companies are international businesses headquartered outside India, and are not listed on Indian stock exchanges. Ten years ago, investing in such big international companies was rare for the average Indian. Most people would focus on the Indian stock market. Today, it is possible to invest in top international companies and become their owners within minutes. All this has been made possible thanks to the easy access to them via international mutual funds that are available on leading personal finance apps like ETMONEY. International Funds are one of the simplest and low-cost options for Indians wanting to invest in the

international markets. These funds are offered by Indian mutual fund houses and work like other domestic mutual funds wherein you invest in rupees and get the redemption amount also in rupees. These funds also have to follow the same regulations as domestic funds. With international funds, you can invest in developed countries like the US, or the emerging markets, or even across the globe. There are also theme-based schemes available, thus giving plenty of options to the Indian investors. So why invest in other countries at all? An investor focused only on the domestic stock market would have his/her investments prone to country-specific risks such as an economic slowdown

or political instability. Diversifying your investments by investing in markets of other countries gives you a safety net. Another big reason is that India's share in the global economy varies from 3-8%, and investing in international markets makes you a part of the growth of the remaining 92-97% of the world. The US in particular is an attractive investment destination for Indians, with the world's largest and most successful companies, such as Apple, Tesla, Alphabet (which owns Google), Facebook, and Amazon listed there. Moreover, you can also benefit from the currency fluctuations. That's because while you invest and get your returns in Indian rupees, the fund

house converts them into another currency to invest it. So any upward movement in that currency against rupee can bump up your returns at the time of redemption. Trusted personal finance apps like ETMONEY have made investing in international companies easier. You can easily select your favorite international mutual funds from top Indian fund houses such as Edelweiss, ICICI, Axis, UTI, SBI, Motilal Oswal, etc based on country and sector and start with SIPs as low as Rs. 500 or lump-sum investments from as low as Rs. 5000. So go ahead, become shareholders of some of the world's biggest companies within minutes - with the ETMONEY app.

Will never ask for Christmas, New Year donation: NSCN (R)



DIMAPUR, December 08 : NSCN (Reformation) has reminded all concerned that as maintained earlier, the NSCN (R) "will continue to uphold the sanctity of Christian principles and will never seek or ask for any Christmas & New Year's donations and this year too is no exception." NSCN (R) through its MIP said that the organization, like any other Christian, too is bounded by the 'Christian principles' and pointed out that "Christmas/New Year is a time for giving and not taking, and also

to share equal Joy, Love and Peace, regardless of any Social Inequities as in, Rich or Poor, Strong or Weak, Old or Young". It said that the NSCN (R) cadres/members are reminded of these principles, from time to time, during "remedial and political classes", adding any such incidents were most likely to be imposters, masquerading as NSCN (R). It warned that if any individual/character or perchance, or any cadres are found involved in such sordid activities and bringing bad disrepute, they "will be strictly dealt with an iron hand". In this regard, NSCN (R) has requested all concerned to immediately report any such activities to the 'competent authority(s)' without any compunction. Further, NSCN (R) wished all a "Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May this season's greeting bring 'Good tidings, Love, Peace and Happiness' to one and all."

Ktm Launches The All New My21 Ktm 125 Duke

Guwahati, December 08 : KTM, The World's No.1 & India's fastest growing premium motorcycle brand, announced the launch of the all new MY21 KTM 125 DUKE, with the promise of delivering maximum riding fun that punches way above its displacement. Available now at KTM dealers across India, this all-new machine has received multiple enhancements for 2021 to keep the KTM 125 DUKE at the top of its game. Instantly noticeable and impossible to ignore is the KTM 125 DUKE's distinctive new styling-inspired by the performance powerhouse - KTM 1290 SUPERDUKER. The design is flanked by more aggressive, sharper bodywork with a seat unit that exposes more of the sportier geometry chassis. This streetfighter gets a new, bolt-on rear subframe, a larger steel tank and steeply rising lines that catapult its street creds sky-high. The ergonomics of this lightweight streetfighter have also been altered, with a more authoritative riding position, backed up by revised rider and passenger seats. DUKE riders also benefit from a modified and larger fuel tank which creates better leg contact & feel, and the 13.5-liter capacity will take ambitious riders further than ever. Boasting top level chassis and braking components, the completely new WP Suspension front and back further adds to the superior proposition of the new KTM 125 DUKE. For bikers who will be intending to use the KTM 125 DUKE in diverse ways across India, the updated suspension system will give riders of all types and ability, the comfort for commuting and confidence in the corners. With a maximum output of 14.5PS at 9,250rpm and a torque

maximum of 12Nm at 8,000rpm, the 125cc liquid cooled fuel injected engine combines an instantaneous power delivery with great refinement whilst also delivering a fantastic and lightning-quick response, from idle all the way to the rev limiter. KTM 125 DUKE has always been favoured by young customers seeking an entry into the KTM franchise. Coming at Rs. 150,010/- Ex-Showroom Delhi, the price of the new KTM 125 DUKE is irresistible for its capability. The model will be available in 2 colors - Electronic Orange & Ceramic White. Speaking on the



occasion Sumeet Narang, President (Probiking) at Bajaj Auto Ltd. said "Spawned from the 1290 beast itself and packed full of Duke attitude, the KTM 125 DUKE exudes qualities never seen in this category before. The ultra-lightweight trellis frame and subframe provide razor-sharp control, and the new styling is an absolute head turner. The launch of KTM 125 DUKE in late 2018 had been a point of inflection for KTM's stronghold amongst the young biking enthusiasts in India. Upgrading that model with this new all capable entry level KTM is another testimony of the brand's commitment to bringing pure performance to its valued customers." True to its READY TO RACE philosophy, KTM has an unparalleled legacy in motorsports with over 300+ world championships spanning over 66 years since 1953. The MotoGP 2020 series will remain a poignant and memorable event for KTM where KTM has risen to dominate with 7 podium finishes and 2 wins. Since its entry into India in 2012, KTM has grown its presence across 365 cities & 460 stores.

'Bharat bandh' hits normal life at Nagaon

NAGAON, December 8: 'Bharat bandh' called today by All India farmers' body severely hit the normal life in the district. During the bandh, all the shops as well as other commercial establishments, schools, colleges, offices in private sectors and other institutions in the small town were remained close. Similarly, vehicles on the major streets of the town were rarely seen except the vehicles of those emergency services. Though the offices in government sector were being kept open during the bandh yet the attendance of the officials as well as other employees were only a few. Significantly, during the bandh, no incidents of violence has been reported till filing of this report.

Benefiting the State's Employees- The Government's goal is to create employment

Distribution of 21 passenger vehicles in Barpeta under the Chief Minister's All Rural Transport Scheme



Barpeta, December 8: The state government has taken an innovative initiative with the aim of providing new employment to the state. In an effort to open up a new direction of rural mobility and self-reliance, the government has launched the "Chief Minister's Rural Road Transport" scheme. Today, three and four wheeler vehicles are being distributed among 21 selected youths in Barpeta district. The scheme was officially inaugurated in Barpeta district today by Gunindra Nath Das, MLA of Barpeta Sadar

constituency. Vehicles include Maruti Alto 800 cars, Eco Van, Magic, e-rickshaws, autorickshaws etc. For this the Government of Assam has provided 25 per cent of the cost of the vehicle or a maximum of Rs. One lakh as subsidy. The State Government has set a target of establishing 10,000 settlers in 10,000 villages of the State. In Barpeta, the state government had set a target of setting up 850 new recruits through the transport department. Addressing a public meeting on the occasion at District

library in Barpeta, MLA Gunindra Nath Das said that if all the beneficiaries of these vehicles do not hire themselves, it will play an important role in the development of rural economy. He appealed to all the newly recruited youths to come forward to avail the benefits of the scheme, addressing to the meeting, District Deputy Commissioner Munindra Sharma said, This scheme is one of the most deliberate schemes of the present Government, which seeks to achieve two ambitious goals. Speaking to the gathering, Anil Das, Vice-Chairman, Assam Finance Corporation, said that the present government has taken steps for the development of all. District transport officer Himanshu Das explains the purpose of the meeting. District Development Commissioner Diganta Das, one of the directors of Assam Power Generation Corporation Shankar Chandra Das, District Information and Public Relations Officer Bikash Sharma, Vice President of Assam Industrial

Development Corporation Jitu Talukdar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dulal Devnath, Labour Union President Radhika Mohan Das, eminent social activist Hemant Deuri and Nav Kumar Das are present as special guests.

NHPC to commission 2,000 MW hydropower project on Subansiri by March 2022

Guwahati, December 08 : PSU major NHPC Ltd on Saturday said the 2,000 MW Subansiri hydropower project, which was stalled for nearly eight years due to intense protests by many groups in Assam, will be commissioned by March 2022. Union power ministry's secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, Arunachal Pradesh chief secretary Nareish Kumar and the company's chairman and managing director A K Singh visited the Subansiri Lower Hydro Electric project



Gang of dacoits in the uniform of security personnel: one arrested, Bolero car used in robbery recovered

NAGAON, December 8 : Within the 24 hours, Nagaon Haiborgaon police led by SI A Rahman, officer in charge of Haiborgaon Outpost arrested one of the gang of dacoits who in disguise of security personnel raided in two houses of drugs peddlers at Naromari and Batadrova area on Saturday night last and looted cash and other valuable assets including gold ornaments.

Police subsequently also recovered the white Bolero car used in the robbery from Borpeta district.

According to sources, the arrested dacoit has been identified as Jehirul Islam of Borbheti area under Batadrova PS. Sources from Nagaon police said that around 7 members were there in the gang. Police have already traced the master mind of the robbery and he is popular as 'Dukhi' of Dhing area, sources said adding further that search operation against other members of the gang were on.

sites on Friday and inaugurated the restart of the power-house works, NHPC said in a statement. "Later in the day, the power secretary held a review meeting wherein NHPC chief briefed about the various construction activities and downstream river protection works undertaken by the company. It was assured that the project shall be commissioned by March 2022," it added. Construction work of the ambitious project at Gerukamukh along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border on Subansiri river was halted from December 2011 to October 2019 due to protests by locals and many groups fearing about safety

and the adverse impact on the downstream of the river. According to a company estimate in January 2020, the cost of the mega project, which was scheduled to be commissioned in December 2012, had escalated to around Rs 20,000 crore. The initial project cost was estimated at Rs 6,285 crore. The Centre had allocated a total of Rs 11,000 crore as of December 2010 for construction of the dam. Multiple committees were formed by the Assam government and the Centre to address the concern of the agitators. The outcomes of their reports varied from one to another.

Book release at Sipajhar college

Role of text books highlighted



SIPAJHAR, Dec 08 : "The text books of 19th century and first part of the 20th century have played an important role towards formation and development of both Assamese language and literature" said Dr Sanjib Pal Deka, Professor of Tezpur Central University. He was addressing a book release meeting at Sipajhar college held under the president ship of Dr Pradip Kumar Deka, Principal of Sipajhar college. Releasing a novel titled 'Swapnadrasta Haliram' written on the life and achievements of Danbir late Hali Ram Nath Saharia, leading social reformer and builder of modern Sipajhar, penned by Dr Dr Prasanna Kumar Nath, Head of the Department of Assamese in Sipajhar college and published by the Assamese department, Dr Sanjib Pal Deka in his thought provoking speech while expressed grave concern on the condition of the public libraries in the state has stressed on the need of the adequate scientific pres-

ervation of books and also the need of habit of book bying. Furthermore he also said that no nation can go forward only shouting slogans. Inaugurating the meeting Bidya Ram Nath, retired Vice Principal of Sipajhar college has discussed about the ideal personality and visions of late Hali Ram Nath Saharia in details. Earlier Dr Ram Chandra Deka, Professor, Sipajhar college explained the purpose of the meeting. Sasidhar Nath, former president of Darrang district Sahitya sabha, Lohit Kalita and Umakanta Sarma, former president of Sipajhar Sahitya sabha and Chandra Kanta Nath, president of Sipajhar Sahitya sabha were attended as guest of honor. Speaking on the occasion Sasidhar Nath also highlighted the various contributions of late Hali Ram Nath Saharia. Dr Mukul Saharia, Professor, Sipajhar college moderated the programme began with singing a Chia geet by Mousumi Nath, Associate Professor, Sipajhar college. The melodious modern song presented by Tarali Priyam Nath enthralled the audience. Dr Dulal Hazarika, Biplab Saharia, Gagan Kumar Nath, Abdul Malik, Paban kumar kalita and Chitra Rani Barua read out poems as part of the programme of the meeting.

CANOPY FINANCE LIMITED
(Formerly Known as Kartavya Udyog Vinayog Limited)
CIN: L5510AS2011PLC017921
Registered Office: M/s Prezents, Maniram Dewan Road, Bamunimaidan, Opp. Anuradha Cinema, Guwahati-781021; Ph: 9867309169
Website: www.canopyfinance.org; Email id: info@canopyfinance.org
Corporate Office: Shop No. 10, Shiv Dham, CHS Ltd, Satya Nagar, Malpuri Complex, Borivali (West), Mumbai - 400092
Notice is hereby given that the 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held on Wednesday, the 30th day of December, 2020 at M/s Prezents Maniram Dewan Road, Bamunimaidan Opp Anuradha Cinema, Guwahati, Kamrup 781021 at 3:00 P.M.
The physical copy of the Notice convening the Annual General Meeting has been dispatched to the member on their registered address by 07/12/2020. The same has been sent by e-mail to those members who have registered their e-mail IDs with the company (Depository Participants) for communication purpose. Shareholders are hereby informed that the Notice of the Meeting and Annual Report are available on the website of the company www.canopyfinance.org.
Pursuant to provisions of Section 106 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Regulation 44 of SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, the Company is providing e-voting facility to its members through the e-voting services provided by CDSL. The members holding shares either in physical form or dematerialized form, on the cut-off date i.e. Wednesday, 23rd December, 2020 may cast their vote electronically to transact the business set out in the Notice of AGM. The details of e-voting, required under Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, are given hereunder:
E-Voting commences on Sunday, 27th December, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. and ends on Tuesday, 29th December, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. Any person who becomes the member after the dispatch of the Notice and holding share as on cut-off date 23rd December, 2020 may obtain user id and password by sending a request at support@purvashare.com. E-Voting shall not be allowed after 5:00 P.M. on 29th December, 2020. The facility of voting through polling papers shall be made available at the venue of the Annual General Meeting. The members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting may attend the meeting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again. In case you have any queries or issues regarding e-voting, the members may email at helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or contact at 1800 200 5533 or contact Purva Share Registry (India) Pvt Ltd at 022-23012515/ 6761 or email at support@purvashare.com for clarification.
NOTICE: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013, the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from December 24, 2020 (Thursday) to December 30, 2020 (Wednesday) (both days inclusive) for the purpose of Annual General Meeting.
The result of the e-voting/voting at Annual General Meeting/ballot shall be declared on or before 31st December, 2020. The result, along with the Scrutinizer's Report, shall be displayed at the Registered Office of the Company and also be placed on the company's website and communicated to the Stock Exchange where Company's shares are listed.
For CANOPY FINANCE LIMITED
Sd/-
(Lalit Kumar Tapadia)
Managing Director
DIN NO. 08117861
Place: Guwahati
Date: 07/12/2020

NOTICE INVITATION QUOTATION

Selected quotation in affixing court-free stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and twenty Five paise) only are invited by the under signed from Govt, registered firm for supply of tool-kits in Brass Metal crafts. Last date of submission of quotation, 23/12/2020 up to 2:00 PM and opening the quotation on 24/12/2020 at 2:00 PM. For details contact

Sd/-
Managing Director
Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-op Society Ltd.
Guwahati-21

Preparations for Panchayat Election in Arunachal Pradesh



Biswanath Chariali, Dec 08 : The Panchayat election is scheduled to be held from December 22 in Arunachal Pradesh. In this connection, all political parties including ruling BJP, Congress and local regional parties are seen busy in election campaigns in the neighboring state Arunachal Pradesh. Political parties are trying to attract voters by promising handsome assurances to attract their attention. The No 3 Sejusa ZPC constituency, under Kesang district of

Arunachal Pradesh shares state boundary with Itakhola under Biswanath district. It is located nearly 15 kms to the northern part of Itakhola. Only two candidates have contested form this constituency for the upcoming ZPC election one from the BJP and another from JDO; the sister organization of the BJP. Meniyang Wage offered her candidature from the BJP while Yami Nabam Lazi has offered her candidature from the JDO. As per information received, due to

favoritism of the local BJP MLA, this time local people may opt for alternation of BJP in the Panchayat Election. If that happens, then it would not be easier for Meiyang Wage to become victorious. Highly educated Yami Nabam Lazi has been working round the clock to influence and attract the attention of general voters of the constituency. Who will give the final smile of victory form No 3 Sejusa ZPC constituency, we have to wait till the result to come out.

MSME
MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

TENDER NOTIC
(Supply of Machinery and equipment for CFC)

Sealed tenders are invited from **manufacturer/supplier/traders** (having minimum three years' experience in construction) for Supply of Machinery and equipment for Common Facilities Centre at village-Pakhamela (Hajo), District- Kamrup (R) state-Assam being facilitated by **Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-Op Society Ltd. Akashi Nagar, House No-02** Tender should be submitted in separate envelopes for Technical Bid and Financial Bid along with earnest money of Rs. **2,40,587.64 and 1,20,293.82** (General 2% and 1% SC/St/OBC of Tender Value) and can be deposited at the below mentioned address up to 02.00 PM of 18/12/2020. The Demand Draft of earnest money should be in the name of **Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-Op Society Ltd.** Tenders received will be opened before the Procurement Committee of the proposed Common Facilities on 24/12/2020 at 3.00 PM.

Tender form can be obtained from **Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-Op Society Ltd.** on any working day between 10/12/2020 to 12/12/2020 from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM and up to 12.00 Hrs. on 14/12/2020 by payment of Rs. 500/- (or IA decided)

The details of works and Terms and Conditions are available in the Tender Form. President **Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-Op Society Ltd. Akashi Nagar, House No-02** reserves the right to cancel any or all the Tenders without assigning any reason.

Managing Director
Trinayan Multi-State Handloom & Handicraft Development Co-Op Society Ltd.

THE ASSAM RISING

VOL. NO. V, ISSUE NO. 304 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 09, 2020

Possibility of a quick US-Iran detente once

It's part of a scorched earth campaign by Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump to make it as difficult as possible for Iran to resume negotiations with the Biden administration and return to the 2015 nuclear agreement. But the brazen killing is also designed to exploit rifts within Iran's factional political structure: between conservative politicians and hardline factions aligned with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, and the reformist camp led by the president, Hassan Rouhani. In January, the US assassinated Iran's most powerful general, Qassem Suleimani, in a drone strike outside Baghdad's airport. That attack exposed weaknesses in Iran's security apparatus and the regime was unable to follow through on threats to avenge the targeting of its top officials. Iran did fire missiles at US bases in Iraq in retaliation for Donald Trump ordering - and later boasting about - Suleimani's killing. But that was a largely symbolic act and Tehran has not targeted a US official of equal stature, as it threatened to. Since Fakhrizadeh's assassination, hardliners have been calling for tougher action in order to restore some deterrence with Israel and, by extension, the US. In a speech on 29 November, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the parliament speaker and a conservative leader, warned that a "strong response" was the only way to deter future attacks. He also cautioned Iranians against "sending any signals indicating weakness". Hossein Salami, the top commander of the Revolutionary Guards, vowed at Fakhrizadeh's funeral: "Enemies should be awaiting our revenge." The hardline Kayhan newspaper, whose editor was appointed by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, published an opinion article urging the Iranian leadership to attack the Israeli port city of Haifa if it concludes that Israel assassinated the nuclear scientist. The article argued that Tehran's previous responses to Israeli attacks had not gone far enough. These fiery denunciations are not unusual, especially from hardliners, after an attack on Iranian interests attributed to Israel or the US. But leaders of the military establishment, conservative politicians and analysts are signalling to the supreme leader, who has the final say on Iran's foreign policy and nuclear programme, that even if it waits out the final weeks of the Trump administration without retaliating, Tehran can't negotiate with Biden from a position of weakness. That vulnerability has been exposed by the recent assassinations and a series of mysterious explosions and fires at Iranian facilities connected to its nuclear enrichment programme. The perception of exposed weakness could lead the Iranian regime to launch a series of escalations - revenge attacks against Israeli targets; advancing its nuclear enrichment; using allied militias in Iraq to attack US troops there; or risky skirmishes with US forces in the Persian Gulf - to try to establish an upper hand to show the world and the Biden administration that it is not weak. Many of these options carry the risk of a wider confrontation, especially if they're carried out in the waning days of the Trump administration. And Tehran has failed at some past attempts at retaliation. From 2010 to 2012, Iran blamed Israel's Mossad for assassinating at least four of its leading nuclear scientists, part of a wider sabotage campaign against Iran's nuclear programme. In February 2012, Iranian agents tried, and largely failed, to carry out revenge attacks against Israeli targets in India, Thailand and Georgia. If the hardliners' rhetorical message is that Iran should exact revenge to avoid appearing weak, internally they're trying to undermine Rouhani's ability to negotiate with the Biden administration. The conservatives argue that Rouhani will essentially be a lame duck since Iran is scheduled to hold presidential elections in June 2021. Rouhani, who was first elected in 2013, will have served two terms and is not eligible to seek re-election. The conservatives are jockeying to reassert their control over the presidency. In February, conservatives and hardliners swept a majority of the new parliament, winning 220 out of 290 seats. The election was marred by problems: more than 90% of reformist candidates were disqualified by the Guardian Council, an oversight body controlled by the supreme leader, and voter turnout was 42.6%, the smallest of any parliamentary election since the 1979 Iranian revolution. Some conservative politicians are pushing for the next president to come from the ranks of the Revolutionary Guards or another part of the military establishment. It's possible that the Guardian Council may block any reformist candidate from even running. The Iranian election means that the Biden administration has only a few months after it takes office on 20 January to reach an agreement to return to the joint comprehensive plan of action, under which Tehran had agreed to limit its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from international sanctions. In May 2018, Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the deal and imposed new sanctions that crippled Iran's economy. While some Iranian officials, such as Rouhani and his foreign minister, Javad Zarif, may view Biden as far more predictable than Trump, others in the Iranian regime are wary of restarting negotiations that can be undone by future US administrations.

Indians should thank these three journalists for bringing 1971 Bangladesh 'genocide' to light



As the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Bangladesh draws near, what also draws near is the 50th anniversary of a genocide so gruesome that it ought not to be allowed to slide into oblivion. To begin at the beginning, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not part of the deception — he was the deception. Having won only 85 seats, Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had been a runner-up in the elections of December 1970, losing to the Awami League's 167 seats. In the political stalemate due to then-West Pakistan's attempt to modify the people's mandate, Bhutto's presence in Dhaka, on 25 March 1971 for "talks" with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (the legitimate Prime Minister-Elect for the whole of Pakistan), probably lulled Awami leaders into thinking that "the 26th would be just another Friday, like every other Friday before it". Although it was almost an open secret that the thousands of crew-cut youth who had been arriving in civil clothes onboard civil flights, day after day for over a month, were actually soldiers, the Pakistan Army troops in Dhaka had always behaved with deference and remarkable restraint towards Sheikh Mujib — at least on the surface. Despite martial law being in force, the Pakistan Army had withdrawn into their cantonments on 3 March, with nearly no indication that they would not continue to remain there. The sporadic clashes were largely attributed to the eagerness of free agents. After all, Awami supporters were also creating civil nuisance by going on strikes, blocking roads, etc. So, even after his face-to-face talks with Pakistan's military ruler Yahya Khan had failed, Sheikh Mujib's call to his people, "to prepare themselves for an all-out struggle", was still only a call for non-violent civil resistance. While Yahya left Dhaka, Bhutto stayed to ostensibly 'continue the talks' that he had come for. A wily deception. An H-Hour of 01:00 am on the 26th and the arrest of Mujibur Rahman had already been green-signalled at 11:00 am on 25 March, but Bhutto's presence had successfully crafted the impression that 'talks would go on', creating the belief that the night would be peaceful, and the days ahead conducive for democratic protests through civil disobedience. Evening of 25 March. The iconic clock of St Thomas had just struck 10, its chimes soothing. But soldiers,

many with shawls to hide their insignia, started streaming into the telephone exchanges, radio and TV Stations, teleprinter and telegraph offices, and also around the InterContinental hotel in Dhaka. Even as the last of the city's busybodies were getting ready for bed, the stroke of 10, that night, was the sign for the Pakistan Army to effectively blockade any foreign journalists who hadn't already been expelled or left the country on their own, to stop every means of communication, and to quietly encircle Sheikh Mujib's residence. All of this took them just over an hour. Killings, thus far, remained purposeful — limited to what was necessary to take over control of the communication. By 30 minutes to midnight, all that changed. The H-Hour had apparently been advanced. And the true purpose of Operation Searchlight harshly shone forth: to kill and show. Each kill had to be a signal to the other Bengalis, and Pakistanis went out of their way to make it so. Sheikh Mujib was fortunate in a way, he didn't have to personally witness all these killings, for at about 1:30 am on the morning of 26 March, he was abducted from his home, flown to Rawalpindi and then taken to solitary confinement in West Pakistan. But his people suffered. The armed soldiers of East Pakistan Rifles, and the armed constables of the local police, were not spared either, if they were Bengalis. Even the name for their operation was apt. A searchlight can be used either to 'search for' or to 'illuminate'. This operation met both aims. Search out every person suspected of being a politician, a student leader, a teacher of Bangla, or a cultural activist. Don't hide the deaths, but emphasise the gruesome details of these deaths as symbols and signals to illuminate the choices before people who didn't kowtow. It was macabre. "The killing began shortly after 10 pm," says Mashuqur Rahman, describing the demons of 1971, "in the first 48 hours the orgy of killing had ravaged Dhaka city..... (but)..... the genocide had just begun". The intensity of the genocide in Bangladesh surpassed that of the Holocaust. The Nazis had cruelly notched a monthly average of over 80,000 innocent lives between 1941 and 1945, but the Pakistan Army broke the Nazi speed-record five times over in 1971, with their savage murders averaging about

400,000 Bengalis each month, not counting their rapes and other unspeakable atrocities. The 'Gear 5' intensity of the Pakistani Genocide stands out — the Pakistanis had committed approximately three million murders in nine months, and more than 200,000 rapes. And most Western countries looked the other way. Had India not intervened; had Pakistan been allowed to continue the killings for six years as the Nazis had, there would have been 24 million Bengalis dead, and the Lord knows how many more women violated. Though the Nuremberg Trials had in no way offset what the European Jews had suffered, they had at least attempted to bring many of the Nazis to justice for murdering an estimated six million Jews. It is one of the deepest shames of the Seventies, that the Pakistani officers responsible for the murder of nearly three million Bengalis could not be tried for their crimes. India, which had proclaimed East Pakistan a free nation, had to set free 93,000 prisoners of war (PoWs) in order to obtain the release of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose presence was central to the fledgling nation of Bangladesh. Blackstone's ratio of ten criminals to one innocent, has perhaps never in history been skewed on a grander scale. From Governor General Tikka Khan, the infamous 'Butcher of Bengal', or his successor General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, to the soldiers who made beauty their booty (to paraphrase Andrew Jackson) — everyone escaped trial. But, even if so many criminals got away, what ensured that their crimes pierced the world's conscience? To quote Walter Lippmann, "News and (the) truth are not the same thing". Indeed, when it comes to news about India, Western media often chooses authors and journalists who tell their readers what they wish to hear. That becomes news. That news becomes cited history, through the sheer perversity of 'pervasivity' (even if it's not a real word). Western media is so pervasive that history cannot be written by the victors unless they happen to be from the West. The news in the West may never have resembled the whole truth even in the 1971 War, had it not been for a few brave souls, thanks to whom the truth of the genocide got through to the Western media, and changed the colour of the "News" as being reported

there. Who are these heroes? Foremost among them is Archer Kent Blood, who, as the Head of the United States Consulate in Dhaka, sent a series of cables to Washington, commencing with the one on 27 March, which read, "Here in Decca we are mute and horrified witnesses to a reign of terror by the Pak Military....". On 6 April 1971, he sent a 'dissent cable' (later dubbed 'The Blood Telegram') to the US Secretary of State William P. Rogers, which read: "Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen any deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy.... But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely an internal matter of a sovereign state. Private Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional civil servants, express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies re-directed in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world....". National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger didn't react, but the Blood telegram found its way into the press, and the 'truth' suddenly became the 'news' in the US. The moment of convergence came in the British media too. First, a small snippet by Simon Dring appeared on the front page of The Daily Telegraph on 30 March 1971. Dring had gone underground just before the murders began, and collected evidence of the atrocities at great risk to himself, but his article failed to really alter the tone of reporting in Western media. Even though the BBC subsequently carried a broadcast made on the 27th of March 1971 by Major Ziaur Rahman from a small clandestine radio station in Chittagong (reading out Mujibur's declaration of Bangladeshi independence), it had mostly been interpreted as the justification for a Pakistani crackdown rather than the right way around. The defining change came when Pakistani journalist Neville Anthony Mascarenhas, penned his article, "Genocide", in The Sunday Times on 13 June 1971. He had originally been embedded by the Pakistan government with the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan in order to report favourably, but was so disturbed by what he saw that he escaped to the United Kingdom. His article on the Bangladesh genocide has been credited by the BBC as having "exposed for the first time the scale of the Pakistan army's brutal campaign ...", and indeed even "impelled India to look at a military option to resolve the humanitarian crisis". As the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Bangladesh draws near, what also draws near is the 50th anniversary of a genocide so gruesome that it ill behoves humanity to ever forget it. It would only be a befitting tribute to the millions of Bengali lives lost in the Pakistani genocide of 1971, that in the year 2021, the Indian government appropriately honours the names of three good men: the Late Archer Blood, the Late Anthony Mascarenhas, and Simon Dring, for their courage of conviction and honesty. Thanks to them, news came much nearer to the truth.

Banking to groceries-Data Protection Authority has multi-sector role, but must be efficient

India seems increasingly ready to enact a comprehensive privacy legislation to protect its consumer data. The Joint Parliamentary Committee set up to examine the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 is likely to release its report by the winter session of Parliament in December this year. The Narendra Modi government is expected to try and ensure the Bill is passed in the next budget session. It is therefore important to consider the regulatory and bureaucratic apparatus that will protect the data of Indian consumers for the next few decades. The enactment of the Bill will create the Data Protection Authority, which will be one of the most powerful independent regulators in India. This is significant since Indian government bodies traditionally suffer from low capacity. While a number of independent regulators have been set up in the Indian economy since the 1990s, their functioning in most cases has left a

lot to be desired. In order to ensure that the Data Protection Authority (DPA) is a successful regulator, we need to carefully consider how it can effectively operationalise different aspects of its mandate with the least amount of state capacity. The DPA differs from other regulators because it has been given the mandate to regulate the use of data across multiple sectors like banking, capital markets, social media companies, and even local grocery shops. The DPA will have to prioritise and optimise its resources effectively in order to perform its functions efficiently. In this article, we outline a few strategic choices by which the DPA can do so. First, the Data Protection Authority should follow a risk-based approach that is implicitly present in the Bill. For example, in many places, the Bill requires the DPA to consider the risk of harm to consumers while framing regulations. Additionally, the Bill categorises data into personal

data, sensitive personal data, and critical personal data to differentiate the varying levels of risks that emanate from the misuse of data. Finally, the Bill creates a differential level of regulation between ordinary firms that use data, significant data fiduciaries, and small entities. These point to the fact that risk-based regulation must be inherent to the DPA's strategic approach. Within this overall framework, the DPA can prioritise its resources by focusing on processing sensitive and critical personal data, and by overseeing significant data fiduciaries. This will allow the DPA to first build capacity in areas that pose the greatest threat to consumers, rather than expending its limited resources to regulate all sectors of economic activity. The DPA can further sharpen its focus by having a low threshold for exempting small entities. This will allow the DPA to focus its regulatory capacity

towards firms that pose a larger risk to consumers by collecting and processing large volumes of data. Second, the DPA must rely on existing sources of expertise within the government and industry. While this applies to all regulatory authorities, the wide mandate of the DPA makes this imperative. Relying on pre-existing expertise for setting standards and formulating codes of practice — on issues such as notice and consent requirements — will allow the DPA to focus on its oversight and enforcement functions. For example, the bill allows the DPA to enter into a memorandum of understanding with sectoral regulators. The memorandum should include provisions that allow the sectoral regulator to provide periodic information and inputs on privacy standards, data protection concerns, emerging risks from the use of personal data in their sectors, and sectoral best practices for data

protection. The memoranda should also provide for a consultative mechanism for all DPA regulations and codes of practice that will apply to firms regulated by the sectoral regulator. In addition to this, the DPA can seek the existing expertise of sectoral regulators in formulating its monitoring and enforcement strategies for such sectors. The DPA could also work with sectoral regulators in discharging its statutory duty to spread awareness related to data protection. In addition to other regulatory bodies, the DPA must also rely on industry and experts for formulating codes of practice. Instead of formulating these on its own, the DPA can devise mechanisms through which it ensures that the formulations are developed by relevant stakeholders. The DPA should optimise its resources by ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved in this process, and that this process of formulation is evidence-based and

deliberative. In order to do so, it can create advisory bodies for different sectors of the economy. These should consist of members from the industry, academics, and other stakeholders, appointed on a rotational basis. While the DPA can build the technical expertise to perform these functions itself over time, relying on stakeholders and experts would free-up capacity for following global best practices in other aspects of the DPA's work, such as oversight and enforcement. This would greatly add to its efficiency and consequent success. In order to be an effective regulator, the DPA must ensure it optimises its limited resources strategically so as to harness existing capabilities for protecting consumer data. It should consider some of the strategic choices discussed above while it develops the skills and capacity for regulating the use of data across the Indian economy.

Shivangi Tyagi



Students have temperature checked before entering classroom on the first school day at Agartala, the capital city of India's northeastern state of Tripura

Armed Forces Flag day: Honouring the sacrifice of soldiers

New Delhi, Dec 08 : The Indian Armed Forces Flag Day is mainly observed to rehabilitate those wounded in wars, for the welfare of serving soldiers and their families and the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. Armed Forces Flag Day is marked in India every year on December 7 to honour martyrs and the men in uniform who serve India. Citizens are urged to make voluntary contributions towards the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund for the welfare of personnel and ex-servicemen, their family members and also to rehabilitate those injured in wars. Appealing people

to contribute in Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF) to honour sacrifices made by soldiers in the line of duty, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh on December 2 announced that 'Armed Forces Flag Day' would be celebrated throughout December. "The Centre and states along with Sainik Board will celebrate 'Armed Forces Flag Day' throughout December. It's our national responsibility to support families of our security personnel, who have lost their lives or suffered injuries in the line of duty," Singh said. To celebrate the day, all three branches of the Indian armed

forces - the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy - arrange a variety of shows, carnivals, dramas and other entertainment programmes to showcase to the general public the efforts of their personnel to ensure national security. The day was first observed on December 7, 1949. That year, the then government attempted to involve the common people to contribute to the welfare of the defence personnel. After the country gained Independence, there was an imminent shortage of funds for the welfare of armed forces.

PM Modi inaugurates construction of Agra Metro project, work to be completed in 5 years

Lucknow, December 08 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the construction of Phase-1 of the Agra Metro project via video conferencing. The Agra Metro project comprises two corridors with a total length of 29.4 km and will connect major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal and Agra Fort with railway stations and bus stands. The project

will benefit Agra's population of 26 lakh and also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit the historic city every year. It will provide an environment-friendly mass rapid transit system to Agra, an official statement said. The estimated cost of the construction of the project is Rs 8,379.62 crore and it will be completed in five years, it said.

Farmers' demands valid, Kejriwal at Delhi's Singhu border

New Delhi, December 08 : Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Monday his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has always stood by farmers as he reiterated the support to their call for the Bharat Bandh or nationwide strike on Tuesday. Kejriwal made the comments at the Capital's Singhu border, where he has gone to extend support and check arrangements for farmers who have been protesting for the past 12 days against three farm laws enacted by the central government in September. "We support all the demands of farmers. Their issues and demands are valid. My party and I have stood with them from the very begin-



ning. At the beginning of their protests, Delhi Police had sought permission to convert nine stadiums into jails. I was pressurised but didn't permit," he was quoted. He was referring to the Delhi government denying police permission to convert nine stadiums in the city into temporary detention centres in light of the farmers' agitation on November 27, a day after the 'Dilli

Chalo' march began. "The farmers' demands are valid. The central government should agree to their demands immediately. Detaining farmers is not the solution. Peaceful protest is the constitutional right of every Indian. They cannot be jailed for that. That's why Delhi government is rejecting the permission sought by Delhi Police to convert stadiums into jails," Delhi's home minister Satyendar Jain had then said then in a letter to the Delhi Police. At the protest venue, Kejriwal said members of the AAP have been serving the farmers as 'sevadars' since the protests began. "I haven't come here as a CM but as a 'sevadar'. Farmers are in trouble today and we should stand with them. The AAP supports Dec 8 Bharat Bandh and party workers will participate in it across the nation," he said.

New book uncovers forgotten tales of Indian Army 'coolies' in World War I

New Delhi, December 08 : During World War I, over 5,00,000 men in the Indian Army were non-combatants who completed tasks like porting, construction, maintaining supply lines and transporting the wounded. However, over the years, the contribution of these men, who constituted the 'Coolie Corps', has largely remained forgotten. In 'The Coolie's Great War', author Radhika Singha recovers the stories of these men, who are invisible from history, and their unacknowledged services during the Great War. The book, published by Harper Collins India, is due to be released on 12 December on 'SoftCover'. ThePrint's e-venue to launch select non-fiction books. These men from the 'Coolie Corps' were called 'coolies' and sustained the military infrastructure of the British empire. They were viewed as racially subordinate and were subjected to 'non-martial' designations. However, they used the war-rising sides' need for their services as leverage

to fight back against prejudice, wage differences and service hierarchies. In the book, Singha, who is a professor of Modern Indian History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, views World War I through the lens of Indian labour, constructing a distinct geography of the war beyond India's frontier battlefronts. Singha has also authored the book 'A Despotism of Law: Crime and Justice in Early Colonial India'. Her research focuses on the social history of crime and criminal law, identification practices, governmentality, borders and border-crossing. Tanika Sarkar, a former JNU professor, said that the book explores the fate of Indian menial labourers in a narrative that is "as complex as it is compelling". Santanu Das, Professor at the University of Oxford called it a "book of rare scholarship and imagination", while Georg-August University of Göttingen's professor Ravi Ahuja said that the book stands out among the "recent bumper crop of World War studies".



A shop vendor arranges Christmas decorations at a shop in Jerusalem's Old City.

Army has a new head of information warfare. But first, stop hiding facts from Indians

New Delhi, December 08 : The over-supply of information during Operation Vijay in Kargil has been in stark contrast to the denial stance adopted by the Narendra Modi government since the 2017 Doklam crisis broke. Lessons learnt on information warfare in 1999 have been put aside to reveal a new methodology of controlling the story from India's military frontline, through silence and selective friendly leaks. To put this doctrine into practice, a new post of Director General of Information Warfare has been created under the Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Strategy. This is essentially the elevation of the already functioning Additional Director General, Public Information (ADG PI). Its roots were in a small team put together by two sections of Military Operations and Intelligence directorates, working out of a South Block dungeon called Army Liaison Cell (ALC). The 1990s' terrorism and insurgency fuelled the need for a non-attributable, but reliable, Army HQs address for journalists, including foreign media. Access was open to all credited journalists, and even some greenhorns cutting their teeth in defence reporting. A Colonel led the group of officers, until Op Vijay broke. I was witness to the emergence of this cell, its growth, and its operational utility during conventional and counter-insurgency operations. The outstanding Lt Gen. Paramjit S. Sangha will be India's first Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy). He will function as the 'single-point advice' person to the Vice Chief of Army Staff (V-COAS) and will have Directors of General Military Operations, Intelligence, Perspective Planning



and Strategic Communication reporting to him. Their inputs will then be collated to deliver 'advice' to the V-COAS. So, in effect, four Lt Generals will report to a slightly senior Lt General who will then sift through their inputs, and share it with yet another Lt General, albeit a little more senior. This reform at the Army HQs has been approved by the Union government. First of all, in the current scenario, information warfare has to be a tri-service effort, and the DG of Information Warfare should be responsible for handling dissemination from the three services. That is, after all, the stated objective of jointmanship and the purpose behind creating a Chief of Defence Staff. All press reports, stemming from the same briefing, suggest that the mover behind this reform was the 2017 Doklam crisis. According to an Indian Express report: "The need for the creation of the single-point advice person for the Vice Chief was felt during the standoff with China in Doklam in 2017. Sources had said earlier that this was because everything was under different verticals, and several officers would provide similar inputs." This reasoning defies imagination since those 'several' officers could still provide similar inputs to the Deputy Chief, and he,

in turn, carry the same contents to the V-COAS. After all, if various Lt Generals are expected to render advice in a mobilisation scenario, as Doklam was, it is almost certain all would share similar views, a logical outcome of their training and experience. So, if Doklam is being taken as the instigator of this reform, it doesn't quite click because, by all accounts, the Army fulfilled its operational role in Doklam with suitable results. The subsequent losses in the area are not on account of the Army, but political diplomacy, and beyond the purview of this reform. When the functioning cannot be faulted, then changing structures is not reform but bureaucratic tinkering, which will not do any good for the Army HQs' efficiency, however outstanding Lt Gen. Sangha may be. In the recent past, the Army HQs hasn't really been found wanting during times of crisis or operational deployment. The success, or otherwise, of Army HQs is directly proportional to the clarity of political directives, and the monies put on the table to achieve the targeted results. During far greater challenges, the Army HQs has achieved more with less, only because there was no political pussy-footing, and resources were made available as desired. The best example is Kargil and Operation Vijay, in sharp contrast to the current mobilisation in Ladakh, Operation Snow Leopard. The use of firepower is, of course, completely dissimilar between the two, but equally important is how vastly divergent information war-

fare was, and is being, applied in both scenarios. Back in the ALC, the swashbuckling Maj. Gen. Arjun Ray was brought in to handle the Kargil crisis from an information perspective. He had a psychological operations background from a foreign course, and understood its immense value, as also the methodology of achieving results. Responsibility was delegated to a few young Majors and Captains drawn from across the Army, with a target audience that was within India as well as across the border in Pakistan, and thereafter, the rest of the world. In fact, the initiative was taken by two officers, one from the Armoured Corps and the other from Signals. Then Chief of Army Staff Gen. V.P. Malik gave a broad perspective to the ALC, and it was implemented with operational and intelligence inputs from the concerned directorates. The simple formula worked well even in the most trying of circumstances. Now when the challenges are far less, capability somewhat greater, and the Modi government in an information denial mode, the new Deputy Chief of Strategy has a tough task ahead of him. Particularly since a lot more information is available to all known adversaries outside of India, as well as friendly countries. Those being denied information are only the citizens, while foreign media gets briefed, covertly, as the ALC once did. Psychological operations aimed only at the domestic audience don't alter facts on the ground, nor the adversaries' willingness to fight, which must always be the primary military objective of information warfare.

Ethiopian conflict affects virus battle, vaccine arrives in UK hospitals & other Covid news

New Delhi, December 08 : The novel coronavirus pandemic continues to devastate countries across the world - the latest count being over 6.7 crore cases and more than 15 lakh deaths. Ethiopia's one-month long war in northern Tigray region has severely affected efforts to battle the coronavirus pandemic in the region. Batches of the Covid vaccine have started to arrive in UK hospitals, and newly-appointed Japanese prime minister's approval rating falls significantly amid a Covid surge. Ethiopia's one-month long war in the northern Tigray region between regional and federal forces has severely affected efforts to battle the coronavirus pandemic in the region. The conflict has displaced 1 million people and has strained humanitarian services to a "breaking point", reports More than 45,000 refugees from the Tigray region are now seeking shelter in Sudan where they have no access to treatment or testing for coronavirus. "Many staying in the camps are forced to share shelters and crowd together in lines for food, cash and registration with different aid agencies. There are few face masks to be seen - or available for distribution," notes the report. Ethiopia has recorded 1,13,295 cases of Covid-19 and 1,747 deaths so far. In November, China's exports increased at the fastest pace ever in almost three years. Exports increased by 21.1 per cent in November in comparison to 2019, reports. "This was the sixth consecutive month of export growth, with China's factories continuing to capitalise on coronavirus lockdowns in the West," notes the report. This increase



in exports has been attributed to China sending electronic goods and medical equipment around the world over the course of this pandemic. China has recorded 86,634 cases of Covid-19 and 4,634 deaths, so far. Iran may not have access to Covid vaccine for 2 years, says Health Commission member Sameh Bakhtabadi, member of the Iranian Health Commission, said that the coronavirus vaccine will not be distributed in the country for at least two years, reports The Jerusalem Post. Bakhtabadi told the state-run Iran Students News Agency that the "people of Iran should know there is no coronavirus vaccine available for them at the moment". However, his comments are in stark contrast to Health Minister Saeed Namakis' remarks, who said that Iran will be securing 18 million vaccine doses from European nations. Iran has recorded 10,40,547 cases of Covid-19 and 50,310 deaths. Approval rating of Japan PM's Cabinet falls over rising Covid infections. The approval rate for Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's Cabinet fell significantly to 50.3 per cent from 63 per cent last month, reports. "It was the first time since June 2017 that the support rate for a Cabinet had dropped more than 10 points. The administration then was headed by Suga's predecessor, Shinzo Abe,"

the report notes. "The disapproval rate rose to 32.8% from 19.2%, according to the two-day telephone survey conducted over the weekend," it adds. The rise in disapproval is due to the fresh surge in coronavirus infections as well as government's struggles to rejuvenate the economy. Batches of the Covid vaccine have started to arrive in UK hospitals and are being readied for the 'first jabs' starting Tuesday, reports. The UK approved US firm Pfizer's vaccine, which showed 95 per cent efficacy in trials, on 2 December, becoming the first Western country to do so. However, experts have warned that the Covid vaccine doesn't mark the end of the pandemic. Professor Stephen Powis, National Medical Director in UK's National Health Service, was quoted as saying, "It will take many months for us to vaccinate everybody who needs vaccination." Victoria's expensive schools propose chartered planes to retrieve foreign students. Australian state Victoria's most expensive schools are proposing to bring students from other countries on chartered flights to begin school and revive the education market, reports The Age. Due to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns, several students had been forced to choose between staying in Australia indefinitely or returning to their home country for remote classes. "Victoria has more international school students than any other state or territory, with more than 9500 enrolled in 2018, primarily from China, Vietnam and Cambodia," says the report. Australia has recorded 27,972 cases of Covid-19 and 908 deaths.

Heavy Police Force Deployed at Akhilesh Yadav's House to Stop Him from Joining March for Farmers

Lucknow, Dec 08 : A heavy police force has been deployed from Samajwadi Party's office to Akhilesh Yadav's residence in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh ahead of the party supremo's visit to 'Kisan Pad Yatra' on Monday. Yadav had announced the yatra on Sunday in solidarity with agitating farmers demanding repulsion of new agrari laws. The police have deployed barricades on the entire stretch of Vikramaditya Marg, while the roads have been sealed for the general public. Pleading to support agitating farmers, Yadav also requested people and party workers to ensure food and medical supplies for the protestors who threatened to intensify protests and block more roads. Yadav will be participating in the Samajwadi Party's statewide 'Kisan Padayatra' on Monday. While announcing the solidarity march, Yadav said that SP supports the demands of the farmers and the Government should withdraw all three anti-farmer laws. This law is withdrawn, the party will organize a continuous march in the entire state. Chief Yadav himself will participate in the yatra beginning from Mandi in Kannauj to the Kisan Bazar. Attacking the government, Yadav said, "Farmers' paddy and maize is not being purchased at the minimum support price."

Contd. From Page 1

'CAA'-AASU announces

the State," AASU General Secretary Sankar Jyoti Baruah said.Issuing a release, the stated that the Centre has passed CAA in the Parliament on December 11 in 2019 and from December 12 onwards, the people from across the state and country have been protesting against it, which resulted in the deaths of 5 innocents.The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 was passed by the Parliament of India on 11 December 2019. It amended the Citizenship Act, 1955 by providing a pathway to Indian citizenship for illegal migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The protest, termed as "Gana Hoonkar" (public's warning) by the apex students' body, will be observed in every district by beating traditional drums, sankha, taal, dhol etc. and seeking justice for the five martyrs' and demanding to withdraw the Citizenship Amendment Act.The CAA eases the pathway to Indian citizenship for persecuted foreign religious minorities who entered India before the end of 2014; Assamese groups have opposed the CAA because an influx of foreigners may change demographics in tribal and border regions. Demonstrators will likely gather in urban centers, including the state capital, Dispur, as well as other major cities such as Guwahati. Protesters will probably demonstrate at popular protest locations, such as government buildings and public squares. AASU members have also marched along roadways during previous protests. Hundreds of people will likely participate in larger gatherings.Security personnel will likely monitor protests and may enforce coronavirus disease (COVID-19) gathering restrictions. Clashes between protesters and police are possible, especially if security forces forcibly attempt to disperse demonstrators. Localized transport disruptions are also possible, as protesters may march along roadways.

Bharat Bandh: Normal Life Hits

peaceful shutdown. The security forces are also keeping a vigil at the railway stations to avoid any 'Rail Roko' protest in the state.Normal life has been affected as commercial vehicles off the roads in view of the shut down.Farmer leaders said their strike will remain peaceful and that no shops and establishments will be forcibly closed on account of the Bandh. "There will be complete 'Bharat bandh' till 3 pm Tuesday, but emergency services will be allowed," farmer leader Balbir Singh Rajewal told reporters.On the eve of the nationwide strike, the Centre asked all states and Union Territories to tighten security and that peace and tranquility must be maintained during the strike.Police also detained a few people that were protesting in front of Janata Bhawan in Guwahati in support of the Bharat Bandh called by farmer unions.

"Previous BPF government

and aspirations of the people of the BTR.On the other hand, the people alleged that the fund allotted for the implementation of welfare schemes in BTR was consumed by the government. Therefore, he requested the voters of BTR to exercise their franchise in favor of a change and cast their votes in favor of the BJPSo that a government based on the sheer commitment to the cause of welfare of the people can be established.He also said that taking cues of the Central and State governments run by the BJP, the people of BTR very earnestly desire to form a government of BJP. He also said that the if BJP forms the government at BTR all people belonging to all caste, creed, ethnicity, and religion can feel secure and can have development in the real sense of the term. He also said that ifBJP forms government in the BTR there will be total peace, prosperity, and tranquillity in the BTR areas.Sonowal also said that if BJP comes to power, the government can implement Central and State government schemes in the BTR areas. He moreover, said that if BJP comes to power the government will work intensely to wipe out corrupt practices from BTR. He also said that the BJP government will transform BTR into a region where there will be noinsurgency and every body will feel safe and secured and there will be a permanent and strong democratic system in the area. He also said that all the four districts of BTR have immense potential.However, at different times the divisive forces retard the rate of development. The BJP government therefore, once comes to power will tame all the divisive forces by bringing everybody to the mainstream and unleash a strong narrative of development in the BTR.Minister of State for Revenue and Disaster Management Jogen Mohan, MP Rajya Sabha Bhubaneswar Kalita, Chairman Minority Development Board Mominul Awal, Secretary, BJP Sukumar Biswas and a host of others were present at the rallies.

Mobile technology will help India

was able to provide benefits worth billions of dollars to millions of Indians. "It is because of mobile technology that we are seeing billions of cashless transactions which boost formalisation and transparency. It is because of mobile technology that we will enable smooth contactless interface on toll booths," he saidThe government is planning a detailed technological road map to optimise the distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine. The plan will include the use of more regional languages for creating awareness, addressing challenges of last-mile vaccinators and generating alerts about fake vaccines. Health workers will be at the forefront of the immunisation drive while information technology (IT) experts will be in charge at the back end. Experts are working to develop requisite software to ensure the vaccine is properly distributed across the country.An inter-ministerial team for this purpose has members from the ministries of IT and health and as well as the United Nations Development Programme. The government is expected to roll out the COVIN app to track the procurement, supply and distribution of the vaccine to the last mile. The app is likely to be a bolstered version of the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (e-VIN) used for the polio eradication programme in India. The e-VIN technology is currently active in 32 states and Union Territories and the government plans to roll it out in the remaining ones immediately."23,507 cold chain points across 585 districts of 22 states and 2 UTs [Union Territories] routinely use the eVIN technology for efficient vaccine logistics management. Over 41,420 vaccine cold chain handlers have been introduced to digital record-keeping by training them on eVIN. Nearly 23,900 electronic temperature loggers have been installed on vaccine cold chain equipment for accurate temperature review of vaccines in storage," the government said in a statement in August.As per the ministry's dashboard, 26,567 new Covid-19 cases took India's tally past the 9.7 million mark to 9,703,770 on Tuesday. India has reported 383,000 active infections, 9.17 million recoveries and 1,40,958 deaths so far.

IIT Guwahati researchers

that has a slippery surface that causes insects that land on it to fall into its tube-shaped structure, to be digested. In the past geometries of Rice leaves and cacti are associated with 'Slippery Liquid-Infused Porous Surface(s)' or SLIPS to improve the water harvesting performance. The research team from IIT Guwahati has used the concept of chemically patterned SLIPS for the first time, to effectively harvest water from moist air. The researchers produced a patterned hydrophilic SLIP by spraying a sponge-like porous polymeric material on top of a simple A4 printer paper.Further, chemically modulated hydrophilic spots were associated on the coating prior to lubricating with two distinct types of oils - natural olive oil and synthetic krytox. This surface could harvest water from foggy/water vapour laden air without the need for any cooling arrangement."We have produced a highly efficient water harvesting interface where the fog collecting rate is as high as 4400±190 mg/cm2/h", says the lead researcher, Dr. Uttam Manna. The researchers have also compared the performance of their pitcher-plant inspired SLIPS materials to other bio-inspired ideas and have found theirs to be superior in terms of efficiency of water harvesting.Given that more than 50% of India's population has no access to safe drinking water and about 200,000 people die every year due to lack of access to safe water, the inexpensive method for harvesting water from water vapour or fog droplets in air can potentially alleviate the water scarcity issues in the country.Apart from water harvesting, SLIPS could be used for other purposes, such as easily cleanable household appliances, in underwater hulls of ships and submarines to prevent bio-fouling and anti-icing windows for aircraft.

Mukesh Ambani Plans Jio's 5G

providers such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea offer 4G services. The country however also has a 2G network that supports only voice calling and text messaging."As many as 300 million mobile subscribers in India are still trapped in the 2G era. Urgent policy steps are needed to ensure that these underprivileged people have an affordable smartphone so that they too can benefit from direct benefit transfer into their bank accounts, and actively participate in the digital economy," he said.India has over a billion phone users.Mukesh Ambani's company offers low-priced smartphones that allow internet access."I can say with utmost confidence that 5G will enable India to not only participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution but also to lead it," he said.As the digitalisation of the Indian economy and Indian society picks up speed, the demand for digital hardware will grow enormously."We cannot rely on large-scale imports in this area of critical national need," Mr Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Ltd, said.Stating that many leading global companies are coming to India to set up manufacturing facilities, he said the country has developed world-class strengths in chip design."I clearly foresee India becoming a major hub for the state-of-the-art semiconductor industry," he said. "When all the stakeholders work together, we can surely ensure that India's success in hardware will match our success in software."Jio Platforms, with its family of over 20 start-up partners, has built world-class capabilities in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, machine learning, the internet of things and blockchain."We are creating compelling home-grown solutions in education, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, financial services and new commerce," he said. "Each of these solutions, once proven in India, will be offered to the rest of the world to address global challenges."Mr Ambani said India has the historic opportunity to become the world's pre-eminent digital society with ease of living for all."My conviction comes from the enormous transformative power of the digital technologies," he said.India, he said, has two unique strengths - the confluence of three D's vibrant democracy, young demography and digital transformation, and the visionary and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.While the outbreak of COVID-19 posed life-threatening challenges, high-speed 4G connectivity infrastructure has proved to be India's Digital Lifeline, he said.Throughout 2020, India worked online, studied online, shopped online, received healthcare online, socialised online, played online. "Simply put, India thrived online."With the coronavirus induced recession behind, Mr Ambani said the Indian economy will not only bounce back but will also grow with unprecedented acceleration."India can and India will prove cynics wrong by becoming a USD 5 trillion economy," he said. "It will be a more equal India, with increased incomes, increased employment, and improved quality of life for 1 billion Indians at the middle and bottom of the economic pyramid."

90-year-old woman from Northern

again once she receives the top-up booster dose 21 days later."I can't thank May and the NHS staff enough who have looked after me tremendously, and my advice to anyone offered the vaccine is to take it - if I can have it at 90 then you can have it too," she said."It's a huge honour to be the first person in the country to deliver a COVID-19 jab to a patient, I'm just glad that I'm able to play a part in this historic day," said nurse Parsons.Maggie is among the first set of people contacted in advance by the NHS for the jab based on a pre-determined health risk criteria and will include 87-year-old British Indian grandfather of nine Hari Shukla, who will get his first dose at a hospital in Newcastle."I'm so pleased we are hopefully coming towards the end of this pandemic and I am delighted to be doing my bit by having the vaccine, I feel it is my duty to do so and do whatever I can to help," said Dr Shukla, a race relations campaigner.They have been picked based on the criteria set by the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation phased rollout based on those at the highest risk of death from the deadly virus.People aged 80 and over as well as care home workers will be first to receive the jab this week, along with NHS workers who are at higher risk among the first to receive the "life-saving jab". "Today marks a huge step forward in the UK's fight against coronavirus, as we begin delivering the vaccine to the first patients across the whole country. I am immensely proud of the scientists who developed the vaccine, members of the public who took part in trials, and the NHS who have worked tirelessly to prepare for rollout," said Prime Minister Boris Johnson.However, the UK prime minister struck a note of caution to say that mass vaccination will take time, and therefore there was a need to remain "clear-eyed" about the challenges that remain."As the programme ramps up in the weeks and months ahead, it is as important as ever to keep to the COVID Winter plan - following the rules in your area and remember the basics of hands, face and space," he said.Since the Pfizer vaccine got the green light from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) last week, the NHS said.Its workers have been working around the clock to manage the huge scale logistical challenge of deploying the vaccine. Over the weekend, hospitals have begun inviting over 80s in for a jab and work with care home providers to book their staff into vaccination clinics."We will look back on today, V-day, as a key moment in our fight back against this terrible disease, and I am proud our health services across the United Kingdom are about to embark on our largest ever vaccination programme," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock."With over-80s and frontline health and care staff receiving their vaccinations from today, the whole country will breathe a collective sigh of relief as our most vulnerable loved ones start to be given protection from the virus."Now's the time to sit tight and remain patient until you get notified by the NHS that it's time for your vaccination. Until then, protect yourselves and the NHS by continuing to follow local restrictions. We can see light at the end of the tunnel but still have a long way to go," he said.The Pfizer/BionTech formula is an mRNA vaccine that uses a tiny fragment of genetic code from the pandemic virus to teach the body how to fight COVID-19 and build immunity.The MHRA has stressed it has been cleared for mass rollout only after "rigorous" safety tests despite the process being speeded up due to the urgency of finding an effective vaccine against a pandemic that has wreaked havoc around the world."Today is just the first step in the largest vaccination programme this country has ever seen. It will take some months to complete the work as more vaccine supplies become available and until then we must not drop our guard," said NHS England chief executive Sir Simon Stevens, as he praised everyone involved in the first clinically approved COVID-19 vaccination for "achieving in months what normally takes years".

Anna Hazare on fast to support

people of the country that the agitation which is going on in Delhi should spread across the country. The situation needs to be created to create pressure on the government, and to achieve this, farmers need to hit streets. But no one should resort to violence," said Hazare who began his fast in Ralegan Siddhi village in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.He said this was the "right time" for farmers to come out on streets and get their issues resolved."I had backed this cause earlier also, and will continue to do so," he said.Hazare also expressed the need to grant autonomy to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and to implement the recommendations of the M S Swaminathan Commission.The octogenarian warned of agitation if the government fails to grant autonomy to the CACP and implement recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission."The government only gave assurances but never fulfilled these demands," he said.

B. Palkee enthalls Perfect Glam Beauty Pageant Season 2



Guwahati, December 8: B. Palkee, a disciple of the Kathak exponents Marami Medhi and MeghranjaniMedhi, enthalls the packed audience at the Perfect Glam Beauty Pageant Season 2, with her scintillating Kathak performance. One of the prestigious

fashion event of the state, Perfect Glam Beauty Pageant's second season was held at the Shilpagram auditorium on December 6. B. Palkee joined the programme as a Guest Performer and performed a Dhrupad, musically ornamented by the renowned vocalist Joy

Prakash Medhi and choreographed by her Gurus Marami Medhi and MeghranjaniMedhi. Palkee has been learning Kathak at Sursangam for last 10 years. She is a CCRT Scholarship holder in Kathak for the year 2018-19 and an approved Radio Actor for AIR, Guwahati.

' Borgeet's place in Indian classical music', Webinar organised by Asom Sahitya Sabha's Mumbai chapter

Guwahati, Dec 08 : 'Bargeet, a Musicological Exploration' is a modified version of Ph.D thesis and " it caters to aspiring researchers. Among many articles Dr Pabitra Pran Goswami has written, it is the 'Bargeet, a study of the literature & system of music is praiseworthy. After getting his M.Phil, he guided four M.Phil scholars of Madurai Kamraj University." Talking about the Vaishnavi scholar of Assam, Dr Pabitra Pran Goswami, who rendered a program, titled- ' Borgeet's place in Indian classical music', has been organised by Asom Sahitya Sabha's Mumbai chapter on 6th December through a Webinar. Viewers from Assam & across the countries are immensely motivated by Dr Goswami's fine presentation, detailed observation and knowledge about Bargeet as well as Sreemanta Sankardev.. Dr Goswami says that ""without Bargeet there is no significance of worship and prayer. There is a difference between the morning & the evening Bargeet". Dr Goswami is worried about the the Bargeet's existence amid modernism. To extent the Bargeet, it has to be introduce outside Assam , then only other people will come to know the greatness of Borgeet ; Dr Goswami said." Deciple of Dr Goswami, Sanghita Pujari beautifully sang some Borgeet & here also Dr Goswami accompanied her with his Khol Badon'." The onset of the programme, Suraiya Jahan, the President of Mumbai Sahitya Sabha welcomed Dr Goswami, Sanghita Pujari and the viewers, across the globe .. Karabi Acharya has conducted the programme. A vote of thanks has given by the Secretary of Mumbai Sahitya Sabha & convenor of the brilliant programme Deepankar Borgohain .

Opposition leaders to meet President Ram Nath Kovind to discuss contentious farm laws

NEW DELHI, Dec 08 : Amid the "Bharat Bandh" called by the farmers protesting against the Centre's farm laws, the leaders from different political parties will meet President Ram Nath Kovind to discuss the contentious laws and express their concerns about it.This was announced by NCP president Sharad Pawar on Tuesday. Opposition parties are expected to meet Kovind on Wednesday evening to discuss the three farm laws enacted by the Centre. Importantly, the farmer union leaders will meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the evening today.Pawar's NCP is among the parties that have backed Tuesday 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers' unions. "Leaders from different political parties (those opposing the farm bills) will sit, discuss and take a collective stand on the contentious farm laws before meeting President Ram Nath Kovind," Pawar told reporters.On Monday, the BJP said Pawar, who was agriculture minister in the UPA government, had asked states to amend the APMC Act and had even warned them that the Centre will not provide financial assistance in absence of the three reforms.It also cited letters written by Pawar during his tenure as agriculture minister to buttress the point. The NCP said after taking over as Union agriculture minister, Pawar had tried to form a broader consensus amongst state agriculture marketing boards by inviting suggestions for the implementation of the act."The benefit of farmers as per the model APMC Act was explained (by Pawar) to various state governments and many state governments came forward to implement it. Farmers across the country are gaining from the implementation of the act which was fine-tuned by Pawar to protect farmers' interests," the party had said.On Tuesday, Pawar met Defence Rajnath Singh and the discussions were believed to be held pertaining to land acquisition for the Purandar airport in Pune district. Meanwhile, ahead of the sixth round of talks scheduled on Wednesday, Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy on Tuesday declared that the Narendra Modi government is ready for "MSP and Mandi Act (APMC Act)".The Minister said that the central government's first priority is Minimum Support Price (MSP) and that it will also focus on Mandis in coming days.Reddy ensured that the government doesn't follow two different opinions on the issue and is committed for the welfare of the farmers who have been protesting on Delhi borders for over 13 days."We are ready for MSP and Mandi Act. These two points are our government's priority. Our government's first priority is MSP. We will also run Mandis in the coming days. There are no two opinions on these issues," Reddy said at Krishi Bhawan.MSP is a form of market intervention by the government to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices. MSP is price fixed by government to protect the producer or farmer against excessive fall in price during bumper production years.There is the fear that MSP will not be enforced once private mandis come up. Thus, the farmers seeking amendment of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act or Mandi Act.

BTC elections, Himanta Biswa Sarma has been addressing several mega rallies in Kokrajhar

GUWAHATI, Dec 08 : In the run-up to the second phase of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) convenor and Assam cabinet minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma has been addressing several mega rallies in Kokrajhar district on Tuesday.Dr. Sarma took part in a bike rally from Putiyabari to DN Himatsingka High School.Later, he will also take part in a Padyatra from DN Himatsingka High School to KDSA ground.The senior BJP leader will address the crowd at Fakiragram following a bike rally.Kokrajhar and Chirang districts in Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) will vote in the second phase for the BTC elections on November 10. The first phase of polling in Udalguri and Baksa district concluded peacefully on Monday. The votes will be counted on December 12.Over 75 per cent voters exercised their franchise in the first phase. Till the closing time of 4:30 PM, 75.21 per cent polling took place out of a total of 13,64,018 voters, who seal the fate of 130 candidates in ballot boxes for 21 constituencies spread across Udalguri and Baksa districts.An official of the Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) said long queues were still there at several of the booths out of the total 1,739 polling stations as they entered the compounds before 4:30 PM and the voting percentage is likely to go up further. Assam health and finance minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would single-handedly form the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).Addressing an election rally at Fakiragram in Kokrajhar district, Dr. Sarma said, "BJP will single-handedly form the government in Kokrajhar."The minister also took on Hagrama Mohilary-led Bodoland People's Front (BPF) for widespread corruption and anomalies in the government schemes.He promised that such irregularities would come to an end if the BJP comes into power in the BTC.The campaign for the second phase of the BTC elections ended today. Kokrajhar and Chirang district will go to polls on December 10. Udalguri and Baksa district voted in the first phase on December 7. The votes will be counted on December 12.

South Africa left to count the cost after edgy England opt for safety first

Cape Town, December 08 : Cape Town was overcast for much of the day on Monday but around 3pm, just as word came through that England's ODI leg of the tour of South Africa was off, blue skies and sunshine broke out, showing off Table Mountain in all its glory. The mood in the England squad was in keeping with this change of weather, as increasingly anxious thoughts about forging ahead with the cricket while simultaneously dealing with a Covid-19 outbreak in the camp were replaced by a collective sense of relief. Despite two early positive cases in the South Africa squad at the start of the bubble, the Twenty20 series was staged in full. But since Friday the tourists had become agitated and having privately queried the efficacy of the so-called biosecure bubble since the start of the trip - albeit without offering specific examples - suddenly they had no faith in it whatsoever. A third South Africa positive had seen the one-day series opener at Newlands called off at the 11th hour and again in Paarl on Sunday when two members of staff at the Vineyard hotel were shown to have contracted the virus. Then came the tipping point for the tourists: a couple of their own were suddenly suspected cases and it did not take long for the management to be told that, with the prospect of more infections and a 10-day isolation period that would delay departure, this was all too much. Eoin Morgan is a powerful England captain, perhaps the most powerful in recent times following last year's World Cup win. He made it clear four years ago when missing the tour of Bangladesh amid security concerns

that he is unwilling to take the field if his mind is occupied elsewhere. This should have been a relatively straightforward tour by comparison, certainly one that appeared much less complex than the recent English summer. The quickfire trip involved two teams playing six white-ball fixtures at two venues and staying at one supposedly secure hotel. Yet despite the presence of enlarged squads, pro-



viding warm-up opposition and plenty of reserves in the event of any illness, South Africa's first stab at biosecure cricket was unable to keep the virus out and thus provide the peace of mind off the field that Morgan and his players feel they need. There has been plenty of renewed praise for the England and Wales Cricket Board in recent days, having shepherded visits by West Indies (men and women), Ireland, Pakistan and Australia this year without one positive Covid result from the 10,000 tests dispensed. And few could argue this was not an impressive feat by Steve Elworthy and his ECB team. But after years of cricket's global landscape being tilted towards the so-

called Big Three, Cricket South Africa's pockets are empty, while their leadership remains hugely unstable. Any English superiority here should be kept in check by these facts and the promise to return to play these ODIs must not be hollow. Relations between the two boards appear amicable on the surface but beneath there has been a spot of back and forth. An email from officials at Western Province

appeared on ESPNcricinfo alleging that England broke protocols on Thursday by using nets that were outside of the agreed zones. South Africa's team coach sits outside the Vineyard hotel in Cape Town, where both they and England had been staying during the T20 and ODI series. South Africa's team coach sits outside the Vineyard hotel in Cape Town, where both they and England had been staying during the T20 and ODI series. Photograph: Shaun Botterill/Getty Images England's response was that the original practice pitches were "not acceptable" and, though they switched location, at no stage was "the safety and health" of players and coaches compromised. It may

seem a petty quibble by the hosts but, by the same token, how would the ECB have viewed such a unilateral move by their guests during the summer? The tourists are now staying in the country until Thursday and in a heightened state of lockdown. Word comes from the bubble that face masks are now mandatory and social distancing is at its strictest. Curmudgeons may argue that an overreaction from a group of fit young athletes has taken place, a view that will harden if the follow-up tests for England's two positive cases provide them with the all-clear to leave South Africa alongside the other members of the party. But it is worth remembering that even in normal times, cricket is a sport that heavily taxes the mind. Marcus Trescothick (on this tour as a coach) and Jonathan Trott were praised for speaking up about the mental health problems that cut short their England careers and the current generation have seen the pressures increase. Until they are vaccinated - and Morgan has stressed cricketers should be low down the queue - their movements are limited to hotels and grounds. There is little escape on tours that previously offered a chance to take in the local surroundings, while the time they spend with their families has returned to levels witnessed during less enlightened times. With tours of Sri Lanka and India to come after Christmas, a packed home summer and then a winter of fives tours that includes a T20 World Cup and an Ashes campaign, there will be more cloudy days ahead. For South Africa, who must convince others to still tour this season, these are imminent.

Anthony Joshua admits to worries of ring rust after year without fight

London, December 08 : "Oh, definitely," Anthony Joshua says as he considers whether his year out of the ring could affect him on Saturday night when he defends his world heavyweight titles against Kubrat Pulev in London. "That's what makes this fight so interesting. This year has just thrown every obstacle at us all. I can tell you that I'm a million dollars, I've been knocking everyone out in sparring - and then I go in there on Saturday night and I get my head punched in because I've got ring rust. Who knows?" But I feel good. I'm looking forward to it. I haven't boxed in such a long time but that's why in lockdown I've done lots of training physically and mentally. Joshua has not boxed competitively since he regained his titles in a rematch against Andy Ruiz Jr last December and he claims, that, in an effort to steel himself against the rugged Pulev, he has allowed his sparring partners to pummel him. "I've done a lot of sparring, getting my body tough again, getting punched up. Sometimes in sparring I think: I'm going to take this round off and let this boy punch me up because I need to get tough. I need to get that thick skin." Joshua won his first 22 fights, while collecting the IBF, WBA and WBO world titles, but 18 months ago he suffered a shocking stoppage loss to Ruiz in New York. Memories of his defeat remain and Joshua believes that chastening experience strengthened him mentally. "The Ruiz fight is buried for me because I made no excuse. I took the loss and I dealt with it four and a half months later [in winning the rematch]. Knowing what losing was like and not wanting to go there again has definitely made me tougher. I want to prove to myself how good I have become after losing, getting back up and then being in lockdown training like an athlete. I want to see what the benefits of training like a true athlete have done for me." Pulev has lost only once in 29 bouts - when he



was knocked out in his only previous world title fight against Wladimir Klitschko. The Bulgarian cannot match Ruiz's fast hands, but he is tenacious and resilient. "I'm fighting someone experienced, with a good jab, and so I have to be ducking and diving, slipping and sliding," Joshua says. "I can't be straight-up and stiff. I am going to have to adopt an elusive style as well, so I have had to work on all these aspects tactically. So I am really looking forward to that motivation I've used after the Ruiz loss. This is the first opponent I have faced after losing and regaining the title, so it will be a good indication of where I am at." Pulev and Joshua were originally scheduled to meet in October 2017 in front of a sold-out crowd of 70,000 in Cardiff. But Pulev had to be replaced by Carlos Takam after he was injured during training. "Three years ago might have been too early for me," Joshua suggests. "I'm more experienced now. I'm wiser. I would never want to lose a fight again. I know what that feels like. But Pulev is wiser as well. With age comes experience and I'm going to be in there with a man who's mentally strong and experienced." Joshua is a heavy favourite to win on Saturday and Pulev would have had more of a chance three years ago. "I was thinking about that the other day," Joshua agrees before revealing that he has been watching many of his own previous fights. "I went through a lot of my career not even knowing what I was doing. I was just fighting. I watched the [Eric] Molina fight the other day. I watched a bit of the Takam fight. I watched the Klitschko fight and I was like: 'Wow! How was I in those types of fights with such little experience? I was just a pup then.' I feel stronger, I feel smarter and it's the same thing with the other guys I want to fight. The longer they leave it the tougher it is going to be for them because experience is the best teacher and I'm gaining so much experience every day in the gym." Those three years have taught me a lot. So it's come at a good time for me. You'd have to ask Pulev how he feels but I'm sure after my loss everyone now says: 'Oh, we're going to exploit Anthony Joshua's weaknesses' and all this nonsense. We'll see how confident he is after my first jab and right-hand smashes him in his jaw."

Olympics branded a 'mockery' after inclusion of breakdancing for Paris Games



Melbourn, December 08 : Australian squash great Michelle Martin says the Olympic Games have become a "mockery" after breakdancing was added to the program for Paris 2024. Australia's three-time world champion's immediate reaction to learning squash had been overlooked yet again, this time in favour of breakdancing was "oh my god". "You just look at the whole thing and you just go 'where's the Olympics going?' I know some people say breakdancing's a sport but ... I don't understand," Martin told AAP. "The Olympics was all about a score, or it was a running race. There was a definitive answer and results to sports. You bring in all these judging things and it just gets so corrupt and so out of control. I just don't get it anymore. Squash has been lobbying hard, unsuccessfully, for decades to be included at the Olympics. But not even support from tennis star Roger Federer has been able to give squash a look-in. Before breakdancing, officially named "breaking" beat it, squash has lost out to sports including skateboarding, sport climbing, BMX, surfing, golf and wushu, which was trialled in Beijing in 2008. As heartbroken as she is, Martin - who also won six British Opens, the Wimbledon of squash - is no longer surprised. "After the last ones, you get to the point where it's almost expected," the former long-time world No 1 said. "Why? I don't know because the amount of effort squash players put in. I know what it was like, training for the sport. It's one of the hardest sports to train for and play. They've obviously got something against squash, because it's been rejected in the past, it just keeps getting overlooked. I don't know. I don't know what to say." The 53-year-old has lost all hope of squash ever gaining Olympic status, especially when the IOC has opted for breakdancing on this occasion. "It's sort of making a mockery of what the Olympics is," Martin said. "When you look at what it all used to stand for, the Olympics, it definitely fits in the category. What does the Olympics stands for these days, I don't really know." They either need to go back to what the Olympics was about and let the other sports stay outside of that because the problem is it's having such an impact on the sports that don't get into the Olympics now. "The Olympics has lost what it was. Yes they're trying to move with the times but it's creating a mockery of the thing."

Paul Pogba's agent says player wants to leave Manchester United in January

London, December 08 : Paul Pogba's agent, Mino Raiola, has claimed it will be best for the midfielder and Manchester United if the 27-year-old leaves in January as he is unhappy and can "no longer express" himself at the club. The comments are believed to be part of an interview Raiola has conducted with Italian newspaper Tuttosport and which will be published in full on Tuesday. They will not go down well at United and especially as the team's focus is meant to be on preparing for a crucial Champions League fixture with RB Leipzig. Given Pogba's struggles at United since returning to the club for a then world-record £93.2m fee in the summer of 2016, it would be no surprise to see him depart Old Trafford. But the earliest that was expected to happen was in the summer - Raiola is instead calling for it to occur when the winter transfer window opens on 2 January. "It is useless to go around it," he has reportedly told Tuttosport. "Better to speak clearly, look ahead and not waste time looking for culprits. Paul at Manchester United is unhappy, he is no longer able to express himself as he would like and as expected of him. He has to change teams, he has to change the air." He has a contract that will expire in a year and a half, in the summer of 2022, but I believe the best solution for the parties is to sell it to the next market. Otherwise, the Old Trafford club, with which relations are excellent, knows that they would risk losing him on a free transfer, given that for the moment it is not the player's intention to extend the contract. If someone doesn't understand it - they understand very little about football. In any case, let them blame me if Paul leaves next summer." Raiola has criticised the direction of

United ever since Pogba's transfer four years ago and his client may well have been sold this summer but for the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the finances of potential buyers. Earlier this season, United triggered a one-year extension clause in Pogba's contract until summer 2022 to guard against losing him as a free agent at the end of the



campaign. Meanwhile, Harry Maguire says United are not thinking about the Europa League, with the captain expecting their big players to step up against Leipzig on Tuesday and ensure qualification for the Champions League last 16. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team require a point in Germany to guarantee passage, but know if they lose they will drop into Europe's second-tier competition. It would be a dire scenario for a club of United's ambition and when asked about it, their captain struck a bullish note, pointing out how United won at Leicester on the final day of last season to finish third as proof of their ability to win when it truly counts. "I joined this club to play in the biggest games possible," said Maguire. "Your big players step up in the biggest games and I think that's a statement we've made over the years. It is similar to Leicester when we had to get a result to reach the Champions League - we managed to do that, so we will take confidence from that. We feel ready and prepared and we're looking forward to it.

We haven't thought about the Europa League. We're just fully focused on the game and we're going in prepared and wanting to get through to the knockout stages." Solskjaer echoed the sentiment. "Knockout games or games like this that give a chance to go through are big," he said. "The players are Manchester United players because

people's heads that [this] might happen [a comeback] so they can't switch off," he said. "Manchester United has a tradition and history of this and opponents would know about that as well. I can definitely see those traits returning - the belief coming back. I don't know how many times we've come back and how many goals we've scored in the last 10 or 15 minutes but it's a lot, that's a big difference from last season. We spoke about that at the start of the season - we need those extra points that can give us. It's been very important so far." Maguire said: "We've shown great character to come from behind in all these away games and will need this character, spirit and confidence against Leipzig - a team who are very good at home. But we have great belief in ourselves that we can go there and get the result required to go through to the knockout stages." In October's reverse match United soundly beat Julian Nagelsmann's side 5-0. "It's a game we will remember fondly because we did many things right," reflected Solskjaer. "We need to do lots of things right again and we should also correct a few wrongs. We know Leipzig well enough to know they're unpredictable in their shape and system but, we know the players and the style they play in so know it's going to be a tough game and we need to be at our best to get a good result." David de Gea is fit again after a knee problem caused him to miss the West Ham win, with Luke Shaw also travelling following a month out with a hamstring strain. Edinson Cavani and Anthony Martial have "niggles" so are not in the squad, meaning Solskjaer will choose between Marcus Rashford and Mason Greenwood to lead the line.

people's heads that [this] might happen [a comeback] so they can't switch off," he said. "Manchester United has a tradition and history of this and opponents would know about that as well. I can definitely see those traits returning - the belief coming back. I don't know how many times we've come back and how many goals we've scored in the last 10 or 15 minutes but it's a lot, that's a big difference from last season. We spoke about that at the start of the season - we need those extra points that can give us. It's been very important so far." Maguire said: "We've shown great character to come from behind in all these away games and will need this character, spirit and confidence against Leipzig - a team who are very good at home. But we have great belief in ourselves that we can go there and get the result required to go through to the knockout stages." In October's reverse match United soundly beat Julian Nagelsmann's side 5-0. "It's a game we will remember fondly because we did many things right," reflected Solskjaer. "We need to do lots of things right again and we should also correct a few wrongs. We know Leipzig well enough to know they're unpredictable in their shape and system but, we know the players and the style they play in so know it's going to be a tough game and we need to be at our best to get a good result." David de Gea is fit again after a knee problem caused him to miss the West Ham win, with Luke Shaw also travelling following a month out with a hamstring strain. Edinson Cavani and Anthony Martial have "niggles" so are not in the squad, meaning Solskjaer will choose between Marcus Rashford and Mason Greenwood to lead the line.

England's George Ford: 'Kicking is part of giving us best chance to win'

London, December 08 : England's unpopular kicking strategy has been defended by the fly-half George Ford who says he and his side are simply doing what it takes to be successful under rugby's current laws. Eddie Jones, the England coach, believes criticism of the tactic is "disrespectful" to the players and Ford also rejects the theory it makes the game less interesting. According to Ford, the Autumn Nations Cup final victory against France on Sunday is further evidence of England's approach bearing fruit, despite widespread public scepticism. "We understand where the game is at and what we need to do to try and win games," the Leicester fly-half said. "Ultimately, that's probably why we've won a few games recently. People are entitled to their opinion, but we're the guys that run out on the field and we want to give ourselves the best chance of winning. We believe that's the best way to do it." Like Jones, Ford is adamant kicking is not boring if it is done effectively. "I know it can be frustrating for people watching but it's fascinating in the sense it's a game of patience. There's a lot of information, composure and control needed to do the right thing and then also be ready to attack at the right time as well. We had a few opportunities to move the ball and challenge France ... we just need to execute a little bit better on the edges." The players also do not believe excessive pragmatism risks alienating old and new fans alike. "I don't think so, no," Ford said. "There are still opportunities in the game to attack and score tries. People can get excited about the defensive part of the game as well. You see players like Tom Curry and Sam Underhill consistently smashing people and that's also part of the game. It's a big part. It's just a cycle where the game is at. We want to put in a plan to make sure we win games."

New Zealand defeat West Indies in first home Test of two-match series



London, December 08 : New Zealand completed the first step of its mission for the home summer when it beat the West Indies by an innings and 134 runs on the fourth morning of the first Test. The win on Sunday began the Black Caps' drive to win all four of its home tests - against the West Indies and Pakistan - this season, which could lift them into the top two in Test rankings, depending on results in the series between Australia and India. A 2-0 series win will likely be enough to lift New Zealand above England into third place on WTC standings. The first step on Sunday was decisive. The West Indies resumed at 196-6, still 185 runs behind New Zealand after being asked to follow on 381 runs in deficit on the first innings. They were finally all out for 247. "We knew the West Indies coming here

were going to be a really tough challenge and we were fortunate to get off to a really good start in this match and hold that position," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said. "Coming into today we also knew it was going to be tough. This West Indies side bat very deep and they showed that as their middle and lower order applied themselves very, very well." The stubborn seventh-wicket partnership between Jermaine Blackwood and Alzarri Joseph, which prevented New Zealand from wrapping up the match on the third day by bowling out the West Indies twice in one day, was finally broken in the 58th over of the innings, the 16th of the day on Sunday. The partnership had been worth 107 runs by stumps on day three when Blackwood was 80 not out and Joseph was 59. The pair provided

one of the few displays of defiance from the West Indies batsmen and the only one Saturday when the tourists lost 15 wickets for 285 runs in 80 overs. Blackwood, who resumed at 80 not out, went on to his second Test century in an outstanding attacking innings, played out against a gloomy background for the visitors. The tourists were 89-6 in their second innings when Blackwood was joined in the middle by Joseph, a bowler with an ambition of being recognised as an allrounder. They frustrated New Zealand's bowlers through the last two hours of the third day, guiding the West Indies to 196 without further loss by stumps. The New Zealand bowlers had dominated the third day, bowling out their counterparts for 138 in their first innings as they replied to New Zealand's 519-7

declared. That total was based around Williamson's 251, his third test double century and highest test score. Williamson enforced the follow-on and the New Zealand bowlers, still fresh after bowling only 38 overs, continued to hold sway over the West Indies batsmen. They reduced the tourists to 30-4 by lunch and 89-6, again maintaining pressure. Blackwood and Joseph changed the tone of the day with a stand which was both stubborn and belligerent. When Joseph was out for 86 in the 58th over, they had batted for 35.5 overs and added 155 runs. Joseph was creeping towards a maiden Test century when he lofted a full, wide delivery from Kyle Jamieson to substitute fielder Mitchell Santner on the off side. Blackwood followed only five balls later, gloving a catch to Tim Southee behind square off Neil Wagner. The innings itself ended after only four more balls at 247-9 when Shannon Gabriel was bowled by Wagner. Wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich again was unable to bat because of a broken finger. "We just weren't good enough," West Indies captain Jason Holder said. "Our bowlers tried, they passed the bat quite a few times. But credit to Kane, he played an outstanding innings and made us toil and work hard to get him out." "Our batting just wasn't good in both innings but I just want to say credit to Jermaine Blackwood and Alzarri Joseph for bringing some respectability towards our batting."

Olympic medallist Vijender Singh to return Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in support of protesting farmers



Sonepat, December 08 : After several former sportspersons from Punjab decided to return their awards, 2008 Olympics bronze medallist boxer Vijender Singh have joined them to return his Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in support of the protesting farmers at the Delhi border. Vijender, the first Indian boxer to win an Olympic medal, said he will return the country's highest sporting honour if the union government failed to meet the demands of the farmers. "I owe a lot to Punjab. I spent maximum of time during my boxing career at National Institute of Sports (NIS) Patiala, so now its my time to pay back to the state," says Vijender Singh, who joined the farmers' protest at Singhu border in Sonepat on Sunday. "I totally support the farmers' demands and the entire country should support them because they are the lifeline of the country. Without them we can't live for a day." Vijender got the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in 2009 for winning bronze at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. "I got the award for making the country proud at the international arena, but the way the government is dealing with the farmers is

unacceptable. So, in protest I will return the award and all other benefits that I got along with the award," said Vijender. "Hope the government listens to the farmers' demands and resolve the issue soon, otherwise this protest will turn out to be a nation-wide agitation. I appeal to all the sportspersons to contribute in this revolution, in this fight for the farmers' rights." Five former sporting greats from Punjab also joined the protest at Singhu border on Sunday. Arjuna awardees Rajbir Kaur and Gurmail Singh (Hockey), Kartar Singh (wrestling), Jaipal Singh (boxing) and Dhyanchand awardee Ajit Singh (hockey). "Over 40 former sportspersons from Punjab had already announced to return their national sports awards in solidarity to the protesting farmers. In coming days many more sportspersons from Punjab and neighbouring state Haryana are likely to extend their support to the farmers. It's a nation wide protest and we wouldn't back out till the time the protesting farmers get their due from the government," said former Indian women's hockey captain Rajbir Kaur.

Gareth Southgate fears England player burnout for delayed Euro 2020

London, December 08 : Gareth Southgate says he is worried about the condition that his England players will be in for the European Championship next summer as he opened up on how the power of the Premier League could affect his prospects of success. The England manager next sees his squad in march when they will play their opening three qualifying ties for the 2022 World Cup, the draw for which was made on Monday. England have been put in a group with Poland, Hungary, Albania, Andorra and San Marino and the order of the fixtures will be announced on Tuesday. It is unusual to play World Cup qualifiers before a summer European tournament but this is an unusual season in terms of the rejigged schedule. Southgate, who will name his Euro squad in the weeks after the opening World Cup ties, says he shares the concerns of the top Premier League managers, including Liverpool's Jürgen Klopp. They have been frustrated by the demands placed on the players and how the league has as yet not per-

mitted use of five substitutes in matches. "Jürgen will be like me, looking at what March looks like - when teams are at the end of the Champions League, teams are going for the league title," Southgate said. "What we have tried to affect is that we've lobbied Uefa for five subs in the Nations League, which I think was a good decision.



I know there are talks about the FA Cup going in that direction. They are the bits that as an FA we can control. "I would think Jürgen would be frustrated because in Germany the DFB and Bundesliga work so closely together on these things. We don't have that power on fixtures with the Premier League or the substitutions. I think from a national team point of view a compact season like this - it's always a concern what you're going to get at the end of it." Southgate was asked

whether he would like to unite the Premier League clubs behind the cause of the national team. "It's a lovely idea but I have to live in a pragmatic world and a world of reality," he said. "I totally understand that we have the most intense competition at the top of our league and some very successful managers who have huge motivation."

Our league is very different. It's one of the additional situations as England manager that you have to deal with. It's always important to have civilised relationships with the clubs and respectful relationships. But the reality is our objectives are always slightly different. It's not so easy to get a multinational group of managers on the same page about England winning. "International football is strong, so is Champions League and Premier League football. So there is a different

political situation there that we do our best to try and navigate but it makes our life more difficult. I think Arsène Wenger said over the years that it's very difficult to have a successful national team and the strongest league. We are trying to do that. And will continue to try to do that. "If this is like a season like no other, then the race for the Premier League title is shaping up as unusually open, with a host of clubs - featuring various England players - emerging as challengers. Southgate believes it can benefit him in his most immediate goal - pushing for glory at the European Championship finals next summer. "We always want our players involved in big games. And when you look at teams that historically win international tournaments, they've got lots of players who have won European trophies or league titles. "The best way to judge people is against opponents that are at the highest possible level so you can see everything about whether they can cope, how they deal under pressure. It's a much easier guide to how they would be with England."

স্মৃতিগ্রস্তৰ বাবে লেখা আহ্বান

বিগত বৰ্ষৰ দৰে এইবাৰো আলোকপ্ৰভঞ্জন বেলফেয়াৰ ছ'চাইটিৰ সৌজন্যত দৈনন্দিন **বার্তা** গোষ্ঠীয়ে আয়োজন কৰিছে **Assam Rising-2020** শীৰ্ষক বঁটা প্ৰদান আৰু সম্বৰ্ণনা অনুষ্ঠানৰ। এই উপলক্ষে প্ৰকাশ পাব এখন স্মৃতিগ্ৰন্থ। আগ্ৰহী লেখক-সাংবাদিকে উক্ত স্মৃতিগ্ৰন্থলৈ লেখা প্ৰেৰণ কৰিব পাৰিব **৩১ ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০২০** তাৰিখৰ পূৰ্বে। লেখাৰ বিষয়বস্তু প্ৰাধান্য দিয়া হ'ব— **আত্মনিৰ্ভৰ ভাৰত-আত্মনিৰ্ভৰ অসম, জাতীয় অৰ্থনীতিৰ নিৰ্মাণ, ক'ভিডকালীন সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ প্ৰত্যাহ্বান আৰু ভৱিষ্যতৰ নতুন দিশ** ইত্যাদি বিষয়ত।
তলৰ ই-মেইলত লেখাসমূহ প্ৰেৰণ কৰিবলৈ অনুৰোধ জনোৱা হ'ল —

ই-মেইল : araward2021@gmail.com





The bond of
love and devotion.



100% DEPENDABLE... That's our guarantee !





CHIMNEYS WITH APPS | R.O. WATER PURIFIER | HOBS | GAS STOVE | OTHER KITCHEN APPLIANCES

Abhayapuri-94350-22784 | Agartala-98560-93668 | Baihata chariali-94351-42568/98641-40488 | Bangaigaon-7002184811, 9435547654, 9435121367 | Barpeta road-94350-17865 99541-41975 | Barpeta town -94350-25127 | Bhawanipur-7002206773 | Bandaradewa-98649-84753 | Bijoyanagar -99570-98392/94010-01157/94353-40662 | Boko-94010-02588 | Chaygaon-9435014549 | Dadara -98546-98027 | Dhupdhara-96785-16189 | Dhamaji-99546-51322 | Dhubri-94350-29279 | Diphu-94350-66701/94350-66643 | Dudhnoi-94357-21505/94351-28048 | Goalpara-70023-10904/88762-23858 | Golaghat-96132-30384 | Guwahati -94355-59057/97065-94950 | Hajo-94353-47024/88763-09327 | Hojai-94357-29521/84028-59256 | Jorhat -94350-53934/98541-06776 | Kharupitia -98541-44223 | Kokrajhar-97070-29429/99548-88721/94354-81234 | Karimgunj-97061-39061 | Krishnai-88224-15337 | Lumding -94351-63327/97066-14137 | Mangaldoi -94350-87284/94351-86435/97065-39174/73994-79163 | Mirza-98540-71983/99572-81858 | Morigaon -94350-64986/80111-17171 | North Lakhimpur-88224-21077 | Nagaon-97061-79408/94355-18665 | Nalbari -98644-14515/98540-30209 | Pathsala-80110-06658 | Dhekiajuli-98548-29934 | Dibrugarh-98548-11265 | Rangia -94351-05888/96782-26563 | Silchar -97061-39061/70054-86129 | Silapathar-70028-94393 | Shillong-90869-66640 | Suwalkuchi -98643-54859 | Tinsukia-94350-35156/94350-35511/94350-36463 | Tezpur-97060-73481 | Tihu-97068-53124 | Udalguri-97063-46492

Trade enq. 9435146909/9435559057/9435559056 www.capsindia.in Toll Free: 1800 103 4646