

# The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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Canada election: rivals force Justin Trudeau on to defensive in ...

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Priyanka Tibrewal will be candidate**

News Desk  
Kolkata, September 10 :

The BJP on Friday nominated party leader Priyanka Tibrewal for the September 30 by-poll for Bhabanipur assembly seat against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Tibrewal, a lawyer by profession, is one of the petitioners in the post-poll violence cases against the TMC government in the Calcutta High Court. The party also announced the names of Milan Ghosh and Sujit Das for Samserganj and Jangipur seats respectively. The results will be declared on October 3.

## ITR filing for financial 2020-21

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

Taxpayers can now rejoice as the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), on Thursday, announced that the last date of ITR filing for financial 2020-21 has been extended till December 31, 2021. This major move from the Income Tax Department came after many taxpayers complained of facing technical issues while filing their ITR. The due date of furnishing of returns of income for the assessment year 2021-22, has been extended to December 31, 2021, from September 30. In a statement, the Finance Ministry said that the decision has been on consideration of difficulties reported by the taxpayers and other stakeholders in the filing of Income Tax Returns and various reports of audit for the Assessment Year 2021-22 under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

## Ford Motors Shuts

News Desk  
Mumbai, September 10 :

Ford Motors, one of the first global carmakers to enter the Indian market, announced restructuring of the Indian operation under which the company decided to stop manufacturing vehicles at its two plants in the country, resulting in loss of jobs for about 4,000 employees. The company in a statement said, "Ford India will cease manufacturing vehicles for sale in India immediately...[the company] will wind down vehicle assembly in Sanand by the fourth quarter of 2021 and vehicle and engine manufacturing in Chennai by the second quarter of 2022." The decision was taken in the wake of huge loss that the company has accumulated in the past few years.

## Centre, Assam Jointly Working Towards Building Jorhat-Majuli Bridge in 4 Years : Sonowal

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

Union Minister Sarbanand Sonowal assured that both the Centre and the Assam government are committed to complete a bridge over the Brahmaputra river, connecting Majuli and Jorhat, within four years. (File photo: ANI) Union Minister Sarbanand Sonowal assured that both the Centre and the Assam government are committed to complete a bridge over the Brahmaputra river, connecting Majuli and Jorhat, within four years. The Union minister for shipping, ports and AYUSH said he respects the opinion of those who asserted that the boat



mishap could have been avoided if the Jorhat-Majuli bridge was there. Both the Centre and the Assam government are committed to complete a bridge over the Brahmaputra river, connecting Majuli and Jorhat, within four years and are jointly working towards it, Union minister Sarbanand Sonowal said on Friday. The statement of Sonowal, who was a former chief minister of Assam, came two days after a boat headed to Majuli sank in the river after hitting a ferry steamer near Nimati Ghat in

Jorhat district, in which one person died and two others went missing. "We all want a bridge on the Brahmaputra and both the state and central government have taken necessary steps in this direction so that it is well constructed with the latest technology," Sonowal told media persons here. The Union minister for shipping, ports and AYUSH said he respects the opinion of those who

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## Additional Chief Secretary To Probe Into Boat Accident

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

The Assam Cabinet on Thursday decided that Additional Chief Secretary Maninder Singh will conduct the inquiry into the boat tragedy in which one person died and two others went missing, and submit a report within a month, a minister said. A boat headed to Majuli

collided with a ferry steamer and sank in the Brahmaputra river near Nimati Ghat in Jorhat district on Wednesday. The Cabinet met on Thursday evening after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma returned from Majuli, where he reviewed the rescue operations, visited the injured at a hospital and met representatives of various organisations during the

day. The Cabinet also made a decision that the Jorhat Police will be directed to file a criminal case against those responsible for the accident, Health Minister Keshab Mahanta said after the meeting. It decided to entrust Finance Minister Ajanta Neog with the responsibility to monitor the construction of a bridge connecting

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## Bhupen Borah has blamed the BJP-led government for the failure to complete the bridge five years

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

The Congress on Thursday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of hoodwinking the people of Majuli with false promises. The government had promised them the bridge that would have saved lives, but it did not come up, he said. In 2016, Union transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari had laid the foundation of a bridge from Majuli connecting Jorhat and Lakhimpur district in the south and north. In February this year,



PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the construction of the bridge, which the Opposition had slammed as a tactic to win the hearts of the people of the riverine island before the assembly election. State Congress president Bhupen Borah has blamed the BJP-led

government for the failure to complete the bridge five years after the foundation stone was laid. "We have seen how the BJP government has made numerous electoral promises to the people of Majuli and Jorhat. In 2016, Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation of the bridge. The former chief minister Tarun Gogoi had remarked at that time

that the bridge was coming up without a detailed project report," said Borah in a news conference here on Thursday. Assam PCC has demanded that the BJP government immediately pays an ex gratia of Rs 25 lakh to each of the victim families of the Neamatighat accident. "I have never seen a central government

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## President Ram Nath Kovind appoints new governors to Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Nagaland

News Desk  
New Delhi, September 10 :

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed new governors in four states according to press communiqué issued by the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Thursday. Lt Gen Gurmit Singh (retd) has been appointed as the Gov-

ernor of Uttarakhand after Baby Rani Maurya tendered her resignation from the post. Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh, who retired as the deputy chief of Army, was on Thursday appointed the governor of Uttarakhand, a post which

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## Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs high-level meeting to review India's COVID-19 situation

News Desk  
New Delhi, September 10 :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday (September 10) chaired a high-level meeting to review the COVID-19 related situation and the vaccination drive in the country, government sources said. The meeting comes a day after Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said India is still going through the second wave of COVID-19 and it is not over yet. Rajesh Bhushan had said 35 districts are still reporting a weekly COVID positivity rate of over 10% while it is between five to 10% in 30 districts. More than half of



India's adult population has received at least one dose of anti-coronavirus vaccine while 18% have got both the shots, the Union government had said on Thursday as the total number of jabs administered in

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## Protests erupt in Majuli, APCC demands resignation of Transport Minister over repetitive failure

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

One died and two are still missing in the Nimati Ghat Boat tragedy. Rescue operations are underway. And prayers for the safe return of the missing passengers, Dr Bikramjit Baruah and Jan Borah, are continuously pouring in. Everyone is haunted by

the horrific visuals of the accident and it is a bone-chilling sight for people who have to travel regularly by Brahmaputra waterways for various reasons. On Wednesday, after a boat carrying dozens of people, bikes, and cars capsized, 87 people are rescued or survived. Nine injured including a couple of children are undergoing treatment at the Jorhat Medical College

hospital. Fortunately, all the injured ones are out of danger. But the trauma of those injured in the accident cannot be ignored in any way even if the physical injury is not so serious. The relief of survival has not diminished the horror of those moments they had to face. "We were travelling from Jorhat to Majuli. There were at least 50-60 passengers

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## Assam boat capsizes : Search on to track two missing

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

NDRF, SDRF and river police teams pushed on with search operations on Friday to track the two missing persons in the Brahmaputra boat capsizing incident. An Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) official said that, search and rescue operations are underway in different locations from Nimati Ghat in Jorhat district to Biswanath Ghat. "Apart from NDRF, SDRF teams, river police are



also engaged in the search operation in different locations," the ASDMA official told India Today. The boat ferrying 92 passengers capsized on the Brahmaputra in the

Nimati Ghat after it collided with another boat coming from the opposite direction. A 30-year-old woman lecturer died and 89

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## Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewed various schemes implemented by the Agriculture dept.

AR Staff Reporter  
Guwahati, September 10 :

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today reviewed various schemes implemented by the Agriculture, Horticulture & Food Processing Dept at Directorate of Agriculture, Khanapara. Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, MLA Jayanta Malla Barua and nodal officers of various schemes of the Agriculture Department were present in the meeting. The Chief Minister directed that Agriculture



Department must be proactive in getting closer to the farmers and facilitating the use of the latest farming technology while providing better market linkage to the farmers. He added that being an agrarian state, agriculture has to be the primary driver of the economy. During the

meeting the Chief Minister directed these points : To fill up vacant posts in the Agriculture Dept at an early date along with taking steps for initiating the due promotions of officials. For recruitment purposes, a special cell is directed to be constituted. To create required posts of ex-

ecutive engineers for augmenting the functioning of the Dept. To maintain an asset register for the Dept which would be uploaded on a portal. To set up a Seed Portal for proper seed procurement and distribution. Implementation of National

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## Isolating Afghanistan will have 'serious consequences', says Pakistan Foreign Minister

News Desk  
Islamabad, September 10 :

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday urged the international community to adopt a "new positive approach" towards Afghanistan, warning that isolating the country will have "serious consequences" for the Afghan people, the region and the world at large. Qureshi made the comments during a joint press conference along with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, who arrived in Islamabad on Friday to discuss the latest Afghan situation. "Isolating Afghanistan will have serious consequences and will not be helpful for the Af-



ghan people, the region and the world at large," said Qureshi, adding that the policy of intimidation, pressure and coercion did not work. "We have to adopt a new positive approach regarding Afghanistan," he

said. He urged the international community to recognise the new reality in Afghanistan and engage with the Taliban for the sake of peace. Qureshi urged the world to focus on averting

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Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (2nd L, Front) attends the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for a COVID-19 vaccine production factory in Belgrade, Serbia

## West to decide on Iran censure after damning UN nuclear watchdog report

**London, September 10** : European powers and the US will decide on Friday whether to censure Iran in response to a damning report by the UN nuclear inspectorate the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) showing that the new hardline government in Tehran had made it impossible for inspectors to oversee the country's nuclear programme. The Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, has warned any such censure motion, or a reference to the UN security council, could delay or prevent Iran returning to the talks in Vienna on how the US and Iran could come back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal. Mutual compliance would result in the lifting of a swathe of sanctions on Iran and the likely release of political prisoners. The US special envoy on Iran, Rob Malley, will meet diplomats from France, Germany and the UK in Paris ahead of a board meeting of the IAEA, the UN's nuclear watch-

dog, on Monday. Russia urged the Europeans not to complicate the Iranian return by tabling a censure motion but also urged Iran as soon as possible to return to the talks that started in April and ended in June. Malley met Russian diplomats on Thursday in Moscow in the hope Russia could spell out to Tehran the risks it is running if it overplays its negotiating hand. Earlier this week Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said "we are getting closer to the point at which a strict compliance with the JCPOA (the nuclear deal) does not reproduce the benefits the agreement achieved". But he added "we are not there yet". It is becoming hard for the west not to table some censure given the clear public warning by Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Tuesday that the IAEA's activities in Iran had been severely undermined. "I am increasingly concerned that issues

with unannounced sites remain unresolved and that Iran needs to resolve them as soon as possible," Grossi said in a statement earlier this week. He has submitted two reports setting out what Iran's non-cooperation means in practice. Grossi has asked to fly to Tehran for talks, but his request was described in Tehran as suspended. Grossi is not seen as someone who wants to confront Iran, and has previously shown ingenuity in seeking compromises that keep the inspection process alive. The Iranian parliament withdrew from a cooperation agreement with the IAEA. However, after talks with Grossi in February, the foreign ministry agreed to keep IAEA security cameras running inside its nuclear sites, without providing a commitment that the tapes would be handed over. This informal agreement carried on until 24 June, but has not been formally

continued after that date. But in addition to Iran's refusal to clarify officially if the February 2021 special monitoring arrangement was still in place, Tehran has not responded to requests by the IAEA to access remote surveillance equipment.

## Canada election: rivals force Justin Trudeau on to defensive in leaders' debate

**Toronto, September 10** : Justin Trudeau has been forced to defend his government's plans for fighting climate change, Canada's fractured relationship with Indigenous peoples and a growing affordability crisis in the country as the prime minister faced off with contenders ahead of the federal election. For two hours on Thursday evening, federal party leaders from the Liberal, Conservative, New Democratic, Green and Bloc Québécois parties sparred in the only official English-language debate before the 20 September vote. Party leaders debated in French on Wednesday evening. Trudeau, who has been prime minister for six years, has been on the defensive after calling an election during the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Early polling suggests the decision for a snap election has not been popular among Canadians. On stage, party leaders hewed to that theme, accusing the prime minister of putting citizens at risk while engineering an election for his own political gain. "Leadership is about putting others first, not yourself," said Conservative leader Erin O'Toole, pointing out that Trudeau called the election as Canada was scrambling to evacuate people from Afghanistan. Annamie Paul, the new Green leader, also questioned the prime minister's judgment in calling the election and whether he fully grasped

## Afghanistan flight carrying more than 100 foreign passengers lands in Doha

**Doha, September 10** : Passengers from the first civilian flight from Afghanistan since the end of the US-led evacuation arrived in Qatar late on Thursday. A flight carrying more than 100 international passengers out of Kabul has landed in Doha, the first such civilian flight since the chaotic evacuation of 124,000 foreigners and at-risk Afghans sparked by the Taliban's swift takeover of the country. About 113 people were aboard the flight to Doha operated by state-owned Qatar Airways, officials said. The passengers included US, British, Canadian, Ukrainian, Dutch and German citizens. Qatari special envoy Mutlaq bin Majed al-Qahtani described Thursday's flight as a regular one and not an evacuation, and said there would be another flight on Friday. In Doha, the passengers will initially stay in a compound hosting Afghan and other evacuees. US secretary of state Antony Blinken thanked Taliban and Qatari authorities, and called the flight a "concrete demonstration" of American commitment to help its citizens and others who helped the US continue to leave



Afghanistan. Earlier, National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne praised Taliban cooperation on the flight. "They have shown flexibility, and they have been businesslike and professional in our dealings with them in this effort," she said, adding that efforts to secure further departures would continue. US state department spokesperson Ned Price said 10 US citizens and 11 permanent residents were on the flight, out of "the 39 we invited". Canada said 43 of its citizens were on the plane, while the UK and

the Netherlands each had 13 on board. An Afghan-American dual citizen, waiting to board the flight with his family, said the US state department had called him on Thursday morning. "We got in contact with the state department, they gave me a call this morning and said to go to the airport," the father, who asked not to be named, told. Although international flights have flown in and out with officials, technicians and aid in recent days, this was the first civilian flight since the Taliban captured the capital on 15 August. In the days that followed the Taliban takeover, the airport had become a tragic symbol of desperation among Afghans terrified of the militants' return to power - with thousands of people crowding around its gates daily, and some even clinging to jets as they took off. Thursday's Taliban-approved departure comes amid mounting concern over the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation under the hardline Islamist group's new rule, including around freedom of expression and women's rights. UN secretary general António Guterres pleaded with the international community on Thursday to maintain ties with the Taliban, warning that an "economic collapse" with possibly millions dying must be avoided. "We must maintain a dialogue with the

Taliban, where we affirm our principles directly - a dialogue with a feeling of solidarity with the Afghan people," he told AFP. "Our duty is to extend our solidarity to a people who suffer greatly, where millions and millions risk dying of hunger." The UN chief said there were "no guarantees" about what might come out of talks but that discussions were a must "if we want Afghanistan not to be a centre of terrorism, if we want women and girls to not lose all the rights acquired during the previous period, if we want different ethnic groups to be able to feel represented." "Until now, in the discussions that we have had, there is at least a receptivity to talk," added Guterres, who does not rule out going to Afghanistan one day if conditions were right. Guterres added that the Taliban wanted recognition, financial support and sanctions to be abolished. "That gives a certain leverage to the international community," he said, adding that "an economic collapse situation which could create appalling humanitarian consequences" must be avoided. Guterres suggested that, as with Yemen, it is possible to foresee the granting of "financial instruments" to Kabul that would not be subject to current sanctions.

## 9/11 attack anniversary: Two more victims identified, 40 per cent still remain unknown

**New Delhi, September 10** : Just days before the 20th anniversary of the attacks, the office of the New York's chief medical examiner on Tuesday announced that it had formally identified two more victims of September 11 attacks on New York's Twin Towers in 2001. The remains of the two more victims of 9/11 attacks, the 1,646th and 1,647th of the 2,753 people killed, was identified with the help of advanced DNA technology, New York officials said. Also read | 9/11 attack anniversary: US renews 20-year-old National Terrorism Emergency Declaration "Twenty years ago, we made a promise to the families of World Trade Center victims to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to identify their loved ones, and with these two new identifications, we continue to fulfill that sacred obligation," chief medical examiner Barbara Sampson said in an official statement. Victim numbered 1,646th has been identified as Dorothy Morgan, of Hempstead, Long Island. The other identification was a man whose name was withheld at the behest of his family, the examiner's office said. "No matter how much time passes since September 11, 2001, we will never forget, and we pledge to use all the tools at our disposal to make sure all those who were lost can be reunited with their families," Sampson said. Around 1,106 victims - or 40 per cent of those who killed still remain unidentified. The attacks were masterminded by al-Qaeda on New York's Twin Towers which killed nearly 3,000 people.



Wang Ling (L) instructs her students at the dragon and lion dance club at Heping Primary School in Hefei City, east China's Anhui Province

## Pakistan will use own currency for bilateral trade with Taliban govt in Afghanistan: Sources

**New Delhi, September 10** : Pakistan announced its economic plans for Afghanistan on Thursday (September 9, 2021) which revealed that the bilateral trade between the two countries will take place in Pakistani rupees and this step is being referred to as an attempt by Pakistan to control Afghanistan's economy. According to a report in News18, with this development, Pakistan is eyeing to control Afghanistan's economy after the country gained entry into the Afghan army as well as intelligence. The report also revealed that, earlier, the bilateral trade between the two countries used to take place in the US dollar. Additionally, during that time Afghan currency was more powerful. But after this move, Pakistan's currency will have a hold over Afghan traders and the business community. Meanwhile, Af-



ghanistan is still reeling from the Taliban takeover last month and the economic meltdown can only make things worse for the country and its citizens. The report also said that almost 80 per cent of Afghanistan's budget comes from the international community. On Tuesday, Taliban announced its all-male interim government and, according to the reports, is likely to hold its inauguration ceremony on September 11, 2021, which is also the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. The report mentioned the top sources as saying that this development was Pakistan's at-

tempt to enter the Afghan economy, as it was already in the army and intelligence. After the introduction of Pakistan's currency, the value of the Afghan currency will drop, following which all trade and business will be dependent on Pakistan's price and volume which will force Taliban to send their drugs only to them, the sources were quoted as saying in the report. On the other hand, the Taliban is facing intense outrage from journalists, women and activists including university students. Demonstrations are being held against the outfit while the 'new government' is imposing restrictions to curb the voices rising against it. Also, the international community has not shown an inclination in recognising the interim government led by Taliban.

## Hong Kong: Tiananmen vigil organisers charged with inciting subversion



**Hong Kong, September 10** : Hong Kong police have charged the group

that organises the city's annual Tiananmen candlelight vigil and three of its leaders with subversion under the national security law, amid an ongoing crackdown on dissent. The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China said that the group, its chairman, Lee Cheuk-yan, as well as vice-chairs Albert Ho and Chow Hang-tung were charged

late on Thursday with "inciting subversion of state power", under the national security law Beijing imposed more than a year ago. The case was brought before court on Friday. Lee and Ho are already serving jail terms for their roles in protests in 2019. Chow and four others arrested this week were also charged with failing to comply with the require-

ment to provide information for a national security investigation. The charges follow police also raiding the closed June 4th museum, which was run by the alliance to commemorate the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown in Beijing on 4 June 1989, and confiscated computers, documents and promotional materials from the venue. Police said 2.2 mil-

lion Hong Kong dollars (\$280,000) worth of assets belonging to the alliance were also frozen. The alliance is best known for organising candlelight vigils in a Hong Kong park on the anniversary of China's Tiananmen Square crackdown. The event was attended annually by massive crowds and was the only large-scale public commemoration on Chinese soil.



# Deadline for Jorhat-Majuli bridge is four years: Sonowal



Abhijit Chaliha

**Guwahati, Sep 10:** Both the Centre and the Assam government are committed to complete a bridge over the Brahmaputra river, connecting Majuli and Jorhat, within four years and are jointly working towards it, Union minister Sarbanand Sonowal said on Friday. The statement of Sonowal, who was a former chief minister of Assam, came two days after a boat headed to Majuli sank in the river after hitting a

ferry steamer near Nimati Ghat in Jorhat district, in which one person died and two others went missing. "We all want a bridge on the Brahmaputra and both the state and central government have taken necessary steps in this direction so that it is well constructed with the latest technology," Sonowal told media persons here. The Union minister for shipping, ports and ayush said he respects the opinion of those who asserted that the boat mishap could have been

avoided if the Jorhat-Majuli bridge was there. The foundation stone of the bridge was laid in 2016 while Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the Bhumi Pujan earlier this year. At present, "technical aspects are being examined with both the state and the central governments aiming at completing the project within the next four years", Sonowal said. Sonowal was elected from Majuli in 2016 and again in 2021 while he was elected

twice as MP from Lakhimpur constituency under which the world's largest river island is an assembly segment. He became a Union minister in July and is yet to resign as a member of the Assam assembly. Rejecting allegations from some quarters that he had done politics over the bridge issue, he said, "The people of Majuli have elected me twice as an MLA and also as an MP. I will never do politics with the people of the island as I both respect and revere them." The state cabinet on Thursday decided to entrust Finance Minister Ajanta Neog with the responsibility of monitoring the construc-

tion of the bridge. "This indicates the commitment both the Centre and state government has towards the people of Majuli. Steps will also be taken by both the governments to improve the infrastructural facilities at both the Nimatighat and Kamlabari ghat at the earliest," he added. The boat collision was a "very tragic and unfortunate incident. I was in Delhi and immediately called up Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to discuss the matter. The prime minister and the Union home minister also assured all help to rescue the passengers," he said.



1st Bn NDRF Has Sanitized The St Clare's Convent High School, Borzar, Guwahati

## ATPWDS Greets New DC Penga Tato



STAFF REPORTER

**Aalo Sep 10:** The Aalo Town Peoples' Welfare and Development Society Led by its Chairman Kento Ete met West Siang Deputy Commissioner Penga Tato at his office Chamber and cordially welcomed him and apprised

him of burning issues to be taken up by him. Overwhelmed by the gesture shown to him by the senior members of Aalo Town, the DC said that he will always be there for the growth, development and welfare of the people of the district and do

whatever is possible from his side. Any meaningful services in the district can be rendered by the DC only with cooperation of senior citizens, PRIs, Youth and developmental agencies in the district. Peace and tranquility is a

prerequisite to take up developmental and welfare activities and urged to the society members represented by Ex. Ministers, retired govt. servants, PRIs and public leaders to play a proactive role and cooperate across the table stating that his door is open for all. The Chairman ATPWDS Kento Ete said that the society has been taking up many welfare measures concerning welfare of the people since its inception but there are certain issues where adminis-

trative and public leaders' intervention is quite necessary. He disclosed that the society will soon place an agenda of issues concerning Aalo town and appealed to DC to look into those issues on merit. The former Minister and Chief Advisor ATPWDS, Shri Doi Ado said that issue like drug menace among youth, inordinate delay in construction of stadium and above all disruption and isolation of the district from the rest during this monsoon has been unprecedented and we need to draw a comprehensive plan to do away such natural calamity in future.

## Illegal saw mill busted at Juria

Correspondent

**Nagaon, Sep 10:** Based on information, forest personnel from Nagaon forest range led by range officer Jayanta Goswami

busted two illegal saw mills at Mahguri village under Juria PS today. Sources claimed that both the illegal saw mills were being run by one Siyajul Islam for long.

All tools, generator sets and other equipment were brought to the range office after dismantling for further legal action, sources added further.

## Protest against abolition of Tangla Irrigation Division



Correspondent

**Udalguri, Sep 10:** A special notice issued by the Irrigation Department of the BTR Government is now being protested in the BTR area. According to the notice, out of the 16 divisions of the Irrigation Department in BTR, 8 divisions will be abolished. In order to abolish the 8 divisions of the Irrigation Department, Tangla Irrigation Division which was

established in 1975, is also in the list. Consequently along with various organizations including AASU, ARSU, ABSU, AKRSU and Tangla Irrigation contractor association organized a strike today in the middle of Tangla town. The Tangla Irrigation division, established in 1975, has been providing water services to the crop fields of large areas of Tangla area and also has opened a way for many educated unem-

ployed to earn. Pranjal Deka, President of Tangla AASU, criticized the decision of Assam and BTC government to abolish the Tangla Irrigation Division and said that when the government seeks Tangla people for vote in the near future, people of tangla will never help them. Pranjal Deka also said that, in the pre-moment of elections, the government made false promises that they would work for development of Tangla but after the election, instead of taking a new scheme for Tangla the govern-

ment wanted the abolition of the Tangla Irrigation division. On the other hand Retired Professor of Tangla College, Educationist, Senior Citizen Binoy Kumar Medhi, Vice President of AJYCP, Udalguri District Committee Nilay Saliha, President of Udalguri district AKRSU (west) Hemanta Bora Koch, Jiban Rabha, President of Tangla ARSU, Tangla ABSU, incumbents of Tangla Irrigation Contractor Association and incumbents of various organizations also participated the strike program.

CORRESPONDENT

**Kokrajhar, Sep 10:** Review meeting with Senior officials of Soil Conservation Department, BTR with Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Cabinet Minister of Handloom & Textile, Sericulture, Bodoland Welfare and Soil Conservation of Assam in presence of Pramod Boro, CEM, BTR, Gabinda Chandra Basumatary, Deputy CEM, BTR in the Conference Hall of BTC Secretariat, Kokrajhar on September 10. Discussion held on centrally funded like Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), PMKSY, SWDC etc. to expedite projects to complete on time. Rajesh Prasad, IAS, Principal Secretary to the Government

of Assam, in his speech, said the project should be completed as per guidelines of Govt. of India further to get more funds. Hon'ble Minister U.G. Brahma in his speech said the performance of the Soil Conservation Department of BTR was either so good or so bad. Therefore, he requested all Officers to sincerely do their duty whether in BTR or Assam. Since the Government of Assam and BTR are planning to develop equally all the projects for the people of Assam. So, the Minister decided to review again within a short period of time with the all



Officers of BTR, Government of Assam and Contractors to speed up the projects in time. The meeting also attended Ranjit Basumatary EM, Dharma Narayan Das EM, Rakesh Brahma EM, Lawrence Islary MLA, Prin-

cipal Secretary i/c BTC Naren Ch. Basumatary ACS, Pallabi Phukan ACS, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Soil Conservation, Assam, CHD of Soil Conservation and officials of Soil Conservation Department.

## AANLA (I) have been declared as a faction from AANLA piter Dang and Dipen Nayak Group

CORRESPONDENT

**Kokrajhar Sep 10 :** AANLA-I have declared as faction from AANLA piter Dang and Dipen Nayak Group. Reasons are mentioned below. Therefore, the AANLA which was formed in the year 2004 at Golaghat District of Assam to Safeguard the rights of the Adivasi Community of Assam and to fight for the Social, Economic, Political, Educational, Land and Constitutional rights of the Adivasi's of Assam. Adhering to the appeal of the then Govt. of Assam under the Chief Ministership of Tarun Gogoi for negotiation and peace talk for solving the issues and problems of Adivasi Community of Assam, the AANLA giving peace a chance laid down arms on 24th January, 2012 at Horu Hojai Stadium, Guwahati, Assam along with 8 (Eight) others organization in the presence of former Hon'ble Union Minister Dr. P. Chidambaram Govt.

of India. In that arms laying ceremony 150 Nos of leaders and cadres of AANLA laid down arms before the aforesaid dignitaries. During the time a large number of cadres of AANLA did not come to the mainstream then, but later on joined the mainstream. As such a large number of AANLA cadres who joined the mainstream later on were deprived from the stipend facilities as only now 126 Nos leaders and cadres of AANLA are benefited. Since, only 126 Nos of AANLA activists were benefitting the monthly stipend from the Government the rest being deprived and the few leaders of AANLA were also working against the bi-law of the organization for their personal benefit, which created dissent within the organization. Since they were not able to address the grievances of the cadre's as a result, a large number of cadres wanted to take up arms again. Taking serious view about the outcome of the situation under the



leadership of Arjun Oraon @ Amrit Beck, Sonu Soreng @ Jagir Soreng, Albis Toppo @ Alwin Sona and few others were compelled to form a separate faction as AANLA-I from the year 2019. The AANLA-I now commands more than 450 Nos of cadres under it. The former congress led Govt. of Assam had assured to solve the issue and problems of Adivasi's of Assam by holding tripartite talks with GOI, GOA & AANLA but

unfortunately which was never fulfilled. Now, the present BJP led government under the dynamic and able leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam with the collaboration of Assam Police ADGP Hiren Nath have initiated steps with 5 Nos of Adivasi's Cease-Fire Organizations and going to Sign a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) or Adivasi Accord which

AANLA-I appreciates and welcomes. Since, now AANLA-I has more than 450 Nos. of Cadres under its command, in this connection AANLA-S should have to be signatory authority in the said accord. We also demand that - the Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement be signed with Govt. of India and with AANLA-I for proper implementation of Rehabilitation of AANLA-I Officers & Cadres, to appoint an Inter-

locator from the Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI, for a Tripartite Accord with Govt. of India, Govt. of Assam and AANLA-I as the main demand of AANLA-I is granting of Scheduled Tribe status of Adivasi's of Assam which is central Government Subject, To immediately allocate the stipend to the left out Police Verified cadres of All Adivasi National Liberation Army-I (AANLA-I) (Cease Fire Unit)

## CM attends conference of tribal leaders of north east

*CM calls for preservation and promotion of tribal art & culture*

**Guwahati, September 10 :** Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma urged the people to take leadership in the preservation and promotion of tribal art & culture. He made this call while attending the inaugural programme of the three-day conference of tribal leaders of North East titled "Voice of North East" organized by Janajati Faith & Culture Protection Forum at Rani Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education, Tepesia at Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati today. Speaking as chief guest on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that tribal art & culture has greatly enriched Indian culture and civilization and it is very important to protect, preserve and promote tribal art & culture. He said that along with the tribal people, the non-tribals must also take leadership in its promotion and the state government would continue extending all needful support in this regard. Chief Minister Sarma further said that considering the significance of tribal art, culture, faith, customs and traditions in the growth of India's civilization, the state government established a new department named, "Indigenous Faith & Culture". He further informed that initially 100 crore has been earmarked for the department in the current budget and the government intended to increase budget allocation up to 500 crore in next five years. Chairman of Akhil Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram Ramchandra Kharadi and chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes Harsh Chauhan were also present among others at the inaugural programme.



## THE ASSAM RISING

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## Rich countries cut Covid deaths as poorer fall behind

Recently the number of doses will reach 27bn, enough to fully immunise the world's population twice over. But despite this manufacturing triumph, we are losing badly in the arms race to actually inject every adult in every country. Next summer, on current trends, more than half the world will remain unvaccinated. We simply aren't getting doses out to the people who need them. Until recently this was due to an understandable shortage of vaccines. But now there is a clear and inexplicable failure to distribute them equitably. Poor countries, which have injected just 2% of their adults, are being denied vaccines, while rich countries that have already fully immunised more than 60% of their citizens continue to monopolise access to doses. Thousands will die this month and for the foreseeable future, not because there are too few vaccines being produced but because they are being hoarded in the places that need them least. The promise made by Boris Johnson, on behalf of the G7 club of advanced economies, that the whole world would be vaccinated during 2021 and 2022 currently has no chance of being honoured. More than 100 countries will now not meet the September deadline to inoculate even the first 10% of their population, and as things stand they have little chance of meeting the further December deadline to vaccinate 30%. The World Health Organization's Covax programme is the global bulk purchasing agency set up last year to ensure equitable vaccine distribution. But even though the G7 nations promised Covax in June that they would share 870m doses with the poorest countries, just 100m have been released to them, and overall only 4% of all vaccines produced worldwide have been channelled through Covax. Our collective failure to turn the scientific success of the vaccines themselves into actual protection for all, and to avoid dividing the world into vaccine haves and have-nots, is a moral catastrophe. If the world were a state, we might well call it a failed one. And we are in a race against time to turn things around. While countries with high vaccine coverage have broken the link between Covid cases and deaths, countries that cannot access vaccines see high case rates driving record hospitalisations and deaths. Unsurprisingly, African nations have registered their anger, with pleas this week from African leaders, the Mandela-inspired Elders group and African NGOs for vaccine equity. Concluding that they can no longer rely on the west's promises, they set up their own bulk-purchasing agency, and are now intent on building their own vaccine manufacturing capability. But there is a way forward. An emergency G7 vaccines summit chaired by President Biden should be convened on the margins of the UN general assembly to agree a comprehensive plan to transfer the west's unused supplies and its over-subscribed vaccine delivery contracts to Covax. We have more than enough vaccines to do this. Vaccine production is already at 1.5bn doses monthly, and will surpass 2bn per month by the end of the year. By then, we will have amassed more than 1bn unused vaccines. By mid-2022, that figure could pass 2bn. Until recently, western leaders could defend holding supplies in reserve because they feared interruptions to the manufacturing supply chain. Now there is sufficient capacity to guarantee a rising flow of vaccines for the months ahead. So many doses are being produced that the bigger risk now is that millions may go to waste. We could begin immediately. By the end of September western nations could release 500m vaccine doses, and another 200m each month thereafter. Under this plan, by mid-2022 every low-income country would have enough doses on hand to immunise 60% of its population, catching them up to rich nations' current vaccination levels in less than a year. Vaccine-rich nations don't have to choose between boosters and donations either. By next year, North America and Europe could vaccinate their populations, including offering boosters and providing for all over-12s, donate to meet the needs of poor countries, and still have doses left over to cover most eventualities. And if China - the world's biggest manufacturer - were persuaded to contribute to this effort, we could advance that target date by months. The financial cost is small in comparison with the benefits in resumed employment, commerce and trade. Just \$4bn (£3bn) is needed by Covax to cover its projected 2022 vaccine purchases. Comprehensive coverage - including therapeutics such as medical oxygen to save lives, and diagnostic equipment - would cost about \$30bn a year. This is just 1.5% of the cost of Biden's projected \$1.9tn Covid stimulus, and, when shared between the advanced economies, eminently affordable. Denying the world vaccines is self-defeating and will come back to haunt us. As the disease spreads among unvaccinated people, variants could emerge that threaten even our current vaccine coverage.

## If Plan A is talking to Taliban, India must start Plan B too - prepare for worst



As the Taliban announces the formation of a caretaker/interim government with Mullah Hassan Akhund as the prime minister (head of state), and Mullah Baradar and Mawlawi Hannafi as his deputies, India should be ready with its Plan A and B. Mullah Yaqoob, son of Mullah Omar, is the defence minister, Serajuddin Haqqani, the interior minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the foreign minister, and Mulla Hedayatullah Badri, the finance minister. Most of the cabinet is from the old guard that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. The prime minister and four ministers - Akhund, Baradar, Yaqoob, and Haqqani - are United Nations designated terrorists and the interior minister has a \$10 million bounty placed on him by the US. The cabinet is predominantly Pashtun with only three non-Pashtuns - second deputy prime minister Hanafi, an Uzbek, and chief of army staff Qari Fasihuddin, and minister of economy Qari Deen Hanif, both Tajiks. There are no women or non-Taliban members in the cabinet. The formation of the interim government came after an internal power struggle between the Quetta Shura, now located at Kandahar, the mother organisation led by the old guard, and Miran Shah/Peshawar Shura dominated by the Haqqani Network, which is favoured by the ISI. The politically savvy and relatively moderate Doha negotiators led by Mullah Baradar enjoying the support of Quetta Shura were challenged by the Haqqani Network. Military commanders led by Mohammad Yaqoob, son of Mullah Omar, were also major contenders for political power. General Faiz Hameed, the head of Pakistan's ISI had rushed to Kabul last Saturday to broker peace after reported clashes between supporters of Mullah Baradar and Haqqani Network, in which the former was allegedly injured. The signature of Pakistan is all over the new Afghanistan cabinet. A comparative lightweight has been appointed as the prime minister, the wings

of the Doha negotiators, who led by Mullah Baradar were front runners for top posts, have been clipped and ISI's sword arm, the Haqqani Network, has got considerable representation including the all-important interior ministry. The US and its allies have no choice but to remain in 'wait and watch' mode as the primary conditions - an inclusive government, respect for human rights, particularly rights of women, and not to allow Afghanistan territory to be used as a base for exporting terrorism - remain unfulfilled or untested/unverified, especially the latter two conditions. The legitimacy of the Taliban government and the economic assistance from Western-dominated institutions essential for its survival as a functional State is contingent on meeting these conditions. However, its supporters China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Qatar and Pakistan may opt for early recognition. Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries may follow suit leaving the rest with little choice but to accept fait accompli. Much has been said about all stakeholders working on Plan A - dealing with a reformed Taliban adhering to international norms - and Plan B - to cater for a failed State embroiled in a complex civil war. Be that as it may, India has broken away from the cacophony of anti-Taliban rhetoric prevailing domestically to engage with the Taliban. I analyse the contours of India's likely Plan A and Plan B. New Delhi's core national interest in Afghanistan is to prevent it from being used as a base for exporting/supporting terrorism in India at the behest of Pakistan and/or for ideological reasons. As a regional power, India does not want geo-strategically important Afghanistan to become a client state of its principal adversaries - China and Pakistan. India wants a stable and inclusive Afghanistan that respects human rights, particularly those of women and minorities. India has invested over \$3 billion in development projects apart from the

investment in Chabahar port. The bulk of Afghan intelligentsia has been educated in India. India would like to maintain and sustain the goodwill it has earned in Afghanistan. The pursuit of India's national interests demands engagement and diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. India's soft power in terms economic aid and assistance in governance, essential for Taliban's survival as a functional State, will go a long way in neutralising the leverage of Pakistan and China. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a bold decision against his party's ideology and prevalent public opinion to engage with the Taliban. However, the timing for the 'wait and watch' policy to end and action to begin will be critical. Doing it too early, would be risky, but doing it too late would not pay desired dividends. It may be prudent to immediately follow the European Union model of progressive "operational engagement" subject to meeting India-specific conditions. Meeting conditions devoid of independent monitoring must be weighed against national interests. India must immediately announce substantial humanitarian aid and assistance for running civic facilities. Recognition will require fine judgement. Rather than take a cue from the West, India should focus on what China, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey and Iran intend to do. A bold preemptive decision once conditions are conducive would be to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat to become major player in Afghanistan once again. India must strive to put itself in a position to give rise to Pashtun nationalism. Realpolitik demands that simultaneously and covertly India should set in motion Plan B to cater for a more sophisticated Taliban with a moderate face playing a double game; a rogue Taliban; an ethnic civil war; an intra Taliban conflict; and a conflict between the Taliban and other terrorist organisations. It goes without saying that Pakistan will play a direct role in all these scenarios. More so when Pashtun nationalism itself may pose a threat to its sovereignty. The future of Afghanistan lies in a broad-based Taliban-led inclusive government with proportional representation for all ethnicities. Even then it will be an uphill task for the Taliban to create a functional State that has absolute monopoly over violence through an organised army and a police force. Disarming its own cadres and other militias/terrorist organisations is going to be extremely difficult. Given the Afghan way of life, it may never happen. Conflict in Afghanistan is thus inevitable. In

my view, the worst-case scenario is a full-blown ethnic civil war with various terrorist organisations taking sides. Plan B should aim at safeguarding India's national interests and creating a stable and inclusive Afghan government. With the absolute victory of the Taliban, organised resistance against it in any form, currently, appears to be far-fetched. More so, when all its immediate neighbours - Pakistan, China, Iran, and Tajikistan/Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan through their ally Russia - are supporting it. However, the first signs are already there for the discerning eye. Tajikistan has taken the first step by posthumously conferring the nation's highest honour, the order of Ismoil Somoni, on the Lion of Panjshir, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and former Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani, both Afghan Tajiks. The honour is for their contribution to ending the Tajikistan civil war, 1993-1997. The timing of the award indicates that Tajikistan will support Afghan Tajiks in the fight for their rights and is, in all likelihood, already doing so in Panjshir. Tajikistan could not have done this without the tacit approval of Russia, implying that the latter too has a Plan B. Russia's support for the Taliban comes with many caveats. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov recently forcefully reiterated the condition of an inclusive government. Iran has been critical of the Taliban offensive against the Tajiks in Panjshir and also alluded to Pakistan's involvement. In my view, even China has a Plan B. America too will come on board with money and material support. India must begin talks with Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran to start giving shape to our Plan B. Our military cooperation with Tajikistan including upgrading the Gissar airfield must be given further impetus. Depending upon how the situation develops, India must establish covert contacts with various ethnic groups, factions within the Taliban and other stakeholders. The long-term aim of Plan B should be to neutralise any threat that emanates from Afghanistan against our national security. As a regional power, it is imperative that India must not allow its adversaries a free run in Afghanistan. India must get off the moral high ground, to accept the reality of an Islamic State based on the Iran model and engage with the Taliban. Plan A based on "operational engagement" without formal recognition is a pragmatic interim option. However, put in motion a Plan B to cater for the worst-case scenario.

## The Upi Moment For Personal Data

Last week India launched yet another ambitious plan to fundamentally alter status quo. This time with the intent of empowering individuals and small enterprises through their personal data. The Account Aggregator (AA) framework, enabling this monetisation of personal data, was launched at a virtual event hosted by iSPIRIT, a group of technology evangelicals based out of Bengaluru who helped create the India Stack architecture powering UPI or the Unified Payments Interface. The eight authorised entities, including State Bank of India, IDFC Bank and ICICI, are under the regulatory purview of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The AA framework en-

ables consent-based monetisation of data, particularly of individuals and small enterprises, which was otherwise invisible to most financial intermediaries. Once Parliament signs off on the pending data privacy law, all the parts of this strategy will be in place. This exchange of verified individual data will not only spur another round of financial inclusion - with more individuals and small enterprises empowered by their personal data to access credit - and the ongoing Fintech revolution in India but it could stoke a fresh boom in consumption - something India so desperately needs

in a post-covid world. Data Democracy For the uninitiated the AA is very similar to a financial intermediary. There is a big difference though. The AA's oversee the exchange of an individual's data instead of facilitating money transfers. It means that all the data - whether it be wealth or health statistics - of an individual can now be captured in a digital environment and shared using an AA. This transaction will be consent-based and the AA is data-blind - neither can these entities view the data passing through them nor can they store it. And companies who wish to use this data for commercial use will have to pay for it - the tariff for which will vary, depending on whether it is being used once or multiple times. Hitherto this value was either unrealised or the data was being harvested for free by various platforms. Something that Nandan Nilekani, the former head of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), chairman of Infosys and a key backer of AA, often sums up so succinctly: Indians are economically poor but data-rich. The launch of AA is seeking a convergence of these two extremes through data empowerment. Exactly why this is akin to another "Freedom at Midnight" moment. And what a coincidence for this to happen in the 75th year of Independent India. Indeed, it is another trust with destiny Data Rich Among the first uses for the AA framework will be in creating first time credit opportunities for demographic segments like micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Despite contributing about a third of the country's national income, employing a quarter of the country's 400 million-plus workforce and possessing an impressive appetite for risk, their access to formal credit lines are limited. This is largely because of the informal nature of their economic status - which limit their ability to generate metrics to be eligible for conven-

tional loans from banks. All this is about to change. The enabling AA framework happens at a time when FinTechs have already begun to disrupt the business of lending by focusing on metrics other than collaterals. The new set of psychographics being deployed by these FinTechs to map a borrower include the mapping of cash flows or Goods and Services Tax receipts accruing to an MSME. First time collateral free business loans and flexi working capital to fund seasonal business to MSMEs will create a formal credit history. This alone will partially de-risk them in the eyes of more conventional lenders. This kind of credit empowerment, which can also be extended to individuals, can only translate into more business activity. A win-win for all. An equally compelling use of the AA framework could be how the over 100 million beneficiaries of the nearly Rs1 trillion rural employment guarantee scheme can use their data capturing wage receipts from the government to avail of loans. At the moment this is not possible since borrowing is presaged on collaterals and this data is not shared. The breakaway success of the UPI - which leverages the same India Stack technology architecture based on Aadhaar being used by the AA framework - suggests that this potential can be tapped. According to RBI, the volume of transactions using UPI has grown exponentially in three years. It was 189.3 million in May 2018, 733.4 million in the same month in 2019, before surging to a staggering 2.54 trillion in May this year. In the final analysis it is clear that the AA framework is powering the audacious idea of monetising personal data to generate credit lines, the obverse of current practice of collateral-based lending. Exactly why they say data is the new oil.

## If you want to know about life in an unvaccinated country, look to Uganda

My gardener, Emmanuel, returned a few days ago after a five-month hiatus. One of the conditions for his return was that he needed to be vaccinated. He comes from Karamoja in the north-eastern part of Uganda, where the vaccine uptake was low, so he was able to get vaccinated. I first thought that he was fibbing, as many Ugandans are prone to do when they get fake documents in order to get a pass. I checked his card and confirmed he had a genuine vaccination card. He told me that his whole family had been vaccinated. On the other hand, Annet, my live-in housekeeper, has resisted getting the vaccine - always weaving new stories of why she cannot get it. First it was that only adults over 50 were allowed the vaccine. Today, it is only teachers and other essential workers are getting immunised. I have stopped cajoling her to get vaccinated, although I still share with her the vaccine schedules and centres whenever I get the updates. Both Emmanuel and Annet are representative of the current Ugandan landscape: one part eager to be vaccinated, and observing the relevant restrictions and procedures;

and the other side, if not anti-vaccine, coming up with excuses for not taking it. While some Ugandans have been able to access the vaccine, and others have been offered it but not taken it up, doses are overall in short supply. Ugandans watched in disbelief as the western countries hoarded their own vaccines, denying millions of doses to countries across Africa in dire need. Uganda has only been able to administer 1.3m doses - about 3% of the popu-

lation. In June this year, when President Yoweri Museveni ordered a 42-day lockdown at the peak of the second wave, the country had very few vaccines. During the first wave, the country seemed to have handled the pandemic very well; but we seem to have thumped our chests too fast. By the time we were sent into the June lockdown, the gaping holes in our health system came to haunt us. While we have always complained about the poor state of the hospitals and the lack of investment, the pandemic ripped the sticking plaster off our health sector. Those of us able to access private healthcare did not

raise our voices enough for better state-run health facilities. The second wave hit the country like a hurricane. Each day, I would receive word of colleagues and friends dying, or losing loved ones. Hospitals both private and public struggled to accommodate the rising number of patients who needed intensive care. Typical ICU medical costs average £24,000, which few Ugandans could afford. We set up harambees (fundraising events) to help families affected, and kept praying that our own would be spared. We spent a lot of on herbal remedies, such as the breakthrough "wonder" herbal drug, Covidex, whose prices spiralled out of control. I heard so many stories of people selling their properties to meet the hospital costs of their loved ones. A young man I was told about had sold his car, spent all his savings, and gone into debt to meet the rising costs of his mother's hospitalisation. He was now looking to sell off his land. Many families put out calls for contributions, because the private health facilities held on to their loved ones' bodies until the bill was paid or a payment plan agreed. During all this, we were asking about access to vaccines.



**Jackee Budesta Batanda**



# Asian shares stem recent losses, attention on cenbank tapering

**Hong Kong, Sep 10:** Asian shares rallied on Friday after two days of losses, but were still in a nervous mood as global investors grapple with how best to interpret central banks' cautious moves to end stimulus, which also left currency markets quiet. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan (.MIAPJ0000PUS), gained 0.47% in early trading, but is still down around 0.8% compared to last week's close, in line with the global trend. Japan's Nikkei (.N225) rose 0.25%, and U.S. stock futures, the S&P 500 e-minis, were flat. Australia (.AXJO) gained 0.4% as mining stocks rose after aluminium prices hit multi-year highs, and Chinese blue chips (.CSI300) also advanced 0.5%. But gains were led by Hong Kong with the local benchmark (.HSI) rebounding 1.5%



having fallen over 2% the day before when Chinese tech stocks took another battering after authorities called gaming firms in for a word. But traders are still cautious about buying too much of the dip. "At some point in time investors will say actually this is the right price, it's not going to go to zero," said John Lau, head of Asian equities and a senior portfolio manager at SEI, referring to Chinese

tech names. "I think most investors will wait until the dust settles and see whether there is enough clarity before they can act, at this point in time it's extremely difficult." Asian gains followed a wobbly Thursday when markets had struggled to gain clear direction. Reaction to the European Central Bank saying over the coming quarter it would slow emergency bond purchases implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic was con-

strained by the ECB refraining from detailing how it plans to end its 1.85-trillion-euro Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme. read more "Risk sentiment flip-flopped through the overnight session, initially reacting positively to the ECB meeting and evidence of ongoing strength in the U.S. labour market. However, U.S. equities ended in the red, likely reflecting concerns about the timing of central bank tapering and ongoing Delta woes," said analysts at ANZ. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (.DJI) fell 0.43%, the S&P 500 (.SPX) lost 0.46%, and Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC) dropped 0.25%. Investors normally interpret better employment figures as a sign the Federal Reserve is less likely to delay trimming its massive asset purchases,

which have been supporting share prices in recent months. In addition, Federal Reserve Bank Governor Michelle Bowman added her voice to the growing number of policymakers who say the weak August jobs report likely won't throw off the central bank's plan to trim its \$120 billion in monthly bond purchases later this year. read more In currency markets, the euro was flat in Asian hours at \$1.1820, after the ECB announcement helped it stem a few days of losses, as it fell off its month high set at the end of last week. The dollar was also little changed against a basket of peers but on course for nearly a 0.5% weekly rise. The yield on benchmark 10-year Treasury notes edged up to 1.307% compared with its U.S. close of 1.3%. U.S. crude dipped 0.1% to \$68 a barrel. Brent crude fell 0.15% to \$71.34 per barrel.

## Schwing Stetter India launches the next Gen SLM (Self Loading Mixer) for domestic as well as global market

**Guwahati, September 10:**

Schwing Stetter India, one of the largest manufacturers of concreting and construction equipment across the country, has today, unveiled their state of the art All New Self-loading Mixer - SLM 4600, a flagship model, in a Grand Gala ceremony. Adding to its existing Range of SLMs the All New SLM-4600 will cater to higher output requirement of Concrete batching, Mixing and Placing in the urban development Segment. The New SLM 4600 fitted with the latest CEV Stage 4 Engine will be the feather in the cap, providing excellent fuel savings, while adhering to the latest emission norms. Schwing Stetter's R&D, through its extensive market study and incorporating the latest in IOT and telematics has rolled out a world class Equipment not only for the domestic consumption but also for the global requirement. The SLM range of Equipment are being rolled out from its Global Manufacturing Hub, a sprawling manufacturing facility at Cheyyar, Tamil Nadu. The SLM 4600 Mixer's additional features include Precision Batch out put through its



telematics, lesser mixing time improving the overall output, - due to innovative Drum Design less wear and less maintenance, - Ergonomically designed Structure ensure at most safety to man and machine. Most of the infrastructure projects are across rough terrains, and the new SLM mixer is suited for these conditions and a boon for Contractors who have taken up smaller projects, where optimised equipment investment is important. SLM 4600 will suit perfectly for such kind of application while performing big. Speaking at the launch event, Mr. V.G. Sakthikumar, Managing Director of Schwing Stetter India said. "Schwing is the

first Construction Equipment Manufacturing company in India to launch a product in this segment and has been designed for the global market. With Indian Government giving more push to Infrastructure projects and focusing in North - Eastern states, it is more appropriate to launch the SLM in Guwahati." As part of the CSR initiatives, Schwing Stetter has also launched an extensive operator development training program locally, which will help train the right candidates and thereby provide job opportunities in handling the Infrastructure Equipment in the North-east Sector.

## Amazon India launches new delivery station in Guwahati; deepens reach in the North East region ahead of the festive season



**Guwahati, Sept 10:** Amazon India today announced the launch of a new Delivery Station in Guwahati, Assam. Spread across 10,000 square feet, the new station will enable Amazon to further strengthen its last-mile delivery network and ensure faster deliveries across the city of Guwahati and in areas such as Sonapur, Hatigaon, Beltola and Ambari, ahead of the upcoming festive season. Investments in Delivery Stations enable faster last mile deliveries of orders to customers in the region, and creates local jobs in the city. Commenting on the expansion, Prakash Rochlani, Director, Amazon Logistics said, "We believe customers, no matter where they are located, value fast & reliable delivery. In line with our vision of making e-commerce a part of everyday life, and transforming how India buys and sells, we have expanded our last mile delivery network in the North-East region and also opened a new delivery station spread across 10,000 square feet in Guwahati. This expansion will create many local work opportunities for individuals in the city as we continue our long-term investment in creating jobs and building infrastructure in the region." The company further announced the expansion of its delivery network with the launch of 8 new Amazon owned and partner Delivery stations in the North East region this year to enable direct delivery presence in towns such as Morigaon, Diphu, Birpuria and Karimganj among others. This growth of the delivery network will enable Amazon to penetrate further into smaller towns across the region, with significantly more customers now being able to enjoy one-day and two-delivery promises. Over the years, Amazon has invested in deepening its reach and presence in the 8 states of North East India and now has close to 65 Amazon owned and Delivery Service Partner stations that ensure direct delivery presence in more than 380 pin codes across the region. Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary, Hon'ble Minister of Industry, Government of Assam, said: "Developments with regard to infrastructure and job creation are always welcome. Amazon India's investments have proven to be beneficial in different regions of the country including the North-Eastern states. The investment in Assam in terms of supply chain expansion will help MSMEs from state to expand their footprint, increase local job opportunities and contribute to the growth of the local economy. We congratulate Amazon on their infrastructure expansion and appreciate these developments which support the State MSMEs to explore the e-commerce opportunity."

## Tesla's Musk asks staff to 'go super hardcore' to ensure decent Q3 delivery number



**San Francisco, Sep 10:** Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) Chief Executive Elon Musk has asked employees to "go super hardcore" to make up for production challenges early in the third quarter and "ensure a decent Q3 delivery number," according to an internal email seen by Reuters. "The end of quarter delivery wave is unusually high

this time, as we suffered (like the whole industry) from extremely severe parts shortages earlier this quarter," he said in the email sent on Wednesday. He said Tesla built "a lot of cars with missing parts that needed to be added later." "This is the biggest wave in Tesla history," he said, referring to its end of quarter delivery push.

## Celebrate Festivals in Style! Samsung Brings a Unique Loyalty Program 'Samsung Home' on Flipkart to Reward Samsung Fans

**Guwahati, Sept 10:** Samsung, India's most trusted consumer electronics brand, today announced a unique consumer loyalty program in association with Flipkart called 'Samsung Home'. This on-of-a-kind consumer loyalty program has been designed to incentivize existing Samsung consumers by offering them affordability benefits, acknowledging their love and preference for Samsung's consumer electronics products. This program brings special benefits to consumers on second purchase of Samsung's latest Televisions, Washing Machines, Refrigerators or Microwaves till September 30, 2021. Consumers who have bought Samsung consumer electronics products on Flipkart on or after July 28, 2021 can avail this offer. Under this program, customers will be eligible for paying only 50% of their first EMI (up to INR 2,500) and this benefit is applicable if subsequent purchases are of



a different product category. For instance, if a consumer has bought a Samsung Television on Flipkart on or after July 28, 2021, this offer can be availed on purchase of Washing Machine, Refrigerator or Microwave till September 30, 2021. "At Samsung, we are excited to announce a unique program with Flipkart called 'Samsung Home'. This program is aimed at Samsung loyalists and reward them for

buying their second Samsung consumer electronics product to upgrade their living spaces with the latest technology. This program is valid on our wide range of consumer electronics and with this program we are sure to address the evolving needs of our consumers, especially as they are spending more time at home," said Sandeep Singh Arora, Senior Director, Online Business, Consumer Electronics, Samsung India.

## Business travel may never be the same again

**Berlin/Milan, Sep 10:** Sylvia Burbury is delighted that she no longer spends most of her life travelling for work. "I am grateful that the pandemic has forced us to step back and look at ways of working we took for granted," said the regional president for emerging markets at Mars petcare brand Royal Canin. "I am very happy not to go back to spending 80% of my time travelling. I am not even sure it will be 50%," Burbury said from her home office in Paris. Burbury's sentiments are echoed by workers around the world who are tired

of the grind of corporate travel. This is bad news for the airlines, hotels and conference centres that rely on this lucrative business. Mars, the family-owned snack and pet food company, said cost, environmental and health considerations were behind its decision to keep travel to less than half pre-pandemic levels, meaning 145,000 fewer flights per year. Nick Bush, Mars global vice president for workplace transformation, said reducing travel could



also make senior jobs more attractive to people with families. She said 700 staff members could attend online strategy or sales events compared with the 100 people who used to meet in person: "You can really be more surgical about when you travel." Niklas Andreen, the chief operating officer of global corporate travel management firm CWT, knows the prospects are slim for a quick bounce back to pre-pandemic levels for the business travel sector. While 58% of people polled by CWT say they are keen to resume expenses-paid junkets, bookings are only gradually recovering, with 80% of travel domestic now, compared with 67% pre-pandemic in 2019. "It's going to take several years before we're back,"

Andreen said. In one of the first tests of the appetite for global gatherings, Germany's auto show in Munich this week has seen many major car companies like Toyota (7203.T) and Jaguar's Land Rover choosing to stay away. German airline Lufthansa (LHAGDE) has nevertheless seen demand for its regional flights between Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium jump 15% in recent weeks, and rise 30% for flights within Germany, Chief Executive Carsten Spohr said. Lufthansa is putting on more flights for business travellers in September, but it only expects a return to 90% of pre-pandemic trips in the long term. Pre-pandemic, airlines

made the bulk of their profits from business travel because companies are more likely to book at short notice and are prepared to pay more for convenient times. U.S. spending on corporate travel is expected to only reach 25%-35% of 2019 levels by the fourth quarter of 2021, and 65%-80% a year later, according to a Deloitte survey of 150 travel managers. "As companies look forward, they are thinking about how to keep some of the cost savings they have realised," said Anthony Jackson, head of Deloitte's U.S. aviation practice. Italian fashion group Prada's (1913.HK) chief executive Patrizio Bertelli said he thinks business travel would be "reduced to a minimum". "This

is certainly a big advantage for margins," he said earlier this year. Companies are also looking for ways to reduce their carbon footprint: about half the respondents in the Deloitte survey said they plan to adjust their business travel policy to decrease their environmental impact within the next year. "I used to fly from Dallas to New York for the day for an internal meeting with three or four people. I don't see that coming back very quickly," Jackson said. As part of climate measures Zurich Insurance Group (ZURN.S) unveiled this week, it said it would cut air travel compared to its pre-pandemic level by 70% as of 2022. read more The consulting arm of CWT is helping companies design travel policies that balance cost with environmental impact, for example proposing the lowest cost direct flight rather than a cheaper indirect flight with higher carbon emissions. However, CWT's Andreen said it was still important for some managers to get staff, and clients, together again. "It's hard to close a deal without looking each other in the eye," he said. And Burbury said some face-to-face meetings remain better for brainstorming and resolving tensions between staff: "When you are virtual, you only see what people want you to see."



Contd. From Page 1

## Assam boat capsizes : Search

people were rescued or traced.Two people identified as Jaan (Indreswar) Bora of Lakhimpur and Dr Bikramjit Baruah of Jorhat are still missing.Meanwhile, locals recovered a bag from the Brahmaputra river at Biswanath Ghat in Biswanath district on Friday. Documents including voter card, Aadhar card, PAN card of one Ruprekha Bora were found inside the bag.Local MLA Promod Borthakur said a fisherman had found the bag in the river and later handed it over to the police."In the recovered documents, we have seen that Ruprekha Bora is wife of Indreswar Bora, one of the persons who is still missing," Promod Borthakur said.READ| Horrific videos show locals scrambling to swim in Brahmaputra as Assam boats sinkUnion Minister Sarbananda Sonowal visited Majuli on Friday and took stock of the situation. He assured the people of the river island that construction of the bridge connecting Majuli to Jorhat will be completed in the next four years.Sarbananda Sonowal also met with the family of Dr Bikramjit Baruah, who went missing in the boat capsizing incident.

## Centre, Assam Jointly Working

asserted that the boat mishap could have been avoided if the Jorhat-Majuli bridge was there.The foundation stone of the bridge was laid in 2016 while Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the Bhumi Pujan earlier this year. At present, "technical aspects are being examined with both the state and the central governments aiming at completing the project within the next four years", Sonowal said.Have Urged China to Ensure Downstream States' Interests Not Harmed: Govt on Brahmaputra Dam Reports Kevin Pieteresen Interview: Assam is Global Leader in Protecting Rhinos Because They Care For Animals Sonowal was elected from Majuli in 2016 and again in 2021 while he was elected twice as MP from Lakhimpur constituency under which the world's largest river island is an assembly segment. He became a Union minister in July and is yet to resign as a member of the Assam assembly. Rejecting allegations from some quarters that he had done politics over the bridge issue, he said, "The people of Majuli have elected me twice as an MLA and also as an MP. I will never do politics with the people of the island as I both respect and revere them."The state cabinet on Thursday decided to entrust Finance Minister Ajanta Neog with the responsibility of monitoring the construction of the bridge."This indicates the commitment both the Centre and state government has towards the people of Majuli. Steps will be also taken by both the governments to improve the infrastructural facilities at both the Nimatighat and Kamalabari ghat at the earliest," he added.The boat collision was a "very tragic and unfortunate incident. I was in Delhi and immediately called up Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to discuss the matter. The prime minister and the Union home minister also assured all help to rescue the passengers," he said.

## Chief Minister Dr. Himanta

schemes like PM-KISHAN, PM Fasal Bima Yojna, Krishi Sinchai Yojna, etc was reviewed. Distribution network of fertilizer to be strengthened for avoiding shortage and misuse. State to develop own fertilizer distribution network within 3 months to deliver fertilizer directly to the retailer.?Agri University to conduct a study on rampant usage of fertilizer, pesticides, etc by farmers in various parts of the State while undertaking sample testing.To prepare a plan for optimum utilization of funds under various Central Govt schemes. One Programme Officer, Accounts Officer & Media Expert to be recruited in every District Agriculture Office for the purpose.?An interactive session of Horticulturists of the state to be organized to develop the sector.Activate seed farms under Agri Dept and Assam Seed Corp for producing quality seeds.All seed certification to be made free of cost for next three years.

## Additional Chief Secretary

Jorhat and Majuli.The Cabinet resolved to take a few permanent steps regarding waterways connectivity in the state which will be declared by the chief minister soon, Mahanta said.At the meeting, the ministers observed a minute's silence to mourn the tragedy and offered condolences to the families of those who died or are missing.Reciprocating militant organisation Dimasa National Liberation Army's unilateral ceasefire for six months, the Cabinet decided that the state government would stop its operations against the outfit for one month and during this period, its members cannot carry arms and declare bands.It was also decided that from now on, police verification would not be required for those selected for appointments in government jobs, Mahanta said.They would have to provide self-declaration which would be uploaded on a portal and if self-declarations are disputed with facts, steps would be taken against the candidate.Reservation for specially-abled candidates in government jobs would be increased from the current three per cent to four per cent.Unemployed persons in the state would now be able to register their names online at the Employment Exchange with their Aadhaar card numbers, the minister said.Offline registration will be allowed till March 31, 2022, and from April 1, only online mode of registration will be there, he said.For government construction works, the royalty payable to the forest department for using construction materials like sand, stones etc would now be deducted from the contractors' bill and submitted in treasury.For private construction in urban areas, the fixed royalty can be paid in four instalments at the treasury, Mahanta said.The Cabinet also decided that degrees and diplomas issued by government approved distance learning institutes would now be considered on a par with on-campus courses for government jobs.

## Bhupen Borah has blamed

like the present one going on a foundation stone-laying spree without even preparing DPRs," he said."Lessons were not learnt from the unfortunate boat capsizing that happened in north Guwahati in September 2018. The precautions that should have been taken by the BJP government all over Assam after this incident were simply not visible when the ferry accident happened," Borah added."As per news reports, help from SDRF and NDRF took an hour to reach the site of the disaster. During the season of floods, is it not mandatory for river transport authorities to monitor water transport activities? Do Neamatighat and Majuli have river police stations?" Borah wondered.He also questioned whether the Inland Water Transport Department had properly marked navigation routes. "How could two ferries collide in daylight in good weather conditions? Do they have licensed ferry drivers? Who is monitoring the load of the ferries as allegations are also rife that ferries and boats are always overloaded," Borah asked.The Roll on Roll off (Ro-Ro) service was inaugurated by then chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal at Kamalabari Ghat on October 11, 2018. The Ro-Ro vessel named MV Bhupen Hazarika was built at a cost of Rs 9.46 crore by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and had a capacity to carry over 100 passengers along with eight trucks. "It is unfortunate that till date the Ro-Ro service is not operational for reasons best known to the government of Assam," he added.

## President Ram Nath Kovind

fell vacant after Baby Rani Maurya tendered her resignation.Govt signs 'Karbi Anglong Accord'; Amit Shah says 'peace in NE region has been PM Modi's vision'A graduate from the Defence Services Staff Course and National Defence College, Lt Gen Singh has done two M.Phils from Chennai and Indore universities besides being a research scholar on India-China Boundary Issue in the Institute of Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, during his study leave from the Indian Army.President Ram Nath Kovind also ordered shuffling of governors of some states which includes shifting Banwarilal Purohit from Tamil Nadu to Punjab. He was earlier holding additional charge of Punjab.The Centre's interlocutor and retired IPS officer RN Ravi has been shifted from Nagaland to Tamil Nadu as its new governor.Jagdish Mukhi, at present governor of Assam, has been appointed to discharge the functions of the governor of Nagaland in addition to his charge till a fresh appointment is made, the communique said.The above appointments will take effect from the dates they assume charge of their respective offices.

## Isolating Afghanistan will have

the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and expressed satisfaction that a conference was to take place in Geneva to raise funds for the country.He said Pakistan was contributing towards the improvement of the situation in Afghanistan and sent an aircraft on September 9 with food and medicine supplies and promised to extend more humanitarian assistance through air and land routes.Qureshi reiterated his call to the international community to take steps to avert the economic collapse of Afghanistan, which can be done by making available the resources and promoting economic activities.He suggested the decision of freezing Afghan funds will not be helpful and be revisited.Talking about the international commercial flight from Kabul to Doha on Thursday, he said this safe passage was in sync with the demand of the Europeans and "we need to encourage the Taliban to stay on course". Qureshi also regretted that the "spoilers" did not allow the intra-Afghan dialogue to reach a conclusion, saying if there had been progress on talks among various Afghan groups, things would have been calmer.Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said on Friday that the world community must engage constructively and provide humanitarian support to bring lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. While chairing the 243rd Corps Commanders' Conference at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, Gen Bajwa reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to peace, according to a statement by the Pakistan Army."Constructive engagement and sustained humanitarian support for Afghanistan by the world community are imperative for enduring peace and stability," he said.Bajwa also said that close cooperation among all regional stakeholders was essential for a prosperous and peaceful region.He appreciated the Pakistan Army for its support and role in the evacuation of foreign and Afghan people from Afghanistan to other countries, the statement said.The Taliban swept across Afghanistan last month, seizing control of almost all key towns and cities in the backdrop of withdrawal of the US forces that began on May 1. On August 15, the capital city Kabul also fell to the Taliban, even as a large number of Afghans attempted in vain to flee the war-torn nation.

## Protests erupt in Majuli, APCC

onboard. Suddenly our ferry was hit by a bigger boat coming from the opposite direction. At first, I asked all to stay calm but within seconds I realised the water level has reached up to my knee. The boat was broken and I knew I have no other choice but to jump into the river. I jumped and I don't know how to swim so I was struggling not to drown. Somehow I could hold onto a floating trolley bag and come near to the other vessel. I saw one girl was trying to pull her mother up and I just screamed and begged her to save me, I have a 3-year-old daughter, please save me, I told her. She immediately offered her other hand while pulling up her mother with another hand. I got up with her help, those moments of horror I am not able to forget," one survivor said.Several passengers of the capsized boat who were fortunate enough to save themselves by jumping and swimming to the bank in Nimatighat left for their homes in Majuli on Thursday from the Tekelifuta Ghat in Sivasagar Disangmukh. Survivors explained how their boat 'Ma Kamala' capsized within 2-3 minutes after it was hit by the bigger vessel. By the time rescue teams reached the spot people were either missing or survived on their own.One of such survivors Ramachandra Satola, a young man from Kamalabari in Majuli, gave a thrilling description of the accident before the News18, "We were about to start our journey from Nimati to Kamalabari in Majuli but just as we were leaving, the bigger ferry coming from the other side hit us in full speed. Our boat was broken into two halves mid-water. Water was filling inside quickly and the boat was about to sink, we were helplessly trapped, most people jumped into the water without thinking."He also shared his grief of losing his two-wheeler which was drowned alongside the boat carrying it to the other end.While some are fortunate enough to tell their stories, some are not. One such unfortunate soul is Parimita Das of Kahilipara in Guwahati. The 28-year-old assistant lecturer of Rangasahi College in Majuli couldn't survive and was declared dead in Jorhat Medical College hospital after she was rescued from the water. She was returning to her work as school and colleges were reopening after a long break."I told her not to go, she could continue online class, but she said, ma I have to go. I shouldn't disappoint Principal sir," her weeping mother said.A bright student of Assam Jatiya Bidyalaya and Cotton University Parimita's accidental and untimely demise has sparked widespread protest in Majuli. Locals, students including her students from Rangasahi college staged a protest outside the DC office in Majuli on Thursday, agitators demanded immediate termination of Majuli DC Bikram Kairi.Power Minister Bimal Bora who is in Majuli on Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma's instruction had to sit on the road at Garmur Chariali for at least 30 minutes trying to talk to the protestors."I came here to talk to you. Please decide among yourselves and send a 10-member delegation to discuss things with us," Borah requested the students. But they were adamant with their demand that CM himself should come and face their questions."Why the ro-ro ship is not running even in monsoon? What is its use? If it's unserviceable why it was not repaired on time? We had to travel dangerously every time. No tickets are given and there is not a single life jacket available. Where is the much-hyped bridge? We are hearing about it since our birth but till now not a single pillar can be seen?," agitated students asked the Minister who left before the situation got into more tense mode and at one point police and para-military personnel had to use lathi-charge to disperse the crowd.Meanwhile, the Chief Minister visited the accident spot and later went to see injured persons at JMCH. He announced a high-level enquiry and compensation for the boat accident victims. He had a meeting with representatives of various organisations in Majuli."GoA is committed to passengers' safety & hassle-free movement of ferries between Kamalabari & Nimati Ghat. The number of passengers per boat will be fixed. Strict action against non-compliance. Assured this to reps of AASU, TMPK, AJYCP & other local organizations in #Majuli today," the CM tweeted after their meeting.The Nimati boat accident has raised many questions on part of accountability and the Opposition has slammed former Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and demanded the removal of Transport Minister Chandramohan Patowary for repetitive failure."Sonowal, who has become the chief minister with Majuli people's vote is now the Union Minister. But there is no trace of the bridge in Majuli as he promised. BJP laid its foundation twice but no construction is to be seen. Sonowal has failed to fulfil his promise," APCC President Bhupen Borah said at a press meet. The Opposition also demanded Transport Minister Patowary's resignation who is in charge of the same department since 2016.Three officers of the Internal Water Transport department including executive engineer Vikramaditya Chaudhary are suspended after the Nimatighat boat accident. Before this, the same officer was suspended after a similar tragic boat accident in Guwahati in 2018. Demanding to fix responsibility, the APCC President said Minister Patowary should immediately resign taking responsibility for continued failure.Denying the Opposition's allegation Central Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said construction of the proposed bridge is underway and as announced by Assam CM Dr Sarma it will be completed on time with close coordination of the State and Central governments. Sonowal will be visiting Majuli on Friday.The Nimati Ferry tragedy has brought back horrific memories of similar past accidents and people from across the State are slamming the IWTD department's repetitive failure and also demanding the strictest possible action against the concerned team fixing responsibility.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi

the country crossed 72 crore. Meanwhile on September 10, India recorded 34,973 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours taking the total tally to 3,31,74,954. The death toll climbed to 4,42,009 with 260 people succumbing to COVID-19, as per the Union Health Ministry data.A reduction of 2,968 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The active caseload at 3,90,646 accounts for 1.18% of the total tally. As many as 37,681 recoveries have been recorded in the last 24 hours taking the total recoveries to 3,23,42,299 and the recovery rate is currently at 97.49%. Kerala and Maharashtra are continuing to report maximum number of infections daily. On Thursday (September 9), Kerala reported 26,200 new infections and 125 deaths. The state's test positivity rate has now climbed to 16.69% after the state tested 1,56,957 samples within a span of 24 hours.

# "Everyone Is Scared" Echoes In India Inc After Infosys Attack: Report

New Delhi, September 10 : A public diatribe against two business giants by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's officials and his ideological allies has unnerved the business community, several industry executive told news agency Reuters.Over the week-end, a magazine run by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) launched an attack on tech giant Infosys for failing to resolve glitches in the income tax website it manages.The RSS called Infosys "anti-national" for letting down the tax system, sending a chill through the industry wary of falling on the wrong side of the PM Modi government.Just last month, the finance ministry "summoned" Infosys' CEO over the tech issues and in an unusual step took to Twitter to announce the summoning, heightening a media frenzy around a company that has been the face of India's IT's prowess.And in August, the commerce minister publicly lashed out at the \$106 billion Tata Group for criticising proposed stringent rules for e-commerce and said local companies should not only think about profits.In India, safeguarding domestic businesses has been PM Modi's priority. While government or RSS criticism of foreign businesses like Amazon and Monsanto is common, local businesses are rarely caught in the crossfire.But the latest events have raised concerns among business leaders about whether PM Modi is now taking a hardline approach towards domestic giants as well, five industry sources said.One venture-capital executive said the criticism was akin to "harassment" of businesses and risks souring investor sentiment. Another executive working at a global consultancy said "everyone is scared" as businesses don't want to run foul of the government."The frontal attack on iconic elements of Indian businesses have only buttressed the need for companies to ensure they are conforming, not just with tax issues, but with other government initiatives," said Dilip Cherian, an image guru and co-founder of leading Indian PR firm Perfect Relations.RC Bhargava, chairman of Maruti Suzuki, defended Infosys, saying it had played a key role in building India's software reputation globally."It needs to explain the glitches, but it doesn't mean there is a conspiracy to damage the country," he said.A senior member of RSS, however, said there's nothing wrong in the way the companies have been criticised, saying they must be thick skinned and held accountable."Why should questions not be raised, have corporates become a holy cow?" said the RSS official who declined to be identified. So far, PM Modi's government has not commented on the backlash on social media and from politicians. None of the sources who spoke to Reuters wanted to be identified as they fear a reprisal from the government and no industry lobby groups has come out and spoken against the government or RSS.The Indian Express said in an editorial it was "time for India Inc to stand up", saying business leaders had maintained "a studied - and perhaps strategic - silence about the vitriol that has been seeping into the public discourse."The Infosys controversy is related to the government's new income tax filing website launched on June 7. But there were many glitches which Infosys could not fix, despite assurances.When the Infosys CEO was summoned in August, the finance minister conveyed "deep disappointment and concerns," giving the company until September 15 to fix things.The RSS magazine Panchjanya said the company was making the same mistakes over and over again, creating doubts about its motives. "There are allegations that the management of Infosys is deliberately trying to destabilize the Indian economy," it said.After the furore over the article, Sunil Ambekar, the joint head of the RSS publicity wing, sought to distance the organisation from the contents and said Infosys had made a seminal contribution to the country.A mutual fund manager with Infosys and Tata investments said he was worried as it indicated "the government was not pro-business", and there were fears other companies can face such backlash for lapses.



## Minister Suklabaidya asks administration to remove encroachments from forest lands in Dhubri district; to intensify drive against illicit liquor and band saw mills

Guwahati, Sept.10: Minister for Environment and Forest, Excise and Fisheries, Parimal Suklabaidya reviewed the status of various schemes and projects of the departments in Dhubri on Friday. Reviewing the activities of Environment and Forest Department with Deputy Commissioner, district officials and representatives of political parties at Deputy Commissioner's conference hall, Minister Suklabaidya asked the administration to clear the forest lands from encroachments and sought the cooperation of all in the greater interest of protection of the environment. He also underscored the need for extension of the green cover through massive plantations. "We have to increase the green cover for generation of oxygen without which we cannot survive. Trees must live for the human race to live too," he quipped. The Divisional Forest Officer apprised the Minister that 303 hectares of forest land have been encroached upon in the district and around 32 hectares have been cleared from encroachments recently. Minister Suklabaidya said with the help from Geological Survey of India, all the forest lands and areas close to the inter-state borders will be carried out soon. He directed the DFO to close down all the illegal band saw mills operating across the district within 15 days and to reduce the number of licensed mills from the present seven numbers in a phased manner. Expressing displeasure over the entry of trucks carrying sand, gravel and other forest products from West Bengal through Chagolia checkpoint in Assam without transit permits, Minister Suklabaidya warned the Beat Officer of dire consequences for his lackadaisical attitude. The Minister while lambasting the DFO for turning a blind eye, directed him to start the process of checking the transit permits of trucks carrying sand, gravel and other forest products from West Bengal within the next two days. The Minister also asked the forest officials to increase the number of sand mahals from the existing three numbers to enhance revenue. Reviewing the activities of Excise department, Suklabaidya asked the officials to take all possible measures to stop illicit liquor and warned of stern action against anyone found involved in illicit liquor. He expressed his satisfaction over the collection of revenue by the department. Reviewing the activities of Fisheries department, Suklabaidya asked the officials to take into confidence the local MLAs and representatives of political parties while starting new projects. He asked the officials to encourage the educated youths to take to fishing as a lucrative business and to maintain close touch with the fishermen to solve their problems that will pave the way for more production. He asked the MLAs and representatives of political parties to help identify 10 bigas of land in any temple-mosque and other places and to submit proposals through the District Fishery authorities for creation of ponds. The Minister asked the District Fisheries Development Officer to extend invitation to the beneficiaries who have completed their works under PMMSY and to release the final instalment within a week. The review meetings were attended by the officials of the concerned departments, Deputy Commissioner, Anbamuthan MP, SP, Abhijit Gaurab, MLAs Nizanur Rahman, Abdus Sobhan Ali Sarkar, former MLA, Ashok Singhi and representatives of BJP, AGP and other political parties.



### Experienced Brazilian forward Jonathas joins Odisha FC



**New Delhi, September 10 :** Odisha FC on Thursday announced the signing of experienced Brazilian centre-forward Jonathas Cristian de Jesus ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League season scheduled to be played in Goa. The 32-year-old Jonathas has played in various leagues in countries like Brazil, Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Germany. He started his professional career with Brazilian club Cruzeiro in 2006 after playing for their youth team. He had also represented Ipatinga and Villa Nova on loan in Brazil before signing for Dutch club AZ in 2009. The experienced striker has played in the Serie A, La Liga and Bundesliga in Europe and represented clubs like Pescara, Torino, Elche, Real Sociedad, Hannover 96 among others and has more than 100 career goals to his name. Before joining the Bhubaneswar-based side, he was with UAE Pro League club Sharjah FC and played for Hatta Club on loan in 2021. Jonathas had also donned the Brazil U-19 colours during Sendai Cup in 2008. "I am very excited for this new challenge in my career. The project that Odisha FC showed me had a big impact on my decision. I am looking forward to play in the ISL and achieve greater things with Odisha FC," Jonathas said in a release from Odisha FC. Odisha FC head coach Kiko Ramirez said, "Jonathas has to be our goal scorer. He will give us work inside the pitch and he will make it very difficult for opposing defenders." In addition, he comes to the club with a lot of hunger and motivation to make a big impact in the ISL. Apart from his great character, he has a lot of quality, he is good in the air and he can create chances on his own."

## Uefa threatens World Cup boycott as Coe joins chorus of disapproval

**London, September 10 :** Fifa's radical plans to stage a biennial World Cup came under attack hours after they were officially unveiled on Thursday - with the World Athletics president, Sebastian Coe, warning of growing anger across Olympic sports and Uefa's president, Aleksander Ceferin, saying the proposals could "kill football". The Premier League joined 36 other European leagues in signing a statement stating they were "firmly and unanimously opposed" to Fifa's proposals for a new international calendar which would see a major international tournament every summer, with the World Cup and Euros in alternate years. Arsène Wenger, Fifa's head of global development, has suggested that a biennial



World Cup could begin in 2028, weeks before the Los Angeles Olympics is due to take place. When Coe, a member of the International Olympic Committee, was asked by the Guardian whether there were widespread fears across summer sports that they

could be smothered as a result he simply replied: "Yes." "I can see no good reason for it," he added. "There may be vested interests here but the summer sports are protective about the landscape as it's hard enough for them as it is to

grab space in the traditional or digital media. A biennial World Cup will inevitably start clashing with the Olympic Games too. "I'm a big football fan, but I fear that you're going to put a lot of players under some big physical stress. The clubs and leagues are all opposed to it. And my gut instinct is that you can keep cramming stuff into the calendar if you really want to, but less is more sometimes." Fifa's plans were also condemned by Ceferin, who when asked how Uefa could block a two-yearly World Cup, told the Times: "We can decide not to play in it. As far as I know, the South Americans are on the same page. So good luck with a World Cup like that. I think it will never happen as it is so much

against the basic principles of football. To play every summer a one-month tournament, for the players it's a killer." Ceferin, who has called a meeting of Uefa's 55 member countries for Tuesday, said that Uefa would not introduce a Euros every two years if the new calendar went through. "It might be good for Uefa financially but the problem is we would be killing football like that," he said. "We are killing the players. I don't see the clubs allowing the players to go and that would divide us completely." I have spoken to Zvonimir Boban [the former Croatia international, now Uefa's chief of football] and he has said players are not fully recovered from a World Cup or Euros until the November. Imagine that happens every year?" Wenger said the final decision on a biennial World Cup would be a "democratic" one made by the member associations - an overwhelming majority of whom backed the idea to commission the feasibility study - and reiterated that he hoped it would be decided by December. When asked about a potential global revolt, the former Arsenal manager replied: "If people have better ideas, I'm open to it. I welcome every idea that is better than mine."

### Indian team not keen on playing fifth Test after support staff tests positive



**London, September 10 :** Uncertainty remains over the Manchester Test, with Indian players, this paper understands, not keen to turn up for the game scheduled to be played from Friday. This follows the Indian team support staff, assistant physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar, returning Covid positive ahead of the match. Although the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is keen on going ahead with the schedule after the latest round of RT-PCR tests of the Indian players returned negative, Virat Kohli's team have reservations. It is learnt that the Indian players had a meeting on Thursday evening (BST), where the majority of the squad members expressed their unwillingness to play the fifth Test. According to sources, with the Indian Premier League (IPL) resuming in the United Arab Emirates from September 19, players are wary about the risk factors. Parmar had been monitoring several players, including Rohit

Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma - players with various niggles - during and after the fourth Test that ended on Monday. Players are unsure about what lies in store for the future, given that the virus has a certain incubation period. According to the source, testing positive in the future rounds of tests can put a question mark over their IPL participation and also in the T20 World Cup that commences in October. Sky Sports, however, reported that the final Test is set to go ahead as scheduled. "The fifth Test between England and India on Friday will go ahead as scheduled after the ECB announced there have been no further positive Covid tests in the Indian camp," it reported. But Kohli and company cancelled their pre-match training following instructions from the cricket board to stay put at the team hotel. The BCCI, meanwhile, has kept its cards close.

## Harlequins' Danny Care says World 12s proposals can make rugby more exciting



**London, September 10 :** The Harlequins scrum-half Danny Care has welcomed this week's proposal for a World 12s tournament, saying the sport must move forward and that most of modern Test rugby leaves him cold. The inaugural World 12s is planned for next August, with organisers pointing to the early success of the Hundred in cricket as evidence rugby could benefit from a similar progression. Proposals for the new competition include an IPL-style player auction and equal prize money for men and women. 2021/09/06 Copyright James Robinson Free for editorial use image, please credit: James Robinson Ian Ritchie photographed for the launch of World 12s. If you require a higher resolution image, have any other

photographic enquiries or are in any way unsure of your right to publish this image please contact James Robinson on Hello@James-Robinson.co.uk. At the Premiership launch as champions Harlequins approach the new campaign, Care said: "I do see the sport needing change. You can't just sit still. If you watch the majority of international Test matches at the moment, if New Zealand and maybe France aren't playing, then it doesn't really excite me - I tried to get my son to watch that Lions tour and he was like: 'What is this?'" Harlequins roared to last season's Premiership title playing an expansive style and Care believes the new 12s competition may encourage international coaches to play a more open game and also help to strengthen national

unions. "I like to think our club tries to play in a way that might inspire kids," he said. "I know international rugby's very different to Premiership rugby, but people say: 'You can't play like that in international rugby.' Well, why not? Why can't you? You can if your coaches let you play like that." "Maybe this 12s thing is going to be a great way for coaches to have a look at that. It's certainly something I'd want to watch and maybe get involved in." "You want the best players playing in your country. South Africans leave South Africa to play over here or in France or in Japan to get more money. But if you could create a bit more money that players felt like they didn't need to leave... I think each union would be stronger." "Whether the World 12s would have such an impact is debatable, as the richest domestic leagues would still expect to attract many top players. World Rugby has questioned the viability of any new competition but there is clearly an appetite among players to increase their earning potential."

## Emma Raducanu roars past Sakkari to set up US Open final against Fernandez

**London, September 10 :** When Emma Raducanu arrived at Flushing Meadows this year, she did not have the faintest idea of where to go. So unfamiliar was she with her surroundings, she needed help from her fellow players just to navigate the tournament's vast grounds. Her growth over the past three weeks since those timid first steps has been astounding as she outplayed everyone put in front of her. And under the lights of the Arthur Ashe Stadium on Thursday night she went even further, producing yet another brilliant performance to reach her first grand slam final. Faced with a moment she has been dreaming of her entire life, Raducanu handled the occasion with the remarkable composure that has defined her rise as she outclassed Maria Sakkari, the Greek 17th seed, 6-1, 6-4. In doing so, Raducanu became the first qualifier, man or woman, to reach a grand slam final and

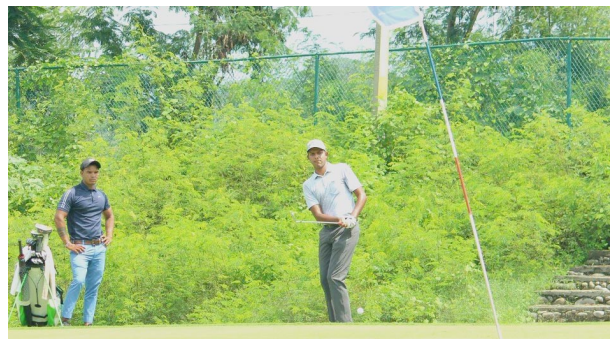


the first British woman to reach a grand slam final since Virginia Wade's triumph at Wimbledon in 1977. At the age of 18, Raducanu is now one step from the ultimate achievement in her sport. "Honestly, the time here in New York has gone so fast," she said after the match. "I've just been taking care of each day and, before you know it, I'm in the final and I can't believe

it." She will face another teenager, 19-year-old Leylah Annie Fernandez, after the Canadian extended her own astonishing run by scuppering the second seed, Aryna Sabalenka, 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-4. Together the two players, who last faced each other at junior Wimbledon in 2018, will contest the first grand slam final between teenagers since Serena Williams and Martina Hingis met at the

1999 US Open. Standing between Raducanu and the final was one of the biggest servers and most athletic players on tour. Sakkari had unfinished business when she stepped on court: at Roland Garros this year, in her first-ever grand slam semi-final, she had faltered when she held match point against Barbora Krejickova. Sakkari's drive was obvious at the start of the match. Over the first two games, Raducanu faced seven break points but she demonstrated her toughness by saving them all, and broke for good measure to lead 3-0. As Sakkari struggled to find her level, Raducanu grew. She seemed to occupy every part of the court, neutralising Sakkari's weight of shot with her movement and effortlessly flipped from defence to offence. Sakkari sprayed unforced errors and found herself 5-0 down before Raducanu tidily closed off the first set.

## On rain-hit day at Panchkula, Veer Ahlawat sizzles with 10-under 62 and emerges clubhouse leader



**New Delhi, September 10 :** Veer Ahlawat of Gurugram overcame 150 minutes of delay forced by morning rains in the second day of the TATA Steel PGTI Players Championship at Panchkula Golf Club (PGC), producing an extraordinary round of 10-under 62 that took him to the clubhouse lead position by a massive seven shots, finishing the second day with an imposing 15-under 129. Veer, playing his first competitive event in six months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, was in roaring form with his first two rounds of 67 and 62 and bogey-free

in second round. However, the 26-year-old's score failed to break Mandeo Singh Pathania's course record of nine-under 63 set in 2009 due to the rule of 'preferred lie' in place this week. Out of a total field of 124, only 59 players completed their second round on Thursday due to the delayed start. The remaining 65 players with unfinished second round, will resume play at 0700 hrs local time on Friday. Veer, who was overnight tied second, admitted to some early nerves before getting into his groove as he restarted his season at Panchkula. On Thursday, the

six-foot-three tall long-hitter from the DLF Golf & Country Club began with four straight birdies from the fourth to the seventh as he kept landing it within four to eight feet of the flag thanks to his brilliant hitting. Veer continued this trend on the back-nine by picking up six more birdies. The standout moments were finding the par-5 12th green in two for a two-putt birdie, a tap-in birdie on the 15th and his day's longest birdie conversion of 14 feet on the 18th. "I'm proud of my effort as it's (10-under) my personal best. My previous best was eight-under. I was a little nervous as I'm playing after six months and I didn't play in Hyderabad last week due to personal reasons," Veer said. "After the first round, I knew my game was still in good shape. The softer conditions due to rain didn't really bother me as I anyway hit it quite long. I struck it to perfection today and landed it where I wanted to. I had just one bad drive on the ninth where I managed to

save par. I also converted all putts within 10 feet today. I knew hitting it close wouldn't count if I don't sink the putts," he said, adding, "During the Covid-19 forced break, I used to practice putting indoors on my carpet during the lockdown. That kept me in touch with practice." Amardeep Malik (71-65) of Noida struck a solid seven-under 65 with eight birdies and a bogey to be placed second in the clubhouse at a total of eight-under 136. Chandigarh's Ranjit Singh (68-69) was third in the clubhouse at seven-under 137 while Harendra Gupta (71-67), another Chandigarh-based professional, was fourth in the clubhouse at six-under 138. Overnight leader Yashas Chandra of Mysuru was even-par through nine holes to be at a total of seven-under when play was suspended at 1830 hrs local time on Thursday due to fading light.

## Messi overtakes Pele with hat-trick as Argentina beat Bolivia in WCQ

**London, September 10 :** Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick to give Argentina a 3-0 win over Bolivia in a World Cup qualifier on Thursday, lifting him above Pele as South America's top international scorer with 79 goals. Messi got the opener after 14 minutes in Buenos Aires, dancing around the Bolivian defence before curling the ball into the net from just outside the box. He made it 2-0 in the 64th minute after working a one-two with Lautaro Martinez and displaying superb footwork in a packed penalty box, then completed the hat-trick with two minutes left, crashing home a rebound from close range. His 77th, 78th and 79th goals marked his

seventh hat-trick for the national side and took him two above Pele in the South American scoring charts. "I was really anxious, and I really wanted to enjoy it," Messi said. "I've waited a long time for this, I went for it, and I dreamt about it. It's a unique moment for the way it came about, after waiting so long." On a night when Argentine fans were allowed to watch their national team for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Messi broke down in tears as he lifted the Copa America trophy at the Monumental stadium. Argentina won the Copa America in July, their first major title in 28 years, and Messi danced with his team mates and showed off

the trophy to the 21,000 supporters present. "There was no better way to celebrate than by being here," he said. "My mum is here, my siblings are in the stands. They have suffered so much and they are here celebrating. I am very happy." Argentina are in second place behind Brazil in the 10-team qualifying group for Qatar in 2022. The top four teams qualify automatically and the fifth-placed side goes into an inter-regional playoff. Earlier on Thursday, Miguel Borja scored two goals in two minutes to put Colombia on their way to a 3-1 victory over Chile in Barranquilla. He got

the first from the penalty spot after 19 minutes and then ran through on goal a minute later to slip the ball under the keeper and make it 2-0. Jean Meneses pulled one back for Chile in the 56th minute but Luis Dias restored Colombia's two-goal lead with 16 minutes left.





# FIFA unveils biennial World Cup plan but UEFA threatens boycott

London, September 10 :

FIFA detailed its plan for re-shaping international soccer around playing the men's World Cup every two years despite European opposition that could lead to a boycott. Joined by retired greats, FIFA unveiled the proposal Thursday but the pushback from Europe was



immediate as UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin confirmed it could launch a boycott by its teams which have dominated soccer's marquee event since Brazil won in 2002. "We can decide not to play in it," Ceferin said in an interview with British daily The Times. About 80 former international players including World Cup winners went to Qatar for two days of FIFA-hosted talks and emerged

with consensus for playing the tournament twice as often. "We all agreed with the new proposal of the calendar," said Brazil great Ronaldo, who went to four World Cups and won twice. He described FIFA's proposal as "just amazing." Still, European soccer leader Ceferin said "as far as I know, the South Americans are on the same page" with resist-

ing FIFA's plan. "So good luck with a World Cup like that," Ceferin told The Times in the latest UEFA vs. FIFA fight since 2016 when he and Gianni Infantino were elected to the respective presidencies. Infantino and his allies have since 2018 floated the idea of a biennial World Cup which European soccer has viewed as a commercial and competitive threat to its club and national

team events. Arsene Wenger has led the project since FIFA hired the former Arsenal coach last year to be its director of global development. Details floated in recent media interviews and briefings were finally presented Thursday from Qatar in an overall plan to shape the schedule of international games from 2024. The FIFA-managed calendar mandates when clubs must release players to national teams. More top-level tournaments and fewer qualifying games are the priority with a biennial men's World Cup the key takeaway. Wenger said his priorities were less travel for players and less disruption for their clubs plus giving young talent worldwide "a chance to shine" by also playing more meaningful games. The current system that typically sees players based in Europe taking long-haul flights home throughout the season in short breaks for national-team games - could be replaced by a single block of fewer qualifying games in October. International tournaments would occupy June each year, with players proposed to get a mandatory 25-day vacation in July before

rejoining their clubs. Wenger said the balance of players having 20% of their games for national teams and 80% for clubs would stay, though "in a more efficient way." "I think it is an outdated (status quo)," he said. "It is not linked with the evolution of the modern game. We will not increase the number of games, we might even reduce it." Retired greats like Germany's Jürgen Klinsmann, Roberto Carlos of Brazil, Didier Drogba of Ivory Coast and Denmark's Peter Schmeichel were enlisted to discuss changing the four-year World Cup cycle in place since the first edition in 1930. "I don't think anyone disagreed on the frequency" of biennial World Cups, said Schmeichel, who played at just the 1998 World Cup. "It was a really, really long wait for an ambitious player like me to have the next possibility." The global group of players' unions, FIFPRO, has not yet commented on FIFA's plans. FIFA's process has angered many in European soccer who claim they were cut out of the consultation so far. "Still nobody engaged us. It is very strange," Nasser al-Khelaifi, the Paris

Saint-Germain president who leads the European Club Association, said Thursday at UEFA headquarters. The European Leagues group added its opposition one day after the World Leagues Forum criticized FIFA's plans. Wenger said FIFA could make a decision in December, though it would likely be ratified by its congress of 211 member federations next year. Saudi Arabia, a close ally of Infantino, formally asked for a feasibility study into a biennial World Cup at FIFA's online members meeting in May. Europe and South America have only a combined 65 of the 211 votes, with Africa's 54 now closely tied to Infantino, who is also an International Olympic Committee member. FIFA can expect opposition from Olympic sports to adding another World Cup that would absorb billions of dollars in commercial revenue and a huge amount of media attention. If approved, a biennial World Cup would likely move to odd-numbered years to avoid clashing with the Summer Olympics which open in late-July in 2028 and 2032.

## Kohli intent on cementing legacy with series win for India in England

New Delhi, September 10 :

Australia's cricketers partied long into the night on the outfield here two years ago. They had taken a 2-1 lead over England, retained the Ashes and, to empty stands and with beers in hand, gave a drawing rendition of True Blue by the folk singer John Williamson. Tim Paine, their captain, looked to gee

dia did not come across as a side who had climbed their mountain with that 157-run victory at Oval on Monday. They did become the second India team since Kapil Dev's triumphant 1986 tour to record two Test wins on English soil but Virat Kohli is a captain who wants to seal the country's fourth outright series victory here, and a first since 2007, to further cement his

this means a green light for the fifth Test to proceed - everyone is vaccinated but the proximity of the multimillion-dollar Indian Premier League is a complicating factor here - both teams are expected to make changes. India have a refreshed Mohammed Shami ready to replace a seamer - most likely Mohammed Siraj after Jasprit Bumrah's



up his players before the subsequent fifth Test at the Oval, dubbing it their "Grand Final" in a nod to the other major codes back home. But what followed was the performance of a team that had experienced its moment a week earlier. England won, the series was drawn 2-2 and Cricket Australia's fly-on-the-wall documentary did not get the final flourish its editors had hoped for. India find themselves in the same scenario this week by way of scoreline, but the psychology is different to Ashes cricket. For a start, the Pataudi Trophy is at stake for series played in England and the Anthony de Mello Trophy when in India. Joe Root's side therefore hold the former after three successive home series wins and so, despite being thrashed 3-1 in India this year, retention is still possible with victory in the fifth Test that starts on Friday. In-

game-breaking performance in London on Monday - and also face their latest decision over Ravichandran Ashwin. The pitch at Old Trafford looked a bare, slightly mottled one 24 hours out from the toss and is expected to turn. If so, Ashwin for Shardul Thakur would be a logical move, even if the all-rounder was unfortunate not to be named player of the match at the Oval, but Ashwin's non-appearance thus far means there are no guarantees. India must also decide if Ajinkya Rahane's loss of form should prompt a change to the middle order, with Hanuma Vihari and Suryakumar Yadav the alternatives here. Despite India having been in the UK since June, when they lost the World Test Championship final to New Zealand, it is hard not to sense greater weariness among England's players and not least for the new-ball pairing of Jimmy Anderson and Ollie Robinson.

## Dina Asher-Smith finds silver lining in Zurich final after Olympics heartbreak

Zurich, September 10 :

After a season drenched in tears and heartbreak, Dina Asher-Smith went toe-to-toe with the greatest women's sprinter in history - and reminded everyone just what she can do when her body is firing and pain-free. On a raucous and joyous night in Zurich, a crowd of nearly 30,000 roared Asher-Smith on as she flew out of the blocks and led the double Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah for 50m, before the Jamaican found a fifth and sixth gear to power home in 10.65sec - the eighth fastest in history - to add the Diamond League 100m crown to her collection. However, Asher-Smith's time of 10.87 was not only just 0.04 off her British record, but also capped a stunning return to form after an injury tore her hamstring and her Olympic dreams apart in late June. There was also further joy for Britain as Keely Hodgkinson ended her season by adding the 800m Diamond League title to her Tokyo silver medal. But it was Asher-Smith who sported the

biggest smile after finally hitting the highest notes again. "It's a really, really good day," said the sprinter. "I was so happy with my 100m. I was looking to go sub-11 seconds and put together a good race so 10.87 is great. But it wasn't necessarily about times, it's more about looking forward and setting a positive mindset and positive step for next year." Asher-Smith wasn't quite so impressive in the 200m an hour later, coming third behind the Namibian Christine Mboma in 22.19 sec, but she didn't appear to mind given her 100m time was her third fastest. And she believes it will help put the disappointments of the year behind her. "Obviously the Olympics didn't go the way I wanted but it's done now," she said. "I want to go into next year without any of that on my shoulders, and just push forward to make the next three years incredible. After the few months I've had, I'm so happy. I'm definitely taking that." The Letzigrund is one of the sport's great spiritual homes and the scene of multiple

world records. It was here that Armin Hary became the first man in history to run 100m in 10 seconds. It was also here that the world records in the men's 800m, 5,000m and 3,000m steeplechase were toppled in a few disbelief hours in 1997. And here that some felt that Florence Griffith Joyner's 33-year-old record might finally fall. It didn't happen. But Thompson-Herah believes she has unfinished business as far as that is concerned. "This year it was a long season with ups and downs, but next year, the world record is definitely on my mind," she said. The Diamond League final is billed as the Olympics in one night, and with 17 gold medalists on show it truly delivered over three hours of extraordinary athletes. As the winners were paraded around the track afterwards, to the sound of Shirley Bassey's Diamonds Are Forever, there was a Briton among them in the form of Hodgkinson. Once again she showed the sharpest of racing brains to take the \$30,000 first prize and an automatic entry into next year's World

Championships in Eugene. "To finish the season with a win like that against world-class competition, I couldn't be happier," said the 19-year-old, who tracked the leader Natoya Goule before kicking hard off the final straight to win in 1:57.98. "Now, I am going home, and then straight on a plane to Greece, and I am not going home for 10 days. I don't want to see a track for those ten days, and I am leaving my running shoes at home. "However another British medallist in Tokyo, Holly

Bradshaw, could only finish fourth with a modest clearance of 4.67m in the pole vault. The event was won by the Russian Anzhelika Sidorova, whose jump of 5.01m was the second highest ever outdoors. The women's 1500m, which had been billed as the race of the night, lived up to its billing. For three laps Faith Kipyegon, the Olympic champion, and Sifan Hassan, who won 5,000m and 10,000m gold in Tokyo, tracked each other step by step.



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