

# The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

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Aung San Suu Kyi braced ...**

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**30-bed  
Pediatric ICU**  
Assam Rising, Reporter  
Guwahati, November 28 :

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday inaugurated a 30-bed Pediatric ICU comprising 15 ICU beds & 15 step down beds at Tezpur Medical College & Hospital, Bihaguri, Sonitpur. Taking to Twitter CM Sarma wrote, "Glad to inaugurate a 30-bed Pediatric ICU comprising 15 ICU beds & 15 step down beds, a 30-bed COVID ICU & Residential Faculty Quarters at Tezpur Medical College & Hospital, Bihaguri, Sonitpur. These facilities will significantly improve medical services rendered by TMCH."

**Pradip Dutta  
Roy was  
rushed to  
hospital**  
Assam Rising, Reporter  
Guwahati, November 28 :

BDF's arrested leader Pradip Dutta Roy was rushed to the Silchar Medical College Hospital (SMCH) after he complained of severe chest pain in the mid-night hours. He was brought to SMCH by the jail authorities at around 2 am. The doctors at the medical college provided Roy necessary treatment. However, he was denied admission in the hospital. Later, he was shifted back to jail after being discharged from the hospital.

**Passenger  
offloaded  
from flight**  
Assam Rising, Reporter  
Guwahati, November 28 :

A passenger from SpiceJet flight SG 8169 (Guwahati-Delhi) was offloaded on Sunday after he repeated got off his seat and created a ruckus. According to a SpiceJet Spokesperson, "After repeated attempts to pacify him failed and co-passengers told the crew that they were not ready to fly with the said passenger on board. The aircraft was brought back to the bay where airport security officials along with SpiceJet staff deplaned the passenger and handed him over to the CISF."

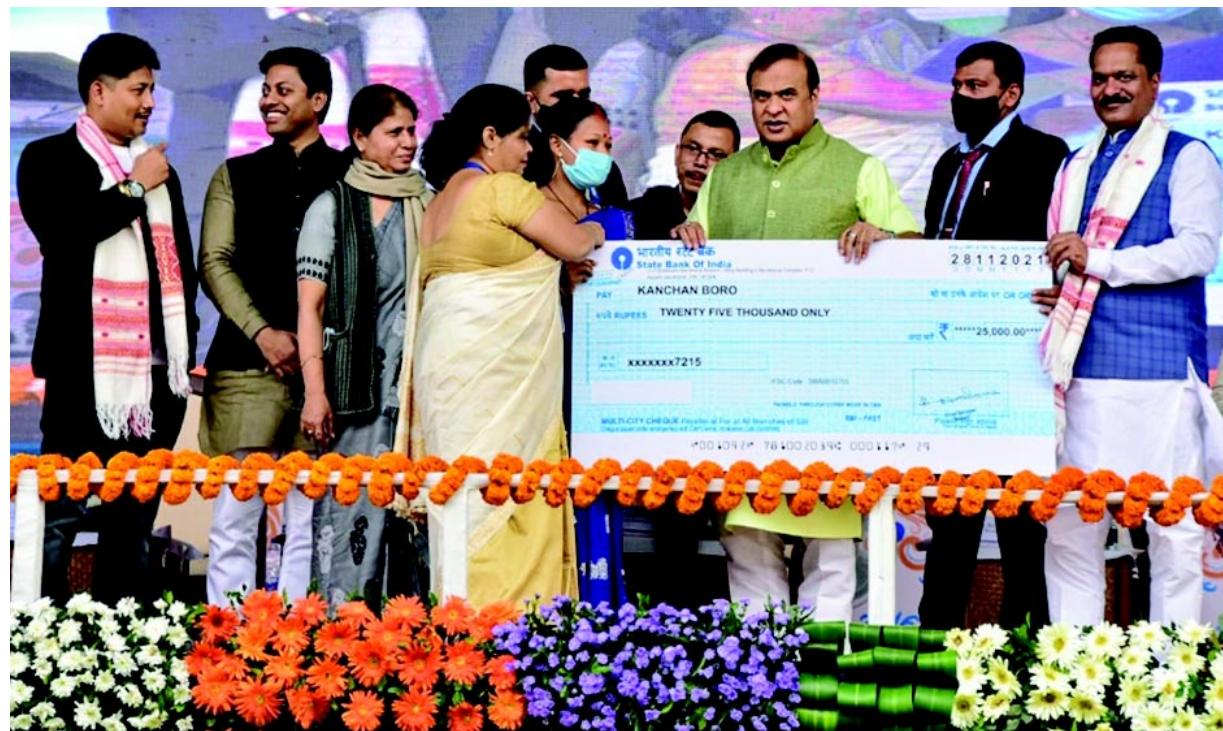
**Ramen Boro  
Wins Gold**  
Assam Rising, Reporter  
Guwahati, November 28 :

Assam had one of its best days in the SAFAS as it secured a gold medal through Ramen Boro in the category of Wushu. The 2nd International Games 2021 of South Asian Federation of All Sports (SAFAS) was held in Kathmandu in Nepal on November 27, 2021. Assam had one of its best days in the SAFAS as it secured a gold medal through Ramen Boro in the category of Wushu.

## CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma starts relief process for microfinance borrowers at Tezpur 24 lakh women beneficiaries will be benefited

Assam Rising, Reporter  
Guwahati, November 28:

Assam government will spend close to Rs 3500 crore to provide relief to around 11 lakhs microfinance borrowers who are making regular payments to banks. The process starts from Sunday onwards. Fulfilling his election promise, Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday launched microfinance loan waiver scheme at Collegiate HS School in Tezpur. The Assam Microfinance Incentive and Relief Scheme (AMFIRS), 2021, which promises financial relief to borrowers in Assam who have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, was formally inaugurated by the Chief Minister. Taking to Twitter CM Sarma wrote, "Honoured to launch the Assam Micro Finance Incentive & Relief Scheme, 2021, at Collegiate HS



School, Tezpur. Of the total 24 lakh woman beneficiaries including 59,468 women in Sonitpur district, each will get Rs 16,000 - Rs

25,000." Along with the CM, state finance minister Ajanta Neog, minister of water resources Pijush Hazarika along with other ministers

were present for the special inauguration program. Around 59,468 women from Sonitpur district would benefit from the loan waiver program. Assam chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The first phase which will encompass those making regular payments start

from today onwards. We will spend Rs 3500 crore in this phase." The Assam Cabinet had approved the process of cheque distribution who are regularly paying. Sarma said, "In the second phase around Rs 4000 crore will be

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## Incumbent upon judges to exercise discretion in their utterances in courtrooms: President



New Delhi, November 28 :

President Ram Nath Kovind has cautioned that it is incumbent upon the judges to exercise utmost discretion in their utterances inside courtrooms, as indiscreet remarks, even if made with good intention, can give space for dubious interpretations to run down the judiciary. Addressing the valedictory function of the Constitution Day programme organised by the Supreme Court, Presi-

dent Kovind expressed happiness as he noted that the Indian judiciary has been adhering to the highest standards. "There is no doubt that you have set for yourself a high bar. Hence, it is also incumbent upon the judges to exercise utmost discretion in their utterances in courtrooms. Indiscreet remarks, even if made with good intention, can give space for dubious interpretations to run down the judiciary," he said. Citing In-

dian tradition, he emphasised that judges are imagined as a model of rectitude and detachment, more akin to 'sthitpragya' (a person of steady wisdom). The President said that India has a rich history of legions of such judges who were known for their utterances full of sagacity and conduct beyond reproach, which have become hallmarks for the future generations. He said justice is the critical fulcrum around which a democracy revolves, and it gets further strengthened if the three institutions of the state - judiciary, legislature and executive - are in a harmonious existence. "In the Constitution, each institution has its defined space within

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## All-party meet at Delhi: PM Modi skips, AAP leader stages walkout

New Delhi, November 28 :

Ahead of the Winter Session of Parliament, an all-party meeting was called by the government on Sunday. Thirty-one political parties attended the meeting and 42 leaders from different parties participated in the discussion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was

"We were expecting PM Modi to come for the meeting. We wanted to ask his opinion on the farmers' bill." Later today, the BJP will hold its parliamentary executive meeting. The NDA floor leaders are expected to meet in the afternoon. At the meeting, most opposition parties demanded a discussion on the Pegasus snooping row,

laws on minimum support price and disinvestment of

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## BJP Sweeps Tripura Civic Elections, Wins 217 Of 222 Seats

Agartala, November 28 :

BJP has bagged a landslide victory in Tripura civic polls, winning all 14 urban bodies which went to polls on November 15. It made a clean sweep in 11 urban bodies, including Agartala Municipal Corporation. Out of the 222 seats across 14 urban bodies that went to polls, BJP emerged victorious in 217. CPI(M), which won in all the urban bodies in last civic body polls, has won in three seats across three urban bodies—Kailashahar and Ambassa Municipal Councils and Panisagar Nagar panchayat. Trinamool Congress, which has bagged the second highest number of votes after BJP in the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC), has won a single seat at Ambassa Nagar panchayat while Tripura royal scion Pradyot Kishore-led TIPRA Motha has won one seat. Polls were held for 14 of 20 urban local

bodies in the state on November 25. Of the total 324 municipal seats in the state, the BJP won 112 seats uncontested. The remaining 222 seats registered a healthy 81.54 per cent voter turnout. With this, Agartala Municipal Corporation is without an Opposition for the first time. Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb said this was a "historic" victory and the people of Tripura have given a "sothik jobaab" (apt answer) by casting votes which ensured that BJP won 98.50 per cent of the seats. "Those who tried to malign Tripura should see... people from majority and minority communities together voted in favour of development under Narendra Modi," Deb said. Without naming Trinamool Congress, Deb said that the poll mandate was a reply to those who tried to "insult Tripura" and "demean it by conspiracies". Speaking to reporters after the results



were announced, Tripura ICA minister Sushanta Chowdhury said people voted against "conspiracies hatched by Trinamool Congress and CPI(M)" that were trying to "disturb the peace and tranquillity of the state". "There were many conspiracies hatched by CPI(M) and TMC. With this mandate the people have proved that even though Tripura is a small state, dignity is something we hold dear," he said. He asked all victorious councillors and corporators of his party to work closely with people and garner public support for the

party ahead of the Assembly  
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**BHEJA FRY**

Assam is not badly spoken about. Stitch your face

## New COVID variant Omicron triggers fears about fresh outbreaks

New Delhi, November 28 :

There is a global concern and widespread alarm at the discovery of SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.529, which the World Health Organization (WHO) has called 'Omicron'. The emergence of this new COVID variant has triggered fears about fresh outbreaks around the world even as cases are rising in Europe. Some of the countries including the UK, Israel and America have imposed curbs on travel from affected African countries. Others have scaled up their screening of incoming

passengers from these countries. The WHO has classified Omicron as a 'variant of concern' because it has a wide range of mutations. This suggests vaccines and treatments could be less effective. Although it's too early, Omicron appears to be able to reinfect people more easily than other strains. WHO said that it may take weeks to understand the new variant. According to a Bloomberg report quoting a scientist in London, "it likely evolved during a chronic infection of an immuno-compromised person, possibly in an untreated HIV/AIDS patient".



Besides South African nations, Omicron has already been detected in other regions, including the UK, Germany, Israel, Hong Kong and Belgium. So while a travel ban on southern African countries may slow the spread and buy limited time, it's unlikely to stop it. In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired a

high-level meeting where he told officials to be proactive in light of the new variant. The Centre issued a directive to states to screen passengers from these countries including those transiting through them. Bengaluru and Mumbai airports have made RT-PCR and quarantine mandatory for passengers from these countries. The

variant was identified on November 22 in South Africa, from a sample collected from a patient on November 9. South African virologists took prompt action, conferred with colleagues through the Network of Genomic Surveillance in South Africa, liaised with government, and notified the World Health Organization on November 24. This is in keeping with the International Health Regulations that guide how countries should respond. The behaviour of this new variant is still

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Christmas opening event held in central Helsinki

## Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi braced for verdict in incitement trial

**Yangon, November 28 :** Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi is braced to hear the verdict in her trial for incitement against the country's military rulers, the first in a catalogue of cases that could see her jailed for the rest of her life. The Nobel laureate has been detained since the generals ousted her democratically elected government on 1 February, and she is expected to find out about her sentence on Tuesday. More than 1,200 people have been killed and over 10,000 arrested in a crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group. Aung San Suu Kyi faces three years in jail if found guilty of incitement against the military. The charge is one of several that analysts say are aimed at removing the high-profile figure from the political arena for good. The court has been hearing testimony related to the charge of incitement, which is sometimes referred to as sedition. The offence is defined as spreading false or inflammatory information that could disturb public order. But the junta's plans for Aung San Suu Kyi remain unknown, they add, and authorities could also

delay the verdict. Journalists have been barred from proceedings in the special court in the military-built capital Naypyidaw and her lawyers are banned from speaking to the media. Days after the coup, Aung San Suu Kyi was hit with obscure charges for possessing unlicensed walkie-talkies and for violating coronavirus restrictions during elections her National League for Democracy (NLD) won in 2020. The junta has steadily added a slew of other indictments, including violating the official secrets act, corruption and electoral fraud. Aung San Suu Kyi now appears most weekdays at the junta courtroom, with her legal team saying last month the hectic schedule was taking a toll on the 76-year-old's health. "I think it's almost certain Suu Kyi will get a harsh sentence," said David Mathieson, an analyst formerly based in Myanmar. "The question is what will her incarceration look like? Will she get average relayed messages to her supporters. The trials of other

block, or privilege in a VIP statehouse?" Aung San Suu Kyi's long spells of house arrest under a previous junta were spent at her family's colonial-era mansion in Yangon, where she would appear before thousands

ranking members of Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD have wrapped up, with the junta doling out harsh sentences. A former chief minister was sentenced to 75 years in jail earlier this month,



gathered on the other side of her garden fence. Min Aung Hlaing's regime has confined her to an undisclosed location in the isolated capital, along with a small staff. Her link to the outside world has been limited to brief pre-trial meetings with her lawyers, who have brought her news and relayed messages to her supporters. The trials of other

while a close Aung San Suu Kyi aide was jailed for 20. The generals could later reduce any sentence pronounced on the higher-profile Aung San Suu Kyi, said Mathieson, although he cautioned against expecting clemency from the junta and its leader. "How much mercy does Min Aung Hlaing possess?"

## Niger: two killed and 17 injured in clash with French military convoy

**Paris, November 28 :** At least two people were killed and 18 injured in western Niger on Saturday when protesters clashed with a French military convoy they blocked after it crossed the border from Burkina Faso, Niger's government said. The armoured vehicles and logistics trucks had crossed the border on Friday after being blocked in Burkina Faso for a week by demonstrations there against French forces' failure to stop mounting violence by Islamist militants. Anger about France's military presence in its former colonies has been rising in Niger, Burkina Faso and other countries in west Africa's Sahel region where France has thousands of troops to fight affiliates of al-Qaida and Islamic State. Last weekend, hundreds of people in the Burkina Faso city of Kaya blocked the French convoy, which is on its way from Ivory Coast to Mali. It was able to leave Burkina Faso on Friday but ran into new protests on Saturday morning less than 19 miles (30km) across the border in the western Niger town of Tera, where it had stopped to spend the night. Civilians wounded in an earlier attack in Niger in January 2021 meet Niger's interior minister, Alkache Alhada, at a hospital in Ouallam. "In its attempt to extricate itself, it (the French forces) used force. Sadly, we deplore the death of two people and 18 injuries, 11 of them serious," Niger's interior ministry said in a statement. "An investigation has been opened to determine the exact circumstances of this tragedy and determine responsibility." French military spokesperson Col Pascal Ianni told Reuters that French soldiers and Nigerian military police had fired warning shots to disperse protesters who were trying to pillage and seize trucks but said he could not confirm or deny the reported casualties. The convoy was later able to continue towards the capital, Niamey, Ianni added. Video shared by a local official showed the protesters, mostly young men, shouting "Down with France," as black smoke rose from a burning barricade. France intervened in Mali in 2013 to beat back militants who had seized the desert north, before deploying soldiers across the Sahel. While it has killed many top jihadist leaders, violence has continued to intensify and spread in the region. In remarks broadcast on national television on Friday, the Nigerian president, Mohamed Bazoum, defended the French presence in the Sahel, saying its departure would lead to "chaos".



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**London, November 28 :** The Cabinet Office has been accused of "delay and deception" over its blocking of the release of files dating back more than three decades that reveal the inside story of the intelligence agent Peter Wright and the Spycatcher affair. Wright revealed an inside account of how MI5 "bugged and burgled" its way across London in his 1987 autobiography Spycatcher. He died aged 78 in 1995. Details of Wright's disclosures and the mostly futile attempts by Margaret Thatcher's government to quash publicity of Wright's revelations are detailed in 32 files containing government documents from 1986 and 1987. Tim Tate, an award-winning documentary-maker and author who is seeking access to the files, accuses officials of withholding documents that may cause political embarrassment. "They have behaved appallingly, as if the law does not apply to them," he said. "It is a waste of public money over documents which should be in the public domain." Most government documents are released after 30 years, but officials have cited various exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act to block publication of the Spycatcher files. They initially said the request was "vexatious" because of the amount of work involved in collating the files and redacting any sensitive material. It is the latest

controversy involving the Cabinet Office and Freedom of information laws. It has been accused of wasting public funds in a legal battle over the personal diaries of Lord and Lady Mountbatten in which costs are expected to exceed £600,000. Wright was a senior MI5 officer from 1955 to 1976. After retiring to Australia, he wrote his memoirs, which alleged illegal activities by the security services. Wright claimed that he was a member of a small group of MI5 officers who plotted to try to force the resignation of the Labour prime minister Harold Wilson because of their suspicions he was a communist spy. He also alleged agents burgled and bugged the embassies of



hostile countries and allies. One of his most sensational claims was that Sir Roger Hollis, the former head of MI5, was a Soviet agent. A review in 1974 by Lord Trend, a former cabinet secretary, found there was no evidence to show that Hollis had been a Soviet agent. The government launched legal proceedings to stop the book being published in Australia, but lost the action in 1987. During the hearing, Sir Robert Armstrong, Thatcher's cabinet secretary,

admitted he was prepared to be "economical with the truth" to protect national security under cross-examination from barrister Malcolm Turnbull, who later became Australia's prime minister. Ministers also gagged newspapers in England from reporting on Wright's claims against MI5. The government was found in November 1991 to have violated the right of freedom of speech because of gagging orders against the Observer and the Guardian. Tate first made a request for the files to the Cabinet Office in April 2019. Under the Public Records Act 1958, records selected for permanent preservation are required to be transferred no later than 30 years after their creation either to the National Archives in Kew, south-west London, or another suitable place of deposit.



Tourists enjoy skiing in Yabuli, NE China

## 'A core threat to our democracy': threat of political violence growing across US

**Washington, November 28 :** Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez stood on the House floor and implored her colleagues to hold Paul Gosar accountable for sharing an altered anime video showing him killing her and attacking Joe Biden. "Our work here matters. Our example matters. There is meaning in our service," Ocasio-Cortez said in her speech last week. "And as leaders

in this country, when we incite violence with depictions against our colleagues, that trickles down into violence in this country." House Republicans heard Ocasio-Cortez's impassioned plea and responded with a collective shrug. All but three Republican members voted against censuring Gosar and stripping him of his committee assignments, while every House Democrat supported the resolution. The Gosar incident served as the latest data point in an alarming trend in American politics. In a year that began with a deadly insurrection at the US Capitol, lawmakers have seen a sharp rise in the number of threats against them. Republicans' muted response to Gosar's behavior has intensified fears about the possibility of more political violence in America in the months to come. Jackie Speier, the Democratic congresswoman who spearheaded the effort to censure Gosar, warned that Republicans' refusal to hold him accountable could have dangerous repercussions. "If you are silent about a member of Congress wanting to murder



another member of Congress, even in a 'cartoon', you are inciting violence," Speier told the Guardian. "And if you incite violence, it begets violence." That cycle is already playing out in the halls of Congress. The US Capitol police reported earlier this year that the agency had seen a 107% increase in threats against members compared with 2020. The USCP chief, Tom Manger, has said he expects the total number of threats against members to surpass 9,000 this year, compared with 3,939 such threats in 2017. Some of those threats have been on vivid display in the past month. In addition to Gosar's violent

video, the 13 House Republicans who voted in support of the bipartisan infrastructure bill earlier month have received threatening messages. Representative Fred Upton of Michigan publicly shared one such message, in which a man called the Republican congressman a "fucking piece of shit traitor". "I hope you die. I hope everybody in your fucking family dies," the man said in the message. And those kinds of threats are not reserved solely for members of Congress. Election workers and school board members also say they are receiving more violent messages. According to an April survey commissioned by

the Brennan Center for Justice, nearly one in three election officials are concerned about their safety while on the job. Stephen Spaulding, senior counsel at the government watchdog group Common Cause, described such violent tactics as "a core threat to our democracy". "The threat of violence is really to intimidate people from doing their jobs and upholding their oath of office," Spaulding said. "When you start having these violent episodes enter the system, it is totally counter to the way that we are supposed to engage in open and fair debate about policy issues in this country." There are already signs that fears over personal safety are pushing lawmakers out of office. When the Republican congressman Anthony Gonzalez announced in September that he would not seek re-election, he said his vote to impeach Donald Trump for inciting the insurrection had affected the lives of his family members.

## Coalition bill would force social media companies to reveal identities of online bullies

**London, November 28 :** The Morrison government will introduce legislation this week to crack down on abuse and bullying on social media platforms. Under the laws, social media platforms will be forced to expose the identity of individuals who post defamatory or damaging material anonymously. "The online world provides many great opportunities but it comes with some real risks and we must address these, or it will continue to have a very harmful and corrosive impact on our society, on our community," Scott Morrison told reporters in Canberra on Sunday. The government is seeking a complaints mechanism where if

somebody thinks that they are being defamed, bullied or attacked on social media that they will have an opportunity to require the platform to take it down. If the platform fails to comply, there will be a court process that would allow that person to require the platform to provide details of the identity of the abusive or defaming identity. "The online world should not be a wild west where bots and bigots and trolls and others can [be] anonymously going around and can harm people and hurt people, harass them and bully them and sledge them," the prime minister said. He said online companies must have proper processes



to enable the removal of this content." There needs to be an easy and quick and fast way for people to raise these issues with these platforms and get it taken down," he said. They have that responsibility. They have created this world." Morrison said the government will be looking for test cases to reinforce these new laws, and will back people who have been wronged if they are someone of little means. "We will back them in the courts and we will take them on. We will take them on in the

parliament, and we will take them on in the courts because I want to ensure our kids are safe," the prime minister said. Liberal minister Anne Ruston said it would be "absolutely unacceptable" for a platform to think it could shirk responsibility. "I would really like to see any of these platforms stand up and say that they think it's acceptable that they hide behind the anonymity of bots and bullies and bigots online," Ruston told ABC's Insiders program.

## Ride on, baby: NZ politician cycles to hospital to give birth - for the second time

**Wellington, November 28 :** New Zealand MP Julie Anne Genter got on her bicycle early on Sunday and headed to the hospital. She was already in labour and she gave birth an hour later. "Big news!" the Greens politician posted on her Facebook page a few hours later. "At 3.04am this morning we welcomed the newest member of our family. I genuinely wasn't planning to cycle in labour, but it did end up happening." The island nation of 5 million has a reputation for down-to-earth politicians. Prime minister Jacinda Ardern famously took maternity leave while in office and brought her three-month old to a UN meeting as she was still breastfeeding. "My contractions weren't that bad when we left at 2am to go to the hospital - though they were 2-3 min apart and picking up in intensity by the time we arrived 10 minutes later," Genter wrote. "Amazingly now we have a healthy, happy little one sleeping, as is her dad," said Genter, a dual New Zealand-US citizen who was born in Minnesota and moved to New Zealand in 2006. Genter - her party's spokesperson for transport issues and whose Facebook profile includes "I love my bicycle" - also biked to the hospital in 2018 to give birth to her first-born. "Beautiful Sunday morning for a bike ride, to the hospital, for an induction to finally have this baby," Genter posted on Instagram at the time, alongside photos of her riding her bike at 42 weeks pregnant, accompanied by the hashtag #bicyclesarethebest.

## Guest House

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# Pijush visits dredging site of Jia Bharali



**Assam Rising, Correspondent Biswanath Chari, Nov 28:** Pijush Hazarika, the

state Water resources minister had visited the areas adjoining the

Jiyabharali river in Sonitpur district along with Soota MLA Padma

Hazarika and officials of the Water Resources Department and the district administration on Sunday. During his visit, he interacted with the engineers and officials involved in the installation of a Cutter Section Dredger machine, to be used to dredge the river for the first time in the history of Assam and provide a permanent solution to the flood problem faced by the people living on the both sides of the river. Addressing a media gathering, he added that the dredging work to be carried out using cutting edge technology will begin soon in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

## Blood Donation Camp held

**Assam Rising, Reporter, Golaghat, Nov 28:** A blood donation cum awareness camp was organised yesterday by the Red Ribbon Club of Hemo Prova Borborah Girls' College Golaghat in association with the Department of Political Science of the College. The camp was supported by technical and logistics support by the Blood Bank of the Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital Golaghat. The Red Ribbon Club of the college has taken up a number of initiatives in recent times as an attempt to serve the local community. The camp was inaugurated by Dr. Bipul Chandr Bhuyan, Principal of the college in the presence of Dr. Rupam Bora, In Charge, Blood Bank, SKKCH and other officials of the Blood Bank. Dr. Bhuyan asked the college fraternity to come forward and donate their blood for a noble cause. Dr. Bora too emphasised on the human aspect of such donation which is essential and urgent for a needy person. A good number of faculty members, office staff and students donated their precious blood for the betterment of humanity.

## One lakh government employees will go on a door-to-door survey for vaccination: CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

**Guwahati, November 28:** The Chief Minister of Assam, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the newly discovered variant of the coronavirus, 'Omicron' was more dangerous than the 'Delta' variant. CM spoke on various issues including the discovery of the new variant, vaccination status, and microfinance. Regarding the new variant, mentioning that it was more dangerous than the delta variant, he informed that after another 3 lakh vaccines, the entire state would have been covered for the first dose of the vaccine. He also said that the second dose of vaccine had been administered to 1,15,59,443 as of yet. Speaking further on the issue, he said that from November 29 to December 5, one lakh government employees will go on a door-to-door survey. They will go to each polling booth and get the first dose vaccine list then match it during the door-to-door survey. While speaking on microfinance, the CM

reiterated that 11 lakh women will get up to ₹25,000 exemption. The exemption will be only for those who return the loans by March 31. The CM then informed that ₹3,000 crores would be spent in the first phase which will be completed before March, adding that ₹4,000 crores would be spent in the second phase. The beneficiaries would be selected based on applications, he said. CM Sharma also commented on Pradeep Dutta Roy. Saying that this was not a conspiracy against Assamese, he mentioned the aggression in Barak Valley which is a conspiracy against Bengalis in the Brahmaputra Valley. Adding that Pradeep Dutta wanted to bring Trinamool Congress to Assam, he said that all of this was to pave the way for the new party to enter and benefit.

## Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha's state executive held at Nagaon

*None can develop one's own mother tongue by insulting other's mother tongue : Suklabaidya*

**Assam Rising, Reporter, NAGAON, Nov 28:** Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha's state executive meeting was underway here at Nagaon district library auditorium. The executive meeting was held with two days agendas where a slew of state ministers and party president of ruling BJP and other state activists of the BJP and its brother organization Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha participated.

Bhavesh Kalita, state president of BJP, Parimal Suklabaidya, minister of

forest and environment, Bimal Bora, minister for cultural affairs, Jayanta Malla Bujarboruah, spokesperson of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, local MLA Rupak Sarma were among of those high profile leaders who attended the open session of the executive meeting today.

The open session was chaired by Sidhanku Angkur Boruah, the state president of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha and party president Bhavesh Kalita graced the occasion as chief guest.

Besides, 400 activists from 40 organized district

**Assam Rising, Correspondent, Golaghat, Nov 28:**

On the occasion of the Constitution Day 2021, a quiz competition titled 'Know Your Constitution' was held at Hemo Prova Borborah Girls' College, Golaghat. The event was organised by the Political Science Discussion Forum, Department of Political Science of the College. A total of fourteen teams comprising of two members each participated in the quiz out of which four teams reached the finals. The quiz was conducted by Sumit Kumar Sarma, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science who also briefed the students about the importance of the day. The team

comprising of Asrifa Zaman and Kashmiri Bora secured the first prize followed by the team of Seema Gogoi and Dharitri Saikia. The third position went to the team of Bhagyashri Saikia and Lakhee Saikia while the team comprising of Ankita Chetry and Barnali Saikia bagged the consolation prize in the event. Dr. Bipul Chandra Bhuyan, the Principal of the College along with Dr. Bulbuli Boruah, HoD, Dept. of Political Science and Dr. Palash Handique distributed the prizes and certificates to the winners. The students were made aware of many unknown facts about the Indian Constitution through the quiz.



*Smt Seba Kalai has created history by becoming the first candidate from a regional party in the history of Tripura to win an urban seat. She has won the Ambassa Urban seat by defeating the BJP.*

## 73rd ID Cup Football Tournament

**Assam Rising, Correspondent, Nagaon, Nov 28:**

The 73rd edition of prestigious Independence Day Cup football Tournament will be started tomorrow at 5-30 pm under flood light here at Nagaon Nurul Amin Stadium playground. The inaugural match of the tournament will be held between Khaoshingh football club (Majuli) and Bodusa club (Udalguri) and the match will be inaugurated by former state footballer Dipak Das. Plaban Boruah, secretary to Nagaon Sports Association said all the matches of prestigious ID Cup football Tour-

nament will be held under flood light this time and the team of Khaoshingh football club which will participate in the opening match of ID Cup football tournament, has already arrived at Nagaon and the rival team - Bodosa Club (Udalguri) will arrive tomorrow. The president and executive president of Nagaon Sports Association respectively ex Union Railway Minister for State - Rajen Gohain and local MLA Rupak Sarma urged the people as well as other sports lovers to make the tournament a grand successful.

## AITSAA'S Bhimbora Deori Award 2021 to Hagrama Mohilary Former Chief of BTC

**Guwahati 28 November:** The All India Tribal Students' Association Assam (AITSAA) has declared its prestigious Jananeta Bhimbora Deori Award 2021 to Hagrama Mohilary Renowned Social Activist NE India, Former Chief of BTC and President of BPF respectively for his outstanding contributions towards the upliftment of Bodo society language culture, making peace harmony brother hood and overall development of Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District Region during his tenure of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The AITSAA's Jananeta Bhimbora Deori Award will be conferred to Hagrama Mohilary on the eve of Late Bhimbora Deori's 74th Death Anniversary on 30th November 2021 at PWD Training and Convention Centre Dispur Guwahati with gorgeous day long program which is organised by All India Tribal Students Association Assam AITSAA. On the occasion of Death Anniversary of Former minister of Assam govt, Jurist, Ex General Secretary of Assam Tribal League, Architect of Khasi Darbar Jananeta Bhimbora Deori's Death Anniversary most of the eminent personalities like Journalist Pranay Bordoloi, Prag News CMD Dr Sanjive Narain, Dr Tuliram Ronghang CEM of KAAC, Debolal Garlosa CEM of NCHAC, Actor Nishita Goswami, Radio Artist Suruj Kumar Patiri, Dr Anjali Daimari, Former Mr World Golap Rabha and other dignitaries are invited to grace the function.

## Sonitpur district committee of Janagostiya Sanskritik Oikya Mancha formed

**A.R correspondent, Biswanath Chari, Nov 28:**

Sonitpur district committee of Janagostiya Sanskritik Oikya Mancha was formed in a public meeting held at Khelmati Adabari



MES, near Balipara with Mridul Sahariya in the chair on Sunday. Chatraman Subba, convener of the meeting briefed the objectives that was attended by Prahlad Mili; general secretary of the state committee, Ranjit Sahariya along with representatives of various students union and literary body. At the end of the meeting Sonitpur district committee of Janagostiya Sanskritik Oikya Mancha; a new body was formed with Lalit Kumar Basumatary as president, Ranjit Sahariya as working president, Pranjal Pratim Bora as secretary along with thirty one executive members.

## Awareness programme to Mark 75th Year of India's Independence held



**Assam Rising, Reporter, Aalo Nov 28:** Along with the rest of the India, Office of the Legal Aid Clinic at the premises of Additional District & Ses-

sions Court-cum-Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Upper Subansiri District, Camp: Basar, A.P has conducted legal aware-

ness campaign to celebrate India's 75th year of independence as the "AZAADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV" in com-

memoration of the adoption day of our Constitution as SAMVIDHAN DIVAS (CONSTITUTION DAY) at the Panchayat Hall, New Dari village, Dari, Leparada District, A.P on November 26 last. Tage Halley, AD&SJ cum Chairman, DLSA, U/Subansiri District, Camp: Basar dwelt at length on Synergy between Customary Law (Assam Frontier Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 and The Arunachal Pradesh Civil Courts Act, 2021, Mijum Doka, Advt.— Indian Adoption Law cum Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and POC

Act, 2012, Ito Riram, Advt. cum Retainer Lawyer, Legal Aid Clinic, Basar— The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. The representatives of village authority/Head Gaon Burah and Gaon Burahs, Women Organization, Panchayat Members, Self Help Group, Youth Forum and other general public of entire Dari Circle, Leparada District comprising of 05 females and 39 males in total have participated on the occasion.

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## THE ASSAM RISING

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## The revolution in space research

The observatory - built by Nasa with European and Canadian space agency collaboration - has been designed to revolutionise our study of the early universe and to pinpoint possible life-supporting planets inside our galaxy. However, its planning and construction have taken more than 30 years, with the project suffering cancellation threats, political controversies and further tribulations. In the process, several other scientific projects had to be cancelled to meet the massive, swelling price tag of the observatory. As the journal Nature put it, this is "the telescope that ate astronomy". Now scientists are about to discover if those sacrifices and soaring costs are justified when, according to current schedules, the telescope is fired into space on 22 December. "It's the launch of a generation," says Daniel De Chambure of the European Space Agency (Esa). Designed as a replacement for the Hubble space telescope - still in operation after its 1990 launch - the James Webb is a far bigger, much more complex instrument with many more ambitious goals. For a start, it will not study the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum - as does the Hubble and most ground-based telescopes - but will gather only infrared radiation. "There are many reasons for this," says Prof Gillian Wright, director of the UK Astronomy Technology Centre in Edinburgh. "For a start, infrared is the perfect part of the spectrum for looking through dust, and that is important because stars and planets form in regions full of dust. So if you want to understand where and how other solar systems are being created, the James Webb should provide crucial data." In addition, atmospheres of planets that might contain chemicals such as methane - a gas associated with biological processes - are also best studied by gathering infrared radiation and could indicate if they are capable of supporting life. "Spectroscopy is an important way of looking at the formation of promising planets in our own galaxy," adds Wright, who is the European principal investigator for the team that built one of the Webb's four main instruments: the MIRI or Mid-infrared instrument. This part of the James Webb's operations is essentially a local affair and will involve looking at stars in our own galaxy. However, astronomers also want to study the very early universe in the period that followed the birth of the cosmos in the big bang 13.8bn years ago. That means focusing on very, very distant galaxies. And again studying infrared radiation provides key advantages. "A telescope is a time machine. It lets you see what the universe was like in the past - because light takes a finite time to reach us from a distant object," says Prof Martin Ward of Durham University, who is a member of the MIRI science consortium.

## Be a Citizen Journalist

Are you against of violence or corruption? Do you really want revolution in the social, educational, political or economical system? Do you have any questions for the Government, political or non political parties? Don't worry, be a part of The Assam Rising family, Be a citizen journalist and write to us about your problem and we will take the responsibility to publish your voice. We will give you a platform to raise your voice, because your simple voice can change society.

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## Letter to The Editor

You can send us your self-composed article, story, poem, letter to the editor or any other creative work done by you. We are responsible for publishing it in The Assam Rising. We will also find out one best contributor/writer every week and an attractive prize will be given to encourage him/her. So, without any further delay mail us your own work with full name and address to [assamrising@gmail.com](mailto:assamrising@gmail.com).

**Editor,**  
**The Assam Rising**  
Guwahati, Assam

# 'Mahatmas' are ideals of human perfection. Madame Blavatsky was their agent in India



I read ThePrint opinion article "The woman behind the fake Mahatmas who made A.O. Hume set up Indian National Congress", authored by Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar, edited by Neera Majumdar, published in October, and was disappointed that your journal, which, as proclaimed in its editorial policy, stands for ethical journalism and reportage strictly based on truth and fact, should have published the article in question. It is full of factual errors, poorly researched, abounding in misconceptions about the Theosophical Movement, and insulting to the honourable name of Madam H.P. Blavatsky to whom the world owes a deep debt of gratitude for the incalculable benefit she has conferred on humanity with her message of Theosophy. The Theosophical Movement of the 19-21st century came in its proper time to give an impulse to the advancing intellectual development of the modern era, which was evincing a decided swing towards materialism since the Renaissance, as a reaction to centuries of religious bigotry and suppression of free thought. It was aimed towards higher thought and nobler ideals by bringing back to the Western

mind the forgotten truths of timeless wisdom; and, at the same time, reviving the true spirit of archaic Eastern religious and philosophical traditions that had become obscured. The "Mahatmas" spoken of so disparagingly in the article are among the fraternity

of the living ideals of human perfection, a product of universal evolution, who in all ages have been constantly at work, aiding human progress towards man's higher destiny. They have imparted as much of the Wisdom-Science as the people of the times could assimilate either through their messengers or by appearing

 **MI Ramprakash**

themselves according to the dictates of the cyclic and Karmic law governing higher progress of humanity. Madame H.P. Blavatsky was the Mahatmas' direct agent who was sent by them to found a Society with the express purpose of forming a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood of humanity, to promote comparative study of world religions and philosophies, and to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic and spiritual faculties and powers latent in mankind. She recorded for the modern world so much of the eternal Wisdom-Religion, which encompasses in its disquisition the whole gamut of the laws governing the cosmic and anthropic origins, evolution and destiny. This furnished stimulating intellectual material as the basis for the accomplishment of the said three

objects. Madame H.P. Blavatsky travelled all over the world and spent years in India. She and Col. Olcott tirelessly worked in India to revive ancient Hindu and Buddhist philosophies and infuse a sense of pride and reverence for the priceless ancient heritage in the youth of India who had been demoralised by incessant propaganda of Christian missionaries demeaning Hinduism, on the one hand, and irresistible tide of Western thought that had materialised the Indian mind, on the other. India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Madame for her labour of love for the country's reform and regeneration. The statement made in the article that the Mahatmas made use of Allen O. Hume, then-secretary to the government, to found the Indian National Congress is baseless. The founders of the Theosophical

Movement never indulged in politics, their sole aim and purpose being intellectual, moral and spiritual development of humanity. Hume who came in touch with the Teachers dissociated himself from them because his proposal to teach a few white men occult science was rejected by the Mahatmas. It was Hume who, inspired by the lofty ideals of the founders, involved himself in the freedom movement and founded the Indian National Congress. The other statement that Madame Blavatsky colluded with her workers, the Coulombs, and resorted to fraudulent means to simulate the image of her Himalayan Teachers to satisfy the desire of Hume to see them, is baseless. The author has cited a series of articles published in the Madras Christian College Magazine on this subject as proof. The truth of the matter is that the Christian Missionaries

carried on a relentless disinformation campaign against the Theosophical Movement and resorted to questionable means to despoil the effort to awaken interest among Hindus about their ancient heritage, which was best done by ruining the reputation of the inspirer of the great revival movement and thus discrediting the latter. For the historically factual version of the incident, the readers are invited to peruse chapter VI, pp. 83-87, in "The Theosophical Movement 1875-1950," Cunningham Press, Los Angeles, CA, 1951 edition. One more statement made by the author of the article, which is a repetition of the unjust and slanderous attack made by the Society of Psychological Research (SPR), based on a one-sided faulty investigation report of Richard Hodgson, that Madame Blavatsky resorted to fraud by setting up concealed mechanical devices in her chamber in Adyar Headquarters to simulate exhibition of occult powers and deceive people. Independent investigation of the charges of SPR demonstrated the biased and faulty method of investigation of Hodgson. For correct facts of the case, the reader is referred to chapter VII of the above-cited reference. Moreover, the SPR admitted the erroneous basis of Hodgson's report after one of its officials, Vernon Harrison, published in the journal of the SPR, in 1985, pointing out the biased report of the committee and exonerated Madame Blavatsky of the false charges. Further, Harrison noted in his report that "there are serious flaws in Hodgson's methods, observation, reasoning, and conclusions," and that the report was "flawed and untrustworthy," accusing Hodgson of selection bias, among other errors.

## Autistic people are being locked away in institutions. A radical change is needed

Not many people have to worry that their children will be forcibly removed or locked away from society. Yet this is something I do worry about. My autistic son, who also has a learning disability, experiences the world differently. I am often in awe of his perspective, and he has inspired my more than 40 years of professional and voluntary effort advocating for better understanding, care and support. When people like my son go into crisis there is a high chance they won't be supported at home - not because they can't be helped to live full, valuable and meaningful lives in their communities, but because our "system" doesn't allow for it. Instead, they may be removed and taken, sometimes miles away, to an unfamiliar inpatient setting designed to treat mental illness, even though many are not mentally ill and do not need to be in hospital. There are currently more than 2,000 people with learning disabilities and autistic children and adults in such settings in England and Wales. These often noisy and sensory-driven environments exacerbate the more troubling features of autism, instead of providing the routine, structure and predictability that autistic people need. It is little wonder that autistic people

struggle to regulate themselves and fail to thrive in these places. Many get stuck, with the average length of stay for current inpatients being five and a half years, albeit skewed upwards by some long forensic detentions (those subject to legal or court proceedings). This week we have seen shocking accounts of one man's 20-year detention in such a setting, traumatised by a system that has failed him. Tony Hickmott's brave, and now elderly, parents persuaded

 **Sheila Hollins**

the judge in a court of protection hearing that his article 8 right to respect for family life had been breached - and that it was in the public interest for him to be named. They talked on national news about their 100-mile journey every week to see him. His father described having to break his journey on the way home to manage his own tearful distress. His mother said they don't smile any more. The promise of his release by next spring offers some hope for Tony, who has spent nearly half of his life in hospital, but there have been promises before and it's years too late. Ryan, whose similar story featured in national news last year, recently moved back home to live near his parents. Neither Tony nor

Ryan have forensic histories, but they are victims of inadequate planning and a lack of safe and adequate care and support in the community. Ryan's mother wrote to me this week: "Ryan is doing really well in his new home, and the staff can't believe how chatty he is, as in hospital he didn't converse much. When he goes for a drive, my son looks forward to coming back home, and my husband heard him mutter, 'Home sweet home.'"

Each day when he wakes, he goes to the living room window, looks out and smiles, knowing that at last he's free. "The sad truth is families are not routinely involved in the way that is the norm for patients with physical health conditions. Instead, distressed families are seen as somehow part of the problem. The families of Tony and Ryan describe being ignored and marginalised. It's two years since Matt Hancock, the then secretary of state for health, appointed me to advise and oversee a DHSC-managed programme of independently chaired case reviews for 77 people detained in long-term segregation. The cases examined comprised people with learning disabilities and autistic people. I work with an oversight panel of experts, including experts by

experience. For legal reasons we do not know the identity of the people being reviewed. The reviews were intended to uncover the blocks in the way of getting people discharged more accurately. The reviews started just before the pandemic began and many had to take place virtually. Despite making urgent and achievable recommendations, there has been insufficient action to get people discharged even in cases where alleged rights violations have been reported. The numbers of people in long-term segregation have increased rather than gone down. The independent reviews are continuing, and some people have been offered a senior "intervenor" as part of a pilot to speed up commissioners' responses. Other recommendations include that when someone is admitted a clinical contract must be agreed in advance, and those responsible for that admission should be accountable for checking the clinical pathway is effective, timely and brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Autistic people and people with learning disabilities who do have a mental illness need a specialist environment with people who understand their sensory and communication needs and also have proven expertise in their health condition.

## Modi govt must not ban cryptocurrencies. But regulation shouldn't be slack either

The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021, which is likely to be introduced in the Lok Sabha in the coming Winter Session of Parliament beginning 29 November, will signal the end of private cryptocurrency deals in India and introduce a regulatory framework in this sector. The official digital currency to be introduced by the Reserve Bank of India will be recognised and will, in all likelihood, be the official cryptocurrency of the country. The broad consensus seems to be that it would be prudent on the part of the Narendra Modi government to regulate this business rather than ban it completely. There is an apprehension that roughly 10 crore Indians who possess or deal in cryptocurrency will continue to dabble in it in spite of the ban, making it the biggest underground black market illegal financial trade in decades. The share market will pale in insignificance. The worst fear of any online trading activity and agency, in the private or public sector is the possibility of cyber-attack. According to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) there have been more than six lakh cyber security breaches in the first six months of this year with government institutions

accounting for 12,000 incidents. Pakistan-originated malware that had earlier targeted the power sector and government organisations in India has now mutated, like a real-life virus, to adopt new cyber-attack capabilities. The modified remote access trojan, dubbed 'ReverseRat 2.0', has "added functionality such as taking remote photos via webcams and retrieving files on USB devices inserted into the compromised machines", according to Back Lotus Labs report. According to reports Afghanistan, India, Iran and Jordan were among those governments targeted by attackers using a forged United Nations Meeting platform (UNODC) to lure government targets. For example Quoine Pte Ltd, which trades under the brand name Liquid, is exempted by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) from holding a licence to provide Digital Payment Token (DPT) services and warns customers that they may not be able to recover all the money or DPTs paid to them if the business fails. In August this year, this company became a victim of cyber-attack resulting in the theft of cryptocurrency assets worth 97 million dollars from its warm wallets (an online account used by customers for easy ac-

cess for trading in cryptocurrency). A cyber-attack on government operated or licenced cyber exchanges will seriously erode the confidence of investors even in other markets trading in financial instruments. The regulatory body needs to insulate all such exchanges and financial markets from such an eventuality. Cryptocurrencies emerged from the idea of 'mining' bitcoins using a complicated algorithm and high-end computers with multiple functions running parallelly.

 **Seshadri Chari**

Soon, the blockchain technique became more popular than the end product. The biggest advantage of this technique was the ease with which the trader could conceal all private information. This in itself becomes the source of many illegal, shady and anti-national activities. The regulation attempt by the government appears to be the right way to prevent the misuse of the technology but derive maximum benefit out of it. Like any other "legally permissible gambling business", this trade in government-minted cryptocurrency will also generate profit fit enough to be taxed. This tax revenue

could be one of the incentives for the government to allow this trade with restriction rather than ban it and lose the "sin tax". Cryptocurrencies are not just another trading activity. They have the potential to turn into a lethal weapon in the wrong hands with sinister motives. Trading in arms and weapons including medium range nuclear warheads are possible with cryptocurrencies without going through the overtly traceable computer operations which are easy to track. In order to prevent tracing of transactions and protect privacy of the customers the cryptocurrency platforms use various techniques such as Dual Key Stealth Address Protocol (DKSAP), which allows the sender to generate a new address for every new transaction. By using ring user signature technique, the sender can make the transaction totally untraceable. Such multiple transactions can originate from one source but reach different buyers or beneficiaries without anyone in the ring coming to know the other, not to speak of the security agencies. Finally, the Zero Knowledge Succinct Non-Interactive Argument of Knowledge (Zk-SNARKS or Snark as it is referred to) devised to

conceal account balance allows the currency holder to authenticate and validate a transaction without divulging critical personal information or even location. The new regulation by the government should seriously consider imposing technology mechanisms in such a manner that each cryptocurrency deal, like share market operations, should be traceable and subject to scrutiny and audit. The idea behind such a mechanism should be to insulate the cryptocurrency deals from being turned into a tool that could compromise national security. This does not mean that the user has to surrender their personal information or compromise with their confidentiality for the sake of net profit. Like any other financial instrument, cryptocurrency too should have all the features of guaranteeing protection of information that is of confidential in nature but allow the authorities to detect fraud, concealment of income, misuse with anti-national intent or security breach. The government's regulation may need further correction over a period of time but certainly this is a good beginning, which will test both the market's sincerity and the government's prudence.



## CBI books 7 for Rs 73 cr fraud at PNB, Indian Bank



**New Delhi, Nov 28:** The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case against seven accused, including private firms, for perpetrating a fraud at Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Allahabad Bank in credit facilities and term loans to the tune of nearly Rs 73 crore during 2013. The accused were identified as S.R. Alcobey Pvt. Ltd, New Industrial Estate, Jagatpur, Cuttack, its Managing Director Ranjan Kumar Padhi and Director Saina Kar; Naina Devi Suppliers Pvt. Ltd, Sainagoue Street, Kolkata, West Bengal (Corporate Guarantor), Chandraghanta Iron and Steel Traders Pvt. Ltd., Shyam Bazar Street, Kolkata,

West Bengal (Corporate Guarantor), Brewforce Technologies, East Patel Nagar, New Delhi or Dehradun, Uttarakhand (Supplier) and a civil contractor named Sukanta Kumar Lenka, a resident of Cuttack. According to the CBI, there is involvement of unknown public servants of Punjab National Bank, among others. "The accused committed a fraud at Punjab National Bank, main branch, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack and Allahabad Bank, Bhubaneswar branch, in a matter of credit facilities or term loans to the tune of around Rs 73 crore (Rs 40 crore by PNB and Rs 33 crore by Indian Bank, formerly Allahabad Bank) during

2013," the probe agency said in a statement. After disbursement of the loan proceeds, the borrowers and guarantors allegedly violated the terms and conditions of the sanction and they neither procured the machineries nor deposited the instalments in time and the account turned into a non-performing asset (NPA). It was further alleged that the accused, including promoters, directors, guarantors and suppliers, had misappropriated and diverted the loan proceeds with the ulterior motive to defraud the banks to the tune of nearly Rs 140.48 crore (principal amount plus interest as on September 30, 2021). The CBI conducted searches at the premises of the accused situated at Cuttack (Odisha) and Dehradun (Uttarakhand). "Further probe is on," it added.

## Lenovo launches new all-in-one PC with Core i5, 16GB RAM

**Beijing, Nov 28:** Lenovo has launched its new all-in-one computer 'Lenovo AIO520' with 23.8-inch FHD display, Core i5 and 16GB RAM in the Chinese market. The computer is priced at 5,499 yuan (approximately \$860) and is currently up for pre-order

through JD.com, reports GizmoChina. In terms of specifications, the new Lenovo AIO520 features a 23.8-inch Full HD display that offers a screen resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels and a 96 per cent screen-to-body ratio. Under the hood, the device is powered

by Intel's 11th generation Core i5-11320H processor. The PC packs 16GB of RAM and 512GB of SSD for storage. It comes with integrated Intel Iris Xe high-performance graphics, built-in 96 stream processor units with performance close to MX450.

## Vedanta Chairman bags Asian Business Philanthropy Award 2021

**New Delhi, Nov 28:** India's leading industrialist and philanthropist, Anil Agarwal, Chairman of the Vedanta Group, one of the world's biggest Oil & Gas and Metals companies, has been bestowed with the Philanthropy Award at the Asian Business Awards 2021 for his outstanding contribution towards humanitarianism initiatives centering on healthcare, education, sanitation, skill development and sustainable livelihood. His philanthropic pursuits have been an inspiration across the globe for his charitable foundation, the Anil Agarwal Foundation, which has created an exemplary social impact in rural India with Vedanta's multiple care initiatives. These initiatives, including Swatch Goan Abhiyaan, Nand Ghar, have touched upon over 4.23 crore lives helping them better their quality of life. To bring in sustainable and inclusive growth integrated with social-economic development, the group spent over Rs 331 crore in the year 2020-21. The Asian Business Award, now in its 23rd year, is hosted every year by Eastern Eye, Britain's biggest selling English language Asian newspaper. The award is known for celebrating Asian entrepreneurship and business success, wherein the winners are honoured at the annual gathering of the UK's wealthiest and most successful businessmen and women. This year's esteemed assemblage, held on November 19 in London, recognised Agarwal for his exceptional contribution towards empowering underprivileged communities. His universal mission of giving back to society has made him a living inspiration for many across the globe. Sharing his thoughts concerning his recent accolade, Agarwal said: "I am extremely humbled to receive this award. It has further energised me to uphold my commitment towards sustainably strengthening the rural communities of the



country. I take pride in living up to my 'Giving Pledge' as this year Vedanta, under its social initiatives, has spent Rs 331 crore and has vowed to spend Rs 5000 crore more. Philanthropy has given more meaning to my life, and I draw immense satisfaction in giving back to society." Anil Agarwal Foundation CEO, Bhaskar Chatterjee, expressed great joy over international acknowledgement of Agarwal's efforts and the honourable distinction. Chatterjee said: "We are extremely humbled and honoured to receive this award. We have always been committed to uplifting society and creating a more egalitarian social structure where basic necessities of life are accessible to all. The Anil Agarwal Foundation was set up to facilitate sustainable and inclusive growth to protect and provide for our communities. Such a prestigious award has boosted our spirit to continue our efforts towards serving society and motivates us to do more and better." It is not the first time his philanthropic vision gained traction, as he was also featured in the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2020. The list ranked him among the top five philanthropists in the country. In the pandemic-marred year of 2020, Agarwal's contribution towards humanitarian

initiatives rose by 90 per cent compared to the previous year. In order to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 contagion, the foundation launched a Rs 5,000 crore social impact program called 'Covid Mukti Villages' to help the rural communities build a robust healthcare infrastructure. Last year alone, Vedanta contributed more than the government-mandated 2 per cent towards corporate social responsibility. The group outdoes itself every year with its transformation work at the grassroots level. One of Vedanta's flagship initiatives, 'Swasth Gaon Abhiyaan', provides end-to-end healthcare services across 1,000 villages in 12 states, improving the lives

of over 2 million people. Besides, the foundation also continues to significantly scale up its state-of-art Anganwadi project called 'Nand Ghar'. With the key focus on women empowerment and child development, the foundation is operating 2400-plus Nand Ghars across the nation. These aim to recreate anganwadis, powered with technology, especially to surpass the pandemic-induced challenges, by establishing e-learning for children along with providing nutritional meals and healthcare at their doorsteps. Vaccination being the most important shield against the virus, Vedanta rolled out a mega vaccination drive covering 1.2 lakh employees, their families and business partners. Under the guiding light of Agarwal, the foundation continues to work towards creating a better world by elevating the quality of life of various communities. Agarwal, staying true to his philanthropic commitment, took the 'Giving Pledge', in March this year and vowed to give 75 per cent of his wealth towards the socio-economic welfare of the rural communities. The Giving Pledge is a movement comprising global philanthropists wherein the world's big-hearts commit to donating the majority of their wealth towards philanthropic programs and charitable causes.

## Aviation rebound to sustain as vax drive keeps pace says Boeing India

**New Delhi, Nov 28:** Easing travel hesitancy along with a notable reduction in Covid infection rate and an accelerated vaccination drive will sustain the healthy rebound in India's aviation sector, said aerospace major Boeing India. Besides, easing restrictions as well as trends like 'revenge travel' are expected to boost air passenger num-

bers. Notably, the trend shows a gradual conversion of the pent-up demand into a more sustainable growth pattern for the industry. "We are seeing a recovery in domestic traffic numbers which are now at similar levels of those in 2019," Boeing India President Salil Gupta said. "Increase in vaccination penetration will first boost the domestic traffic which is currently leading the recovery."

Accordingly, the positive effects of the fast paced vaccination drive will eventually lead up to the opening of the international sector. "There are places which have achieved 70 per cent or more vaccinations for people above 12 years, whereas there are many other places which have relatively lower rates." As and when the vaccination penetration increases, the



international segment will subsequently open-up and

come to a near normal level of operations." Furthermore, he

said that India remains one of the most important global markets for the company. As per the latest annual India Commercial Market Outlook (CMO), Boeing predicted strong aviation growth in India due to the country's growing economy and an expanding middle class, fuelling demand for more than 2,200 new jets valued at nearly \$320 billion over the next 20 years.

# Biden sets out oil, gas leasing reform, stops short of ban



**Washington, Nov 28:** The Biden administration has recommended an overhaul of the nation's oil and gas leasing program to limit areas available for energy development and raise costs for oil and gas companies to drill on public land and water. The long-awaited report by the Interior Department stops short of recommending an end to oil and gas leasing on public lands, as many environmental groups have urged. But officials said the report would lead to a more responsible leasing process that provides a better return to US taxpayers. Our nation faces a profound climate crisis that is impacting every American? Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said in a statement Friday, adding that the new report's recommendations will mitigate worsening climate change impacts while staying steadfast in the pursuit of environmental justice? The report completes a review ordered in January by President Joe Biden, who directed a pause in federal oil and gas lease sales in his first days in office, citing worries about climate change. The moratorium

drew sharp criticism from congressional Republicans and the oil industry, even as many environmentalists and Democrats said Biden should make the leasing pause permanent. The new report seeks a middle ground that would continue the multibillion-dollar leasing program while reforming it to end what many officials consider overly favourable terms for the industry. The report recommends hiking federal royalty rates for oil and gas drilling, which have not been raised for 100 years. The federal rate of 12.5 per cent that developers must pay to drill on public lands is significantly lower than many states and private landowners charge for drilling leases on state or private lands. The report also said the government should consider raising bond payments that energy companies must set aside for future clean-up before they drill new wells. Bond rates have not been increased in decades, the report said.

The Bureau of Land Management, an Interior Department agency, should focus leasing offers on areas that have moderate to high potential for oil and gas resources and are close to existing oil and gas infrastructure, the report said. The White House declined to comment Friday, referring questions to Interior. The federal leasing program has drawn renewed focus in recent weeks as gasoline prices have skyrocketed and Republicans complained that Biden policies, including the leasing moratorium, rejection of the Keystone XL oil pipeline and a ban on oil leasing in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, contributed to the price spike. Biden on Tuesday ordered a record 50 million barrels of oil released from America's strategic reserve, aiming to bring down gas prices amid concerns about inflation. Gasoline prices are at about USD3.40 a gallon, more than 50 per cent higher than a year ago, ac-

cording to the American Automobile Association. The Biden administration conducted a lease sale on federal oil and gas reserves in the Gulf of Mexico last week, after attorneys general from Republican-led states successfully sued in federal court to lift the suspension on federal oil and gas sales that Biden imposed when he took office. Energy companies including Shell, BP, Chevron and ExxonMobil offered a combined USD192 million for offshore drilling rights in the Gulf, highlighting the hurdles Biden faces to reach climate goals dependent on deep cuts in fossil fuel emissions. The leases will take years to develop, meaning oil companies could keep producing crude long past 2030, when Biden has set a goal to lower greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent, compared with 2005 levels. Scientists say the world needs to be well on the way to that goal over the next decade to avoid catastrophic cli-

mate change. Yet even as Biden has tried to cajole other world leaders into strengthening efforts against global warming, including at this month's UN climate talks in Scotland, he's had difficulty gaining ground on climate issues at home. The administration has proposed another round of oil and gas sales early next year in Wyoming, Colorado, Montana and other states. Interior Department officials proceeded despite concluding that burning the fuels could lead to billions of dollars in potential future climate damages. Emissions from burning and extracting fossil fuels from public lands and waters account for about a quarter of US carbon dioxide emissions, according to the US Geological Survey. Environmentalists hailed the report's recommendation to raise royalty rates, but some groups said the report falls short of action needed to address the climate crisis. "Today's report is a complete failure of the climate leadership that our world desperately needs," said Taylor McKinnon of the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group. The report presumes more fossil fuel leasing that our climate can't afford and abandons Biden's campaign promise to stop new oil and gas leasing on public lands, McKinnon said. The American Petroleum Institute, the top lobbying group for the oil industry, said Interior was proposing to "increase costs on American energy development with no clear roadmap for the future of federal leasing."

## Traders up in arms against 12% GST on textiles, footwear

**New Delhi, Nov 28:** The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said that instead of simplifying and rationalising the GST tax structure, the GST Council has made it as "most complicated GST law in India over the world" and much against the GST structure shown to CAIT by the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. CAIT National President B.C. Bhartia and Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said that in the cotton textile industry there was no inverted tax structure, then why fabric and other cotton textile goods were brought under the 12 per cent bracket. Even in the man-made textile industry, at the stage of manufacturing garments, sarees and all types of made ups, there was no inverted tax issue. Without having any understanding of the stages of the textile industry such a harsh decision will be a regressive step. The Central Government's

notification to increase the rate of GST on basic items like textiles and footwear from 5 per cent to 12 per cent is being opposed all over the country, including Delhi, and the CAIT has decided to launch a mega agitation across the country against such arbitrariness. The agitation will be led by two important trade associations of cloth trade, namely Delhi Hindustani Mercantile Association and Federation of Surat Textile Association (FOSTA) under the umbrella of CAIT. Apart from textiles and footwear, trade organisations of all types of trade, workers, employees associated with them will also participate in it. Bhartia and Khandelwal said, "Roti, Kapda & Makaan are three basic things of life. Bread has already become very expensive due to high rise in prices, buying a house is beyond the reach of a common man and the cloth, which was accessible, has also been made expensive



by the GST Council." After all, what kind of treatment is being done to the common man of the country. In this matter not only the Central Government but also the State Governments are completely guilty because these decisions have been taken unanimously in the GST Council and no one has opposed such an irrational decision," CAIT said. They have demanded that the increased rate of GST on clothes and footwear should be withdrawn immediately. They said that retail trade in the country has already been destroyed due to Covid and now that the business was resuming on

track from this year, the increase in the GST rates will be the last nail in the coffin of the trade, CAIT said. Bhartia and Khandelwal said that according to sources, it has been learnt that the Fitment Committee of GST has recommended an increase in the GST rate on gold jewelry from 3 per cent to 5 per cent and the current tax rate in GST 5 per cent has been recommended to 7 per cent, 12 per cent to 14 per cent and 18 per cent to 20 per cent. They said that this proposed increase in tax rate is highly irrational and unjustified and is clearly arbitrary action by the fitment committee.



## Contd. From Page 1

## My Goal is to Serve People

Bhaktivedanta Swami or Srila Prabhupada in 1970, according to the movement's website. "In 1983 she moved with her family to Sri Vrindavan Dham, and they spent the next 13 years teaching in Bhaktivedanta Gurukula. In her spare time, she regularly journeyed by local transport to significant holy places throughout the outlying Braja District," the website said. Jagattarini Dasi, her husband Bhurijana and her family have been based in Perth since 1996. "Jagattarini Mataji continues to draw her artistic inspiration from Vraja Dham, and since 1998 she has been working with a variety of mediums producing miniature three-dimensional diorama exhibits, depicting Krishna's nectarean Vrindavan pastimes." "She is establishing these dioramas within a project known as Gopinatha Dham, which is meant to attract souls to the glories of Sri Vrindavan Dham." PM Modi said the amazing effort of Jagattarini "indeed shows us the power of Krishna Bhakti". "I wish her all the best in this work," he added.

## Incumbent upon judges

which it functions. Except for a brief phase of aberration (Emergency period), the journey of our Republic has been glorious," he added. The President also quoted Justice Felix Frankfurter of the US Supreme Court in the 'Dennis vs United States' case. Justice Frankfurter had said that courts are not representative bodies and are not designed to be a good reflection of a democratic society, and their essential quality is detachment founded on independence. The President, citing the US judge, further added that history teaches that independence of judiciary is jeopardised when courts become embroiled in the passions of the day, and assume primary responsibility in choosing between competing political, economic and social pressure. Expressing his unhappiness at the remarks made against judges on social media, the President said, "It pains me to no end... There have been cases of some disparaging remarks against the judiciary made on social media platforms. These platforms have worked wonderfully to democratise information, yet they have a dark side too. The anonymity granted by them is exploited by some miscreants. I hope this is an aberration, and it will be short-lived." On the aspect of appointment of judges, Kovind said he was of the firm view that the independence of the judiciary is non-negotiable. However, he asked, "Without diluting it to the slightest degree, can a better way be found to select judges for the higher judiciary?" The President said there can be an all-India judicial service that can select, nurture and promote the right talent, right from the lower levels to the higher levels. He further added that the idea is not new and has been around for more than half a century without being tested.

## BJP Sweeps Tripura Civic

polls. Chowdhury also warned his party workers against indulging in "overenthusiasm" and said celebrating their victory should not be a "cause for sadness" for others. Thanking voters for their support, Bengal Trinamool Congress general secretary Kunal Ghosh tweeted, "Tripura: @abhishekaitc's so-called 'silent revolution' is working. Two months of organization @AITCofficial. "He claimed that TMC got "+20% votes" despite the "attacks and lawsuits" on their party in the state. "The BJP would not have existed if there had been free and fair voting. We are excited. People are responding. Thanks. The next work begins. 2023 will be for us," he tweeted in Bengali. Speaking to reporters, TMC leader Rajib Bhattacharjee claimed that democracy was being "murdered" in Tripura and his party has emerged as the "main opposition" later. "Despite so much rigging, booths being looted, violence, false voting and attack on our supporters, the results show TMC could not be entirely stopped. BJP did scientific rigging during the polls. Despite that, Trinamool got 24 per cent of the votes on an average across all the urban bodies. TMC received the second highest number of votes." In 2018, Trinamool Congress had secured less than 1 per cent of the votes polled in the Assembly elections. Tripura TMC convener Subal Bhowmik said, "This was not an election where the government could change. It had a different dynamic. The results show that a TMC votebank has been formed in Tripura and this will take us to victory in 2023." The BJP has swept the civic polls in Tripura -- held amid bitter feud with the Trinamool Congress --- bagging 217 of 222 seats on which elections were held on November 25. The CPM has won three seats, the Trinamool and TIPRA Motha one seat each. Of the 334 total seats -- including AMC with 51 wards, 13 municipal councils, and six nagar panchayats -- the BJP has won 329, having been elected unopposed in 112 seats earlier. Polling took place on November 25 for 222 seats. The Agartala Municipal Corporation has become opponent less, with all 51 wards going to the BJP. The CPM won one seat each in Ambassa Nagar Panchayat in Dhalai District, Panisagar Nagar Panchayat in North district, and Kailashahar Municipal Council in Unakoti district. The Trinamool won one seat in Ambassa. A regional party, Tipra Motha, has got one seat in the same area. This is the first civic election that the BJP contested after coming to power in Tripura in 2018. Its main rival was the Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress and the CPM, which ruled the state earlier. The Trinamool, however, said this was "just the beginning". "It is exceptional for a party beginning with negligible presence to successfully contest municipal elections and emerge as the main opposition in the state with more than 20% vote share," tweeted Trinamool's Abhishek Banerjee. "This is despite the fact that we commenced our activities barely 3 months ago and @BJP4Tripura left no stone unturned to butcher democracy in Tripura," another tweet from him read. The party had demanded that the elections be declared invalid, alleging they were "heavily rigged and reduced to a farce" by the ruling BJP. The CPM has also demanded the same in five wards of AMC. BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya said the party has asked its workers to maintain discipline. "Party karyakartas were asked to follow the organisational tradition after the announcement of the results," Mr Bhattacharya said in a statement. The polls were held amid heavy security. Thousands of personnel from the Tripura State Rifles and central paramilitary forces were deployed in sensitive areas where the counting centres are located. There have been reports of a series of violent incidents in Tripura as the Trinamool Congress is trying to gain foothold in the state ahead of the 2023 assembly elections.

## All-party meet at Delhi: PM

profitable PSUs. Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Many issues including, inflation, fuel price hike, farmers' issues and Covid-19 were raised at the all-party meeting today. All parties demanded that a law guaranteeing MSP be made. We demanded that families of Covid-19 victims be given compensation of Rs 4 lakh each. Compensation should also be given to farmers who lost their lives during the farm laws protest." Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi said after the meeting, "There have been many suggestions. The government is ready to discuss all issues under the rule, without disruptions. The government hopes that there will be a good discussion in the Parliament." Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh walked out of the meeting. He said he was raising the farmers' issue of bringing in a bill on minimum support price but was not allowed to speak. "The government does not allow anyone to speak. What is the point of such a meeting then?" he said. The prominent opposition leaders present at the customary session-eve meet included Mallikarjun Kharge, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Anand Sharma from the Congress, T R Baalu and Tiruchi Siva from the DMK, Sharad Pawar from the NCP, Vinayak Raut from the Shiv Sena, Ramgopal Yadav from the Samajwadi Party, Satish Mishra from the BSP, Prasanna Acharya from the BJD and National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah. The Winter Session will commence on Monday, November 29 and is likely to end on December 23. Among other things, the bill to repeal the three contentious farm laws will be tabled in Parliament by Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Monday. The government has listed 26 bills to be taken up during the session.

## CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma

portal will be opened and those willing to avail the benefit may apply." Government of Assam had signed an MOU with Microfinance Institutions for implementation of Assam Micro Finance Incentive and Relief Scheme (AMFIRS), 2021. BJP in the run-up to assembly polls early this year promised to waive micro-finance loans. Sarma said, "Putting money in the hands of people is good for the economy as people will take more loans after repayment and there will be spending in the market." The Chief Minister earlier said that under the scheme borrowers who have been repaying regularly with Zero Days Past Due will be provided a one-time incentive to the extent of their outstanding balance, subject to a cap of Rs. 25,000. Similarly, borrowers whose payments are overdue, that is the accounts which are overdue but not NPA, the state government will pay the overdue amount. All such borrowers will be encouraged to make timely instalment payments so that their accounts remain standard and credit culture is reinforced.

## New COVID variant Omicron

unclear. Some have claimed the rate of growth of Omicron infections, which reflects its transmissibility, may be even higher than those of the Delta variant. This 'growth advantage' is yet to be proven but is concerning. African scientists and politicians have been disappointed in what they see as a 'kneejerk' response from countries imposing travel bans. They argue the ban will have significant negative effects for the South African economy, which traditionally welcomes global tourists over the summer year-end period. They note it is still unclear whether the new variant originated in South Africa, even if it was first identified there. As Omicron has already been detected in several other countries, it may already be circulating in regions not included in the travel ban. Travel bans on countries detecting new variants, and the subsequent economic costs, may also act as a disincentive for countries to reveal variants of concern in future. The WHO does not generally recommend flight bans or other forms of travel embargoes. Instead, it argues interventions of proven value should be prioritised: vaccination, hand hygiene, physical distancing, well-fitted masks, and good ventilation. In response to variants of concern, the WHO calls on all countries to enhance surveillance and sequencing, report initial cases or clusters, and undertake investigations to improve understanding of the variant's behaviour. Omicron must be taken seriously. Its features are worrying, but there are large gaps in our current knowledge. While further analyses are undertaken, the variant should be controlled with testing, tracing, isolation, applying known public health measures, and ongoing surveillance. Wealthy countries such as Australia should support African nations and others to share early alerts of potentially serious communicable disease threats, and help mitigate these threats. The panel recommended creating incentives to reward early response action. This could include support to: Vaccines remain the mainstay of protection against the most severe effects of COVID-19. It's unclear how effective vaccines will be against Omicron, but some degree of protection is presumed likely. Pfizer has also indicated it could develop an effective vaccine against a new variant such as Omicron within 100 days or so. COVID's persistence is partly attributable to patchy immunisation coverage across many parts of the world, notably those least developed. South Africa itself is better off than most countries on the continent, yet only 24% of the adult population are currently fully vaccinated. For the whole of Africa, this drops to only 7.2%. Greater global support is urgently needed to boost these vaccination rates. African institutions and leaders, supported by global health and vaccine experts, have argued for mRNA vaccine manufacturing facilities on the African continent. These would prioritise regional populations, overcome supply-chain problems, and respond in real time to emerging disease threats. Yet developing nations face significant barriers to obtaining intellectual property around COVID-19 vaccine development and production. While there is still much to learn about the behaviour and impact of Omicron, the global community must demonstrate and commit real support to countries that do the right thing by promptly and transparently sharing information.

## The North East Youth Conclave 2021 is being organised by Yuva Ayam at Kalakshetra

**Guwahati, Nov 28** : The North East Youth Conclave 2021 is being organised by Yuva Ayam, Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal of north Assam from November 26. The Managing Editor of Pratidin Time group, Mrs. Smitakshi B Goswami today gave a speech at the conclave, being held at the Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra. At the three-day event were present, eminent personalities from the media and educational institutions. The national general secretary of the BJP, Dilip Saikia was also present at the event. Many events apart from speech and discussions, like quizzes and debates and other cultural programs, were organised. The topic for the speech was "The role of media in democracy". Mrs. Goswami began by talking about the preamble of the constitution. She then moved forward to the role of Indian media in democracy, saying that Indian media was one of the oldest in the world. She highlighted that India had over 1,600 satellite channels of which there were more than 400 were news channels. She also highlighted that India was also one of the biggest newspaper markets with over 100 million copies being sold every day. She further highlighted the role of media in the American and French revolutions as well as the Indian freedom struggle, expressing how free media was important for democracy to flourish. Moving ahead, Mrs. Goswami spoke on Shri Hemchandra Barua. She said that Hemchandra Barua was a prominent writer, a social reformer of Assamese of the 19th century. He had started Assam News published from Gauhati. It was a bilingual newspaper to promote the Assamese language and to make the British understand the problems of the societies in the northeastern part of the country, she added. "The role of media in Indian democracy has undergone massive changes, from the days of press censorship during Emergency in 1975 to being influential in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections to present-day age of Social Media", she said. She further highlighted the role of media in contemporary Indian democracy and spoke about the emergence of social media and its role in a democracy. Highlighting both positive and negative aspects of social media, she said that one fundamental truth about social media's impact on democracy was that it amplified human intent — both good and bad. "At its best, it allows us to express ourselves and take action. At its worst, it allows people to spread misinformation and corrode democracy", she said. During her speech, she rose many pertinent points. One of the most important points that she raised was of press freedom. Mrs. Goswami said that it was important that we followed 'World Press Freedom Day' on May 3. She said it was es-

sential that a vibrant democracy like India had a more independent and control-free press. Highlighting India's rank of 142 out of 180 nations in the World Press Freedom Index, 2021, she said that the freedom of the press was not expressly protected by the Indian legal system but it was impliedly protected under article 19(1) (a) of the constitution. Therefore, she said, "3 May should be celebrated and acknowledged in India as it acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics". Notably, the event was inaugurated on November 26 with ceremonial flag hoisting with inaugural speeches from the state education minister, Ranajit Pegu, Prof. Pratap Jyoti Handique, vice-chancellor of Gauhati University, and Dr. Umesh Chakraborty, regional head of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

## UK, Germany and Italy detect Omicron variant cases, Israel closes borders Amsterdam

**LONDON, Nov 28** : Britain, Germany and Italy detected cases of the new Omicron coronavirus variant on Saturday and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced new steps to contain the virus, while more nations imposed restrictions on travel from southern Africa. The discovery of the variant has sparked global concern, a wave of travel bans or curbs and a sell-off on financial markets on Friday as investors worried that Omicron could stall a global recovery from the nearly two-year pandemic. Israel said it would ban the entry of all foreigners into the country and reintroduce counter-terrorism phone-tracking technology to contain the spread of the variant. Johnson laid out measures that included stricter testing rules for people arriving in the country but that stopped short of curbs on social activity other than requiring mask wearing in some settings. "We will require anyone who enters the UK to take a PCR test by the end of the second day after their arrival and to self-isolate until they have a negative result," Johnson told a news conference. People who had come into contact with people testing positive for a suspected case of Omicron would have to self-isolate for 10 days and the government would tighten the rules on wearing face coverings, Johnson said, adding the steps would be reviewed in three weeks. The health ministry in the German state of Bavaria also announced two confirmed cases of the variant. The two people entered Germany at Munich airport on Nov. 24, before Germany designated South Africa as a virus-variant area, and were now isolating, said the ministry, indicating without stating explicitly that the people had travelled from South Africa. In Italy, the National Health Institute said a case of the new variant had been detected in Milan in a person coming from Mozambique. Czech health authorities also said they were examining a suspected case of the variant in a person who spent time in Namibia. Omicron, dubbed a "variant of concern" by the World Health Organization, is potentially more contagious than previous variants of the disease, although experts do not know yet if it will cause more or less severe COVID-19 compared to other strains. England's Chief Medical Officer, Chris Witty, said at the same news conference as Johnson that there was still much uncertainty around Omicron, but "there is a reasonable chance that at least there will be some degree of vaccine escape with this variant". The variant was first discovered in South Africa and had also since been detected in Belgium, Botswana, Israel and Hong Kong. Dutch authorities said 61 of around 600 people who arrived in Amsterdam on two flights from South Africa on Friday had tested positive for the coronavirus. Health authorities were carrying out further tests to see if those cases involved the new variant. One passenger who arrived from South Africa on Friday, Dutch photographer Paula Zimmerman, said she tested negative but was anxious for the days to come. "I've been told that they expect that a lot more people will test positive after five days. It's a little scary the idea that you've been in a plane with a lot of people who tested positive," she said. It could take weeks for scientists to understand fully the variant's mutations and whether existing vaccines and treatments are effective against it. Although epidemiologists say travel curbs may be too late to stop Omicron from circulating globally, many countries around the world - including the United States, Brazil, Canada and European Union nations - announced travel bans or restrictions on southern Africa on Friday. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and State Department added on Saturday to Washington's previously announced travel restrictions, advising against travel to eight southern African countries. US Vice President Kamala Harris told reporters on Saturday that the administration will take it "one step at a time," when asked about additional travel restrictions. "For now we've done what we think is necessary," Harris said. Also on Saturday, Australia said it would ban non-citizens who have been in nine southern African countries from entering and will require supervised 14-day quarantines for Australian citizens returning from there. Japan and Britain said they were extending travel curbs to more African countries, while South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Oman, Kuwait and Hungary announced new travel restrictions. South Africa is worried that the curbs will hurt tourism and other sectors of its economy, the foreign ministry said on Saturday, adding the government is engaging with countries that have imposed travel bans to persuade them to reconsider. Omicron has emerged as many countries in Europe are already battling a surge in COVID-19 infections, and some have re-introduced restrictions on social activity to try to stop the spread. The new variant has also thrown a spotlight on disparities in how far the world's population is vaccinated. Even as many developed countries are giving third-dose boosters, less than 7 per cent of people in low-income countries have received their first COVID-19 shot, according to medical and human rights groups. Seth Berkley, CEO of the GAVI Vaccine Alliance that with the WHO co-leads the COVAX initiative to push for equitable distribution of vaccines, said this was essential to ward off the emergence of more coronavirus variants. "While we still need to know more about Omicron, we do know that as long as large portions of the world's population are unvaccinated, variants will continue to appear, and the pandemic will continue to be prolonged," he said in a statement. "We will only prevent variants from emerging if we are able to protect all of the world's population, not just the wealthy parts."



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# Stability and rest key to Liverpool's scintillating form, says Jürgen Klopp



**London, November 28 :** Jürgen Klopp identified stability as the key to Liverpool's prolific form as his title contenders made it 10 goals without reply in a week at Anfield with a 4-0 stroll against Southampton. Liverpool moved to second in the table, one point behind Chelsea, who face Manchester United on Sunday, with a second successive 4-0 Premier League win at home. They have scored 39 goals in 13 league games this season - their highest at this stage of a Premier League campaign - and two or more goals in their past 17 matches. It is

the first time an English top-flight club has recorded such a sequence since Sunderland in 1927. Klopp credited the return from injury of several key players, plus a full pre-season for Mohamed Salah and especially up front with Sadio Mané, for the return of Liverpool's rhythm. "It is not so easy to talk about games when you lose them like we did last season," he said. "I knew what we were lacking: we were lacking stability because we didn't have centre-halves for a while and we had to find solutions." In the early stages we were shocked because we couldn't play the football we wanted to play. All of a sudden you lose your rhythm and that is what happened to us last season. "This year we had a pre-season which was a proper pre-season, which was incredibly helpful,

# Neal Maupay's spectacular misses cost Brighton in stalemate with Leeds



**London, November 28 :** Football at this level is an exceptionally intricate game in which the world's best coaches plot out their strategies in stunning detail, compute its thousands of moving parts, make contingencies upon contingencies. It feels hopelessly simplistic to boil down the issues with Graham Potter's complex and delicately balanced Brighton team to "just sign a striker". But, you know. Sometimes you really do just have to sign a striker. Twenty shots, plenty of ambitious attacking football, their highest expected goals total of the season, and ultimately a familiar refrain. The wind blew in off the English Channel and the Amex howled and roared to keep out the cold, and yet still the ball refused to drop. There were numerous areas of encouragement:

the marauding wing-backs Tariq Lamptey and Marc Cucurella, the sharp passing and movement in midfield. Chance after chance was fashioned and ultimately squandered, most off the boot of Neal Maupay, or occasionally the shin or the ankle of Neal Maupay. "He's a human being and he'll be disappointed because he thinks he can score those," said Potter. "We did everything but score. If we

maintain that performance level, we'll get the wins." But equally Brighton are now without a win in eight, and an autumn of overachievement is threatening to give way to a winter of discontent. Perhaps this feels like a slightly harsh assessment for a team lying eighth in the Premier League table, but the smattering of boos in the ground at full-time belied a fanbase whose expectations have been raised by the champagne football of recent months. Not all of them, you suspect, were there for the Withead and the Goldstone years. Meanwhile, this was painfully thin stuff from Leeds, who were also deeply wasteful in their own way. The

return of Patrick Bamford up front cannot come soon enough, but of greater concern to Marcelo Bielsa will be their profligacy in possession, the weird lack of intensity, the sense of a team puffing and fraying at the edges a little. Naturally Bielsa cycled through his tactical flick-book: switching personnel, making a double substitution at half-time, but the bareness of his squad is plain for all to see. And naturally enough, Bielsa blamed himself afterwards. "Clearly the function of a coach is for each player to play comfortably," he said. "When it doesn't work, it's because I'm not doing it well. But football has secrets that

are somehow difficult to solve. That's what I'm trying to do and evidently I am not achieving it." For Leeds the return of Raphinha and Rodrigo had promised greater incisiveness for a team who have looked uncharacteristically blunt in recent weeks. But with Calvin Phillips (a midfielder) at centre-half, Diego Llorente (a centre-half) at right-back and Stuart Dallas (a right-back) in midfield, they looked disjointed and distracted in the early stages. Bielsa has always prized versatility in his players, but it is also a trait he possesses himself. Before long the trio had rotated back to their original, favoured positions. Small wonder. Brighton were running riot. Quick diagonals to Cucurella and Lamptey on the flanks were giving Leeds no end of problems. Lamptey, in particular, was giving Leeds left-back Junior Firpo a harrowing evening: the Dominican booked after five minutes and withdrawn after 45. But Maupay had missed two big chances, and for all Brighton's dominance it was they who looked the more frustrated side at the break.

# Magnus Carlsen embraces chaos in gripping draw with Ian Nepomniachtchi

**London, November 28 :** Magnus Carlsen dined with danger in an entertaining second game of the world chess championships in Dubai before recovering to secure a 58-move draw. It leaves his 14-game match with Ian Nepomniachtchi level at 1-1 going into Sunday's third encounter. It was a seesawing struggle, with Carlsen surprising his opponent early before missing a move that left him considerably worse off. However, his Russian opponent failed to find his wave through the thicket of variations and the game ended with a handshake, and a long post-mortem, as the players tried to fathom what happened. "The game was crazy, I had no idea what was going on," said Nepomniachtchi. "During the game I thought: 'We



both are playing not so well'. But now I start thinking it was just very interesting and very chaotic." Carlsen, who has held the world title since 2013, signalled his fighting intentions by playing the rare move, Ne5, on move eight. It sacrificed a pawn

but also meant his opponent was on new ground in a tricky position. Understandably, he was soon behind on the clock. Not only was he playing the Norwegian but also his computer preparation. "It was a really nice idea, not the most popular, and I had a lot of trouble," admitted Nepomniachtchi. However, he

was able to weave his way through the complications without too much damage and, when Carlsen made a mistake on move 20, Rb1, he was left staring at a worse position where he was rook for bishop down. "At some point I blundered because I didn't intend to sacrifice quite as much material as I actually did," admitted Carlsen, who looked visibly the more tired. "After that, I was trying to hang in there, not to lose. The position was very, very interesting." But with Carlsen on the ropes, Nepo then gave up a pawn for little compensation and the position became a theoretical draw. "The games have been a bit

# Creevy and Simmons upset Harlequins to edge London Irish to victory



**London, November 28:** This was London Irish's second win of the season, but you would never have known it. To claim it at the home of their local rivals, the champions of England, will have gratified still further. A game in which both sides tried to outdo each other on the missed-opportunity front ended in a win for the side less profligate. Irish started among four sides level on 17 points, from which deadlock they now emerge to nestle in behind the top six in the customarily tight mid-table. Quins

remain second, but their old obsession with extravagance haunted them on a bitterly cold day that could have favoured something more prosaic. This was not quite the exhilarating affair we might have expected from last season's kings of the comeback against this season's, but Irish did recover from a half-time deficit, so their status on that front remains intact. Most of their fightbacks this season have ended in draws, three of them to be precise, hence that place in mid-table with only two wins. "It was an emotional game for us," said Les Kiss, the Exiles' head coach. "To get away from a draw is very welcome." Two tries midway through the second half were the obvious clinchers of victory, but Irish will also cherish the 10 points they took from the first, which was spent mostly in worthy defence with that cold wind in their faces. The clash of the South African inside centres, André Esterhuizen in the home corner, Benhard Janse van Rensburg in the away, was as eye-watering as one might expect. Quins were without their three England internationals, with Marcus Smith and Alex Dombrandt voluntarily rested and Joe Marchant as a precaution. Smith's understudy, the admirable Tommy Allan, was then lost just before the break to a shoulder injury. By then Quins had set out their stall, and it was a familiar tale. They were awarded only three penalties in the first half, but two of them were kickable; both were sent to the corner - for no return. When they did open

the try-scoring, it was from open play, Danny Care teasing Irish with a chip behind. Kyle Rowe missed the bobbling ball, and Oscar Beard scooped up to score. Irish were not afraid of sending penalties to the corner either. A try for Agustín Creevy from one such driven lineup reestablished the visitors' lead, after Paddy Jackson's early penalty, which ultimately proved the difference between the sides. But Quins struck on the approach to half-time. Jack Walker and Luke Northmore picked fantastic lines, and the latter finished to establish the home team's 14-10 lead at the break. They will feel, given the disparity in penalties against them, that they were good for at least that, but rugby places such a premium on efficiency. Irish, who had barely threatened, were still in the game. Then they pounced suddenly and out of the blue Tom Parton is tipped by many for England. His break down the right had Quins turning this way and that. Curtis Rona's flat pass put Rob Simmons over in the corner. Five minutes later and Irish sent another penalty to the corner, Quins style. They scored from it again, Ben White darting through the bodies to put Irish more than a score ahead as the game entered the final quarter. Quins made their next penalty to the corner tell. Another punishing carry by Esterhuizen, and Tom Lawday sucked in two defenders to send Beard away for his second. Now it was Irish who were starting to miss their chances. Parton's break earlier had featured a missed man outside him.

# Barbarians deny 'shambles' of Covid call-off was their fault or RFU's

**London, November 28 :** The Barbarians have claimed a decision by Public Health England led to their fixture against Samoa at Twickenham being called off 90 minutes before kick-off despite their having enough players who had returned negative tests. A statement released by the Rugby Football Union revealed that four players and two members of staff from the invitational side had tested positive for Covid-19. The

was "an utter shambles". "It's not good enough. After the shambles of last year too when some of the Barbarians broke the bubble it is unforgivable," the former Wales fly-half told the Telegraph. However, the Barbarians claimed they had enough players within their selection to play the match but it was the testing oversight committee which said the game could not go ahead as it posed a risk to

# Davis Cup: Norrie and Evans lead Great Britain past France in empty arena



**London, November 28 :** The abject silence of sporting contests held behind closed doors during Austria's return to lockdown is not the ideal atmosphere for any Davis Cup tie, but in their first appearance at the 2021 Davis Cup Finals, Great Britain made their own atmosphere and coolly handled their business. As their singles superiority on paper translated to reality, they secured an essential 2-1 win over France in Innsbruck to clinch their first victory of Group F. In the opening rubber between the two second-ranked players, Dan Evans overcame some tough resistance from Adrian Mannarino, the world No 71, to win 7-5, 6-4. Cameron Norrie, the British No 1, followed shortly after, securing the win by saving two set points in a breathless, extended tiebreak before edging past Arthur Rinderknech 6-2, 7-6 (8). In the doubles, Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski lost 6-1, 6-4 to Nicolas Mahut and Rinderknech. While France have historically boasted one of the deepest Davis Cup teams, reaching back-to-back Davis Cup finals in the previous format as recently as in 2017 and 2018, they arrived in Austria with a depleted group headed by Rinderknech, the fast-improving world No 58 and French No 4. Although

Mannarino has endured a tough season, he was a nuisance to Evans early on with his spotless hand-eye coordination and sweet, compact backhand. However, Evans struck his more potent forehand well and his backhand slice robbed Mannarino of the pace he loves to feed off. Despite ample pressure, Evans sealed the opening set at his second attempt and then took an essential break at 4-4 in the second set before closing out the win. "It's not easy to come out playing first," Evans said. "I've thought about the match all week and it's difficult to come out and get your game on the court and try to stay calm. I was very nervous beforehand. It was great to play for my country, come out and get a point on the board. There's

only a few better No 1s in the world right now than the guy [Norrie] coming out here so I wanted to set it up for him out there." After spending most of his career far out of the spotlight, this tournament marks an interesting step for Norrie as he adjusts to his new status within the sport. Norrie was not selected for the 2019 Davis Cup Finals squad despite being a top 100 player and he has not competed in the event since 2018. Now, as underlined by Evans, he is ranked No 12 and the leading singles player of the team. His first assignment was the tall, powerful Rinderknech who has risen 120 places this year. Norrie swiftly established himself in his typical manner, making ample returns, eking out errors from his opponent with his consistency and depth while exposing Rinderknech's movement by dictating with his forehand when the

opportunity presented. But the Frenchman grew into the match and as he began to hold with authority, he reached the tiebreak and established a 4-1 lead. After fighting back from that, Norrie spectacularly recovered from bleak positions to save both of Rinderknech's set points. At 6-7 he was completely vulnerable at the net, but he anticipated Rinderknech's cross-court passing shot correctly and punched his forehand volley into the open court. On Rinderknech's serve at 7-8, he pulled off a sweet, angled backhand passing shot winner from deep behind the baseline. Soon afterwards he landed his first Davis Cup win in three years. Norrie talked about the high morale within the team that translated to the noise they generated for each other on the court in lieu of any spectators: "We've been playing a little bit of cornhole, some darts," said Norrie. "We've been watching the other matches together, going to dinner. Some good chat. It's just nice to be part of the team, especially since we go play all year long, we're with our own smaller teams. It's nice to come together at the end of the year and share this moment."



scrapping of the game followed last year's fixture against England being called off after 13 players broke the Covid protocols, leading to widespread condemnation of the players' behaviour. As a result the women's game between the Barbarians and Springbok was moved forward from 5.15pm to 2.30pm. The game - shown live on the BBC - was won by the Barbarians 60-5 in front of 29,581 fans, a world record for a women's match. The RFU's decision was roundly criticised, with Jonathan Davies saying it

the health of both sides. The Barbarians said in a statement: "Despite the recent positive Covid tests, we had a fit 23 today who all tested negative this morning. They were ready and keen to take to the pitch against Manu Samoa. The whole squad complied to the letter with the Covid protocols throughout the week, including daily lateral flow tests." After today's results, we worked hard with the RFU, Public Health England and the testing oversight committee, to find a way that we could play.



# Millie Bright looking imperious and undroppable as England's anchor

London, November 28 :

When Millie Bright lashed the ball goalwards from 25 yards in the first half, it flew wide of Manuela Zinsberger's net. It was inconsequential, an unremarkable moment in a comfortable win in uncomfortable conditions, but it spoke to the confidence of the centre-back, who has flourished as anchor at the base of England's spine. Steph Houghton, England's captain, has not played a minute of international football since Team GB's heartbreaking 4-3 extra-time defeat to Australia at the Olympics. An ankle injury has limited her to just four games this season with Manchester City. In the absence of the 33-year-old, Bright has taken up her mantle at the back and marshalled the likes of Leah Williamson, Alex Greenwood and Lotte Wubben-Moy to great effect. When



playing in tandem with Williamson in particular, who looks most likely to break apart the Bright/Houghton axis but missed this camp with a hamstring injury, there is a symmetry and balance to the centre-back pairing. The Arsenal defender is the ball-playing, forward-looking half with

Bright the long-ball and positional specialist who allows her teammate's creativity to flourish. Houghton is still a very good centre-back. One desperately needed at City, but the stylistic balance between her and Bright has been increasingly off when paired together for England. Of

late, given Houghton's form, it has been Bright who has looked the more likely to be ousted, despite her Chelsea form suggesting something was not quite clicking at international level. With Houghton missing, though, Bright has grabbed the defensive reins and, for now at least, has been rewarded with the armband too. "I like to lead by example, with or without the armband, keeping my standards high every day, and I'm just here for the team to do well, that's the aim," said Bright on being named captain. At 28, Bright has more years ahead of her than Houghton and has had the chance to play consistently under the new manager with next summer's home Euros approaching. It may not yet be time to move Houghton out of the fold entirely: at the 2017 European Championship Casey Stoney travelled

but did not play, there for her experience, leadership and as a high-quality stand-in as the baton was passed. Houghton and her club captain Magda Eriksson have provided inspiration for Bright. "Whenever it gets tough on the pitch, they're always the first ones to bring the team back to its core and get us back on track in that moment. But every captain is different. Every captain will lead in different ways. It's important not to put everyone in the same category. With or without the armband I always remain myself, the same Millie; the same player, the same person." It is important to note that under Wiegman, and without Houghton, England have barely been tested defensively, scoring 33 goals without reply against North Macedonia, Luxembourg, Northern Ireland, Latvia and Austria. In

the lashing rain, with flurries of snow and a whipping wind at the Stadium of Light, controlling the game was not easy but England's defence passed its toughest test to date under the Dutch manager, with Manchester United's goalkeeper Mary Earps twice being called on to maintain the unblemished defensive record. The real test will come in the friendly tournament in England in February when the Lionesses face Spain, Germany and a yet-to-be-announced third team. By then, Houghton and Williamson should be back in the fold, giving Wiegman the chance to put her defenders up against high-quality opposition. Who will line up at the back for England on 6 July when they open the delayed Euro 2021 against Austria at Old Trafford is still up in the air. Bright, however, is proving to be increasingly undroppable.

## India seniors taking notes, guiding the U-21s at Jr Hockey World Cup



London, November 28 :

Hours after their shocking loss to France, some of India's junior players received a link for an e-meeting. Their host was the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Harmanpreet Singh. Having watched from the stands the team concede five goals against an unheralded opponent, the defender-cum-drag-flicker had prepared a dossier of sorts. Next door, India captain Manpreet Singh was having a conversation on leadership and tactics with the junior team skipper Vivek Sagar Prasad. These weren't crisis talks. Rather, just a casual exchange of ideas between veterans who have been there, done that and rookies for whom this is an initiation to international hockey, except Prasad who was in Tokyo as well. The relationship between India's senior and junior teams has evolved over the months. In the beginning, the colts were 'respectful' of the 'seniors', minding the gap. Then, they turned into training partners when the pandemic hit. And now, they idolise the bronze medalists. Prasad is in awe of the way Manpreet carries the team together. Drag-flicker Sanjay Kumar, who has netted a couple of hat-tricks already, has modelled himself on Harmanpreet. Goalkeepers Pawan and Prashant Chauhan look up to PR Sreejesh and forward Arajjeet Singh Hundal is in awe of Akashdeep Singh, who wasn't in Tokyo but remains an integral part of the team. Now, in Bhubaneswar, the U-21 players' heroes have turned into their analysts and mentors. During every match India's colts have played in this World Cup, the senior team members have sat in the stand behind the goal and

dutifully made notes. "It's a learning experience for us too," says Manpreet. "We are analysing the games from the stands and after it's over, we are giving the players our feedback." Both, senior and junior, teams had a far-from-desirable build-up to their respective marquee events of the year. For a major part of the last two years, they were locked inside Sports Authority of India's Southern Centre in Bangalore, staying and training together. As the Olympics got closer and with the national team barely getting any match practice due to the pandemic-forced travel restrictions, the junior team turned into a simulation machine of sorts for them. During training, the coaches would make the under-21 side line-up and play like India's opponents at the Tokyo Games: New Zealand one week, Australia the next; Argentina one week, Belgium in the one that followed. They even played six matches against each other, and the colts eked out a win in one. The mentoring process began with that. "Whenever we used to spot something, we spoke to them. If they had any problem, they reached out to us," Harmanpreet says. "They just needed some fine-tuning, not a lot of work. Overall, they are all very good." After India returned from Tokyo with the bronze, the senior team resources were shifted to the junior side. Chief coach Graham Reid was asked to take over the side and the players started to individually guide their juniors. Even though both teams are in Bhubaneswar - the senior side preparing for next month's Asian Champions Trophy - they are staying in separate bio-bubbles, which means physical interactions aren't possible. "So, we have been in touch through online meetings," Harmanpreet says.

## La Liga: Depay late goal key to Barcelona ending winless run on road

London, November 28 :

The Netherlands striker scored just in time to defuse a Villarreal comeback and secure Barcelona's 3-1 victory on Saturday, and end his team's winless record in the Spanish league. Seeing his team struggle to keep possession in the final minutes, goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen broke with Barcelona's stylebook



of working the ball forward with small passes. Instead, he surprised Villarreal with a long goal kick that Depay ran onto and won against two defenders. Depay then coolly dribbled around goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli before slotting the ball between the legs of Geronimo Rulli for the 88th-minute decider. Philippe Coutinho sealed the much-needed win with a penalty that he earned in stoppage time. "We played against a great team. We dominated the ball less than I had expected, but we were fortunate to get that goal

from Memphis," coach Xavi Hernandez said. "These are three golden points, the first win away from home. We suffered and we need to improve. We got lucky." Depay, who arrived as a free agent this summer from Lyon as cash-strapped Barcelona tried to rebuild on the cheap, has eight league goals, second only to the 10 by Real Madrid's Karim Benzema. Barcelona stayed in seventh place, but reduced the gap to leader Real Madrid to seven points. Madrid faces a tough test on Sunday when it hosts third-placed Sevilla. Second-placed Real Sociedad will also visit Espanyol on Sunday, while fourth-placed Atletico Madrid is at Cadiz. With Frenkie de Jong as playmaker, Barcelona looked set for a romp, only to be stopped by the same finishing troubles that have plagued it since the exit of Lionel Messi. De Jong found Depay in the box, who laid the ball off for Gavi Paez to hit the far post with a shot from a tight angle. Moments later, Depay squandered a wonderfully weighted pass from De Jong that his Dutch teammate scuffed wide.

# Cloudy Glen wins Ladbrokes Trophy Chase in Trevor Hemmings' colours

Newbury, November 28 :

The green, yellow and white colours of Trevor Hemmings, who died last month, have been a constant thread in National Hunt racing for nearly four decades and the former owner's "friends", as he liked to call them, continue to honour his memory on the track. Cloudy Glen, a 33-1 shot trained by Venetia Williams, became the latest big-race winner in the Hemmings silks in the Ladbrokes Trophy Chase here on Saturday, staying on strongly to hold the late challenge of Fiddlerontheroof by half a length. His performance embodied the courage and stamina Hemmings always hoped to see in one of his chasers. Whether Cloudy Glen would have prevailed had Remastered not crashed out at the fourth-last fence is an impossible question to answer. David Pipe's chaser, who had sufficient stamina to line up for the National Hunt Chase at last season's Cheltenham Festival, was apparently about to ease into the lead when he hit the top of the fence and sprawled horribly on land-

ing. Pipe thankfully reported that Remastered was "none the worse" for his fall. That left Cloudy Glen, who was foaled at Hemmings's Gleadhill House Stud, in a clear lead, and though Fiddlerontheroof, the 9-2 second-favourite, made ground to threaten the winner approaching the last, Charlie Deutsch, Cloudy Glen's jockey, was always getting just enough from his mount to keep the runner-up at bay. Brahma Bull (40-1) and Ontheropes (8-1) filled the remainder of the frame. It was a second successive victory in the race for the Hemmings colours after Cloth Cap's success 12 months ago. Last year's winner led the way until the final turn but faded to finish sixth. "It was written in the stars. Trevor was looking down," Williams said. "To have his two horses making the running in the [former] Hennessy, turning for home." He understood horses, you had to be patient. In his business he was really on it, but with



his horses he was so patient and knew what it took. "This fellow [Cloudy Glen] has always been a weird one and he did a piece of work last week and I thought 'Blimey. Where did that come from?'" I decided then I was going to run him in this. He was always capable of pulling something out of the bag, but you never knew if he would do it here or at Fontwell." Conditions at Newcastle deteriorated throughout the afternoon as Storm Arwen continued to wreak havoc in the north-east. However, the seven-race card managed to survive the elements and saved the best for last as Epatante, the 2020 Champion Hurdle winner, and Not So Sleepy dead-

heated in the Grade One Fighting Fifth Hurdle after a thrilling battle from the final flight. Not So Sleepy jinked violently and unseated his rider at the first hurdle in last year's renewal but was much more amenable on Saturday and fought for every inch of ground on the run to the line. Epatante, who was running for the first time since surgery for a back problem over the summer, will now head to the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton Park. Nicky Henderson's mare has been clipped to around 10-1 for the Champion Hurdle in March, while Not So Sleepy - Hughie Morrison's first Grade One winner over jumps - can be backed at 50-1 for the same race.

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