



The Assam Rising

Projecting the best of Northeast India everyday

Vol. No. V ■ Issue No. 353 ■ RNI-ASSENG/2014/58385 | GUWAHATI ■ SATURDAY ■ JANUARY 30, 2021 | PAGES 8 ■ PRICE RS. 7.00

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PM Modi to visit Assam again

Guwahati, January 29 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit poll-bound Assam again on February 7. PM Modi will attend the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Vijay Sankalp Samaroh in Dhekiajuli. According to the state BJP sources, around 3 lakh people will take part in the PM's public rally. It is to be noted that on February 23, 2021, Prime Minister Modi attended a mega public rally organised at historic Jerenga Pathar in Sivasagar district where he distributed land allotment certificates to 1.06 lakh indigenous people of the state. The frequent visits of the Prime Minister is significant keeping in view of the upcoming Assam Assembly polls.

18,855 new COVID-19 cases

New Delhi, January 29 : India reported 18,855 new COVID-19 cases, 20,746 discharges and 163 deaths in last 24 hours, as per Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry on Friday. With that, the total COVID-19 cases in the country has mounted to 1,07,20,048 including 1,71,686 active cases and 1,03,94,352 total discharges. The total death toll of COVID-19 has risen to 1,54,010 including the new deaths in the last 24 hours. A total of 29,28,053 healthcare and frontline workers have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in its first phase. Union Health Ministry has approved two vaccines, Covishield and Covaxin, under Emergency Use Authorisation (EAU).

Blast near Israeli embassy in Delhi

New Delhi, January 29 : A blast occurred near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi and four-five vehicles were damaged in it. The Delhi Police has confirmed the blast and said no injury has been reported so far. It said the blast occurred at 5.05 pm and it was a low-intensity IED blast. "The Delhi Police Special Cell is on the spot to investigate the matter. The entire area has been cordoned off and heavy deployment of police forces has been made. Police said the blast occurred near a pavement and windshield of some cars were damaged in the explosion. This blast occurred at a spot that is less than 2 km from Vijay Chowk, where the Beating Retreat ceremony is being held. The ceremony is being attended by President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, among others. The blast occurred at a very high security area in the national capital.

President Ram Nath Kovind mentions Ambikagiri Raichoudhury in joint address to the Parliament



New Delhi, January 29 : Jan 29: President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday began his joint address to the members of both the Houses of Parliament with the reference of Assamese poet Ambikagiri Raichoudhury. He said that whenever India has remained

united, it has been able to attain even seemingly unattainable goals. "This solidarity and Puja Bapu's inspiration had given us freedom from hundreds of years of colonial rule," he said. Echoing the same spirit, Assam Kesari, Ambikagiri

Raichoudhury the nationalist poet, had said - "Om tatsat Bharat Mahat, Ek chetonaat, Ek Dhyanaot, Ek Sadhonaat, Ek Avegot, Ek Hoi Jaa, Ek Hoi Jaa", said President Kovind. "That is, India's grandeur is the ultimate truth. In one single consciousness, one thought, one devotion, one inspiration, let us unite; let us unite," said Kovind. He said that this joint sitting of Parliament which is being held during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic has great significance. "It is the beginning of a new year and a new decade. We will also be entering the 75th year of India's independence this

year. All the Members of Parliament present here today embody the conviction held by every Indian that the toughest of challenges will deter neither us nor India," he said. The reference of Assamese poet and nationalist Ambikagiri Raichoudhury has once again highlighted that the incumbent Narendra Modi government is giving much more attention to the north-east states. Ambikagiri Raichoudhury was born in 1885 at Raipara in Barpeta. He took part in the Independence Movement for India and was imprisoned by the British

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Sonowal dedicates multi surgery microscope at Siu Ka Pha Hospital



Guwahati, January 29 : Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal dedicated a multi surgery microscope, the first of its kind in Northeast, at Siu Ka Pha Hospital at Dimow in Sivasagar today. It may be noted that the microscope helps in visualising small structures in great details. Sodium fluorescence helps in giving details of tumours and helps in complete removal. The high end ENT microscope can be used for all micro ear surgeries, lateral skull base surgeries, microvascular surgeries with fluorescence imaging. It will be useful in neurosurgery, spine surgery, head and neck surgeries etc. The hospital, where it was operationalised, was built as a part of Corpo-

rate Social Responsibility of ONGC and maintenance is being looked after by Babasaheb Ambedkar Vaidakiya Pratisthan, Aurangabad, Maharashtra. Speaking on the occasion Chief Minister Sonowal, while thanking the hospital management for inducting the microscope for treatment purposes, urged the man-

agement for turning the hospital into a centre of excellence in South East Asia. He also asked the hospital authority to increase the green coverage in the campus of the hospital and make it symbol of happiness. Paying tributes to Swargadeo Siu Ka Pha, Sonowal termed him a champion of unity and harmony

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FM Sitharaman tables Economic Survey 2020-21 in Lok Sabha, FY22 GDP growth seen at 11% Budget 2021

New Delhi, January 29 : Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2020-21 in the Lok Sabha following which the house was adjourned. Today's Survey holds significance as the economy begins to recover from the pandemic-hit year. According to the survey, real GDP growth for the next financial year (FY2021-22) is seen to be 11% while nominal GDP growth is seen at 15.4%. Growth recovery is likely to be led by government consumption, the survey mentioned adding that combined fiscal deficit to exceed target in FY21. These numbers



hold significance as all the Budget estimates to be presented on February 1 will be based on these growth numbers. Advance estimates put out

by the government suggests the Indian economy may contract by 7.7% in the current financial year. Economists widely expect FM Sitharaman to continue with the spending plan so the fiscal deficit for the current fiscal is likely to be far wider than the 3% of gross domestic product mandated by law. Fiscal deficit for the year to March will probably be 7.25% of GDP against a planned 3.4%, according to a private survey. During the presentation of the Union Budget 2020-21 last year, Nirmala Sitharaman had invoked the escape clause in the amended Fiscal

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Et Let Let receive the Best Karbi Film in 10th Rangina Sarpo Award



Diphu, January 29 : Amidst the controversy of not releasing the feature film to the public, 'Et Let Let' was awarded with Best Karbi Film in 10th Rangina Sarpo Film Award and Rangina Sarpo Folk Artists Award, 2021 which was held on January 28 at Singmirjeng Achetai, Karbi People's Hall in Taralango in Diphu, Assam. The event is jointly organised by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in collaboration with the Karbi Film Society. A total of 2 Documentary Film 'Mask' and 'Chomkan' and 6 feature film

which includes Pei Po Akanghon, Havar, Et Let Let, Pi Longri Aseme, Apor Amongve and Dopalongka were nominated for 10th Rangina Sarpo Film Award and Rangina Sarpo Folk Artists Award, 2021. The four new categories which is added in the 10th edition from the existing 21 categories, such as Best folk artist (male) went to Lindok Rongpi on the speciality of making Jamblai Athon, folk artist (female) went to Kasang Terompi on the speciality of singing funeral hymn (Kacharhe), Best Film Editor went to Raju Gogoi from Et Let Let and Best

Makeup went to Dhan Bora from Et Let Let too. Other main categories of the award like Best Actor (Male) award went to Tom GT Terang and Best Actor (Female) award went to Malin Tissopi, and both the award was bag from Et Let Let, Best Documentary Award went to 'Chomkan' and Best Director Award went to Rajib Kro from Et Let Let as well. During the event Rupsing Teron, EM/c Art & Culture, KAAC; MP Horensing Bey; Chandra Sing Kro, President, Karbi Cultural Society; Hidhinath Rongpi, President, Karbi Lammet Amei and several other dignitaries were also attended.

NFR cancelled 6 special passenger trains' due to fog



Guwahati, January 29 : In order to manage train operations during the foggy season, the railway ministry has continued the cancellation of the operations of 6 trains under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) up to March 3, 2021. According to a notification, the

chief public relation officer of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), Subhanan Chanda, the service of Train No. 05909 Dibrugarh-Lalgarh Junction Passenger Special leaving daily from Dibrugarh will remain cancelled effect from February

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Court rejects Pinjra Tod activist Devangana Kalita's bail plea in UAPA case



Guwahati, January 29 : Kalita was arrested in the case for allegedly being part of a premeditated conspiracy behind the riots. A court here has rejected the bail

plea of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student and Pinjra Tod member Devangana Kalita, booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) Contd...Page 6

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres lauds India's COVID vaccine efforts, makes this remark

New Delhi, January 29 : Calling for India to play a major role in global vaccination campaign, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday (January 29) termed the vaccine production capacity of India as the 'best asset' that the world has today. Addressing reporters here, the UN chief said, "I know that in India there is a very high level of production of Indian developed vaccines. We are in contact with Indian institutions for that. We strongly hope that India will have all the instruments that are necessary to play a major role in making

sure that a global vaccination campaign is made possible." "I think that the production capacity of India is the best asset that the world has today. I hope the world understands that it must be fully used," he added. On the need to democratize access to medicines, Guterres said, "I would say a very important element on the democratization of access to medicines all over the world. I appealed once again today for the licenses to be made available in order for companies around the world to be able to produce some of the vaccines that already

exist." UN chief's statement comes as India has gifted over 55 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccine to neighbouring countries. Addressing a weekly briefing, External Affairs Ministry (EAM) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava on Thursday said India plans to gift vaccines doses to Oman, CARICOM countries, Nicaragua, Pacific Island states. Srivastava said New Delhi plans to supply 1 crore or 10 million vaccine doses to Africa and 10 lakh to United Nations health workers under GAVI's (Global Alliance for Vaccines

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Public Relations officer of Northeast Frontier Railway Nripendra Bhattacharyya honoured by Global Peace University, USA

Guwahati, 29 January : Nripendra Bhattacharyya, Public Relations Officer of Northeast Frontier Railway has been honoured with the Doctorate Degree of Jour-

nalism by Global Peace University, Delaware, United States of America on January 23rd during the National Conference of Newspaper Association of India held at

Punjab Culture Centre, Chandigarh. During the conference Bhattacharyya joined in a seminar on "Establishing Global Peace" which

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Women's safety : Unlawful procedures by Govt of Assam regarding VLTD in public vehicles

Guwahati, January 29 : Soon after the horrifying Nirbhaya gang rape in the national capital in the year 2012, the Government of India set up a Committee headed by late Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) J.S. Verma to recommend amendments of Criminal Laws to enable address the issue of Crime against Women. Among the several issues looking into by the committee, the Committee also looked into the issue of provision of adequate safety measures and amenities for women. In this regard, the Committee had given several recommendations, one of them being that "all buses should be fitted with tamper proof GPS systems." Taking a step towards implementing the aforementioned recommendation of the Committee, the Central Government on 28.11.2016 issued a Notification numbered GSR 1095(E), amending the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 by introducing Rule 125-H of those Rules making the fitment of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices with Emergency Panic Button mandatory for Public service vehicles and goods vehicles with national permit in the country. However, it is a matter of deep concern that unlawful procedures are being adopted with respect to the implementation of the said Rule in Assam by the Transport Department, Government of Assam. Addressing a press meet in Guwahati today, Dr. Kamaljeet Singh Soi, an International road safety expert presently a Member at National Road Safety Council - Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India has pointed out the unlawful practices in this regard by the government of Assam. Dr. Soi has also pointed out that Transport Department, Govt. of Assam despite receiving funds under the Nirbhaya framework from MoRTH, has not yet established a command and control centre for monitoring the PSV's in the state of Assam. Furthermore, while the Department has called for registration of VLTD manufacturers, without adopting a common layer backend which should be certified from the testing agencies as specified under Rule 126 of CMV Rules 1989 and should be integrated with VAHAN, it has also encouraged cartelization by a few VLTD manufacturers to undertake the implementation of Rule 125H. "The said Department has also flouted the governing standards and laid rules by allowing VLTD manufacturers to use

a third party private backend system for fitments of VLT devices in the state which is not certified as per the standard of AIS 140 and is not integrated with VAHAN. The manner in which the implementation has been envisaged, suffers from several practical issues, which indeed are detrimental to the interest of the public in the state of Assam", he added. Dr. Soi has also alleged that the Transport Commissioner, Government of Assam is illegitimately



allowing a third party private backend system with respect to the fitments of VLT devices in the state which is in clear contradiction and defiance to the AIS 140 standard as well as the notification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India. It is noteworthy, that state has called for registrations of VLTD manufacturers in a haste to deliberately flout the laid Rules and governing standards issued in this regard encouraging cartelization of a few VLTD manufacturers who intend to use a non-certified backend either directly or through their dealers in the state which shall indeed perpetuate dummy VLT fitments OR fitment of non-compliant VLT devices in the state defying the main objective behind Rule 125H for women safety and security. Moreover, the procedures adopted by the Transport Department are to camouflage with the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India with respect to implementation of the said Rule as the way in which Transport Department, Govt. of Assam intends to implement it is a clear case of defiance of the notifications and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India vide GSR 1095(E) dated 28-11-2016, SO 1663 (E) dated 18-04-2018 and SO 5453 (E) dated 25-10-

2018 in this regard. As far as the notification is concerned the Command and Control Centre has to be authorized by the State Government and it shall be used to provide interface to various stakeholders such as State emergency response centre, the transport department or Regional Transport Offices, VLT device manufacturers and their authorized dealers, testing agencies, permit holders, etc., as per code of practice of AIS 140. The Command and Control

Centre has also to provide feed to the VAHAN data base with regard to the over speeding, device health status and other parameters in real-time. The State is duty-bound to comply with the laid rules and governing standard in a legitimate manner and therefore Dr. Soi has asked the state government to revoke call of empanelment/registration of VLTD manufacturers immediately, till the time they adopt a common layer backend system for implementation of Rule 125H of the CMV Rules 1989 pertaining to mandatory fitment of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices and emergency button in PSV's and Goods Vehicles with NP plying across the State of Assam. He has also revealed the fact in the press meet that although the Transport Department, Assam has already received a fund of Rs from the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India as center's share under the framework of "Nirbhaya Funding Scheme" which is mandatory to be used for establishment of a command and control center in the state to monitor the movement of vehicles and handling of emergency alerts in case of any emergency, the said department has called for the subject empanelment of VLTD manufacturers without establishing the command center and without finalizing a

certified common layer backend system integrated with VAHAN for fitments of VLTD's in the state. The negligence on part of the transport department shall clearly result in sabotaging the main objective of this regime as frivolous/fake/dummy installations of VLT Devices in the state shall be carried out by a cartel of few unscrupulous companies using the referred uncertified private backend in the state. Dr. Soi has alleged that the Transport Department is glaringly acting with disregard of duty by flouting the mandate of Rule 125(H) of CMVR and intends to commit an unlawful act of granting approval to a cartel of VLTD manufacturers in collusion with an intent to unlawfully profiteer and cause loss to public ex-chequer thus not only abusing the public trust but also the laid down Policy with respect to the safety and security of women. In such a collusion, the manufacturers, if approved arbitrarily by the transport department shall mint huge amount of money from the permit holders for their self vested interests which indeed is a clear threat to the public interest at large. Therefore, Dr. Soi has strongly opposed the tyrannical methodology adopted by the state of Assam, and the favoritism being served to a few manufacturers encouraging cartelization in the state which shall indeed keeping the other deserving manufacturers deprived. Through the Fourth Pillar of democracy Dr. Soi has condemned the illegitimate steps taken by Transport Department, Government of Assam and also he has requested the said Department to halt the issuance of any approvals/permissions to VLT Device manufacturers and/or any third party private backend as any such approvals, if granted shall be in complete negation to the laid down rules. He is of the opinion that the Transport Department should revoke the call of empanelment/registration of VLTD manufacturers, till the time they adopt a common layer backend system for implementation of Rule 125H of the CMV Rules 1989 pertaining to mandatory fitment of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices and emergency button in PSV's and Goods Vehicles with NP plying across the State of Assam. He also said that the Transport Department, Government of Assam should refrain from creating any monopolistic situation as it seems to be currently.

DTFI Meets on Covid-19 Vaccine and Routine Immunization



Aalo, Jan 29 : The District Task Force on Immunization held under the Chairmanship of Shri Henkir Lollen, SDO took up all key issues pertaining to implementation of Covid-19 vaccine and routine immunization at Conference Hall of DC today. The SDO stressed on administering the two doses phase wise to all in order the wipe out the disease. He stressed on generating awareness on the vaccine to all health care workers, particularly Anganwadi workers who are unreachable through respective CDPOs so that first phase of vaccination is completed soon. He assured to mobilize the frontline workers of DC office to take the vaccine in time. Stressing on fear psychosis among the workers to take the vaccine and absence during vaccination

is sort of problem and he suggested the department Heads to show the way by taking the vaccine from top to bottom. The DMO and other Programme Officers in the district and the MOs in the PHCs, CHCs have done the same to dispel rumors of side effects doing the round in media. The vaccine is quite safe and govt. has pumped in crores of rupees to prepare the vaccine for us and all must come forward to avail the free facility. The DFWO Dr. Tomar Kamki, DSO Dr. Jombom Kato, DDMO, CDPO, DSP, ADEO Education and other gave useful tips on Covid Vaccination. The DPM Shri Yomto Lollen depicted the overall scenario of Covid-19 vaccine and routine immunization through power point presentation.

The UK has record death tolls, yet still the government has no clear Covid strategy

Back in April 2020, I wrote of my despair that so many people were desperately ill and dying because politicians had "refused to listen and act on advice". It is barely believable that I find myself with similar feelings a full nine months later. Once again, the central government has delayed decisions and not followed the advice of scientists. It failed to follow Sage advice on an England-wide "circuit-breaker" in early autumn, and went on to relax controls in December, despite

high case numbers. Predictions of an inevitable rise in cases did not deter ministers from trying, unsuccessfully, to "save Christmas". The utterly predictable result is now happening, with pressure on hospitals and more than a thousand deaths most days, a toll even worse than the first wave. The emergence of the new, more transmissible variant has doubtless made control even more difficult, but we still seem to have been on the back foot at every stage. There is a stark contrast between the poor control measures and the outstanding scientific progress. We know so much more than we did back in April. We have a better understanding of transmission and the natural history of the infection, the immunology, and the variation in risks within the population. These advances have led to a

growing number of tools that can be used to tackle the epidemic, adding to the basic early interventions of social distancing, hygiene, protective equipment, testing and isolation. We can now add to them rapid tests, contact-tracing apps, vaccines and better treatment. So why are we not in a better place? The answer is that these innovations are simply tools, and tools have to be used skillfully as part of a clear strategy in order to be effective. Underpinning this has to be engagement with ordinary people to

make sure that the proposed interventions are understood, feasible and acceptable. Take the chaotic interventions in education in England, where the government has imposed decisions on exams, masks, mass testing and closures without sufficiently engaging teachers, schools and parents, thereby losing credibility. The response in the UK has been particularly centralised and top-down, with little attention paid to working at local level and with different groups. We can learn here from other public health strategies. Most of my research and public health practice has been in the prevention and control of HIV. Since the early days of that pandemic in the 1980s, we have learned a lot and now have a wide range of effective tools, from home-testing programmes to antiviral drugs.

Helen Ward

Is Theresa May really the only Tory minister to account?

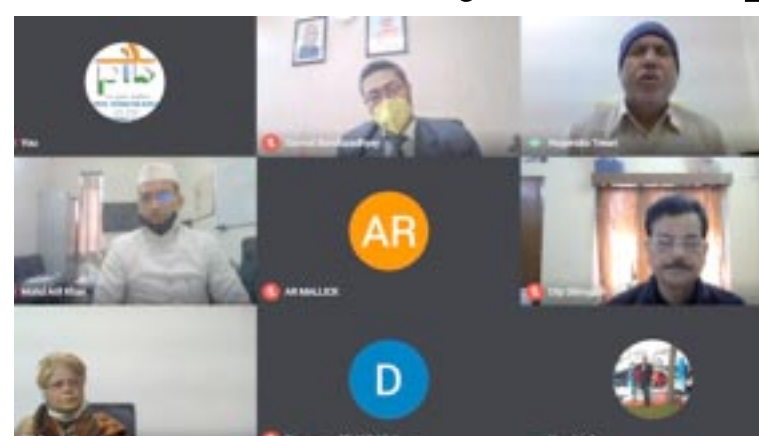
It pains me to say it but Theresa May is right. Who would have thought that the Maybot, who parroted meaningless platitudes, such as "Brexit means Brexit" and "strong and stable", could think outside the box. But her analysis, in today's Daily Mail, of Boris Johnson having vacated Britain's leadership role on the world stage for threatening international law-breaking and slashing the UK's international aid contribution is spot on. In normal times, the direct criticism of a PM by their predecessor would be a huge story. But these are not ordinary times; and with Biden's inauguration and the UK's rocketing Covid death toll passing 100,000, May must now regret being the first to roll out the red carpet for Trump - a sign of our Brexit-induced desperation for trade deals. She should have been holding him to account, when she was holding his hand. Johnson's laziness on world affairs made him by common consensus the worst foreign secretary of

Rupa Huq modern times. His multiple coronavirus missteps mean he's vying for the equivalent title as prime minister. May gave Johnson his first cabinet job to try to keep him in the tent. Maybe she should have literally told him: FO. May, the goody two shoes who professed that the naughtiest thing she'd ever done was running through a field of wheat, has become a viral mutant strain of Tory: sticking the knife into Gove and the PM from the backbenches, schooling them on what's what, and creating instantly memeable images of facial expressions of incredulity at the absurdities they spout. This will be seen as sour grapes. Let's not forget Boris Johnson was serially unkind about May after he flounced out of her cabinet and plotted replacing her full-time - so she is returning the favour. He likened her EU withdrawal deal, which would've been a whole lot softer than the nasty bump of his hard Brexit he's negotiated, to strapping on "a suicide vest".

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PIB discusses on 'Girl Child Empowerment- An Empowering Strategy of North Eastern States Women for Society and its prosperity'

Guwahati, Jan 29 : Girl Child Empowerment includes emphasis on Education, Nutrition Human Resource Talent Management, experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic 'Girl Child Empowerment - An Empowering Strategy of North Eastern States Women for Society and its prosperity' here today. Experts from Government sector along with academicians deliberated and discussed about Girl Child Empowerment and its awareness from medical, psychological, academic, societal and policy perspective. Padma Shri Naresh Chander Lal, Ambassador of Swachh Bharat



Abhiyaan, Andamaan and Nicobar Islands said with optimism that the ambit of Girl Child Empowerment, is not just Girl Child Education, rather more than that, it is Proper Nutrition, Encouragement to emotional Qualities of Entrepreneurial Women, Human Resources Talent Management of Citizenry including Girls, motivating Cultural and Multi-talented abilities of ambidextrous qualities of girls. Dr. Lal said that it is pertinent to mention that there has to be discussion on issues related to Girl Child empowerment such as Education and Nutrition so that there is citizenry awareness on these social issues. He said that Girls are revered in Indian Society because of their abilities to led humanity by their qualities and emotional value-adds. He said that growth and development of the country has to harness these qualities so that society and nation makes great strides. Shri Nagendra Nath Tiwari, Deputy Technical Adviser, Food and Nutrition Board, Eastern Region, Kolkata said that Government awareness programme 'Poshan Abhiyaan' is to sensitise people about proper Nutrition to all

including girls. He said that health and hygiene along with nutrition is vital for the development of individuals. He said that proteins and vitamins in food help in growth. Shri Tiwari said that healthy food habits would help in proper nourishment. Talking about the initiatives of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Prof. (Dr.) Mohd Arif Khan, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh said that it is vital to provide opportunities to girl child in the country. He said that awareness about 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' would help tackle social issues and thereby, society would be better equipped to provide girl child empowerment and growth. Ms Anupoma Das, former Senior official in Field Publicity Unit of Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati said that just as boys, career growth of girls in education, business and medical profession are also occurring simultaneously. Talking about various initiatives in Girl child education, Government programmes such as 'Startup India and Stand-Up India', Ms

Smita Saikia, Media and Communication Officer, PIB Guwahati, Ms W Panthoibi Singh, Field Publicity Officer, Field Outreach Bureau, Tezpur, Ms Hiramani Das, Field Exhibition Officer, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati said that Human Resources Talent management is quintessential factor for the growth of the society and country. Abdur Rahman Mallick, Advocate Delhi High Court said that the society has to celebrate the success of Girl Child and their achievements. Talking about Indian Constitution, he said that health of an individual and a healthy society is vital for the well-being of nation and prosperity of citizenry including girls. Lauding PIB Guwahati for this discussion, he said that awareness is vital on issues such as education, nutrition and well-being of girls in society. The informative and knowledge webinar was planned and coordinated by Shri Samrat Bandyopadhyay, Joint Director (M & C), PIB, Guwahati. Senior officers of PIB were present in webinar. Shri Anjita Chakraborty, Assistant Director, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati welcomed the experts as the webinar delved into details on the various aspects of the topic such as Girl Child Talent Management, proper health, hygiene, nutrition and education, among others. The interactive Webinar has enthusiastic participation of students, academicians and senior officials as they said that this information cum knowledge Webinar would help them in informed decision making and to be aware about the issues on empowerment of Girl Child.

KIRTI CHAKRA Naik Late TAPE YAJO Remembered on Republic Day



Aalo, Jan 29 : The 44th Battalion Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry paid their rich tribute and paid their homage to Late Tape Yajo, Kirti Chakra (Posthumous) through wreath Laying Ceremony on the

occasion of 72th Republic Day. All family members of the valiant soldiers who made supreme sacrifice for Mother India were felicitated by the Battalion. Late Naik Tape Yajo hailing from tiny Karo village of Monigong Circle of Shi-Yomi was saga of bravery and gallantry who served Indian army with distinction in the India Army for over 12 years. proud son of Arunachal Pradesh Nike Tape Yajo. Kirti Chakra (Posthumous) He laid his life during operation against terrorist in Jammu & Kashmir while leading scout of the attacking column tasked to eliminate terrorists in Poonch sector of Jammu & Kashmir life on 21st September 2008. During the operation, terrorists attacked unexpectedly from a very

close range with heavy automatic gun fire and in the ensuing gunfight at close range Nike Tape Yajo was wounded with bullet injury. Despite being wounded and bleeding profusely, he charged the terrorists at close range and he and his team killed three hardcore terrorist. His gallant action led to the elimination of the terrorists without causing further damage to the nation. Being grievously injured, Naik Tape Yajo Succumbed to his injuries and laid down his life on 22 September 2008. Considering his gallant action, bravery and supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation, Nike Tape Yajo was awarded with kirti Chakra posthumously. He was one of the most decorated army men with 50th Year of Independence Anniversary Army Medal, Videsh Seva medal with Clasp Bhutan, Special Seva medal with Clasp Suraksha, OP Rakshak Medal, High Altitude Medal, 9 Years Long Service Medal OP Parakaram Medal and Prestigious Kirti Chakra posthumously.

What to expect from Budget 2021? Support people who lost income in pandemic, boost demand

New Delhi, January 29 : Budget 2021-22 will be focused on alleviating the impact of the pandemic. One set of measures expected is those that give support to households in sections of society where incomes fell sharply during the pandemic. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced some steps in this direction as part of the 'atmanirbhar' package during the lockdown, but they were limited by the uncertainty that prevailed in the economy. By now, the condition of the economy as well as the government's fiscal resources is clear, and better-targeted additional measures can be announced. The length and depth of the economic impact of the pandemic has been much beyond initial expectations. Measures that directly put money into the accounts of the poor can help lift consumer demand and provide relief to households who have been suffering for one year. Similarly, tax cuts, whether in income tax or in indirect taxes, can put money in the pockets of households. Not only can this provide relief to those in the middle classes whose family businesses and sources of income have suffered, it can also help push consumer demand, and directly feeds into the mechanisms through which the economy can be put back on the path of recovery. The second theme expected in the Budget is an emphasis on investment in infrastructure. This is one way for the government to push growth, both in the short run and the long run. The Indian economy contracted by about 7 to 8 per cent in 2020; it is expected to grow at about 11 to 12 per cent next year, taking it to back to the pre-Covid GDP levels in a couple of

years. A development finance institution (DFI) or a development bank that lends to infrastructure projects has been discussed quite a lot lately, and reports suggest the government is keen on this idea. This addresses the question of the maturity mismatch between short-term funds and long-term



investment. In addition, the government is expected to take measures to push investment in manufacturing. Ways to increase employment could include protection to labour-intensive industries that have seen high imports from China. The message that governments support job growth is critical around the world at this time. Though almost all economists have been critical of rising protectionism for domestic industry, especially when it creates an imbalance between final and intermediate products, the last few years suggest that the government is not shy of protecting domestic industry. Post-Covid, with much greater job loss and stress in the economy, some measures may be

expected. Higher expenditure and lower taxes will increase the government's borrowing requirement. The fall in taxes and the rise in Covid expenditure are expected to give India a fiscal deficit of about 6 to 7 per cent of GDP in 2020-21. This is expected to be partly offset by the Budget



allocations that ministries were not able to spend due to the pandemic. With the economy reeling under the impact of the pandemic, the government does not need to shy away from a larger fiscal deficit. The deficit is expected to be higher but could stay within single digits to prepare a glide path to fiscal consolidation. The Budget is also a time for the finance minister to announce institutional and legal changes, particularly in the financial sector. In 2013, the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission had recommended the setting up of a Financial Redress Agency. In the present regulatory framework, each regulator has a separate forum that consumers can approach if

they have complaints about a financial institution that is regulated by it. For example, for a complaint against a bank, RBI has set up banking ombudsmen. Often with increasing sophistication and multiple regulatory overlaps in the financial sector products, consumers may not know whom to approach, or not want to go to courts where judicial delays can take a long time. For example, for an insurance product sold by a bank, the customer is confused about whom to approach. Consumers who do not live in state capitals where the redress mechanism agencies are located may not get justice. A more suitable mechanism would be a single redress agency which all financial sector customers can approach. This agency could work in online mode, accept online submissions, and even do hearings online. This proposal has been around for a while, but possibly after the pandemic, which saw courts functioning online, it has gained greater acceptability. Reports suggest that the Financial Redress Agency is on the cards in this Budget. Similarly, with a larger fiscal deficit, institutions such as a Public Debt Management Agency (PDMA) and a Fiscal Council could show the government's commitment to fiscal discipline in the long run. Budget 2021-22 will be presented in one of the most difficult times in the economy in recent decades, and the finance minister has a very challenging task in making it. But institutional changes that do not require large expenses and show her government's commitment to reform can be strong positive signal, and should form an important element of her Budget.

Those who entered Red Fort & hoisted flag did wrong, they aren't farmers-Haryana ex-CM Hooda

New Delhi, January 29 : Those who entered the Red Fort and hoisted Sikh religious flag 'Nishan Sahib' amid the farmers' tractor rally on Republic Day did wrong, and need to be brought to book and punished, former Haryana CM and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda has said. In an exclusive interview to ThePrint, Hooda said the Congress supports the farmers' demands, but does not endorse how things panned out in New Delhi on

not the government)," he said. Hooda claimed that due to the rising tension between ruling allies BJP and JJP in Haryana, the people have lost trust in the government, and the Congress will soon move a no-confidence motion against it. Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala's JJP has a massive support base among farmers, and thus, has been under pressure to support the demand to repeal the Narendra Modi government's three

said the Congress is "not in a rush" to form the government, and wants to fulfil its "duty as the opposition". "We are not in a rush to form the government. We are raising our voice as the opposition - the duty the people of the state have given us," Hooda said. But he did recall that when BJP and JJP tied up to form the government in October 2019, he had criticised the alliance and "vote kisi ko, support kisi ko", alluding to the fact that the JJP had contested the elections against Manohar Lal Khattar's incumbent BJP government, but supported it nonetheless. "Today, we see that playing out. Aisi sarkarein apne wazan se hi gir jaati hain (such governments collapse under their own weight)," Hooda remarked. In December, while the BJP-JJP government suffered a setback in the Haryana local body polls, losing a number of seats across various



26 January, when a section of farmers barged into the Red Fort, climbed the monument and hoisted the Nishan Sahib. The Congress had condemned the violent clashes between the Delhi Police and the farmers, while several leaders also criticised the hoisting of the flag. "The farmers' movement is not being led by any political party. We have been supporting their demands, and always will. But no one has supported the violence. It is condemnable," Hooda said. Hooda said the people who went to the Red Fort aren't even part of the farmers' movement. "All the farmers have been acting with great restraint. Those among them who went to the Red Fort did the wrong thing, and they aren't even a part of the farmers' movement," Hooda said. "Those people need to be punished and brought to book." The senior leader added that "only talks can bring a solution" to the farmers' agitation. "Kisi bhi taraf se hathh nahi honi chahiye. Sarkar ki taraf se toh kabhi bhi nahi (No side should be obdurate, definitely

controversial farm laws. As many as five JJP MLAs have come out in support of the farmers' protests, and against the farm laws. One independent MLA, meanwhile, has withdrawn support from the government, while two more have come out in support of the protesting farmers. "The BJP-JJP government has lost the trust of the people. Independent MLAs have withdrawn their support; JJP MLAs keep making pro-farmer protest statements," Hooda pointed out. "I have requested the governor to quickly call a session so that on the very first day, we can move a no-confidence motion. All the masks will be off then. The people who are saying something in public and something else privately... it will all become clear," the former CM said. Haryana Congress chief and former Union minister Kumari Selja had said many MLAs of the ruling alliance are in touch with her party, and that it will "use all constitutional methods" to ensure "a better alternative" in the state. But Hooda

bodies, the Congress lost the mayoral election in Ambala, Kumari Selja's home turf. In fact, the Congress only won one of the three mayoral seats - Sonapat, where Hooda had campaigned extensively. He was missing in action from Ambala and Panchkula, but said he was never asked to campaign in the neighbouring districts near Chandigarh. "Look, I would have definitely gone had I been asked to. Neither the candidate nor anyone else asked me to go, so I didn't," Hooda said. "In Sonapat, the candidate called me. I had helped her get the ticket, and this was her first time fighting on our party's ticket... If they called me to Ambala, I would have gone there too," he insisted. Hooda was one of the 23 senior leaders who wrote a letter to Congress' interim president Sonia Gandhi in August last year, demanding a full-time party president and elections to the Congress Working Committee, among other things. Hooda welcomed the party's recent statement that it will have an elected

president by June at any cost, as well as assurances that CWC polls would be held. In Hooda's opinion, the Congress needs to be made stronger organisationally, and all the leaders need to sit together and put their minds to it. "For instance, there have been no district or block presidents in the Haryana Congress in the last six years. How will the party fight, then? We all need to sit together and think about how to strengthen the party," he added.

US: Indian-origin pediatrician shoots and kills another doctor, himself in Texas

Houston, January 29 : A 43-year-old Indian-American pediatrician diagnosed with terminal cancer shot dead a lady doctor and then killed himself after taking hostages at a medical office in Austin, according to police in the capital city of the US state of Texas. The armed man was identified as Dr Bharat Narumanchi, who was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer, police said, adding that he had recently been turned down for a volunteer position at the medical facility. Police received a call on Tuesday saying a man walked into the offices of Children's Medical Group (CMG) with a gun and was holding hostages inside the building, the CNN reported, citing Austin Police Department press release. Initially several hostages were being held, police said, but several escaped and others were allowed to leave, except a pediatrician named Katherine Dodson. The hostages who escaped the office told officers on the scene that the man was armed with a pistol and what appeared to be a shotgun, police said. He also had two duffel bags. Dr Narumanchi had visited the CMG office a week prior to the shooting and applied for a volunteer position. The suspect had terminal cancer and had only been given weeks to live, Austin police Lt. Jeff Greenwalt told reporters on Wednesday. "So we feel like his terminal cancer probably played a large part in whatever it was that occurred in his life and what was happening yesterday," he was quoted as saying by US media reports. But for now, Greenwalt said, investigators are still trying to unravel what could have led to the



hostage situation. He called for any of the doctor's family and friends who might have knowledge about Narumanchi to contact the homicide department. Earlier, police said hostage negotiators tried to make contact with Narumanchi, but were unsuccessful. After repeated attempts, SWAT (special weapons and tactic) officers entered the building where they found Dodson and Narumanchi dead from apparent gunshot wounds. "It appeared that Dr Narumanchi shot himself after shooting Dr Dodson," according to the police department's news release. The incident is still under investigation. "There were five people inside the building when the suspect arrived," Greenwalt said, adding that they were all employees and no children or patients were present when the incident happened. It wasn't until the SWAT team was able to send a robot fitted with a camera inside the doctor's office that police got a full sense of the situation. "We were able to see that both subjects were deceased," Greenwalt said, referring to Dodson and Narumanchi. The Travis County Medical Examiner will be conducting an autopsy to determine the official cause and manner of death.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

CREATIVE invites sealed quotation affixing court fee of Rs. 8.25 in the prescribed format from Assam based company, suppliers, firm or any oilier government registered organization having experience in machinery supply works for the following works at Dimoria Handloom Cluster. Dimoria. Sonapur. Kamrup (M), Assam.

Sl. No	Description of works	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)
1.	Supplying, installation and commissioning of Textiles Machinery	12,144,500.00	Rs. 2,42,890/- (for General) & Rs. 1,21,445 (for ST/SC)
2.	Supplying of Textiles Laboratory Equipment & Accessories	2,500,000.00	Rs 50,000/- (for General) & Rs. 25,000 (for ST/SC)
3.	Supplying and installation of wooden handloom and its accessories	10,019,000.00	Rs. 2,00,380/- (for General) & Rs. 1,00,190 (for ST/SC)

TENDER/CHECKLIST MAY BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP'S WEBSITE: <http://iie.gov.in>

Interested parties may submit their sealed quotation for Dimoria Handloom Cluster at **Office of the Director, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship** within 21 days from the date of publication of this advertisement. Rs. 1500/- (non-refundable) to be submitted at the time of submitting the tender through Demand Draft, in favour of CREATIVE, payable at Guwahati.

- Period of completion : 90 working days from receipt of work order
- Last date and time of submission of bid : 21/02/2021 (12:30 PM)
- Date and time of opening of bid : 22/02/2021 (02:30 PM)

Note : if a holiday falls on any of the scheduled dates, the scheduled date shall be considered the next working day.

Sd/-
Secretary
CREATIVE

No. BWRD/NIT-I/BTC/2018-19/801

Dated: 25/01/2021

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender in prescribed form to be eventually drawn in A.P. W.D.H/F2 from affixing non refundable C.F.S.of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty-five) only for different group are hereby invited for the following works for the current year 2020-21 from the registered contractor/firms under W.R. Deptt. or Addl. Chief Engineer Kokrajhar Zone W.R.Deptt., B.T.C. Kokrajhar for following works.

Tender paper will be received by the Executive Engineer, Baksa W.R.Division, Mushalpur up to 2.30 PM of 14-02-2021 and will be open on same date,time,place and hours. If the date of receiving/opening tender happens to be holiday/bandh or if it is not possible to receive tenders in stipulated date for any reason the next working day will be considered as last date for receipt/opening tender.

Detailed N.I.T.plan specification of work, terms and condition for the work may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day upto 2.30 P.M of 14-02-2021.

Tender paper are to be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs.500.00(Rupees Five Hundred)only (Non-refundable) in perform through D.D of S.B.I and pledge to the Executive Engineer, Baksa Water Resources Division payable at Mushalpur Treasury during office hours on all working day up to 2.30 P.M of 14-02-2021.

The tenders or the authorized representatives may remain present at the time of opening the Tenders.

Sl No.	Name of Scheme	Package No	Approx. value of work (Rs.)
1.	Immediate measures for repairing of damages on R/B of Deosunga river near Bangalipara High School area under SDRF for 2020-21.	I	Rs.39,99,999.66
2.	I/M to restore the flood damages from Bhola river at Pub Bholakash village on its R/B under SDRF for 2020-21.	I	Rs.49,94,844.13

- A) Time for Completion of work: - 45 (forty-five) days' time from date of issue of work orders.
- B) Item of Work: - As per detailed N.I.T.

SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Works will be taken up subject to concurrence of the competent authority.
2. The preference will be given to the Contractor / Firm having sound experience of similar nature of works
3. In case of flat rate quoted by the Contractors /Finns, the decision for allotment of works will be finalized by the competent authority.
4. The allotment authority will consider the capability of the tenderer and be not bound to accept the lowest tender rate.
5. Allotment authority reserve right to accept /reject any tender without assigning the reason thereof.
6. All other terms and conditions are as per rules and procedures followed in the Water Resources Deptt Assam. From time to time are also applicable.
7. Price level of the work is as in the relevant approved scheme and claim to update will not be entertained.
8. GST Registration No (Dully attested Xerox copies of all necessary documents are to be enclosed within the tender paper).
9. Execution has to be comments within 4 (Four) days after award contract/allotment of work along with signing of agreement.
10. Payment of the work will be made subject to the availability of Fund.
11. Deptt. Will not be responsible for arising any complicity for payment due delay of completion of works.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Baksa W.R. Division, Mushalpur.

IPR(BTC)-172/2020

THE ASSAM RISING

VOL. NO. V, ISSUE NO. 353 SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2021

Covid travel quarantine

If you can cut off the source, you can devote your resources and efforts to suppressing its spread, and coping with the health and social problems it has created. The approach of imposing isolation on arrivals, known as quarantine, is centuries old. At a time when an understanding of the nature of infectious diseases was virtually nonexistent, it was one of the few control methods that worked. In times of plague and pestilence, cities and states often applied it with enormous rigour. Almost a year after the World Health Organization declared that Covid-19 was a "public health emergency of international concern", the UK government is imposing a regulated quarantine regime on some international arrivals. This extraordinary delay illustrates perfectly how far the country has distanced itself from its previous position as one of the leading exponents of public health in the world. It also demonstrates a pattern in the government's handling of much of the pandemic response - taking action far too late and, even then, doing it halfheartedly. It was not until 8 June that the government introduced a requirement for people arriving from most foreign countries to self-isolate for 14 days, later reduced to 10 days. The regulations were accompanied by the possibility of fines being issued for non-compliance. There is, however, little evidence of compliance with this system and a vanishingly small number of penalties appear to have been imposed. Covid-19's ability to mutate and produce variants that may have decidedly different characteristics from their predecessors has forced the government's hand. Priti Patel announced compulsory quarantine arrangements, involving hotel stays for passengers who cannot be refused entry, such as British residents and nationals returning to the UK, who are travelling from a limited number of countries, including known variant "hotspots". These modest and disappointing proposals will undoubtedly run into several severe problems that could and should be avoided. Importantly, these new regulations do not replace the failed system of what amounts to voluntary self-isolation for the inadequate period of 10 days. The compulsory quarantine only applies to people travelling from the 22 high-risk countries. Everyone else arriving in the UK will continue to have to self-isolate according to the existing regulations. There can be no such thing as a partial quarantine. Either it is comprehensive and effective, or it will fail. A differential approach based on country of origin is undermined by the difficulty of accurately ascertaining where arrivals have come from. Global travellers may move across many countries during their journey and use various means of transport. During their travels, they may well have passed through multiple travel hubs and departure lounges, encountering and spending time close to many other travellers along the way. Determining who will be subject to self-isolation and who will be subject to mandatory quarantine will probably be a valueless task. Experience from elsewhere shows that operating an effective managed isolation facility is no easy undertaking. Preventing people who are isolating from mixing with others in the same position, in the same facility, such as a hotel, is difficult. In Australia, serious problems arose because of very close contact between people isolating and those working at the facilities. Whatever system of quarantine is adopted, the government needs to break with its insular habits and learn quick lessons from the successes and failures of other countries. An important rule for a quarantine system is that few, if any, exceptions should be permitted. Limited observance and the extensive list of groups that do not have to observe the rules will limit their effectiveness. There are up to 60 occupations or groups potentially exempt from isolation requirements, including everyone from bus drivers to workers in data system maintenance. One exempt group we should be concerned about are those commuting internationally at least weekly. Anyone can bring the virus with them, and everyone should have to go into managed isolation - especially if they travel often and have a greater chance of catching a new strain of the virus. After reaching a disgraceful toll of 100,000 deaths, it is time to focus on some key public health objectives. The government's mantra on Covid-19 should be: "Get it down, keep it down, and keep it out". That is how to maximise the benefit of the mass vaccination campaign and avoid it being undermined by variants. As recently as July and August, the UK and Australia had very similar daily new Covid-19 cases per capita, with Australia at times higher than the UK. Since then, Australia has succeeded in eliminating the virus. Successful quarantine and rapid response to flare-ups have created that success.

TDS Compliances, Do-It-Yourself, works best



Ranjan Goenka

Are you a business entity, making payments to your employees, service providers or any others? If yes, for most, it is mandatory to deduct tax at source (TDS) for specified payment types. The entity needs to deposit the TDS to the IT

Department every month. Every quarter a statement in electronic format (eTDS Return) needs to be submitted, detailing the deposit with its associated deductions. Owing to e-governance, the tax and compliance domain is now substantially computerized and the process has become extremely simple but demands accuracy. Errors, inaccuracies and delays attract interest/penalties. You should avoid being in such a situation. Deduction of taxes and monthly deposits are routine accounting functions. For preparing the quarterly eTDS Return, this information is to be placed in a specified order using one of the specialized software for the purpose. A good software will assist in eliminating errors if any, and seamlessly generate the returns ready for e-filing. Earlier, handling of TDS was quite complex and time-consuming, to say the least tedious, owing to the amount of paperwork and departmental follow-ups. But with e-filing of TDS Returns, the process has been simplified, besides all post-submission information and activities are available online. You can easily do in-house, instead of seeking external professional help. Data is readily available, avoids duplication of effort & coordination hassles, it is more efficient, takes lesser time and most importantly, there is a superior control to prevent errors. You also have reduced chances of delayed filing.

Not only this, you have a complete internal grip on TDS compliance. If any post-submission errors are detected, these can be easily rectified. There is no additional manpower or infrastructure required, but just with efficient TDS software and you are good to go. For unique situations, professional help can always be availed. If you are handling large volumes of TDS information or your accounting functions are outsourced, you may consider outsourcing of the process of TDS preparation and filing. This would enable you to reduce costs, provide professional capabilities, thus better time & resource management for your business. Now that the procedure is quite simple, the first option should be to handle TDS compliances in-house. Outsourcing as an option should only be considered in exceptional cases, wherein it is part of the overall responsibility of the accounting functions. For your better understanding, TDS is deducted on all kinds of payments, you make as a business entity like salary, interest on bank deposits and bonds, payment to contractors and sub-contractors, insurance commission, commission or brokerage, rent, professional fee and technical services etc. There are specialised Software providers, who can make your life simpler and you are good to go with your TDS preparation and filing, in-house.

Indian tourists can keep the Chinese away from LAC. Govt must open borders

The formal response of the Indian and Chinese governments to the "discovery" of a newly constructed Chinese village 4.5 km inside Indian territory on Tsari Chu river, Upper Subansiri district, reflects on the current power equation in the high Himalayas. Even our media, barring a few who ran sensational headlines, soberly analysed the historical background, and resigned to the fact that the area had been under Chinese occupation for nearly 62 years since the 25 August 1959 Longju incident - the first physical confrontation between the People's Liberation Army or the PLA and Indian forces. Our post at Longju was attacked and four Assam Rifles personnel were taken prisoners of war. What followed was an exchange of protest notes, temporary withdrawal by the PLA and reoccupation soon thereafter. I analyse the implications of contrasting approaches of India and China towards border management and development, and the way forward. On 21 November 2020, Ji Rong, spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in India, tweeted the statement of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing: "China's position on Zangnan (southern part of China's Tibet) is consistent & clear. We have never recognised so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' illegally established on Chinese territory. China's normal construction on its own territory is entirely a matter of sovereignty." No ifs and buts, not even lip service to the 80-year-old dispute and absolute clarity with respect the right to do what it wants to on disputed "claimed sovereign territory". Global Times, the Chinese mouthpiece, analysed Indian media reports quoting experts. Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, said that "China and India haven't demarcated the border line of this area yet. So they cannot accuse China of building a village on the Indian side." The report also quoted Zhang Yongpan, a research fellow at the Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), as saying that "It's absurd for the Indian government to use this line (McMahon Line) to determine the territory administered by China and India. Indian media should not bring about the issue when the country is still plagued by the serious situation of a COVID-19 pandemic." This, in my view, also reflects the official line that until the boundary is demarcated, it is China's right to do whatever it wants in the disputed territory. And it is also clear that since even the maps



have been exchanged, the demarcation is unlikely in the foreseeable future. In fact, Chinese actions are part of its policy all along its borders. Professor M Taylor Fravel, eminent China scholar at MIT, explained that the village's construction was part of a Chinese plan of rural revitalisation, put in place in 2017 with a budget of \$4.6 billion, and is due for completion in 2020. A total of 624 model Xiaokang (which literally means 'well-off') villages have been constructed in Tibet on/near the borders. As per China scholar Claude Arpi, 965 such villages have been constructed since 2015. The Chinese aim is clear - to ensure border control/consolidation while promoting economic development and tourism. As per Jayadeva Ranade, former RAW additional secretary, the Xiaokang "border defence villages" are also intended to create a buffer along the border (inhabited by people loyal to the Chinese Communist Party and the nation). President Xi Jinping has himself spelt out the theory for defence of border areas: "Governing border areas is the key for governing a country, and stabilising Tibet". These modern villages are easy to be kept under surveillance via WiFi-enabled devices. And they will provide a secure base for military operations in areas where Tibetan population may turn hostile. In this context, the newly constructed village is significant because it lies, according to Arpi, on the route of the "12-yearly circumambulation of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrims around the mountain known as the Rongkor Chenmo." This pilgrimage had the character of a State ritual for the erstwhile Tibetan government. In sharp contrast to China's assertive advocacy of the legitimacy of its actions, India's response was nothing more than acceptance of

pli. The Ministry of External Affairs said, "China has undertaken such infrastructure construction activity in the past several years. In response, our government too has stepped up construction of border infrastructure. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity." Formally, not a word was said to condemn or confirm Chinese occupation of our territory across the McMahon Line. It was a typical weak-kneed response of a weaker power. It was left to the media to dig out the historical facts. Off the record, the details were confirmed by "official sources". "The Chinese have been holding the area since 1959 and it is not a new development.... There were some temporary constructions few years back. They have now done permanent construction there." The Narendra Modi government's failure to acknowledge the Chinese intrusions and occupation of our territory in Eastern Ladakh since May 2020 is inexplicable. More so, when open source satellite imagery confirms the same. Even more intriguing is its failure to even acknowledge the historical occupation of our territory post 1962 by China. When the government does acknowledge, it is to humiliate the beleaguered Congress by broadly referring to the loss of 38,000 square kilometres till November, 1962. It is time the government formally told the people in detail about our territory under illegal occupation of China. The government must put in public domain maps and satellite imagery showing the International Boundary, Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the nibbling intrusions that have taken

place since 1962. Failure to do so will put a question mark on the government's commitment to safeguard our territorial integrity. It is empirical wisdom that territorial integrity is best safeguarded by infrastructure, settlements and footfall of tourists. This is one reason why China has not secured the 1959 Claim Line in Demchok area. India has a Border Area Development Programme since 1986-87 for security and well-being of the border population. At present, it runs on a meagre budget. Under the project, the government had allocated Rs 783.71 crore in budget 2020-21 for the development of border villages and towns, out of which Rs 190 crore (\$2.5 million) were allotted for India-China border. Compare this with China's \$4.6 billion - \$1.53 billion per annum for three years for 624 villages in Tibet. The India-China Border Roads project has been given impetus by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, but it continues to suffer from lack of vision, adequate budget and tardy execution. One only has to compare the open source videos of China Pakistan Economic Corridor roads with our roads to know the difference. Same is true for a number of hydel projects approved for Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. There is also the need to open up the borders for tourism. There is no justifiable reason to hide our borders, other than our poor state of infrastructure getting exposed. No visit to South Korea is complete without going to the 38th parallel, the border with North Korea. The infrastructure and defences are awe-inspiring and a source of confidence for the domestic population. Our people and tourism industry are no less innovative. India can impose entry/environmental taxes on visitors to earn revenue for infrastructure. In addition, the government can also open up the area for mountaineering expeditions and trekking. We should not take counsel of our fear with respect to China's reaction. China can do nothing more than what it has already done. We have the capability to stalemate it, which for a bigger power is a defeat. The power differential with China does not allow us to take back the usurped territories by force. However, keeping the public informed of exact details of International Border, LAC and historically nibbled territories, development of infrastructure, construction of habitat and tourist footfall will certainly help safeguard India against further loss of territory.

Annadata or anarchist? Belligerent TV channels pointed fingers, demanded justice

You witnessed the outrage, now listen to it: "I don't care what you think... this is a riot..." (Shiv Aroor, India Today) "If you (farmers) aren't ashamed you should be." (Rubika Liyaqat, ABP) "Kisan groups waged a war on the State, viewers... farmers have undermined the spirit of the nation's momentous tryst with democracy..." (Rahul Shivshankar, Times Now) "...Even the tukde-tukde gang, and those at Shaheen Bagh did not have the guts to do what they did today." (Aman Chopra, Zee News) "What happened today at the Red Fort... was an absolute and utter disgrace..." (Amab Goswami, Republic TV) "Today, what happened on Republic

Day will be written in black letters. I am hurt, I am sad, I am angry." (Rajat Sharma, India TV) The pain and indignation felt by leading TV news anchors was reflected in the headlines on the day farmers' groups came, saw and desecrated the Red Fort. Kisan breaks agreement/Besmirched R-Day spirit' (Republic TV); 'R-Day Spirit Shamed' (Times Now); 'Kisanon ne kiya hungama' (News18 India); 'Monumental Anarchy' (India Today); 'India shamed on Republic Day' (CNN News18). While anchors and headline writers pontificated and preached from their cosy perches inside TV studios, the reporters were uncomfortably perched on tractors rumbling into Delhi or worse, caught



in the middle of a **SHAILAJA BAJPAI** the reporters took guard: "Look at the chaos!" exclaimed the Times Now reporter. "Look at that," she added, at a booming sound. "That is an explosion! Our eyes are in tears... and another explosion!" Then, the protesters and tractors lurched drunkenly around Lutyens' Delhi, and reporters began to fear the worst: "...from ITO they are headed to the Supreme Court and India Gate... and then there's Rashtrapati Bhavan," said an ABP reporter. "What are they doing with sticks and swords... dekhie Dilli ki haalat," observed India TV. "Law and order out of control," announced NDTV India in its best stentorian tone. "Even the tractors don't know where they were going," added NDTV 24x7's reporter after hundreds of vehicles headed towards the Red Fort. "Chaotic scenes in Delhi," announced the normally understated BBC World. "... (farmers) scale iconic Red Fort... tens of thousands converge on Delhi..." "Once the protesters had 'breached' the Red Fort, climbed up the flagpole, and scaled domes, the news channel anchors and reporters were truly enraged and out of all patience: In '#AttackOnCapital', Zee News said "Behind violence (are) Khalistanis.

Sensex tanks 938 points: Key factors behind the market crash

New Delhi, January 29 : Global sell-off, lockdown fear: 5 reasons why Sensex tanked 1,115 pts today. Led by losses in index heavy-weight Reliance Industries, private lenders and select IT stocks, benchmark indices extended their losses to the fourth day on Wednesday. Weak global markets, a mixed set of Q3 earnings and selling by foreign institutional investors (FIIs) dented the domestic market mood in today's session. Meanwhile, investors chose to book profits ahead of the Union Budget on Monday, February 1. The BSE barometer Sensex plunged 938 points to 47,410 while its NSE counterpart Nifty slipped below the 14,000 mark to end at 13,968, down 271 points. The broader market trend was mixed with Nifty Midcap 100 and Nifty 500 indices down 1.58 per cent and 1.68 per cent, respectively, while Nifty Smallcap index added 0.15 per cent. The volatility also remained high ahead of the monthly F&O expiry on Thursday, with India VIX rising 4.93 per cent to 24.39 level. Asian equities slipped on Wednesday as investors looked to the Federal Reserve's guidance on its monetary policy while futures for US tech shares jumped after strong earnings from Microsoft. European stocks are expected to slip a tad, with EuroStoxx 50 futures down 0.3 per cent and FTSE futures shedding 0.4 per cent. Global stocks are mostly treading water near record highs as US corporate earnings roll in. Meanwhile, new coronavirus variants that

sparked fresh lockdowns and other restrictions are weighing on the market mood. Frustration over vaccine distribution is also increasing. In a Facebook post last week, Italian Prime Minister described delays in consignments by Pfizer Inc. and AstraZeneca Plc as "unacceptable"



while the UK's health minister warned that vaccines may be less effective against new variants of the coronavirus. That apart, investors are also seeking more clarity on the timeline for President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief plan. "Delay in US paycheques and overall correction in global markets are driving indices lower. Liquidity is a critical factor right now and any fall in liquidity will lead to a sharp fall in markets," said Abhimanyu Sofat, Head of Research at IIFL Securities. The Union Budget, set to be unveiled on February 1, is a highly anticipated affair as it comes on the heels of a pandemic that has altered India's economic landscape. Amid this backdrop, investors have booked profits and are waiting on the sidelines. The government needs

to raise resources to help increase spends, but analysts at Bernstein believe equity markets will consider any form of tax increases negative. Those at Credit Suisse, on the other hand, caution against the limited spending room the government has. "While the government appears

to be willing to spend now, as it believes the growth multiplier would be higher in an economy without Covid-19 restrictions, Rs 4.2 trillion of extra spending may be difficult to execute. It may choose to be conservative on GDP growth assumptions, and also target a lower deficit, which would imply 13 per cent total expenditure growth. In this scenario, spending on residual heads could be 40% higher than in FY20, but the absolute increase a more reasonable Rs 2.5 trillion," wrote Neelkanth Mishra, managing director, co-head of Asia Pacific Strategy and India equity strategist at Credit Suisse in a recent report co-authored with Abhay Khaitan and Prateek Singh. In the December quarter earnings season, the companies have posted a robust per-

formance but this was mostly pencilled in by the market. However, a performance by Reliance Industries disappointed investors, leading to a massive fall in the company's shares and subsequently the benchmark indices. Going ahead, analysts are concerned about lower margins. "We are lowering in expectations for forthcoming quarters on margin front as they are expected to peak out in the current quarter," said Sofat. The market is overvalued from the perspective of PE multiple and market-cap to GDP ratio. The overvaluation is more than 50 percentage points higher than the historical average. "Profit-booking is normal, particularly when valuations are high, like now," said Vijay Kumar, adding that such profit-taking is healthy and desirable. For the third consecutive session on Monday, Nifty50 formed a Long Bear Candle. "The three sessions consecutive decline was formed in the market after the time span of four months. Hence, this pattern could be in-line with the reversal formation in the market at the highs. The last swing high of 14,753 of January 21 could be a reversal high for the near-term," said Nagaraj Shetti, Technical Research Analyst at HDFC Securities in a note on January 25. Nifty on the weekly chart, formed a Doji and high wave-type candlestick pattern back to back in the last two weeks, Jasani said, adding that this market action could be considered as a beginning of major profit booking in the market from the high.

Platinum Love Bands- a fitting tribute to growing StrongerInLove this Valentine's Day



Delhi, January 29 : Last year's whirlwind of adverse situations saw couples across the world face many obstacles, from distance to the over-familiarity of being together all the time, from financial upheaval to health vulnerabilities, from worrying about the ones they loved to increased responsibilities in every sphere. Every turn brought its own set of anxieties, the uncertainty of going back to work, the challenge of constantly coping with the new normal, all while the threat of the pandemic continued. But whatever curveballs life threw their way, couples powered through it all, together. This Valentine's Day, hence, marks a milestone of a different sort as couples look at a future together in a new way and a new light - the newfound strength of their love being an anchor through it all. A journey like this can only be commemorated with Platinum Love Bands that are intricately crafted in a metal that's just as rare and precious as their love - a love that's lifted them from despair and anxiety, offering hope and reassurance instead, and comfort and courage in the darkest nights. It has taught them that no matter what challenges lie ahead, they can face and overcome them when they are together. Acknowledging the truth of the times we live in, these Platinum Love Bands pay tribute to couples who have grown #StrongerInLove and displayed values of strength, resilience, empathy, and optimism in the face of the crisis. While the design narrative includes geometric designs, delicate markings, intricate patterns, clean lines, and hints of precious stones and two-toned pieces, the storytelling celebrates the couple's unique relationship journey. A journey of a love that over this tumultuous time

has grown invincible! The collection is available across 1200+ leading jewellery stores in India. Here are a few of our favourite picks and the meaning behind their designs: Together, there's nothing that love can't overcome. The undulated surfaces on these platinum love bands capture how a love that is rare can overcome hurdles and turn these moments into milestones to be cherished forever. Crafted intricately in platinum, these love bands include diamond motifs, firmly held in place. Platinum, with its inherent strength and density offers an extremely strong hold on diamonds and gemstones, securing them in firm grip for ages to come. A perfect representation of how love keeps you steady even when the world seems to turn on its head. The lines in these bejeweled love bands, represent how the two of you, together, can forge a path out of anything towards safe shores. The cohesive latticework, beautifully placed on both bands represents the harmony you bring to each other's life, irrespective of the circumstances. The circular, solitaire motifs shine bright against platinum's natural white in these love bands. They symbolize how you inspire each other to shine together. The collection of Platinum Love Bands is available here: www.platinumdaysoflove.com

BMW G310R BS6 review, road test: Pocket-friendly, new features, but could be more refined

Mumbai, January 29 : Disappointment is what I will term my last stint with the BMW G310R. The motorcycle was not only pricey but it mechanically wasn't the happiest bike I had ridden. Must be the high expectations we usually have from all the bikes that come out from Bavaria. Cut to 2021 and it was time to see what the BS6 update has brought to the table. On the face of it (no puns intended), there are a few changes whereas mechanically, the bike has moved to a BS6 emissions update. Moreover, one now pays a lower acquisition cost for the motorcycle - Rs 2.45 lakh compared to the earlier Rs 2.99 lakh sticker price. Seems like a deal! Or maybe not. You will have to read the full review to understand. The new BMW G310R boasts a slightly different front as compared to the older one. Now you get a youthful-looking headlight design complete with LED lights as well as a DRL. Both, the clutch as well as brake, levers are now adjustable for four positions. A new paint scheme also makes its way whereas other lights like the blinkers and tail lamps too are LED. The exhaust pretty much looks like the one on the TVS Apache RR310. While the bike might look smaller in the images, it actually feels big in the flesh. The LCD instrument console is the same as before and sadly doesn't come with

turn-by-turn navigation. This is something I would have wanted BMW to change as the entire fascia seems quite old. There is a plethora of information available, no doubt but it lacks the panache one expects from BMW. The mirrors too are a bit rigid and do not have much adjustment to them. They offer a good vision though. The 313cc, DOHC, liquid-cooled engine retains the power as well as torque outputs of 34hp and 28Nm. The gearbox is a 6-speed unit, complete with a slipper clutch arrangement. This engine gets an automatic idle boost and the motor is gruff at start-up. It however quickly reaches a steady idle rpm and thereon sounds a bit refined. On the move, the engine is refined enough and way better than the BS4 model. BMW engineers, on the first impression, seem to have worked their magic. However, when the revs rise, say to about 5,000rpm, vibrations do creep in from the handlebars and more noticeably from the seat. They aren't alarming enough if you've had the chance to ride the BS4 model. Unlike the previous engine that will stall without any warning, this one never died on me. It has a good bottom and mid-range to it. This helps negotiate traffic in a higher gear, something the BS4 unit absolutely loathed.

Fed remains in crisis-fighting mode as recovery appears to moderate

New Delhi, January 29 : The statement's focus on the possible moderation in the recovery puts further weight on the Fed's pledge to keep US monetary policy. The Federal Reserve on Wednesday left its key overnight interest rate near zero and made no change to its monthly bond purchases, pledging again to keep those economic pillars in place until there is a full rebound from the pandemic-triggered recession. That hasn't happened, and US central bank policymakers flagged a potential slowing in the pace of the economic recovery in a statement released after the end of their latest two-day meeting. "The pace of the recovery in economic activity and employment has moderated in recent months, with weakness concentrated in the sectors most adversely affected by the pandemic," the Fed's policy-setting committee said in the statement. "The ongoing public health crisis continues to weigh on economic activity, employment, and inflation, and poses considerable risks to the economic outlook." The Fed's decision to leave its benchmark overnight interest rate in a target range of 0 to 0.25% and to keep buying at least \$80 billion of Treasury bonds and \$40 billion of mortgage-backed securities each month was unanimous. Policymakers' focus on the possible moderation in the US recovery puts further weight on the Fed's pledge to keep monetary policy in an "accommodative" stance for what may be months or even years to come. Though the ongoing coronavirus vaccination program may help the economy reopen and rebound more fully later this year, for now Fed officials feel it remains in a deep hole, with high levels of joblessness, ailing small businesses, and a recent surge in COVID-19 infections all requiring a crisis-level response by the central bank. Fed Chair Jerome Powell, in a news conference after the release of the statement, emphasized that

the central bank plans no changes to monetary policy until it is clear the economy is showing sustained improvement. He also declined to comment on the share price of video game retailer GameStop Corp, which has surged in recent days as the result of a battle between retail investors and professional investors shorting the stock. The Fed chief stressed that the central bank prefers to use macroprudential tools, including stress tests and liquidity levels, to address financial stability risks, and said he did not want to comment on daily market moves or the price of any one stock. We don't really think we'd be successful in every case in picking the exact right time to intervene in markets," Powell said. "We monitor financial conditions very broadly, and while we don't have jurisdiction ... over many areas in the nonbank sector, other agencies do." The United States lost jobs in December, and many indicators of hiring and spending have stalled since the surge in coronavirus infections began in the fall. The Fed said it would leave its bond-buying program untouched until there has been "substantial further progress" towards recovery and would keep the federal funds rate near zero until inflation hits its 2% target and is expected to stay there. Powell noted that the fate of the economy was tied to the success of the US vaccination program. "There's nothing more important to the economy now than people getting vaccinated," he said, adding that the weakest parts of the economy are sectors where people need to work near one another. Powell told reporters he had received the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine and expected to receive the second dose soon. US stocks fell further after the release of the Fed statement and Powell's comments, with the benchmark S&P 500 index down nearly 3% and on track for its biggest daily drop in three months.

Canara Bank Q3 net down 9% to Rs 696 cr due to higher provisioning



Mumbai, January 29 : Public sector Canara Bank on Wednesday reported a 9 per cent drop in its third quarter net profit to Rs 696 crore, taken together with financials of Syndicate Bank that merged last April, mainly due to rise in provisioning. Gross non-performing assets (NPA) on a consolidated basis dropped 236 basis points to stand at 7.46 per cent at the end of December 31 2020. Net NPA fell 298 basis points to 2.64 per cent. One basis point is 0.01

per cent. Provisioning jumped 61.25 per cent to Rs 4,686 crore for the merged entity even as most of the provisions were for the 'others' category. Provisioning for bad debts increased from Rs 2,488 crore in the year ago third quarter to Rs 2,657 crore in the latest third quarter, the bank's presentation filed with the exchanges showed. The provision coverage ratio was as high as 84.9 per cent at the end of the third quarter. Operating profit rose 46.65 per cent year on year to Rs 5,382 crore. Net interest income, excluding Rs 5,413 crore in interest reversal of deemed NPA, stood at Rs 6081 crore, rising 14.58 per cent on a year on year basis. Net interest margin, a key profitability parameter, fell from 2.82 per cent in the September quarter to 2.80 per cent in the December quarter. Shares of the bank fell 1.05 per cent to trade at Rs 132.20 a piece at 2.15 pm on the BSE. Sensex was down 1.85 per cent to 47,450 points.

Gulf Oil enters EV market: Invests in UK's Indra charging solutions tech company

London, January 29 : Gulf Oil International Ltd has announced its foray into the electric vehicle market, with an investment in Indra Renewable Technologies Ltd, a charging technology company based out of the UK. Gulf, part of the Hinduja Group, has entered an agreement to co-invest in the company alongside the Clean Growth Fund (CGF). Indra is a fast-growing EV and energy technology company developing charging and energy storage solutions for home and commercial use. Founded in 2013, Indra manufactures a range of energy products, including its EV Smart Charger and a bi-directional 'Vehicle to Grid' (V2G) charger designed for both residential and light commercial use. Traditionally known as a downstream oil company, Gulf is now actively moving into the e-mobility/electric vehicles sector, recognising the rapidly changing landscape of the automotive and energy industry and the need to supply cleaner forms of energy. CGF and Gulf will each become shareholders in Indra, alongside OVO Group, which had provided seed capital and technical support to Indra via Kaluza, its technology business. "Indra is all about technology and using it to support the journey to Net Zero. Thanks to the early investment by OVO Group, and now with the investment from the Clean Growth Fund and Gulf, we are in a very strong position to take full advantage of the growing EV market and the emergence of V2G solutions in the UK and globally," Mike Schooling, Indra's founder and Chief Technology Officer said. "At Gulf, we believe fast, convenient and smart charging is critical to support consumer adoption of EVs."

'Aas paas' tourism helping hotel business regain momentum but still a long way from pre-covid status: Nakul Anand



Kolkata, January, 29 : "The Hotel business in India is regaining momentum but still a long way from where we left in 2019. The hotel industry in the country has really stood up well by improvising and creating new packages. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization this has been the worst International crisis that tourism has faced since records were ever kept that goes back to the 1950s. Hotel and tourism was the first industry to be affected by corona and would perhaps be the last to recover," said Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited, at a session of Ek Mulakat Vishesh organized by Prabha Khaitan Foundation of Kolkata and presented by Shree Cement. Mr Anand heads the hospitality, travel and tourism businesses of ITC and has pioneered the concept of "Responsible Luxury" or sustainable excellence in the hotel industry. He was in conversation with Ms Ina Puri, member of Ehsaas Women of Gurugram, at an online session which was in-

troduced by Ms Apra Kuchhal of Ehsaas Women of Jaipur. "We are not seeing much revival on business travel but what we are certainly seeing a revival in what I call 'revenge travel' that is people who have been under lockdown are now wanting to visit hotels for a change with first preference for motorable distances which I call 'aas paas' tourism and we are seeing a lot of this," said Mr Anand who has been recognized as the "Corporate Hotelier of the World 2019" by Hotels USA magazine. Mr Anand is also a recipient of the "Green Hotelier" award instituted by International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA) - an United Nations recognized industry body. "In the service industry we have something called the moment of truth every time you interact with a guest. These moments of truth have become moments of trust, and trust is the new currency. What gives this trust is cleanliness, hygiene, safety, sanitisation. So what we have to do now is what I call create cleanli-

ness theatres. What used to be done at night can now be done during the day in the presence of guests so that they can see the manner in which food is to be served. We had to give them visible cues to win their trust and reinvent service like we had never done before. So I think after hoteliering was discovered this is the first time such creativity and service designs have been done," said Anand who joined ITC in 1978 - the second generation in his family to do so. Nakul Anand, who says "If you don't see green, you'll see red", has initiated various sustainable initiatives like 'Responsible Luxury' and 'Food Sherpa' programme under which ITC chefs scour their destinations for street or local food and serve them in five-star ambience as part of their Local Love menu. Mr Anand believes sustainable practices must be embedded in our business philosophy. Commenting on ITC Hotels' prestigious art collection, Anand said, "One of the things we have never taken our eyes off is our credo that was formed in 1975 when the hotels division came what was that 'nobody gives you India like we do. We give you India in every form, whether it is in the form of cuisine, in the form of culture, in the form of

heritage. We have never looked back. Namaste was our logo and it continues to remain so. We have created Indian cuisines which were unknown. We never get into a new cuisine without research. We researched dum pukht, bukhara, these were hidden foods that were taken out; we got into Vedic gastronomy and got the Royal Vega in Kolkata. Similarly art was an important part of our heritage which brings alive the facets of the destination and gives a distinct identity to the hotel where it is located." "Many of the modern concerns that covid has thrown up actually goes back to what India had five thousand years ago. Today we talk of immunity-boosting food as health is the new wealth. The opportunity Indian food offers into the concerns of tomorrow is phenomenal. Someone rightly said 'food should be your medicine otherwise medicine will be your food' and in India truly food has been our medicine and we have enjoyed it by the season what we eat - local, nature and sustainable. I think there is a great future for Indian food," he said. The ace hotelier, however, feels that in the hustle and bustle of life there is nothing like being home and a nice home meal or soul food or mama's food - simple chana, kadi, aloo methi etc.

Contd. From Page 1

Sonowal dedicates multi surgery

who came to Assam and established his kingdom which ruled the state for nearly 600 years. He also asked the hospital authority to install a life sized statue of Siu Ka Pha at the entrance to the hospital. Giving a snapshot of different developments in health sector, Sonowal said during the tenure of the present State government besides eight new medical colleges, 18 cancer hospitals, AIIMS in Guwahati and record number of nursing institutes have been set up for making health care services and health education accessible and affordable to the people of Assam. He also thanked ONGC for its benevolent services and requested it to carry forward its welfare measures for the benefit of all in the state. Chief Minister on the occasion also took stock of the construction work of extended part of the hospital buildings. Chief Executive Officer Siu Ka Pha Hospital Dr. Prakash Kolnoorkar gave the welcome address in the programme which was also attended among others by MP Topon Kumar Gogoi, MLA Kushal Duori, Executive Director ONGC Puneet Suri, and a host of others.

President Ram Nath Kovind

for the same. Ambikagiri Raichoudhury was the founder of "Oxom Xongrikhiini Xobhaa" (Assam Preservation Council) and "Oxom Jaatiyo Mohaaxobhaa" (Assam National Congress). Prominent works of Ambikagiri Raichoudhury include "Tumi", "Kaabyo", "Aahuti", "Joydroth Bodh", "Binaa", "Onubhuti", "Bondoo Ki Sondere", and "Bedonaar Ulkaa". Ambikagiri Raichoudhury was also known as "Assam Kesari" (The lion of Assam) because of his firebrand nationalist character. Emphasising that Modi government brought an inclusive growth in all sectors, Kovind also highlighted Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.He said that this is not just confined to manufacturing in India, but is also a campaign aimed at elevating the standard of living of every Indian as well as boosting the self-confidence of the country. "Our goal of an Atmanirbhar Bharat will be further strengthened by self-reliance in agriculture. With this idea, the Government has, over the last 6 years, attempted to bring positive transformation in the 'Seed to Market' system so that Indian agriculture is modernized and also sees growth. In pursuance of these efforts, my Government decided to implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee report and increased the MSP to at least 1.5 times of the cost of production. Today my Government is not only purchasing record quantities at the MSP, but is also increasing the number of procurement centres," said Kovind.

FM Sitharaman tables Economic

Responsibility and Budget Management Act to increase the deficit target by 0.5% for FY20 and FY21 each.The roadmap presented at the time extended the target of reining in the deficit at 3% to FY24 while projecting the deficit at 3.3% and 3.1% in FY22 and FY23, respectively.However, missing deficit numbers will not be a worry for the government as the main focus is to revive growth in the pandemic-hit economy. The main focus of the government will be to create jobs for the millions who lost their livelihood due to the Covid-induced lockdown.

New budget to be continuation

Union Budget for FY 2020-21 was over ₹30 lakh crore.Modi mentioned that this session is the first of new decade and it is very important from the prospect of bright future of the country. "The coming decade is vital for India's progress. We have to remember the vision and dreams of the greats who fought for our nation's freedom. Let there be detailed debate and discussions on the Floor of Parliament," he said.

NFR cancelled 6 special

1, 2021 to February 28, 2021. The service of Train No. 05910 Lalgah Junction–Dibrugarh Passenger Special leaving daily from Lalgah Junction will remain cancelled with effect from February 4, 2021 to March 3, 2021. Northeast Frontier Railway continues cancellation of 6 special passenger trains' operations due to fog 1 The service of Train No. 05933 New Tinsukia – Amritsar Passenger Special leaving weekly from New Tinsukia will remain cancelled on February 2, February 9, February 16 and February 23, 2021. The service of Train No. 05934 Amritsar– New Tinsukia Passenger Special leaving weekly from Amritsar will remain cancelled on February 5, February 12, February 19 and February 26, 2021. The service of Train No. 05483 Alipurduar Junction – Delhi Passenger Special leaving daily from Alipurduar Junction will remain cancelled with effect from February 1, 2021 to February 28, 2021. The service of Train No. 05484 Delhi – Alipurduar Junction Passenger Special leaving daily from Delhi will remain cancelled with effect from February 3, 2021 to March 2, 2021.

Court rejects Pinjra Tod activist

in a northeast Delhi riots case. Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat, in his order passed on Thursday, said the allegations against Kalita prima facie seem to be true. Kalita was arrested in the case for allegedly being part of a premeditated conspiracy behind the riots. Communal violence broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24 last year after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured. Pinjra Tod (Break the Cage) was founded in 2015 with an aim to make hostels and paying-guest accommodations less restrictive for women students. A court has rejected the bail plea of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student and Pinjra Tod member Devangana Kalita, booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in a northeast Delhi riots case. Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat, in his order passed on Thursday, said the allegations against Kalita prima facie seem to be true. Kalita was arrested in the case for allegedly being part of a premeditated conspiracy behind the riots. Communal violence broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24 last year after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured. Pinjra Tod (Break the Cage) was founded in 2015 with an aim to make hostels and paying-guest accommodations less restrictive for women students. The Karkardooma court in Delhi has rejected the bail plea of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student and Pinjra Tod member Devangana Kalita on Friday booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in a Northeast Delhi riots case. Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat in his order said that the allegations against Kalita prima facie seem to be true. The activist was arrested in the case for allegedly being a part of a premeditated conspiracy behind the riots. Communal violence broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24 last year after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

United Nations chief Antonio

and Immunisation) COVAX facility. "There is interest in many countries to access vaccine from India. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement that India sees international cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. We have played the role of the first responder in the neighbourhood," Srivastava said. "From January 20, 2021 onwards, we have gifted over 55 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccines to our neighbouring countries and in the extended neighbourhood-- 1.5 lakh to Bhutan, 1 lakh to Maldives, Mauritius and Bahrain, 10 lakhs to Nepal, 20 lakhs to Bangladesh, 15 lakhs to Myanmar, 50,000 to Seychelles, 5 lakh to Sri Lanka. In the coming days, We plan to gift further quantity to Oman that is of 1 lakh doses, 5 lakh doses to CARICOM countries, 2 lakh to Nicaragua, 2 lakh doses to the Pacific island state," he added. "On a commercial level, the export has taken place for Brazil Morocco and Bangladesh. Further supplies to countries on commercial bases are likely to take place to Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Canada Mongolia and other countries. We plan to supply 1 crore or 10 million vaccine doses to Africa and 10 lakh to United Nations health workers under GAVI," he said.

Two Activists Arrested At Assam

chapter of All India Kisan Sabha. The activists' families said they were being targeted for taking part in the farmers' protests that descended into chaos after progressing peacefully for months. Guwahati police commissioner told NDTV, "On January 27, we received a complaint from the Assam government's medical team at the Guwahati airport about a few persons creating chaos on being asked to take the mandatory covid test." The police have registered a case and arrested two of them on the basis of a complaint by the health officials on duty, who alleged the accused tried to stop them from performing their official duty, he added. They will be produced in a local court today, police sources added on Friday.

Public Relations officer

was organised by Global Council for Professional Education Mission in association with Global Achievers Council. Earlier, Shri Bhattacharyya got the National Achievement Award in 2017 at New Delhi as Best Public Relation Officer in India. He has been honoured and awarded Railways many times by Government and many Public Organisations in addition to Indian Railways for his outstanding Public Relations and Journalism activities in different fields. During the COVID-19 pandemic period, Bhattacharyya has been playing the excellent role through Print and Electronic Media informing the public about important day to day war footing activities of Railways like running of 24x7 good services, Shramik Specials and Special train services.

Farmers draw hard line, reject Centre's offer to stay farm laws

New Delhi, Jan 29 : Drawing the hard line to press for the repeal of the new agriculture laws, farmer unions Thursday rejected the Centre's offer to keep the laws in abeyance for 18 months and form a joint committee to address grievances. The unions, scheduled to return to the talks table Friday, were virtually split down the middle at a meeting to discuss the Centre's offer. Sources told The Indian Express that of the 32 unions from Punjab, more than a dozen were in favour of accepting the offer, but the majority vote carried the resolution to reject the offer. A statement on behalf of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the umbrella body of organisations spearheading the protest, released by Darshan Pal of Krantikari Kisan Union, stated: "In a full general body meeting of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha today, the proposal put forth by the Government yesterday was rejected. A full repeal of three central farm acts and enacting a legislation for remunerative MSP for all farmers were reiterated as the pending demands of the movement." The Morcha, the statement said, "pays homage to the 143 farmers who have been martyred in this movement so far... Their sacrifice will not go in vain and we will not go back without the repealing of these farm laws". It referred to a meeting with Delhi Police officers earlier in the day and said while police had requested the farmers not to conduct a tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day, they had reiterated that they intend to go ahead with their plan of a parade on the Outer Ring Road of Delhi. Maintaining that their protest was becoming a "people's movement... nationwide", the Morcha said farmers were uniting in Karnataka, many parts of Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur and Rampur in Uttarakhand. "Farmers, labourers and common people under the leadership of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan are reaching Shahjahanpur border. Protests against neo-liberal policies are being conducted through puppets shows and songs," it said. Ahead of the meeting of the Morcha, the Kisan Ekta Morcha, in a Twitter post, had said "jis kaam ke liye aaye the, usko poora kiye bina wapas nahi jayenge (we will not go back till we complete the work for which we had come)". Rakesh Tikait, president of BKU (Tikait) and one of the spokespersons for the Morcha, said: "We came here to get the laws repealed. After long deliberations, we came to this conclusion that we will not return till the laws are repealed. We can stay here for six more months, it hardly matters to us. People have trust issues with the government. What if they implement these laws again after a stay for a short period? We, therefore, decided to reject the proposals of the government." "On MSP, we will tell them to make an Act to assure minimum support price for the produce of farmers. Regarding the Republic Day tractor parade, we will be meeting Delhi Police again on Friday, though they have denied us permission for the parade on Outer Ring Road," he said. Jagmohan Singh Patiala, general secretary of BKU (Dakaunda), said: "We had a meeting of 32 farmer unions of Punjab in which we decided to reject the government proposal to stay these laws for one-and-a-half years. A similar consensus was reached at the meeting of the SKM as well in the evening. We came for the repeal of the farm laws and will not settle for anything less." Buta Singh Burjgill, president of BKU (Dakaunda), said: "We discussed many aspects. What if the government is asked to increase the duration of the stay on these laws from one-and-a-half years to a minimum 4 years, so that they cannot implement them during this term? What if this government returns to power again? These laws will be hanging like a sword... It will not be so easy to start another farmer movement such as this soon, so nothing less than repeal of these laws is acceptable to us." At the farmers' protest Singhu border, New Delhi, on January 19, 2021. (Express Photo: Abhinav Saha) Leaders of unions said their focus now is on the tractor parade planned for January 26. Earlier in the day, Delhi Police asked farmer leaders to reconsider the proposed route of the tractor parade. Police suggested that the tractor parade be held at the protest sites at Singhu or Tikri or on the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways. Farmer unions said they will not go towards Rajpath, the venue of the Republic Day parade, and will restrict themselves to the Outer Ring Road. They said they will hold the rally on a 16-17 km stretch on the Outer Ring Road. The unions are scheduled to meet the Centre again Friday. Several factors appeared to have forced the government to make the offer to put the laws on hold and end the protests. Sources pointed to the Supreme Court's move to stay the implementation of the farm laws for the time being, the signal from the RSS for an early resolution — RSS Sarkaryawah Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi', in an interview to The Indian Express, called for "sensitivity" in dealing with the farmer agitation and said a "middle ground must be found and both sides must work to find a solution" — and the realisation within the ruling party not to give issues that could unite the Opposition during the Budget session. Moreover, several BJP party leaders have said that there could have been more deliberations on the farm Bills or these could have been sent to a House panel once objections were raised since that would have weakened the opposition to the laws. The Supreme Court's stand that Delhi Police should decide on the entry of protesting farmers into Delhi on Republic Day was also a factor that prompted a rethink. But there are others in the party who think that a climbdown is a bad precedent. "Once you take a U-turn on a major reform, there will always be pressure against every move. If you give up once, you will be forced to do so on other issues as well," a party leader said.

Maharashtra extends lockdown till February 28

MUMBAI, Jan 29 : The Maharashtra government on Friday (January 29) extended the COVID lockdown in the state till February 28. Maharashtra chief secretary Sanjay Kumar issued the notification extending the lockdown by a month. "Activities already allowed and permitted from time to time shall be continued and all earlier orders shall be aligned with this order and shall remain in force up to February 28," read the statement released by the government. The Maharashtra government had earlier extended the ongoing lockdown imposed in view of the Covid-19 pandemic till January 31. The state recorded 3,537 new cases, pushing the count to 1,928,603, while the toll reached 49,463 with 70 new casualties. As of January 27, 57 United Kingdom (UK) returnees tested positive for Covid-19, however, it is yet to be confirmed if any of them carry the new, more transmissible strain of COVID-19. The state government is yet to allow schools and colleges to reopen, while the ban on social, religious and political congregations continues with the extension.

DSU and others organisation condemn the recent brutal killing at Dhansiri



Diphu, January 29 : Dimasa Civil Society along with several social and student organisations of Karbi Anglong condemned the recent brutal killing of two innocent people by unknown miscreants at Khamadisha village under Dhansiri Out Post. The Civil Society urges the Government to take the matter for fast track judiciary and the culprit should be punished as per law of the land. They also request to extend financial help to the families of three victims. "We condemn the brutal killing of innocent people and urge the government to take the matter on fast track judicial enquiry. Whoever the culprit must be punished as per law of the land," said Dhiraj Difusa, President, Dimasa Student Union, Karbi Anglong Unit at a press conference held at Diamsa Club, Diphu today. Mention can be made that, on 27th January 2021, the celebration of Bisu Dima- Annual Harvest Festival of Dimasa Community was going on at Khamadisha village under Dhansiri Police Out Post. But about 11 PM Late Amit Nunisa (46) (former DHD leader) and Alota Maibangsa (46) lay down their lives due to indiscriminate firing by some unknown miscreants at the ongoing Bisu Dima festival celebration. In the press conference, Satya Bsat Kemprai, Secretary, Dimasa Sahitya Sabha; Thansing Timung, General Secretary, Karbi Students Association; Thougang Thouthang, President, Kuki National Assembly, Amrit Paul, President, Bengali Student and Youth Federation and Rajesh Phonglosa, Sorkari Gaon Bura, Dilaji Mithiphang were also attended.

President's Police Medal Awardee Felicitated : New Two Wheeler Launched

Golaghat, Jan 29 : Today a special program was organized by Maa Kamakhya Motors, authorised dealer of Vespa Aprilia Company located at GF Road in Golaghat. In the program the Officer in Charge of Golaghat Police Station Inspector Dipak Bora who had received President's Police Medal for his meritorious service was felicitated. The proprietor of Maa Kamakhya Motors Dipu Sharma felicitated the police officer with a Phulam Gamocha, a Japi and a felicitation letter. In the program the newly launched Aprilia SRX 160 scooter of Vespa Aprilia company was officially launched in Golaghat by OC Dipak Bora. The brave cop in his speech appreciated the people of Golaghat for their co-operation with the police. Dipu Sharma, Mina Sharma and all the staff of Maa Kamakhya Motors along with several other distinguished guests were present in the program.

Scrappage policy approved, to come into effect from April 2022

New Delhi, Jan 29 : Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had, in September last year, said the scrappage policy was one of the top priorities. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had, in September last year, said the scrappage policy was one of the top priorities. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), in its vehicle scrappage policy approved on January 25, confirmed the scrapping of government vehicles older than 15 years, reported CNBC TV18. The policy will come into effect from April 1, 2022. From the aforementioned date, vehicles used by the government departments would be put off service if they are older than 15 years. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had, in September last year, said the scrappage policy was one of the top priorities. The move is expected to reduce air pollution while simultaneously spurring demand in the automobile sector. Sources to CNBC-TV18 | #ScrappingPolicy would apply to central and state govt vehicles & green tax proposal to apply to all vehicles pic.twitter.com/1AWayL7hiN Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in August 2019 said a scrappage policy is in the works, when the slowdown began in the auto industry in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 26, 2019, the government had proposed amendments to motor vehicle rules to allow the scrapping of vehicles older than 15 years in a bid to spur the adoption of electrical vehicles. In July last year, the National Green Tribunal rapped the MoRTH for the delay in issuing guidelines on the scrapping of vehicles. A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel had said a proper mechanism to set up authorised recycling centres compliant with environmental norms was an urgent need in view of a large number of 'End of Life Vehicles' (ELV). The draft scrappage policy, whose details were yet to be shared in public domain by MoRTH, was also expected to offer incentive to motorists who decide to scrap their old vehicles. The incentives were expected to be a waiver of the registration fee and a discount on the road tax. The old vehicles would be used in recycling clusters - thereby, cutting the cost of raw materials. The scrappage policy is expected to boost demand for new vehicles in a COVID-hit economy. It is considered as crucial for the revival of India's auto sector, which was struggling since a year before the onset of pandemic. Apart from the above incentives, a number of disincentives for those retaining old vehicles were also reportedly discussed. The latter, which includes higher fee for fitness certificates of 15-year-old personal vehicles, was announced through the Green Tax policy.

Chirang, Udalguri, Baksa To Get New Govt Model Colleges

Guwahati, Jan 29 : Assam Education, Health, and Finance Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today laid the foundation stone of the Government Model College to be set up at Koila Moila in Chirang District under the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Talking to media persons, Dr. Sarma said, "Earlier there was a government college at Kokrajhar. Now the government has decided to set up three government model colleges simultaneously in Udalguri, Baksa and Chirang districts. From tomorrow, the construction work of Model College at Koila Moila will begin. And this evening, we will also start the work for a government college at Tamulpur. In the next two days, we will also start the construction work of setting up a government college in Udalguri." Sarma stated that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) have kept their promises made in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections. The model college at Koila Moila will be constructed with a cost of Rs. 14.07 crore. Along with minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, BTC chief executive member (CEM) Pramod Boro also attended the foundation laying ceremony. Keeping the promise made in recently-concluded Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, Assam, health, finance and education minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday laid the foundation stone of a Government Model College at Kumarikata, Tamulpur in Baksa district. Sarma laid the foundation stone of the college in the presence of minister Bhabesh Kalita, BTC chief executive member (CEM) Pramod Boro and former Rajya Sabha MP Biswajit Daimary. Earlier in the day, Dr. Sarma laid foundation stone of another Government Model College at Koila Moila in Chirang district.

Premier League: 10 things to look out for this weekend

Rory Burns back for England and prepared for life in the bubble

London, January 29 : Arsenal hope Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang can face Manchester United, although the priority is his mother's recovery from the illness that led him to miss the two games against Southampton. His teammates dedicated their victory on Tuesday night to him and, inadvertently, his absencetold something interesting. There have been plenty of questions about Arsenal's capacity to find goals and take points while missing their captain, whose form has picked up in recent weeks after a bleak run, but at St Mary's they exuded menace and managed three goals through different scorers. The ascent of Emile Smith Rowe, recovery of Thomas Partey and continued excellence of Bukayo Saka mean they look a far smoother, more cohesive attacking unit than at any time in the past year and it may lessen the burden upon the prolific - but put upon - Aubameyang. His presence would be a welcome boost in another fixture that tests the strength of Arsenal's recent revival, but they are beginning to show they can tackle big assignments with or without him. The visit of Sheffield United to the Etihad Stadium on Saturday feelspivotal in the title race, after the Blades' shock win at Old Trafford put Manchester City in the driving seat. City can move four points clear of Manchester United before their tea-time game at Arsenal kicks off, capping a dramatic turnaroundsince these teams met at Bramall Lane on Halloween, when Kyle Walker's winner helped lift City into the top half. Rúben Dias' contribution has been immense, but Pep Guardiola has also squeezed more out of his squad. Players who had drifted from the first-team picture - John Stones, Ilkay Gundogan and Joao Cancelo - have become vital cogs. Cancelo joined in August 2019 but struggled to displace Walker from his preferred right-back slot. While his versatility initially prevented him from holding down a first-team place, he is now an indispensable auxiliary man, drifting into midfield regularly and joining attacks down either flank. Against West Brom he

was arguably City's standout performer, setting up the first goal and scoring the second with a ruthless finish. Expect more of the same on Sunday. Quiz question: when did West Ham last sit above Liverpool in the league table withhalf of the season played, as they were before Jürgen Klopp's team's victory at Tottenham. Answer: 2016. It is certainly interesting that the Hammers are doing well and the Reds poorly, but let's not get overexcited. At the start of that year West Ham beat Liverpool 2-0 at home, and five



members of that starting XI (Cresswell, Ogbonna, Noble, Lanzini, Antonio) could feature again on Sunday. Liverpool meanwhile have as many members of that 2016 West Ham squad in their first-team setup at the moment as of their own (one each: Adrián and Firmino). David Moyes is currently getting plaudits for transforming his squad, while Liverpool are being criticised for an unwillingness to decisively alter theirs.Sam Allardyce has made little secret of his concern about West Brom's home form. How do you tighten up a side that has conceded 22 goals in its last five games at the Hawthorns? Perhaps by facing Fulham, whose shyness in front of goal is in danger of making their survival prospects almost as sketchy. Fulham could have smashed and grabbed their way to a late win at Brighton on Wednesday but had to settle for a drab point that keeps 17th place within sight. Theylook hard to beat but they have only scored four in their last nine games - three of them

coming, a touch perversely, against Liverpool, Spurs and Manchester United - and there is little sign of a proven internal solution unless Scott Parker finds a way to accommodate Aleksandar Mitrovic. West Brom seem the perfect opponents for a confidence boost but the stakes are likely to dictate another cagey affair. Another pasting for Allardyce's team would suggest their cause is almost impossible. After a two-game winning run was brought to a shuddering halt at Elland Road in December, Steve Bruce remarked

that for Newcastle, "getting to 20 points by Christmas would be an achievement". It was a laughably modest target, and one they failed to achieve. Almost six weeks on, they are stuck on 19 and getting slowly drawn into the relegation battle. Newcastle's chances of reaching that magic 20-point marker on Saturday appear slim; they haven't won at Goodison Park since 2011 and will take on an Everton team back in top-four contention. In recent weeks, Bruce's side have proved agreeable opponents, so this game represents a good chance for Dominic Calvert-Lewin to break his barren league run. After scoring 11 goals in his first 11 matches this season, the forward has failed to score in the Premier League since. He will be eager to rediscover that early-season form with England returning to competitive action in March. Willian José stands to make his full debut at Selhurst Park, after a cameo off the bench in Wednesday's goalless draw at Chelsea, and with Wolves on a run

of seven league matches without a win (though they have beaten Palace in the FA Cup in that time) and struggling to adapt to life without Raúl Jiménez, an instant impact would be appreciated. The two players are the same age and a similar build, Jiménez being six months older and a centimetre shorter, but other comparisons are not so even: the Mexican took 114 shots last season, placing him 12th in Europe's top five leagues (the top four in order: Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Robert Lewandowski, Mo Salah) while the previous season he was 16th, with 113 (the top four in order: Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Robert Lewandowski, Mo Salah). Jiménez is quite simply a prodigious taker of shots, a person never slow to buy a ticket, while in 2019-20 Willian José was joint 131st, with 58, and in 2018-19 he was joint 255th, with 48. Since the start of last season Jiménez has attempted 133 dribbles (José has attempted five), won 44 tackles (seven), attempted 1,272 passes (595). José is a fine player, but patience is likely to be required. Having led Paris Saint-Germain to the Champions League final, Thomas Tuchel knows a thing or two about finding the right balance in a team front-loaded with attacking talent; something his Chelsea predecessor, Frank Lampard, struggled with. Midway through the 2019-20 season, the German switched to a double-pivot system at PSG, two holding midfielders making room for a quartet of creative players ahead of them. Tuchel has already stated his intention to use the system at Chelsea to get the best out of N'Golo Kanté. "I think he is the strongest in the double-six, in the heart of the game," Tuchel said. "We can use his energy, his range, his ability to recover the ball." Kanté, who could return from a hamstring injury against Burnley, was pushed further forward by Maurizio Sarri to accommodate Jorginho, then returned to the base of a midfield three by Lampard. Neither manager found room for Kanté and Jorginho in holding midfield, but Tuchel may see things differently.

London, January 29 :

After missing the Sri Lanka series to be present for the birth of his first child, Rory Burns is quarantining in India, where England's first Test starts next Friday, and preparing to return to the biosecure bubble in which he struggled off and, at times, on the field. The opener is now armed with a few new tools to ensure he does not become overwhelmed by total immersion in cricket.After last summer, when his most impressive series on home soil - averaging 43.82 runs against West Indies - segued into his worst - averaging five against Pakistan - Burns admitted the bubble was "not something I personally enjoyed that much" and that he "found that you couldn't get away from cricket", something not helped by the players living at the ground, as they were at Manchester and Southampton.He starts 2021, helped in part by the arrival of his daughter, Cora, with a different focus. "We're not overlooking a cricket ground and that's a massive positive," he says from his hotel room, where his practice has been limited to shadow-batting in front of a mirror."I'll just be proactively doing things outside the game. It helps to keep me fresh and get the mind away from cricket, so I don't just sit there and stew about the game completely. I've started a short course in psychology and that's probably going to take up a bit of my time, to just write things down and get my headspace right away from the game. And I've had a break, sort of refreshment, and the new perspective that fatherhood brings."The psychology course is potentially a first step towards a future career for the 30-year-old. "It's always been an interest of mine," he says. "I'm just seeing whether I've got a real interest in it that's worth pursuing further, dipping my toe in to see if it's worth taking a degree and then going down that route."First he must refocus on cricket, having not had any first-class action since September. England are on a run of



five successive away Test victories, all of which have been without Burns, who missed the end of the tour in South Africa last winter after damaging ligaments in a training-ground football kickabout and the start of this winter's travels on paternity leave."It's been a bit of a stop-start year, but it's been a stop-start year for everyone," Burns says. "Covid probably lent itself to that as well. There are extenuating factors."I'm jumping to get back into work and back into business. I can't wait to get going. I've got a bat out and I'm shadow-batting in the mirror behind me. I've not gone the full Steve Smith and whited up yet, but it's coming down all right so hopefully that translates."In Burns's absence, Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley opened the batting in Sri Lanka, the former, after an outstanding 2020, averaging 8.75 in the two Tests and reaching double figures once, while Sibley admitted he "had a bit of a stinker in the series" before scoring a crucial if slightly fortunate unbeaten 56 to end it on a high."It's a strange feeling," says Burns of his decision to step away from the side, "but if you're going to miss it for anything the birth of your first child is probably one thing that you would do it for. It's double-edged but I wouldn't have changed my decision at any stage."I got to see something pretty impressive from my wife, so I was happy about that. It's a pretty momentous occasion, isn't it? I just feel very privileged that I've been able to have a child. She makes me emotional just to look at her. The fact I've got a little girl to play my cricket for now, as well as everything else, is a nice little perspective change."

Townend faces tricky Cheltenham choices after Colreevy and Allaho wins

London, January 29 : Paul Townend seems likely to have two more tricky decisions to make before the Cheltenham Festival in seven weeks' time after Colreevy and Allaho completed a Grade Two double for Willie Mullins at Thurles on Wednesday. Both horses started at odds-on, both were comfortable winners at the line and both then joined or replaced a stable companion at the top of the betting for a Grade One at the Festival.Colreevy is the new 9-2 favourite for the first running of the Mares' Chase on 19 March, replacing Benie Des Dieux (5-1), after winning a mares' novice chase by 12 lengths in little more than a canter. The third-favourite for the same race, is another Mullins-trained runner in Elimay, who ran Allaho to three lengths half an hour later and briefly looked a significant danger to the 10-11 favourite.Talking Horses: Dettori named world's best jockey for third straight yearAllaho joined Min, last year's Ryanair Chase winner, as 6-1 joint-favourite for this season's renewal after finally adding another win over fences to his success in

a beginners' event in January 2020.Min was one of the five winners for Townend at last year's Festival when he edged out the now-retired Barry Geraghty and take the prize for the meeting's top rider for the first time. It would be no surprise to see Townend end up aboard Allaho, however, as the seven-year-old should still be open to plenty of improvement."I think he was idling in front all the time," Mullins said, "and that [two-and-a-half miles] might be more his trip. I was a little worried when Elimay got to him, but when he saw her, he picked up and went away again like a decent horse."Allaho is a huge horse and I thought he was a three-miler, but maybe he is better off coming back to two-four or two-five. He is making progress and he will improve into the spring, which is the time of year you want to improve in. I'm looking forward to his next run and he'll probably go straight to Cheltenham." Elimay ran a fantastic race as well, and she will go for the Opera Hat Chase [at Naas] next and maybe on to the mares' chase in Cheltenham after that."

Firmino and Mané rip Tottenham apart to reignite Liverpool's title defence

David Hytner, January 29 : Jürgen Klopp had promised that his Liverpool team were "on fire to strike back" after their five-game winless streak in the Premier League, which had yielded only three points and one goal. On a night when Sadio Mané provided the spark, the champions delivered on the promise to jump back up into fourth place.The decisive details have eluded them in recent weeks but not here. Mané was central to Liverpool's first and second goals - scored by Roberto Firmino and Trent Alexander-Arnold - and, after Pierre-Emile Højbjerg had raised the prospect of an unlikely Tottenham comeback, Mané got the third himself. It was a night when he could have had three or four.The victory ensured that Liverpool did not lose further ground to the leaders, Manchester



City, and advertised a return to their quick and incisive best but for Spurs a woeful defensive performance was compounded by the loss of their attacking talisman, Harry Kane, to injury. Kane was caught early on by a slide tackle from Thiago Alcântara - he got his right foot stuck under the Liverpool midfielder's side and appeared to roll it - while he would land awkwardly on the other ankle in the 34th minute. On both occasions, he played on after treatment but the alarm bells rang for Spurs when he did not reappear for the second half.José Mourinho tried both three and four at the back, although neither system could legislate for the individual errors that played a part in each Liverpool goal. The first followed a mix-up between Hugo Lloris and Eric Dier while the second came after a weak parry by the goalkeeper. The third was the worst of the lot.Mourinho had preferred Joe Rodon to Toby Alderweireld, having seen the value in the 23-year-old's greater pace, but he got his bearings and body shape all wrong when attempting to deal with an Alexander-Arnold cross. He failed to clear and Mané punished him

with an instinctive half-volley. The strange thing was that prior to this game, Spurs had conceded only five league goals in open play all season.Klopp had once again been unable to name a recognised central defensive partnership. With Fabinho out with a muscle problem, he started with the fit again Jordan Henderson - another midfielder doing a job out of position - alongside Joël Matip, who was back from injury. Matip would last only until half-time, at which point Klopp introduced Nat Phillips. The frustration for Spurs was that they barely laid a glove on Liverpool in the second half save for Højbjerg's blockbuster, his first goal for the club. Phillips, who looks a little raw, was not tested.The tone was set in the second minute when Spurs were cut apart too easily and Mané was clean through on Lloris's goal. On this occasion, the finish was sliced and wasteful.Spurs thought they had the lead moments later when Kane sent Son Heung-min in on goal and he finished past Alisson, who was slow to get down. The move was sparked by Tanguy Ndombele racing away from Thiago and finding Son but, to Spurs's horror, VAR would spot an

offside against the South Korean at the point before he laid off to Kane.It was fast and exciting throughout the first half, the technical quality high, the incidents plentiful. Ndombele showcased a lovely touch and his trademark spin and burst move, although his influence would fade.It was interesting to see Klopp start Thiago as one of his No 8s, rather than in front of the back four. That role went to Gini Wijnaldum. Thiago's work off the ball did not match his stuff with it.Spurs wanted to break quickly and Steven Bergwijn played in Son on 21 minutes. He was denied by Alisson. But it was Liverpool who looked the more threatening, with Mané darting into dangerous areas time and again. He extended Lloris after a Mohamed Salah flick, although he had looked offside earlier in the buildup, while he was denied by a last-ditch Rodon challenge and another Lloris save.The breakthrough came in first-half stoppage-time and it followed Mané getting in around the back on to a Henderson pass and crossing low. Dier felt Lloris coming for the ball and hesitated and so then did the goalkeeper. Firmino gobbled up the tap-in.Mourinho switched from 3-4-3 to 4-2-3-1 at the interval but his team did not start the second half well. Salah had already fired high when Lloris patted a tame Mané shot into Alexander-Arnold's path and he ripped a drive into the bottom corner.Spurs flickered when Højbjerg fizzed home from outside the area but it was all Liverpool thereafter. They thought they had the third when Salah's shot deflected past Lloris only for VAR to rule on a Firmino handball in the buildup. Mané was not in the mood to be denied.

'Both ankles getting big': Mourinho says Kane could be out for 'a few weeks'



London, January 29 : José Mourinho said that Harry Kane could be out for "a few weeks" after the striker gave England a scare by injuring both of his ankles on a night when Liverpool returned to winning ways with a 3-1 victory over Tottenham.Kane suffered a blow to his right ankle after an early tackle from Liverpool's Thiago Alcântara and took a blow to his left ankle following a challenge from Jordan Henderson. The England captain, who has a history of

ankle injuries, went off at half-time and the update from Mourinho was far from positive."The second injury was worse than the first one," the Spurs manager said. "For Harry to leave a game when the team is losing is not a nothing injury. There are some players you can't replace. Both ankles getting big."Kane's latest lay-off is worrying news for England, who need the forward fit for Euro 2020 this summer. Mourinho was unsure about the severity of the injury. "We have to wait and see," he said.Spurs struggled without Kane and made defensive errors for Liverpool's goals. The champions took the lead through Roberto Firmino after a mix-up between Eric Dier and Hugo Lloris, the Spurs goalkeeper, just before the break. Serge Aurier did not prevent the cross from Sadio Mané to

Firmino.Aurier, who had also given away an early chance to Mané, was substituted at half-time and is understood to have reacted furiously. The right-back did not stay to watch the second half and Mourinho described an emotional scene during the interval."It's the mood of a team that it was difficult to accept you are losing, difficult to accept the nature of the goal because the goal is in some aspects a replica of the chance they had in the first minute," Mourinho said."So it's of course a mood where people are not happy - but then we have to move. Then Harry is injured and we need to try to do something. Unlucky that we started the second half conceding a goal."Liverpool's first win in six matches moved them back into fourth place and four points above Spurs.

This season may be serial-winner Tom Brady's most remarkable achievement

Tom Brady, January 29: Moments after triumphing in his 14th conference championship game last Sunday, Tom Brady jogged over to the Lambeau Field stands and waved down a security guard. "Can I say hi to my son?" he asked. And though the kid's body was covered from head to toe against the cold and his face shrouded against Covid, there

eventually caught up with him, to the tune of three second-half interceptions, it was nonetheless striking in comparison to the baffling passivity of Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers. Here, after all, was the presumptive league MVP, the quarterback who is unquestionably more physically gifted than Brady, who plays the most difficult team game



was no doubt that this was Brady's oldest, Jack. The scene, captured by NFL Films, stood out as much for the boy's size as its sentimentality. It is hard to believe that kid, not even a glint in his old man's eye when Brady made his first Super Bowl start in 2002, is 13-years-old now. Such is the undeniable staying power of Brady, who will extend his unprecedented streak of 10 NFL championship appearances into an unfathomable third decade when the Super Bowl kicks off in his home stadium in Tampa on 7 February. That he managed to pull this off barely a year since leaving New England, with a Tampa Bay Buccaneers team that hadn't so much as sniffed the postseason since 2007, is all the more stunning. On top of that, Brady is 43 - a fact that was not immediately obvious from his performance in Tampa's 31-26 road victory over the NFC-leading Green Bay Packers last week. To watch that game was to witness a pocket-dwelling throwback who not only still had plenty of zip left on his fastball, but also did not hesitate to chuck it deep. Of his 36 attempts, none was cheekier than the 39-yard touchdown pass he made to Scotty Miller just before the half. And while Brady's aggression

with the greatest of ease. And yet when the Packers found themselves eight points behind and eight yards from the Bucs' end zone with less than three minutes left in the game, Rodgers - despite all the moxie he showed a week earlier on a short scoring run against the Rams - couldn't find the temerity to exploit a similar opportunity against the Bucs. Rather than seize the moment and run to daylight, Rodgers winged a tweak third-down ball at the knees of a double-covered Davante Adams. It's no wonder Packers coach Matt LaFleur settled for a field goal instead of going for it on fourth down, all but guaranteeing that Brady would never return the ball. Somehow, Brady continues to draw rocket fuel-grade motivation from a Florida-sized inferiority complex that dates to his time sharing snaps at Michigan and that fateful day the Patriots selected him 199th overall in the 2000 NFL draft behind the Browns' Spergon Wynn, the 49ers' Giovanni Cammizzi and other throwaways. Ever since the Jets Mo Lewis knocked out Patriots franchise passer Drew Bledsoe the very next year, Brady has essentially fulfilled his destiny as football's Lou Gehrig - who was six years younger than

the QB when he succumbed to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 1941, by the way. Hell, the rumormongers at PFT feared Brady "could be sliding out of the league's elite quarterback" 11 years ago. But now? Brady's more like the Serena Williams of football, a stubborn legend who has endured long enough to see too many rivals come and go. Peyton Manning, Brady's regular nemesis, left the gridiron behind almost six years ago; he barely even turns up in commercials anymore. Eli, the younger Manning brother, who swiped two Lombardi trophies from Brady, hung up his cleats last year. Drew Brees, the statistical marvel, probably played his final NFL game after Brady beat back his Saints in the divisional round two weeks ago. Phillip Rivers, the fiery gamer, announced his retirement last week. Only Brees played past age 40. That Touchdown Breesus had to spend his probable last moments on the Superdome field watching Brady play catch with his own begotten son before sauntering off to throw another day, on some level, had to smart. Football has always been a marathon sport for Brady. And in the process of breaking with the tradition of Joe Namath, Kenny Stabler and other declining Hall of Famers put to pasture away from their original teams, Brady now stands on the precipice of defying an even deeper entrenched convention: the idea that a player-built super team cannot win in Year One. Consider: Brady just divorced longtime coconspirator Bill Belichick at the New England Patriots. And after signing with the Bucs, he soon found himself being chased out of public parks and otherwise robbed of time to mesh with his new receivers and coach Bruce Arians' chancy vertical pass attack because of Covid restrictions. And then: putting on a brave public face as his parents waged a private battle with the virus. But in little more than 10 months in Tampa, Brady set every single-season franchise mark imaginable - in passing yards (4,633), in touchdowns (40), and that's just during the regular season - while transforming a mistake-prone offense into a league juggernaut. He strung together 11 regular-season

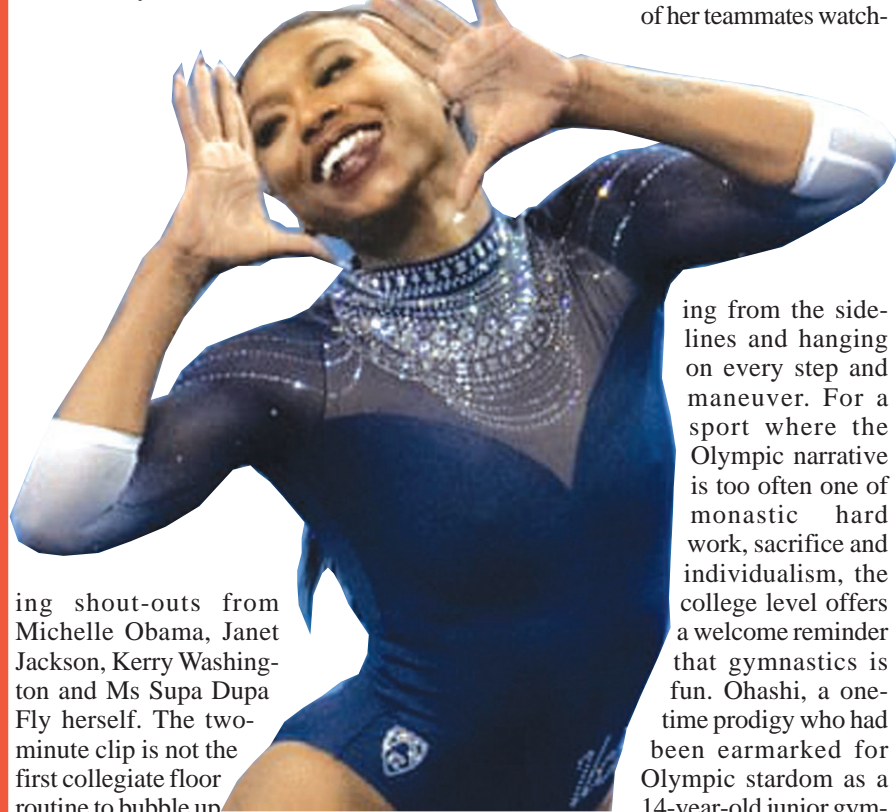
wins in a new conference and then, as the No 5 seed, buzzed through Brees and Rodgers to set up a Super Bowl clash with the team that nearly ended Brady's career in 2008. That Brady has gone from winning the big game as a Patriot in the season of 9/11 to this year's big game during the pandemic just makes it easier to say that he did not rely on Belichick for his greatness. And if Brady were to somehow get the better of the defending champion Kansas City Chiefs? Well, besides making LeBron James insanely jealous, it would redefine what it means for a pro to be past his prime. Of course the task ahead of Brady isn't easy. The Chiefs quarterback he faces, 25-year-old Patrick Mahomes, is a wizard who gutted the second-seeded Buffalo Bills on a bad foot a week after suffering a concussion - and also pipped Brady's Tampa team in Week 12 to draw even with his elder in their four head-to-head matchups. What's more, Mahomes not only has an array of weapons at his disposal, but a cunning play designer in offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy, a masterful play caller in coach Andy Reid and an ace in the hole in defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo - the architect of the pressure-packed schemes that tripped up Brady in those Super Bowls against Eli's Giants. Finally: this will be Mahomes's second time playing in a Super Bowl in the past three seasons. Not since Michael faced Magic in the 1991 NBA finals has there been a torch-passing ceremony with potential this rich. Much as the odds favor Mahomes, a surefire Hall of Famer if he were to quit right now, there's something to be said for Brady's singular experience. In a game where players are chewed up and spat out like the rubber that sods so much of the field underfoot, the fact that Brady is still topping himself in overtime may be the most remarkable of his myriad achievements. (Imagine, a seventh championship ring at this stage...) And now that the daddy of them all, the Super Bowl, is on the horizon again? Boy, you better think twice before betting against Father Tom given how often he gets the last laugh.

Why we don't see viral routines like Nia Dennis's in the Olympics

London, January 29: The latest entry in the surprisingly robust YouTube subgenre of viral college gymnastics routines dropped over the weekend, flooding timelines everywhere and generating national media attention rare for the parochial sport. The footage of UCLA senior Nia Dennis tumbling and swaying in a shimmering blue leotard to a high-energy mashup of Kendrick Lamar, Beyoncé, Missy Elliott, Megan Thee Stallion, Soulja Boy and Tupac Shakur from Saturday's dual meet against Arizona State was instantly hailed as a tribute to Black Excellence, racking up more than 10 million views in a matter of days while earn-

Lloimincia Hall in 2014, UCLA's Sophina DeJesus in 2016 or Katelyn Ohashi two years ago - there's an overwhelmingly common question among a public that mostly only watches gymnastics once every four (or five) years: Why you don't see routines like these at the Olympics? College gymnastics, which operates under different and more accessible rules than what you see in the Olympics, is a step down from the elite circuit, but the fewer difficulty requirements leave gymnasts more time (and stamina) for choreography and showmanship. The gulf between the two classes has only become more pronounced since Simone Biles came along and

tion of everything [black people] can do, everything we can overcome". "Every single song is a major black artist, musician, from different time periods. They had a huge impact on black culture, which has also had a huge impact on me. So I'm just literally celebrating what they've done and having the time of my life," the 21-year-old added. The secret sauce, and why these routines will continue to connect with people even if the skills aren't according-to-Hoyle "elite", is the unbridled exuberance on display. Not only in the figure of Dennis herself, but in the delirious reactions of her teammates watch-



ing shout-outs from Michelle Obama, Janet Jackson, Kerry Washington and Ms Supa Dupa Fly herself. The two-minute clip is not the first collegiate floor routine to bubble up into the mainstream. It's not even Dennis's first: the Ohio native's Homecoming-themed floor exercise from a meet last season has been watched more than 30 million times and landed her on Ellen in March. And it's not a coincidence that so many of them have come under the cultivation of UCLA's longtime coach Valorie Kondos Field, the former classical dancer who in the three decades until her recent retirement transformed the Bruins into one of America's most decorated programs. "I wanted it to be a celebration of everything [black people] can do, everything we can overcome," Dennis said. "Amid all the adversity and oppression we've been through, here we are." Whenever one of these crowd-pleasing performances backed by popular music breaks through - whether it was Louisiana State's

raised the bar for everyone: these days every single thing an Olympic gymnast does on the floor has to add difficulty. It's almost a different sport altogether. There's also a less restrained, more team-oriented culture in NCAA gymnastics that permits the athletes to express themselves more. Where Olympians are more prone to safer musical choices, at times verging on Muzak, that go for a more timeless feel and won't distract from their skills, this freedom of expression on the college level allows the gymnasts to curate performances that are unmistakably bound to the cultural moment and, increasingly over the last decade, reverse-engineered and fine-tuned for maximum viral impact. "The Black Lives Matter protests were pretty much the foundation," Dennis told Washington Post publication The Lily, adding that she wanted the routine to "be a celebra-

ing from the sidelines and hanging on every step and maneuver. For a sport where the Olympic narrative is too often one of monastic hard work, sacrifice and individualism, the college level offers a welcome reminder that gymnastics is fun. Ohashi, a one-time prodigy who had been earmarked for Olympic stardom as a 14-year-old junior gymnast before injuries and burnout intervened, is a classic example of someone who rediscovered the joy of enjoying the sport on her own terms and thrived on college level, becoming a national sensation. Dennis, a former US national team member whose own dreams of competing in Rio were undone by an achilles injury, is following the same path. And she's doing it her way. "It's been a struggle trying to find myself as a black woman in America, for real," Dennis told The Lily. "I was constantly told I wasn't good enough, and I'd be trying to change to fit into the ideal image of what everybody else wanted me to be. Then I came to UCLA, a place where I can celebrate Black Excellence, celebrate me. I can't imagine any other place where I could be me, the way I am here."

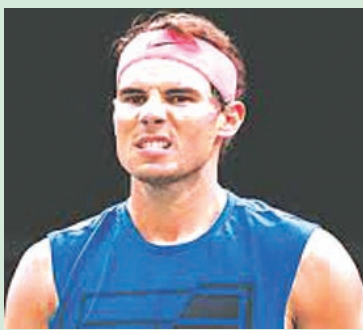
Nadal takes veiled swipe at Djokovic over Australian Open quarantine

London, January 29: Rafael Nadal has responded to criticism of his silence on the ongoing imbroglio over Australian Open quarantine conditions with a veiled swipe at Novak Djokovic. Djokovic has courted controversy over the past week for publicly lobbying Tennis Australia and the Victorian state government to loosen restrictions for the 72 overseas players forced into hard quarantine after traveling on flights with confirmed positive coronavirus cases. But it

was Nadal who became the target of criticism from Argentinian player Guido Pella, who described his silence as "strange" last week. "Djokovic's balcony is bigger than my room but at least he said something," Pella said. "I'm surprised with Nadal and Thiem's silence." Nadal, the 20-times grand slam champion who is keeping his own quarantine in Adelaide, hit back at those criticisms in an interview with ESPN on Monday and appeared to reference

Djokovic. "Some need to make public all these things they do for others, some of us do it in a more private way without having to publicize everything," Nadal told. "The calls we make to help the most disadvantaged players, some of us don't need or want to advertise it." Nadal went on to address the alleged favoritism shown to the top players who have been placed in the separate Adelaide bubble. "There has been talk that Adelaide people have better conditions, but I have not heard from any Melbourne player

that some have much better rooms than others," he explained. "I have not seen some of those who have complained so much about the conditions in Adelaide complaining about the conditions of the more than 20 players who have not practiced." Complaints always come from a disadvantaged position. At the time of talking about fair play or equal conditions, people don't



tend to complain about the position of those who are worse off than them." In the end we all try to get the most out of our possibilities and help each other."





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