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# Imphal Times

Spirit of the Sangai Festival

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## CM flags off conducted tour bus service from Imphal to Sendra as a part of Sangai Festival 2015

**IT News**

**Imphal, Nov. 22:** Chief Minister Shri O. Ibobi Singh flagged off the first conducted tour Bus service from Imphal to Sendra this morning from the Sanjenthong Bridge this morning.The conducted tour is being organised by the Manipur Tourism Department as a part of the ongoing Sangai Festival 2015.

In the conducted tour tourists and tour operators from Myanmar and from other countries including one Member of Parliament of Myanmar took part. At the flagging off ceremony they were welcomed by the Secretary Tourism Ms. Nidhi Mani Tripathy and were felicitated by CM Shri O. Ibobi Singh.

The function was attended by Parliamentary Secretary ( Tourism & YAS ) Shri M. Prithviraj Singh and Ex- MLA Shri Bijoy Koijam, Director Tourism Shri Shyam Lal Poonia among others

## Asian Theatre Festival begins

**IT News**

**Imphal, Nov. 22:** Chief Secretary O. Nabakishore today inaugurated the Asian Theatre Festival at Chandrakirti Auditarium, Palace Compound. Consultant to the Government of Manipur Dr. RK Nimai, Secretary of Arts and Culture, K Radhakanta, Secretary of Tourism Nidhi Mani Tripathi and Tourism Director Shyamlal Punia attended the inaugural function as dignitaries.

On the occasion the Chief Guest released a festival book.

The Asian Theatre Festival is being organised as a part of the Sangai Tourism Festival which begins yesterday. Besides, renowned theatre group from Manipur, Assam and West Bengal, theatre group from Japan and Bangladesh are taking part in the theatre festival.

The first day witness performance from NT Theatre group enthralling the gethering audiences.

Mangshak (Vendetta) is the play performed today. The play is directed by Deepak Ningthouja.

## 9th Manipur Polo International 2015 kick off

**IT News**

**Imphal, Nov.22:** The 9th Manipur Polo International 2015 which as a part of Manipur Sangai Festival which begins yesterday kick off from today at the Mapal Kangjeibung Polo Ground, Imphal.

V Sanmuganathan, Governer of Manipur, O Ibobi, Chief Minister, Nilash Ragnar Kamshvag, Norgian's Embassy to India, Gaikhangam, Deputy Chief Minister and Mairenbam Prithiviraj, Parliamentary Secretary, Tourism inaugurated the tournament. Polo teams from USA, Australia, England, Thailand and players from Manipur representing India altogether five teams are taking part in the tournament.

League match winner and runners-up teams will play for the final match of the tournament on 29 November.

## Assam hosts International Trade Fair to give boost to its economy

**ANI**

**Jorhat, Nov.22:** Assam's Jorhat City recently played host to an international trade fair that it hopes will give a boost to its economy and other related commercial activities.

Jorhat came alive during the Fourth International Trade Fair.

Over 150 exhibitors from across India and neighbouring Bangladesh, Pakistan and Thailand showcased a variety of products during the 19-day long fair held at Jorhat District Sports Association ground.

The mega trade event was organised by Parithi, an NGO. P K Barua, General Secretary of the NGO Parithi, said, "We received a good response and put up 160 stalls. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Thailand participated in this event. Around 60 stalls were for handloom handicrafts and 96 for Consumer and other companies."

Jewellery items, handloom, handicrafts and various lifestyle products attracted the visitors. The exhibitors made every effort to attract customers. Many auto companies also put on display their vehicles including cars and bikes.

Mohammad Asadudin, an entrepreneur from Bangladesh, said, "We usually come here every year. This year I came here twice. The response is very good."

Bangkok entrepreneur Lina, said, "This is the second time and last year this trade fair was organised by government and advertisement, crowd everything was good. Next year we will be in Imphal that is also very happening."

## Patriotic Recitation

**IT News**

**Imphal, Nov. 22:** Patriotic Writers Forum Manipur is organizing the 1st State Level Patriotic Recitation Competition at Manipur press club on November 24. The competition is organized to showcase the hidden talent of the student and youth for patriotic talent of the state. Former minister Moirangthem Hemanta Singh, President of PAWF Raghu Leisangthem and project officer of Social Welfare Department of Child Department Ksh. Subadani will grace the function as Chief Quest, President and Quest of Honor respectively.

## Top ULFA leaders to meet Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi on Tuesday

**PTI**

**New Delhi, Nov. 22:** Top ULFA leaders will meet Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi on Tuesday to find way forward for a possible peace agreement, ahead of next year's Assam assembly polls.

Mehrishi will review various aspects of ULFA's demands with a delegation of the insurgent group led by 'chairman' Arabinda Rajkhowa.

"The Union Home Secretary will review the progress of the parleys that have been going on between central government's interlocutor P C Halder and the pro-talk faction of the ULFA led by Rajkhowa," a Home Ministry official said.

The ULFA delegation is also likely to meet Home Minister Rajnath Singh during their visit to the national capital.

Speculation is rife that the Narendra Modi government is keen to sign a peace accord with the pro-talk faction of the ULFA ahead of next year's Assam assembly election to bring an end to the nearly four decades of insurgency in the northeastern state.

Officials said a peace accord may come through by December-end. The recent deportation of ULFA 'general secretary' Anup Chetia from Bangladesh has also sent a positive signal to the ULFA leadership and that has set the ball rolling for early signing of a peace accord.

Elections to the 126-member Assam assembly are due in April-May next year. The BJP may try to take credit if an accord is signed before the polls in its bid to dislodge the Congress, which is ruling the state for consecutive terms.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who oversaw the peace accord signed with Naga insurgent group NSCN-IM in August, is believed to be keen for an early conclusion of the peace agreement with ULFA.

If a peace accord is signed, some of the ULFA leaders are expected to contest the assembly elections. A former ULFA leader, Hira Sarania, is now an MP (Independent) in Lok Sabha after he successfully contested the 2014 Parliamentary elections.

## Experts give mixed response to government banning violent NSCN-K

**ANI**

**Dimapur, Nov.22:** Experts have given mixed response to the Indian Government's move to ban the militant the Khaplang faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K) a terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 because of its refusal to give up its violent ways.

Urging the leadership of the NSCN-K to come forward for negotiations to ensure peace and stability in Nagaland and adjoining areas, Professor Amar Yumnam, an economist and an analyst, said, "I don't think banning is what the government of India is looking as ultimate solution, but they are all using as a means so there is no question of justification or non-justification. They are using it as one of the means to make the NSCN realise that the Government of India really means business and really want to have talks with them."

Ksh Bimola Devi, another professor and political analyst, said, "In course of time, the government is to review the policy of banning NSCN (K) because the negotiation with NSCN (IM) may not be a successful one without taking into confidence the NSCN (K), because the important point is, there are many members of the NSCN (K) in Nagaland and neighboring states. So, because of that, if the Indian government want to promote or restore complete peace in whole of northeast India, then, I think, the policy of government to ban this NSCN(K) is justified to an extent."

The militant outfit came into existence in 1988 and is active along the Indo-Myanmar border. It has been accused of killing innocent civilians and security forces.

For instance, on June 4, 2015, the Naga outfit attacked an army convoy in the Chandel district of Manipur and killed 18 soldiers.

India has asked Myanmar to hand over four top leaders of the NSCN-K, including its chief S S Khaplang and militant commander Niki Sumi.

The outfit has been involved in a series of attacks on security forces in Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

## Indian Muslims free to go to Pakistan if they feel persecuted, says Assam governor

**ANI**

**Guwahati, Nov.22:** Sparking off another controversy, Assam Governor P.B. Acharya on Sunday said Indian Muslims are free to go to Pakistan or anywhere if they feel they are being persecuted in India.

"Indian Muslims are free to go anywhere. They can stay here like those who are staying here. Many of them have gone to Pakistan. If one wants to go Pakistan or Bangladesh, he is free to go. If he is persecuted like Tasleema Nasreen, she also came here," Acharya said at a press conference here.

However, he insisted that India is a big hearted country and everyone is welcome here.

"We will give a safe haven to anyone and everyone. India is a big hearted country. India is the most tolerant country in the world," he added.

The Assam governor on Saturday had said that 'Hindustan is for Hindus' and that the name of a single Bangladeshi should not be in the updating of the National Register for Citizens (NRC). During a book launch, Acharya's comment came in reply to a question on updating the NRC list and on the controversy surrounding the Centre's notification of allowing religious minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh fleeing persecution to seek shelter in India.

"Hindustan is for Hindus. There is nothing wrong with that. Hindus from different countries can stay here. They cannot be outsiders. There is nothing to be feared about that. But how to accommodate them is a big question and we should think about that," he said.

## 71 Myanmar tourists arrives

**IT News**

**Imphal, Nov. 22:** Assam Riffles today escorted 71 Myanmar tourist who were stranded at Moreh due to the disturbance by some civil society organisation. The Myanmar tourists were on their way to Imphal by land route to attend the Sangai Tourism festival which begins yesterday.

## "Scores killed in Myanmar jade mine landslide"

**AFP**

**Yangon, Nov 22:** At least 90 people have died in a huge landslide in a remote jade mining area of northern Myanmar, officials said today, as search teams continued to find bodies in one of the deadliest disasters to strike the country's shadowy jade industry.

Those killed were thought to have been scavenging through a mountain of waste rubble dumped by mechanical diggers used by mining firms in the area to extract Myanmar's most valuable precious stone.

The massive landslide crushed dozens of flimsy shanty huts clustered on the barren landscape, where an unknown number of itinerant workers had made their homes in the hope of finding riches on the side of the secretive multi-billion dollar jade industry in war-torn Kachin state.

"We found 79 dead bodies on November 21 (and) 11 today so the total so far is 90," said Nilar Myint an official from the local administrative authorities in Hpakant, northern Kachin, adding that the rescue operation was ongoing.

"We are seeing only dead bodies and no one knows how many people live there," he told AFP, adding that only one person had been pulled alive from the rubble, but had died soon after.

Myanmar is the source of virtually all of the world's finest jadeite, an almost translucent green stone that is prized above almost all other materials in neighbouring China.

Landslides are a common hazard in the area as people living off the industry's waste pick their way across perilous mounds under cover of darkness, driven by the hope that they might find a chunk of jade worth thousands of dollars.

Scores have been killed this year alone as local people say the mining firms, many of which are linked to the country's junta-era military elite, scale up their operations in Kachin.

Nilar Myint said rescuers workers from the Myanmar Red Cross, the army, police and local community groups were all at the scene trying to dig people out of the earth, but their efforts have been hampered by poor weather conditions overnight in the remote region.

In an October report, advocacy group Global Witness estimated the value of jade produced in 2014 alone was USD 31 billion, the equivalent of nearly half the country's GDP.

But that figure is around 10 times the official USD 3.4 billion sales of the precious stone last year, in an industry that has long been shrouded in secrecy with much of the best jade thought to be smuggled directly to China.