

More State news

MNPF claims responsibility for Nov 27 Somdal blast

IT News
Imphal, Nov. 29: The proscribed Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF) Saturday claimed responsibility for the powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast on November 27 last at Somdal village of Ukhrul District at 6.45 pm. A statement signed by MNPF Assistant Publicity Secretary Thomas Numai said that Somdal is the native village of the top brass of NSCN (I-M) including General Secretary Th Muivah, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) Phungthing Ruivah, Deputy Chief Tamreipam Muivah and Chief of Finance Chipemmi Ruivah. "The bomb blast at Somdal village was not aimed at targeting the innocent Somdal villagers but to warn the NSCN (I-M) leaders who hailed from the village to stop misleading and trading the Manipur Naga People for their own benefits," said the statement. "It was due to the satanic politics of NSCN (I-M) specially Th Muivah that number of Tangkhuls have died in Eastern Nagaland in 1988. Many innocent Kukis and Nagas lost their lives during the Naga-Kuki clash from 1991-1993. Moreover, a number of innocent Tangkhuls and Naga leaders have been killed due to Somdal's high handed politics and wrong allegations", alleged MNPF. MNPF stands for the Manipur Naga People and any matter which harms the interests of Manipur Naga People will be countered by the outfit, said MNPF. The outfit warned the NSCN (I-M) to immediately stop its "suppressing habit" upon Manipur Naga people and halt fueling of "communal tension" in the State.

13 SSB jawans chasing smugglers detained by Nepalese border force

PTI
New Delhi, Nov. 29: A patrol party comprising at least 13 jawans of the Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) was detained by Nepali border guards after the group "inadvertently" crossed over to the other side chasing suspected smugglers along the India-Nepal border in Bihar's Kishanganj district. The incident occurred at about 7.30am on Sunday when the patrol party saw suspicious activity along the Ambari-Kesna border post and began a 'hot pursuit' of the suspected smugglers. Officials said the party followed the lead team of two jawans, identified as Constables Roshan and Ramprasad of the 12th SSB battalion deployed in the area, and "inadvertently" crossed over to the other side by about 50 metres into Khuntanmani village after which villagers surrounded it. The squad was handed over to Nepal border guarding troops of Armed Police Force (APF) which brought them to their border post in Jhapa district of Nepal, they said. Officials said the SSB patrol team led by a Sub-Inspector was on vigil in the area since early morning as the force had seized about 1,500 litres of diesel being

allegedly smuggled to the other side Saturday evening. "Last night, our teams seized about 1,500 litres of diesel which was being smuggled from the same area on the border and hence the patrol party was on alert," SSB Inspector General (Operations) Deepak Kumar said. "Thirteen of our men have been detained by APF at a border post along Indo-Nepal border. I had an interaction with the APF Chief and IG Mr Kesh Raj Onta and he has assured that these men who crossed over inadvertently will be sent back safely. A border meet is on between the field commanders of the two sides," SSB Director General B D Sharma told PTI in New Delhi. The officials said reports from the ground state that local villagers have surrounded the Kesna border post of APF protesting against the SSB troops. The DG said he is continuously monitoring the situation. Officials said while 6 SSB troops are armed, the rest are without their service weapons. The DG said there has been no 'bodily harm' to the personnel and that they have been extended due courtesies by APF and the issue will be resolved soon. The paramilitary force guards the 1,751 km-long open frontier with Nepal.

Wakatchaba

Eihak Shri Thoudam Manglem Singh, apokpa leikhidraaba Shri Thoudam Kanhai Shingh Shang Mongshanggei Mamang Leikai da laibagi ariba pata no. 69/Ang, anouba pata no. 806/1330 pak chaoba 0.19 (phourel) ashi emung manunggi khudongchadba kya mayoknabadi chili 2 gi mamangda atoppa mioi amada yonthokhraba matungda ioujiki eihakki ethakta ene khondram ongbi Sanatombi Devi, mapuroiba leikhidraaba Khondram Nildhaja Singh Thangal Bazar da leibna araba waphamda yumpham oiraga lam ashigi matangda ekaikhunmajariba court ta wakattuna case tourakpaga loinana police thajinduna aki akhang kaya mayoknahalle case handokpinaba achumba waphamging thamduna hajjarabus tabidre amadi case handokpidre. Emung manunggi awaba kaya mayoknaduna leiriba eihakki ephamda henna awaba pibire. Maram aduna leibak, miyamna amadi echil enaosingna miyeng changbiduna achumba puthokpada mateng pangbinaba noklukchari.

Noklukchariba
 Thoudam Manglem Singh
 Mongshanggei Mamang Leikai

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Media in armed conflict situation: Manipur Perspective

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Introduction
 The popular narrators of everyday happenings, the print, electronic and social media play a pivotal role in a democratic country. The principal democratic function of media is to act as a check on the state. The fourth pillar of democracy should monitor the full range of state activity and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. Even if the publication and broadcast of news is at the embarrassment of the national and state governments, practice of the same should not be deterred if it is outweighed by public interest and impartial conscience of the journalists responds to divulge the same. The process of information dissemination is not however without its biases and asymmetries. The media persons of all ilk are also human. They have their own socio-political, economic and religious affiliations. Even if the ethical codes of professional conduct of the fourth estate of democracy clearly solicit to observe and maintain truth, accuracy, fairness, impartiality, justice and social responsibility, the same cannot always be guaranteed in practice. The situation is more critical in armed conflict zones in comparison to regions of peace and tranquility. This is because of the reason that both the rival parties in the conflict situation and their supporting groups want to utilize the oxygen of publicity to serve their interest. At the same time, the media professionals working in such situations are more vulnerable to professional hazards. Even though there is a convention from the time immemorial of not targeting messengers during the course of war or an armed conflict,

the same is not honoured at times by the warring parties. In the past decade, as many as 1100 media persons and support staff have been killed all over the world. A major share of the journalists killed over the past decade is from the armed conflict zones and armed violent regions of the world. Deeply concerned at the frequency of acts of violence, including deliberate attacks, in many parts of the world against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts, the Security Council of the United Nations condemned such attacks and called on all parties on 23 December 2006 to put an end to such practices. The Council also recalled the war correspondents' right to the status of prisoners of war (PoW) under the third Geneva Convention. According to the Convention, journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in the areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians, be respected and protected as such. In spite of the professional hazards likely to face, many a journalist are ever ready to cover armed conflict zones and the beat is their prime fopper. **Media's interest in armed conflicts and communication politics:** A Guide to Advanced Techniques in Journalism, prepared by the Editorial Study Centre of the Thomson Foundation, lists 20 categories of what makes news and conflict is positioned at sixth. Politics is unquestionably at the top of the list. As armed conflict is a political problem, the coverage of the same in media is a top priority with catalytic effect. News of armed

conflict and its relevant views contributed by strategic analysts, media commentators and policy researchers are hot cakes for the newspaper readers, radio listeners, television viewers and online news media and social media users. For the sake of circulation that will lead to earning more advertisement revenue, media need contents of armed conflict. The news and views of the armed conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Uganda and Middle East are brought to the media audience around the globe by international news agencies - Reuters, AFP, AP, UPI, TASS etc. and the same contents are among the most read or heard or viewed items in newspaper, radio, television and online media. If the importance of conflict content is fueled by proximity, the coverage of the same is done at a more prominent page of print media or at a prime time slot of electronic media. Such editorial contents are regular features not only in national media but also in local media like daily newspapers published in Imphal. The quantum of coverage of news and views of armed conflict in the local media explains per se the demand of armed conflict in media. The key role played by media during the course of an armed conflict is known to the nations or states and non-state parties who have stake in the conflict. Each party tries its best to win the media war first as the psychological war is fought first. If a party wins in the communication politics of armed conflict, success of the party is almost certain in the long run. This happened time and again in US led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and NATO-Serbia armed conflicts. Even if the group

gets defeated physically, support of the international community will be with the group if it could have influenced the global media. Such communication politics really helped Kosovo in the long run and it could become a sovereign country recently. In the present communication politics of the world, media framing of issues or media framing of individuals/groups/nations is really working very effectively. It is because of this reason that the majority view of the world is against Taliban, Al-Qaida and Osama Bin Laden while none of the organizations and Laden were terrorist when they were on the battle line to throw out the Russian forces from the soil of Afghanistan with the help of US intelligence network CIA. The communication politics played by the West to influence the global media during the height of armed conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq shows the compelling nature of winning media war beforehand. It is in this line that the US-led coalition force was criticized for intentionally targeting journalists who defied their command and also for bombarding the work places of Al-Jazeera TV in Baghdad and Kabul as the news organization is considered to be pro-Islamic. Media in Manipur is also facing bomb attack in newspaper office, editor's residence and moreover physical liquidation and attempt of the same while the local journalists are shouldering the responsibility of informing the people of the state. (To be contd.....)

National & International News

Assam school children torch bearers of hand-washing

PTI
Guwahati, Nov. 29: They may be quite young but lower primary school children in Assam are donning the mantle of torchbearers in handwashing to herald clean, hygienic and disease-free environment not only in their schools but also in their families and extended communities. School begins an hour earlier for eight-year-old Karishma Kalita, of Pub Mazaringan LP School in Kamrup district, as she along with members of the child cabinet checks whether the water tank is filled, the hand washing area is cleaned and soaps are in their proper places so that their daily ritual of hand washing is not affected during the day. The children of this school along with those in hundred other schools have assumed a role model status to spread the message that proper hygiene can be attained to a considerable extent by hand washing, ultimately leading to a disease-free society and less absenteeism in schools. These children are a part of a pilot project of the Assam Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) Mission named 'Daily Handwashing for an Aligned free Life' (DHAAL) being implemented in three blocks of Kamrup district by the North Eastern Regional Cell of Centre for Environment Education (CEE North East) with technical and financial support from UNICEF. SSA, UNICEF and CEE jointly piloted a Group Handwashing with Soap initiative in 100 schools of Rani and Rampur Blocks of Kamrup District in Assam to strengthen the practice of handwashing with soap before from the Mid-Day Meal, from July 2013, says UNICEF Assam Communication Officer Tahseen Alam. The DHAAL project also developed a proper monitoring and maintenance

system of group hand washing facilities, CEE North East's Programme Coordinator Simanta Kalita says. The project, which will ultimately cover more than 15,000 schools across Assam, is aimed to create a disease-free environment in elementary schools through strengthening SSAs WASH Cell, facilitating roll-out of Nirmal Vidyalaya Puraskar in Assam and developing WASH model schools, Kalita says. It also includes training key stakeholders, augmenting WASH facilities and setting up operation and maintenance system for group handwashing, he adds. Besides influencing the children, the project has involved teachers, school management committees and the mothers' groups to promote healthy hygienic practices not only in school but also in their respective homes and the community at large. "We have learnt the five basic rules of handwashing in schools and found our parents did not follow these. We have taught them how hands should be washed and now they, too, follow the same rules," says Namita Biswas, a class III student of Keotpara LP School in Azara. School headmaster Kamal Goswami has taken up the project of 'Swacha Vidyalay' or Clean Schools as a mission and besides setting up separate clean toilets for boys and girls and handwashing facilities, has also involved students to set up a kitchen garden within the school campus. "We have learnt a lot about hygiene from our children which our parents and schools during our childhood failed to teach us. We are learning something new everyday from our children and now that we have realised how necessary it is for our hygiene, these practices have become a part of our daily routine,"

says Arati Das, mother of nine-year-old Sumi Das. A UNICEF report says that there is consistent evidence that hand washing with soap at critical times - including before eating or preparing food and after using the toilet, can reduce diarrhoeal risk by about 45 per cent. Diseases such as diarrhoea, intestinal worms and respiratory infections lead to school absenteeism, increased drop-out rates and impact children's physical and cognitive development as well as their education, the report says. The impact of the hand-washing initiative is evident from the example of the mothers' group of Barujani Barujani LP School who have taken the decision to donate a piece of soap for hand washing on their child's birthday. Other schools in the nearby villages are also following the example with Haberikura LP School already implementing it. The project has so far trained more than 1,600 teachers, 2,000 school

management committees members, over 4,000 Mothers' Group members and oriented 20,000 students on WASH issues, with special focus on handwashing with soap. "The success of the project and children's interest depends to a large extent upon the headmaster and headmistress of the school. In schools where they have taken a proactive role, children have adopted and spread the message within their family and community with enthusiasm," Kalita adds. The project has also been appreciated by a Joint Review Mission, commissioned by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Department, which identified mass handwashing with soap before midday meals as one of the best practices being carried out in select schools. A simple fun-filled activity of about 10 minutes of handwashing with soap in schools is, thus, creating a silent but steady change to ensure a clean, hygienic and germ free rural community in Assam.

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