

## Ibobi silence on status of Congress party CM Okram Ibobi, Okram Joy among others hoisted flags

**IT News**  
**Imphal, Feb 12:** The battle is on now. Congress party strong man Chief Minister Okram Ibobi today hoisted the party flag at his residence at Thoubal Athokpam. Veteran politician Okram Joy, who is contesting the upcoming election at Langthabal Assembly constituency as BJP candidate also hoisted the party at his residence at Kakwa.



Chief Minister Okram Ibobi is contesting the election from Thoubal Assembly Constituency this time too. Three other candidates from Chanu Sharmila of PRJA, Leitangthem Basanta of BJP and Leishangthem Suresh of the All India Trinamool Congress Party are likely to be the main contenders of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister hoisted the flag at 8.45 am sharp. His wife O Landhoni, former MLA of Khangabok Assembly accompanied her husband during the flag hoisting ceremony. No other MLAs or Ministers and MPCC officer bearers were seen attending the flag hoisting ceremony. Interestingly, Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh today did

not give any comment to reporters who were asking him about the status of the congress party at this juncton.

The decision of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting to urge the Prime Minister of India for announcement of UNC as an unlawful organization had garnered many support from the voters of the majority assembly constituencies. But the resignation of former senior congress Minister Phungzathang Tonsing from the party membership and his joining to NPP after being announced his name as congress candidate had somehow seen a major shift to the situation of the congress strategy.

Okram Joy Singh, the veteran politician, who is contesting

as BJP candidate for the first time from Lanthabal Assembly Constituency also hoisted the party flag in a different way this time. Along with the BJP flag Okram Joy hoisted the 7 colour Meitei Flag and flag of Meitei Deity Pakhangba.

Answering to reports, Joy said that there is nothing wrong in announcing UNC as unlawful organization as their activities had hurt the sentiments of many of the people. On being enquired on whether the state BJP will support the demand of the CLP, Joy said that the central government authority will surely look into it and may announce unlawful if it thinks it deserves following that all formalities done in a proper way from the state government.

Both the *Okrams* are known for their political credential. For Okram Joy, the heavy weight politician, this is the first time that he chooses a National Political Party BJP. In his entire political career he was an MPP until he left it some few years back. He had earlier kept silent on whether he will contest the election or not but after joining the BJP he had finally rolled out his election strategy once again. He was elected as from Langthabal Assembly Constituency for 5 times as MPP/MLA.

Chief Minister Okram Ibobi, who had ruled the state for three consecutive terms, is the real strong man of the congress party. It is under his leadership that the fate of the congress party will be decided.

## BJP and Congress likely to have straight fight in Singjamei AC

**IT News**  
**Imphal, Feb 12:** A day after BJP ticket seeker Oinam Romen of Singjamei Assembly Constituency had announced his decision to support the BJP candidate after he was denied party ticket, another BJP ticket seeker, who had lately joined NPP, Nangbam Robert today said that he too will not contest the election this time clearing the way for both Congress candidate I Hemochandra and BJP

Candidate Yumnam Khemchand to have a straight fight in the constituency. Nangbam Robert was listed among the list of NPP candidates who had been approved for contesting the election. All of a sudden he announced that he will not contest the upcoming assembly poll. "I took the decision not to contest this time after consultation with my supporters of the

constituency", said Robert. He however did not say anything on whom he will support in this election. Following his announcement it is likely that BJP candidate Y Khemchand and Congress Candidate I Hemochandra may have a straight fight in the constituency. Last general election too, both the candidates have straight fight and Congress candidate I Hemochandra won by a mere margin.

## BJP gears up campaign at Khangabok

**IT News**  
**Imphal, Feb 12:** BJP candidate of Khangabok Assembly Election, Th. Jadumani today said that BJP is gaining more support from the people of Khangabok Assembly constituency after the joining of former minister L Jatra's workers to the party.

The BJP candidate organized a reception function of the 118 workers of former minister L Jatra at Samaram. Speaking on the occasion Th. Jadumani said that the Congress party is spreading rumours about joining of the 118 supporters of L Jatra but

in reality the workers have joined the BJP. O Landhoni, wife of Chief Minister Okram Ibobi is the MLA of Khangabok

Assembly constituency. This time her son O Surajkumar is contesting as congress candidate from the constituency.

## PM pays rich tributes to Dayanand Saraswati on his birth anniversary

**New Delhi, Feb. 12:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi today paid rich tributes to social reformer Dayanand Saraswati on his birth anniversary. In a tweet, Mr Modi said, his noble efforts towards social reform and education continue to have a lasting impact.

Yesterday, Mr Modi condoled passing away of eminent thinker, writer and journalist Pandit Dharmshel Chaturvedi. In a tweet, he said, the sharp writings, wit and humour of Pandit Dharmshel Chaturvedi endeared him and he will be missed.

## About 3.5 lakh cases settled in National Lok Adalats across country

**New Delhi, Feb. 12:** About 3(point)5 lakh cases were settled in the National Lok Adalats held at all levels ranging from district to high courts across the country in a day, yesterday. National Legal Services Authority, NALSA, said that

as per the figures received till 5 in the evening, more than 3.5 lakh cases, including 1.9 lakh pending and 1.6 lakh pre-litigation cases, have been settled. The total value of the settlement amount reached today is Rs 1,185 crores.

## Home Ministry's website hacked? 'Not sure', say officials

**New Delhi, Feb. 12:** Confusion prevails in the Ministry of Home Affairs about its website having been hacked or not. Some reports claimed that the MHA website was hacked and experts were trying to ascertain the damage caused to the portal.

A PTI tweet also said that the MHA website was hacked. The PTI tweet quoted home ministry officials as saying that the website was hacked "prompting the authorities to temporarily block it." However, when India Today spoke to senior MHA officials about the reported hacking of the website, they said, "The

website is down since yesterday. The NIC (national informatics centre) is trying to find out the reason."

"We are not sure about the website being hacked. Pending investigation by the NIC, the website has been blocked," the officials said.

The report of MHA website being hacked comes close on the heels of the hacking of NSG (national security guard) portal last month.

The hackers called themselves 'Alone Injector' and left a 'Pakistan Zindabad' message on the website. The authorities had then, too, taken down the website to recover and repair it.

## UP polls: Many political heavyweights missing from campaigning

**Lucknow, Feb. 12:** The first phase of the elections to the 403-strong Uttar Pradesh state assembly, that ended on Saturday, was marked by many firsts in the electoral history of the politically crucial state — a major one being the absence of many veterans and political heavyweights from the campaigning. The front-ranking name in the list of these politicians is of Congress President Sonia Gandhi. She has been almost out of public life ever since she took ill last year during a roadshow in Varanasi, the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sources in the Congress confirmed that 'Madam' was unwell and not fit enough to hit the dusty roads of Uttar Pradesh and plunge into the high-decibel campaign. She is, however, working the wires from her high-security 10, Janpath residence in New Delhi.

## Corrigendum

The newly created Kamjong district has been wrongly stated as Phungyar district in our news report appeared yesterday under the heading "NSCN-IM sets to open fresh battalion in Manipur Soil". The error is highly regretted.

Editor

## Sasikala told us she doesn't have any political ambition, MLA staying in resort says

**Chennai, Feb. 12:** AIADMK general secretary V K Sasikala, who has been waiting for an invitation from Tamil Nadu Governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao to her to form the government, told MLAs staying in a resort at Koovalur near Mahabalipuram that she did not have any political ambition, Gudiyyattam MLA Jayanthi Padmanaban told TOI. "I (Sasikala) decided to stay with Amma (late chief minister J Jayalithaa) and live for her at the age of 29 and left my husband and family members. Now, I am 62-years-old and I don't have any political ambition. I want to the movement (AIADMK) that is the third biggest party in the country to flourish. It was nurtured by Amma and I don't want to see the movement to fade away in my life time," Jayanthi told TOI, quoting Sasikala.

Sasikala met the MLAs in the resort on Saturday evening even as chief minister O Panneerselvam,

who revolted against her, got supports from senior party leaders and MPs. Sasikala told the MLAs that people had given the party the mandate, and party legislators had the duty to serve for the people, said the MLA, adding, "She (Sasikala) asked them to remain united to withstand the testing time."

"I am a lawyer by profession and no one can hold be captive against my will," said the MLA and added that she had been staying with other party MLAs in the resort at their own will. "We want the party to continue the legacy of Amma (Jayalithaa). We decided to take a unanimous call and are waiting for Governor's response," said the MLA.

Jayanthi added that she had been receiving around 2,000 calls daily in the last few days. The callers claimed that they were from Gudiyyattam constituency. "Several callers are speaking in an intimidating tone. So, I prefer to avoid

calls from unknown phone numbers," she added.

"We, in fact, are enjoying our time here. My husband and children are coming to the resort daily and staying with me till late evening. There is no restriction to move around. We are having nice food here," the MLA candidly said. She further said that the other MLAs were also enjoying their time in the resort.

Asked about reports that a few MLAs were down with flu, she said: "We are staying in two resorts. Minister Rajendra Balaji is down with flu and taking treatment. Others are fine." She downplayed the support extended to chief minister O Panneerselvam by some MPs. "The issue is related to forming the government and MPs have no say in it. They may have forced to join the faction group due to pressure in Delhi (central government). Besides MPs, a few MLAs are only with a faction group. They cannot form the government," she said.

## National productivity week celebrations to begin from today

**New Delhi, Feb. 12:** The National productivity week celebrations will begin from today. Every year 12th to 18th of February is celebrated as the National Productivity Week.

This year the theme of week is 'From Waste to Profits-through Reduce, Recycle and Reuse.' AIR correspondent reports that the departmental Secretaries, PSU's, Industry Associations, Local Productivity Councils and others have been asked to organize various activities including workshops, essay, slogan competitions, debates and training programs. During the week, the message of productivity will be spread amongst all stakeholders. National Productivity Council, an autonomous body under Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion was established on this day in 1958. The objective of Council is to stimulate and promote productivity and quality consciousness across all sectors in the country.

## Manipur blockade may impact Naga peace talks: Ravi

**R Dutta Choudhury**

**Guwahati, Feb 12:** The Centre has taken serious note of the ongoing economic blockade of Manipur and warned that it may have serious impact on the ongoing Naga peace talks. The Centre's displeasure over the issue has also been communicated to the leaders of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (I-M). Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, the Centre's interlocutor for Naga talks, RN Ravi admitted that the economic blockade of Manipur, a state going to polls soon, would have serious impact on the Naga political talks. He said the blockade has sharpened the divide between the Nagas and non-Nagas in the Northeast and it would make his task of finding an early amicable solution to the issues more difficult.

Ravi pointed out that the Naga political issue cannot be solved in isolation. He said the neighbours of Nagaland are important stakeholders. A long lasting solution to the Naga political issue is not possible by disregarding the sentiments of the neighbours

and adopting a confrontational attitude towards them, he added. Expressing his displeasure on the stubborn attitude of the NSCN(I-M) on the issue of economic blockade, he expressed the view that if the leaders of the militant outfit maintain such an attitude, it would have serious impact on the progress of talks.

The Centre's interlocutor was, however, hopeful of an amicable solution following the tripartite meeting on February 3 but unfortunately, the situation has not improved. In fact, two rounds of meetings failed to bring normalcy to the situation and if this trend continues, the talks would be seriously affected, he warned.

It may be mentioned here that the NSCN(I-M) and United Naga Council are spearheading the economic blockade of Manipur. The blockade has seriously affected normal life of the people and created severe shortage of essential commodities, including petroleum products.

The Government of India signed a framework agreement with the NSCN(I-M) on August 3, 2015 and efforts were on to sign the final agreement as soon as possible by taking the views of all the stakeholders into account. The Central Government was trying for an 'inclusive' solution of the Naga political issue and that is why, efforts were on to take the views of all the stakeholders into account before signing the final agreement and all the elected representatives of Nagaland were also consulted.

The Centre's interlocutor also had several rounds of meetings with the Government of Manipur and the other neighbouring states to get their views on the issue before signing of the final agreement. But the economic blockade has now threatened to seriously affect the progress of talks and it is obvious that the signing of the final agreement with the NSCN(I-M) for a lasting solution to the problem will now be delayed.

(Courtesy Assam Tribune)