

## Merry Christmas

### Dr. Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur



"Christmas is here again and I extend my greetings to the people of Manipur, especially to our Christmas brethren on the auspicious occasion of Christmas, 2018. Lord Jesus, the messenger of God and an apostle of peace and non-violence, showed humanity the path to salvation through love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness. He had boundless love for all mankind and advocated abdication of material elements. His teachings transcend all barriers and His everlasting message of peaceful co-existence holds true for all. Let us all celebrate the birth of this apostle of peace while re-dedicating ourselves to the spiritual and ethical path propounded by him and live in harmony and brotherhood by following his values. My best wishes once again to all the people of Manipur on this sacred and auspicious day when the Lord was born".

### N. Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur



"I greet the people of Manipur especially our Christian brethren on the joyous occasion of Christmas, which is celebrated with gaiety and fervour to mark the birth of Lord Jesus Christ.

"It is the time now to listen and take the message of Christmas with utmost seriousness, shun involvement of oneself in any manner of evil activity and involve oneself in the work of spreading peace and harmony in the State. "Once again, I wish the people of Manipur a very Merry Christmas and pray the Almighty that the season of love and joy ushers in an era of peace, harmony and prosperity in this beautiful state", a statement of the Chief Minister said.

### Th. Bishwajit, Works Minister

"I convey my heartfelt greetings to the people of Manipur, especially to our Christian brethren, on the auspicious occasion of Christmas, 2018. Christmas is celebrated commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. This festive season let us spread the message of unity and oneness. May this festive season



renew the spirit of brotherhood and peace in our State. I, once again greet the people of Manipur, a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year".

## Medical camp organised by Singhat Battalion to Give A Healing Touch During Festive Season

IT News  
Imphal, Dec 24,

To make the pleasant Sunday afternoon even more special, an Advent Christmas programme was organised by Singhat Battalion Assam Rifles on 23 Dec for the villagers of Singhat, Tangpizol and nearby villages. On the auspicious occasion, the battalion also organised a medical camp under OP SADBHAVNA initiative

to give a healing touch to the programme and continue its endeavours to give a healthier start to the new year and make a difference to the lives of the villagers of Singhat sub division. The programme began with a prayer by members of the church followed by solo and group performances by various church choirs and talented singers. The Jazz band of Singhat battalion also added to the

festivities and entertained the audience by performing various songs and a solo instrumental song on the saxophone. During the programme, the Senior Medical Officer of Singhat Battalion examined around 417 people belonging to Singhat and neighbouring villages of Tangpizol, Thadou Veng, Mumpi and Sumchinum. Necessary medical treatment, consultation and aid were provided to the ailing villagers by the unit medical staff. The medical camp received overwhelming response from the local populace and also the gratitude of the village chief for the social service extended to the villagers during the festive season. With this the Assam Rifles has proved itself to be the "Friends of the North East".

## Single GST rate in the works, 28% slab could be phased out: Arun Jaitley

Agency  
New Delhi, Dec. 24

Finance minister Arun Jaitley has hinted that India could go for a single standard GST rate going into the future. "A future road map could well be to work towards a single standard rate instead of two standard rates of 12% and 18%. It could be a rate at some mid-point between the two," Jaitley said. Further adding that such a scenario could materialize only when the revenue from GST collection rises significantly, Jaitley wrote, "The country should eventually have a GST which will have only slabs of zero, 5% and standard rate with luxury and sin goods as an exception." The 28 per cent GST slab

could be phased out. This comes within days of the GST Council revising downwards the rates of 23 items leaving only 28 items in the highest category of 28 per cent. In a blog post, Jaitley said, "Today, barring tobacco products, luxury vehicles, molasses, air-conditioners, aerated water, large TVs, and dish washers, all 28 items have been transferred from 28% slab to 18% and 12% slab. Only cement and auto parts are items of common use which remain in 28% slab." "Our next priority will be to transfer cement into a lower slab. All other building materials have already been transferred from 28% to 18% and 12%. The sun is setting on the 28% slab," he added. On the GST revenue collection which has come

under criticism as the government had set a target of collecting Rs one lakh crore monthly, Jaitley said, "This increase in the tax collection has to be factored keeping in mind the significant rate reduction which has taken place in the GST. The reduction in monetary terms amounts to about Rs.80000 crores per year. Notwithstanding the substantial tax reduction, the GST collection in the first six months of this year has shown a significant improvement as compared to the first year. The average monthly tax collected in the first year was Rs.89700 crore as compared to Rs.97100 crore per month in the second year."

In a veiled attack on the opposition which has criticised the patchy implementation of the GST, Jaitley said that the single tax system has greatly reduced the plethora of taxes that an entrepreneur had to deal with. Instead of filing 17 returns and dealing with 17 inspectors, GST has brought all the taxes under one roof.

## 23 ministers take oath of office in Rajasthan

Agency  
Jaipur, Dec 24

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expanded his council of ministers on Monday with 23 ministers, including one from Congress ally Rashtriya Lok Dal, being sworn in at the Raj Bhavan here. Of the 23, 13 are cabinet ministers and 10 ministers of state. Governor Kalyan Singh administered the oath of office to the new ministers at an event attended by Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and senior Congress leaders. The ministers took oath in Hindi.

The cabinet ministers are B D Kalla, Shanti Kumar Dhariwal, Parsadi Lal Meena, Master Bhanwar Lal Meghwal, Lal Chand Kataria, Raghu Sharma, Pramod Jain Bhaya, Vishvendray Singh, Harish Choudhary, Ramesh Chand Meena, Udai Lal Anjna, Pratap Singh Khachariawas and Saleh Mohammad. The ministers of state sworn in are Govind Singh Dotasara, Manta Bhupesh, Arjun Singh Bannia, Bhanwar Singh Bhati, Sukhran Vishnoi, Ashok Chandana, Tika Ram Jolly, Bhajan Lal Jatav, Rajendra Singh Yadav and RLD's Subhash Garg.

## Order For US Military Withdrawal From Syria Signed, Says Pentagon

Agency  
Washington, Dec. 24

The order has been signed for the withdrawal of American troops from Syria, where they have been deployed to assist in the war against ISIS, a US military spokesperson said on Sunday. "The execute order for Syria has been signed," the spokesperson told AFP, without providing further details. US President Donald Trump has declared the terrorist group "largely defeated," and made the

surprise decision to bring US forces home — a move that many US politicians and international allies fear is premature and would further destabilize the already devastated region. The decision — which was followed by another to make a significant cut to the number of American troops in Afghanistan — has prompted the resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and US envoy to the international anti-IS coalition Brett McGurk.

## Sings of discontent within Karnataka Congress as Belagavi strongman Ramesh Jarkiholi threatens to join BJP

Agency  
Belagavi, Dec. 24

A day after Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy expanded the cabinet by inducting eight new ministers, signs of bickering have started emerging from within the Congress party. Ramesh Jarkiholi, the party MLA threatened to quit along with others, after he was 'dropped' from the cabinet.

According to a report by Times Now channel, Jarkiholi's brother Satish was inducted into the cabinet on December 23. According to the Times Now report, Jarkiholi has openly threatened to quit the party and join the BJP along with other MLAs. The departure of the heavyweight politician from Belagavi could spell trouble for the ruling Congress-JDS combine, for which, it is critical to

put up a show of unity at least till the general elections 2019. In the cabinet expansion that took place, the JDS opted to not fill its two slots and instead reserved the decision for the auspicious occasion of Sankranti in 2019. Ally Congress, on the other hand, went ahead with the swearing-in of eight ministers and dropping two ministers including Jarkiholi.

According to a report in Times of India, Mahesh Kamatalli of Athani and Srimanth Patil of Kagwad may leave along with Jarkiholi, who reportedly helped them win the elections. Congress MLC Vivek Rao Patil is also likely to quit — the report suggested. Meanwhile, the state Congress leadership appealed to the 'disgruntled' MLAs to 'understand'. Party leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hoped that Jarkiholi will not leave the party and dismissed reports that his induction into the cabinet was 'blocked' by certain leaders.

## 1 Killed As Bus With 36 Border Cops Falls Into Gorge In Jammu And Kashmir

Agency  
Banihal, Dec. 24

One person was killed and 32 Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel were injured when a bus carrying them skidded off the road this morning and fell into a gorge along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, police said. The border police team was part of a convoy that was returning to Jammu from Budgam after the local body

elections. Around 36 people were travelling in the bus. The accident took place in Ramban district around 8.45 am, a police officer said. While one person died, 32 people were rescued from the wreckage of the vehicle and taken to a government hospital in Ramban, the officer said. Trees prevented the bus from falling further down in the gorge, the officer said.

## National Integration Tour concludes

IT News  
Imphal, Dec 24,

A 15 day long National Integration Tour to Delhi and Agra, comprising of 20 children and three teachers from the far flung area of Joupri, Manipur, concluded on 23 Dec 2018 at Kakching. It was flagged in by Brig Neelish Bhanot, Sena Medal, DIG 28 Sector Assam Rifles. Brig Bhanot, in his address to the children, parents and media personnel, laid emphasis on the important role of these young minds in shaping the future and bringing development, peace, harmony in the state. He later interacted with the children and parents and gained a firsthand account of the tour from the children. The DIG concluded the event by presenting each child with a memento, which was a



framed group photo with the Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ramnath Kovind. The children were elated and will cherish the gift for the rest of their lives. The tour visited the national capital, Delhi and the historically rich city of Agra. During the interaction with the DIG, 28 Sector Assam Rifles,

the children revealed that they were ecstatic during the tour, which provided them an opportunity to experience many things for the first time. A few events which are etched in their memory included travel by train and the Metro for the first time, visit to historical monuments like the Lotus Temple, Red Fort, Humayun Tomb, Nehru

Planetarium, Qutub Minar, Agra the children witnessed deadly unarmed combat techniques and rock climbing displayed by Para Commandos.

The highlight of the tour, according to the children and the teachers, was the interaction with the President of India Ram Nath Kovind. Two of the children shared their experience of the tour and their lives in their villages with the President of India. The Hon'ble President motivated the children by addressing them, highlighting the important role they held in shaping the future of the country.

They also had an interactive session with Hon'ble MoS, PMO Dr Jitendra Singh and Maj Gen Rajpal Punia, COS Delhi Area, who both exhorted them to work hard and contribute actively to the nation building process. The tour has exposed these young minds to discover the culture, technological advancements and architectural splendor of India. The tour has indeed been a life changing experience for the children and hopefully, will motivate them to work towards higher aims in the life.

## Assam Rifles organises security meet cum identity verification

IT News  
Imphal, Dec 24,

Units of IGAR (South) organised security meetings in various parts of Manipur. Tulihal Battalion of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) organised a security meet cum identity verification of shopkeepers and locals residing near the Patsoi Coy Operating Base. The forum was attended by village secretaries, village headman, Meira Paibis and Youth club members along with representatives of Patsoi Police Station. Various issues pertaining to security and maintenance of peace and harmony in the area were discussed during the meeting. Future action

plan in respect of civic action projects like medical camps were also discussed. Wabagaicompany of Kakching Battalion Assam Rifles, under HQ 28 Sector Assam Rifles conducted a security meet with the village chief and ward members of Mantak Village on 22 December 2018 to discuss the security situation in the village. A total of 12 ward members including the Village Chief attended the program. The Coy Cdr interacted with all the members and asked them if they have any problems in their village and if they require any assistance from Assam Rifles and assured them that their security is of utmost importance to Assam Rifles. Cultural

Program was also performed by the children of Mantak Village on the occasion of pre Christmas celebrations in which 10 Children participated which included two types of local dances followed by lunch with all the ward members and children of Mantak Village and gift distribution to the children of Mantak Village. The villagers expressed gratitude to Assam Rifles for providing assistance whenever requested and also highlighted that such interactions bring a sense of belongingness and pave the way in achieving all goals to bring peace and tranquility in the area. The security meet was concluded with tea and refreshments for all.