

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh conferred 'Champions of Change 2018' award



IT News
Imphal, Dec 27,

Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu conferred the award of Champions of Change 2018 to the Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh today at an event organised at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi, for exemplary leadership for bringing about transformation in governance in the State of Manipur. The other prominent awardees include Union Minister of State for Food Processing, Shri Sadvi Niranjan Jyoti and Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, Shri Sudarshan Bhagat and Member of Parliament, Shri Nishikant Dubey. The award was constituted to identify remarkable progress made in 115 Aspirational Districts whose development in being monitored by NITI Aayog. Manipur was recognised for all round development on various parameters in its aspirational district Chandel, a rare feat among all other states of India. With concerted and

collaborative efforts of the State Government, district administration and various Ministries of the Government of India, Chandel district has achieved saturation in several national programmes. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Unnat Jyoti (LED) Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Mission Indradhanush. The award selection jury was led by former Chief Justice of India, K.G. Balakrishnan. The other jury members include Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra, former Supreme Court Judge; Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India; Shri Sonal Mansingh, Padma Vibhushan; Shri Anil Kumar Sinha, Former CBI Director; Shri Pahlaj Nihalani, former Chairman of Central Board of Film Certification; Shri Yaduvendra Mathur, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog and Shri Amit

Bajaj, President, Aditya Birla Group. The event was attended by eminent jurists, journalists, politicians, social leaders, artists, film makers etc. The event was attended by approximately 1000+ eminent personalities. In his speech, Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu lauded the changes brought about in Manipur within a very short period of time. He also stressed that in order to transform India, development has to be made into a people's movement. He also hailed the efforts of bureaucracy who has been backbone of the progress made in the country. VP Shri Naidu remembered the contribution made by Late Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee for making governance core of politics, a vision that has been taken forward under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The award is an initiative of the Interactive Forum on Indian Economy, a Government of India recognised NGO.

Christmas celebrated in environment friendly manner

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Some villages and churches in Manipur celebrates the Christmas, the greatest festival of Christians in an environment friendly manner this time. This was evident in Vakhro, a small village having around 300 households located in Manipur's Senapati

district headquarters about 60 km north of Imphal where one can witnessed well crafted beautiful Christmas tree made out of waste plastic bottles instead of buying costly Christmas decorative materials. Such magical tree glittering away to its fullest glory during the night as one passes through the village. According to Senapati based Herald Today

facebook page, Vakhro Youth & Students organisation (VYSO) members collected around 700 waste plastic bottles dumped at various places of Senapati to make a beautiful Christmas tree for Vakhro village within four days. The idea is to encourage the recycling habits in the village, according to President Thailu LP of VYSO. As a graphic

designer and a photographer by profession I feel that plastic bottles could be used as decorative items, he said. The credit of the humble initiative goes to seven active members of VYSO, he felt. Besides the volunteers of VYSO routinely takes up cleaning activities in and around the village and Senapati town four-five

times a year coinciding with the beginning or ending of the seasons. Interestingly some churches in Ukhrul town, 84 km north of the state capital also uses waste plastic bottles, compact discs and all other used materials as decorative materials in a move to make sure that no trees should be cut down for Christmas tree this time, a resident of hill town said.

Assam Rifles Celebrates Christmas

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The Battalions of IGAR (South) celebrated Christmas at various places across Manipur. The Battalions 9 Sector Assam Rifles organised Christmas in all its Company Operating Bases. Keithelmanbi Battalion celebrated Christmas at Chanchipur, Singjamei, Andro Company operating Bases and Keithelmanbi garrison with locals and children of respective areas of responsibility. The events were started with opening prayer followed by the Gospel message, gifts presentation and concluded with cutting of Christmas cake. Mantripukhari Battalion celebrated Christmas at Sawombung, Hanuman Top and Koirengei Company Operating Bases with the locals and children of Carmel Jyoti Orphanage Home. The Christmas celebration were started with Christmas carols and prayers for peace and harmony followed by gift

distribution ceremony for children and the villagers and refreshments. Thoubal Battalion celebrated Christmas at Chandrakongh Company Operating Base with locals of Somrei Village. The villagers were invited to the Company Operating Base and best wishes and greetings were extended to them. The celebration culminated with refreshment to all the invitees. Tulihal Battalion celebrated Christmas at Mayang Imphal Company Operating Base. The troops extended warm Christmas greetings to the locals and children and celebrated the festival with the locals with great zeal and enthusiasm. Gifts were distributed to children and the villagers followed by tea and refreshments. Chandel Battalion of 26 Sector Assam Rifles paid a visit to the Little Drops Life orphanage on the occasion of Christmas. The Officiating Commandant and other officials of Chandel Battalion celebrated X-Mass with the orphan



children and presented t-shirts to all the children and also christmas cake, sweets and other gifts were given to them. The care taker Mr Johny and his staff were appreciated for their selfless service rendered in bringing up the children. Tengenoupal Battalion under 26 Sector Assam Rifles celebrated Christmas by gifting two 5.5 KVA Generator sets to New Narum and Moriengthel as these villages do not have a regular electricity supply and a generator set would help the villagers for various day to day activities. The unit also gifted cakes, footballs, volleyballs, volleyball nets on the occasion for usage of children and youth of the villages. In

addition to this, Tengenoupal Battalion also helped villagers to organize Christmas feast in various villages like New Narum, Kwatha and Saibol by gifting three farm pigs on the occasion. Sugnu post of Kakching Battalion of 28 Sector Assam Rifles celebrated Christmas by visiting various villages under the Sugnu post and distributing cakes and sweets to the children. This endeavour was aimed at bringing all the people of society together and share joy and happiness of Christmas. Sehlon Battalion under the aegis of 28 Sector Assam Rifles organised a christmas cum new year celebration for the villagers of Old Samtal

and Pholien under Khenjoi sub-division. The companies distributed stationery items, sweets to the school going children and the economically poor families of the village were distributed with basic need items followed by a lunch organized for the villagers. The endeavour all the Battalions to reach out the villagers to extend warm wishes on the the most fondly celebrated festival of the Christian community was appreciated by all. The villagers expressed their gratitude and promised their contribution to work hand in hand with the Assam Rifles for maintaining peace and harmony in the region.

Manipuri Diaspora in Myanmar: Past and Present

the descendants of those Manipuris who practised medicine there. Perhaps, bachelors and spinsters between the ages of 30 and 84 are present in every household. The reasons for remaining unmarried for boys / girls are the lack of suitable brides or grooms, discrimination and casteism. They can be married to the Myanmar people but they want to remain as Manipuri-Kates, and Kate-Paonas. There are girls who remained unmarried because they were burdened with parental care. Ostracism is very much common if a person marries a Myanmar girl because of the unavailability of a suitable Manipuri girl. Remaining unmarried is one of the causes of decreasing population. Those Manipuri-Kates settled along the banks of the Ningthi River can accept other community's brides after converting them to Hinduism since they couldn't find suitable brides from their own community. The number of spinsters outnumbers Manipuri bachelors. Those children born out of marriage with other community's girls are not allowed to enter Hindu temples by the Manipuri-Kate Paonas, and those children are known as 'Kabiya' (Hybrid) in Myanmar language. The people of Myanmar took notice of them because Manipuri-Kate cavalry and soldiers fought by the side of the people of their adopted land, Myanmar. However, the Myanmar's attitude of looking down Manipuri-Kate remained as they were brought there as captives. On the other hand, Manipuri-Kate Paonas got respect because they served the Myanmar king as consultants, purohits (king's priests) and astrologers. For the above reason some Manipuri-Kates wanted to be converted into Manipuri-Kate Paonas. Thus Kates residing inside Mandalay became Manipuri-Kate Paonas. Meanwhile those Manipuri-Kates who failed to become Manipuri-Kate Paonas embraced Buddhism and joined the Myanmar society. In this way Manipuri Myanmar are in a process of vanishing their language and their original settlements. There is an attitude of treating Manipuri-Kates as lower castes by Manipuri-Kate Paonas. Kate-Paonas of Mandalay division are doing their

best to preserve Hindu traditions by constructing temples and offering services to Hindu deities, celebrating annual festivals, offerings weekly evening prayers, and using 'Urik' (sacred bead) and 'Lugun' (sacred thread). **Residential and Temple Architecture** Rich Manipuri-Kates and Paonas built their houses with bricks and some of them are double storied. Most of the houses are constructed with wood and they are covered with C.I. sheets. Besides the living house, kitchen and store houses are roofed with bamboo. And these houses are walled with bamboo mats. Some of the houses of Manipuri-Kates by the river banks of the Ningthi (Chindwin) look like the traditional Meitei Yumjao (traditional Manipuri house). Some of them were seen before the 2nd World War. At Namfalong, some Manipuri houses have 'kangthak (pile dwelling). The area under the kangthak is used as a work-shed. There is a gate for every bamboo, wooden and brick walls that encircle residential areas. A 'Tulishipung' (a sacred spot for ritual purposes) is there in front of every house. An area called 'phamel' is reserved for elders on the right side of the verandah of a house. There is no tradition among Manipuri-Kates and Paonas of Mandalay of reserving an area in the south-eastern corner of the house for Lord Sanamahi. However, idols of Lakshmi (Hindu goddess of wealth) are worshipped in place of Sanamahi. Manipuri-Kates settled along the banks of the Ningthi river, have the tradition of reserving an area for Lord Sanamahi in their houses. They don't have the tradition of rearing poultry. They believe that if a hen perches on the roof of a house, Lord Sanamahi will move away. In the localities of Kate-Paonas there is a tradition of having temples and mandhavs. The main structures of the temples are of brick, and they are roofed with C.I. sheets. The village of Dat Dale have Hindu temples, besides having brick temples of Lainingthou Pakhangba and Lairembi. At Gaave (Yekyi pauk) village, there are two wooden temples of Yumjao Lairembi (meroji) and Marjing and the roof is of C.I. sheets. The Hindu temples have pointed domes like those of the Pagoda. Bells are hung high supported by brick pillars.

Dress and Customs

Myanmarese Manipuris have two areas of dressing. When they come out of their houses they wear longyi. From an early period, some Manipuris will cover their head with a piece of cloth and a knot is left on the left side. Myanmarese Manipuri women wear stripped sarong. The sarong is joined at the borders lengthwise and it is worn by tucking in a part of it, along the line of the left leg. Women wear long sleeved blouses Sometimes woman wear sarongs over them. Sometimes the blouse covers the sarong. There is not much difference on the matter of dresses between a girl and a married woman. Male folks wear white dhoti (pheijom) when they participate religious of ritualistic ceremonies. Boys wear white dhoti. Men use white armless vests as they participate in ceremonies, and cloth is hung around the neck. During ceremonies, girls of Bamon Khunjaio wear 'Pungmou Phane' (pale pink sarong) and their forehead is adorned with 'Chandan' (sacred mark). The tradition of wearing pungmou phane in Mandalay is a recent one. There's no tradition of 'Phidon Chingkhap' (wearing sarong over the chest) among married women during prayer sessions. Most of the male Myanmarese Manipuris wear 'Longyi'. If a male person, residing by the banks of the Ningthi river is seen with a Longyi, he is looked at with derision for he is seen as a woman wearing a sarong. Now - a - days, some men have started using Longyi. There is a tradition for married women to keep a knot of hair on the backside of the head. This knot of hair is often adorned with white flowers. They use earring and gold necklaces around necks. There's no tradition of wearing extra golden bangles. A groom puts on a 'Pheijom' (white dhoti) and Lugun (sacred thread). No shirt is worn. But, their upper body is covered with a white cloth. 'Kokyot', (white turban) is put on the head. However, it is different from the one used by the Manipuris in Manipur. This turban is specially created by the Myanmarese Manipuris. No difference is there between the turban worn by a groom and the turban used by a pungyeiba (drummer). The bride wears 'Achiek' or a costly sarong (phane). A long-sleeved blouse is worn by

her. A thin white cloth will cover the bride, and jewellery is on the head. Scented white jasmine will be used along with the jewellery. Kate women settled by the banks of the Ningthi (Chindwin) river wear embroidered sarong (phane) in marriage ceremonies. The bride and groom will be marked with chandan. There's no difference in the use of costume and jewellery between girls ready for na-hupa (piercing the earlobes) and a bride. But, there's no tradition of using an inaphi (wrapper). In recent years it has become common seeing girls and married women wearing needle worked sarongs (the designs are on both the borders) among the Manipuri-Kates and Paonas of Mandalay division. When girls offer dances at a Mandhav (an open construction used for religious or other functions). They will put on 'Mayek Naiba' sarong. During the occasion of Lai Haraoba of 'Yumjao Lairembi' (Meroji in Myanmar language) at Gaave (Yekyi pauk), village the girls of Manipuri-Kates and Paonas settled in Bamon Khunjaio, Minde-e-kin, Dat Dale, Moza of Mandalay and Sagaing use mayek naiba sarong and extra-welt-designed wrapper. About a centuries back, Manipuri women of Mandalay wore a sarong named 'Pumthet Phane' other ones which had embroidered by needle on both borders. However, these sarongs are no longer in use. Manipuri-Kate 'Maibi' (priestess who does not speak Manipuri language) wear a horizontally-striped sarong high on the chest; she is without any shirt. She will cover herself with a thin cloth over the head. Girls who form a part of the festival of Lai-Haraoba (pleasing of deity) wear stripped sarong and a blouse. A garland prepared with white jasmine will decorate her head. In the late 18th century, a Manipuri-Kate was found serving under the Myanmar king as a general. Manipuri-Kates formed a part of the Myanmarese cavalry and foot soldiers. The general (Manipuri-Kate) of Myanmarese army donned a Pheijom and a turban on head and the shirt is Myanmarese. Manipuri cavalry wore 'Koyet Kangdrum' (turban used as safety gear) and it is tied down with a piece of cloth under the chin.