

Straight contest between NDPP & NPF in LS bypoll

Agency
Kohima, May 16,

The Nagaland Lok Sabha bypoll will witness a straight contest between the ruling National Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) and

opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) on May 28. Tokheho Yephomi of NDPP with 'globe' symbol and C Apok Jamir of NPF with 'cock' symbol are contesting the election. The lone Lok Sabha seat fell vacant after present CM

Neiphiu Rio resigned to contest the assembly election. Counting will take place on May 31. General observer J Ravishankar has urged all political parties and stakeholders to ensure free

and fair polls and also abide by the commission's guidelines. Expenditure observers said all political parties have to come with their expenditure statement and Rs 75 lakh is the maximum limit for a candidate.

Deputy Chief Minister inaugurates Grid Connected Roof Top Solar Power Plant

DIPR
Imphal, May 16,

Deputy Chief Minister had inaugurated a Grid connected roof top solar power plant at office premise of United Club & Library (UCAL), Uripok Khwairak Selungba Leirak in Imphal. The power plant will generate power from solar energy for street lighting has been installed by Manipur Renewable Energy Development Agency (MANIREDA), as a part of the ongoing solar energy generation project jointly undertaken with Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited (MSPDCL). The plant has a capacity to generate five Mega Watts of power and will provide power to around 80 street lamps in the area. Speaking at the function,

Deputy Chief Minister said, 35 different sites in Uripok Assembly Constituency have been identified to install such solar power plants for the first phase. As of now, 12 plants have been installed and have started power generation. 11 more plants will also become functional within three-four days. He further said, such power plants can be helpful in generating clean energy and excess energy can be transmitted to MSPDCL, which in turn generating revenue. Stating that under the ambitious project, almost all places in his Constituency will be covered in phase wise manner, Shri Joykumar Singh said, installation works of the first phase will be completed within 30th of June this year. He said, in the first phase, public places like community halls, clubs and institutions



will be covered. 70 per cent of the total expenditure required in installation of the plants will be borne by MANIREDA. He appealed to the people to extend support while identifying places where it can be installed and to avail such benefits which will be helpful in overall development of power generation in the State. Director, MANIREDA, L. Manglem Singh said, power supply improved considerably in the last three-four years in the state. He said, under Renewable

Purchase Obligation (RPO), 8 per cent of the total power generation in the state per year will be from solar energy and steps are being taken up to generate more and more solar energy to meet the target. As of now, around 6.2 Mega Watts of power can only be generated from solar energy as against the target of 40-50 Mega Watts per year. Therefore, Grid connected roof top solar power plant has been introduced as third step of solar energy generation in the state.

AR distributes solar lights



IT News
Imphal, May 16,

Upper Khoripok Company Operating Base 26 Assam Rifles of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) distributed Solar Lights to villagers of Upper Khoripok, Molan, Natjang, Hongbi, Sangpunram,

Thangja, Lairam Phunka and Lairam Khullen of Kamjong District. A statement of the IGAR (S) said that the service is an initiative of spreading light and a step towards clean energy to the villages. The villagers appreciated the efforts of Assam Rifles in reaching out to them, the statement added.

“Go To Village” mission at Thoubal, Chandel

DIPR
Thoubal, May 15,

The 3rd round of “Go to Village” mission was conducted successfully at different camps in Thoubal district yesterday. The camps were conducted at Laikhrakpam Mayai Leikai Community Hall (Lilong AC), Samaram Mayai Leikai Community Hall (Khangabok AC) and Sabaltongba Lai Haraopham (Thoubal AC).

In Chandel district also, the District Administration conducted the “Go to Village” mission at three venues covering 14 villages. As done in the last two rounds, departmental stalls were set up and benefits under different government schemes were distributed to beneficiaries by each department in the districts. It may be mentioned that service delivery camps will be held at different villages on every Tuesday

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The Fate of Press Freedom in India Over the Years

The hyperbole of emotive adjectives did not die down even in 2007-08 as India came out almost untouched by the global meltdown. And in time it was a habit to mix views with news and excitement with facts, where even the press appeared almost starry-eyed by the grandeur of the Narendra Modi campaign lapping up the size and comparison with the presidential elections of the US.

As all of this happened, not necessarily in an absolute sequence, the realities of running a business hit several media houses. Some opted for private treaties and others openly allowed paid news legitimising the same with a pricing menu. Others sold their equity to large industry. With no policy framework in place, this was waiting to happen. Such incidences, for example, allowed the Reliance Group to own the Network 18. It was

called a ‘bail out’ for the then promoter, Raghav Bahl, but it eventually cost the large corporation a voice and say in public opinion. Coupled with the growing reality of cronyism between industry and governments, the media was quietly emerging as a critical weapon that the two could share in a self-serving manner. It is no wonder why corporates have bought into or bought out several media houses. Surprisingly, the respected media man N. Ram, was quoted in *The Hindu* last October saying, “Nobody has figured out a viable business model for quality journalism”. While quality of journalism has to improve significantly, why should there be a business model if the media is the Fourth Estate and critical pillar of democracy? Think of it – the government runs without profit and loss as its prime criteria. It is to govern

and provide certain services. The same applies for the judiciary and the legislature in different measure. The fourth pillar should remain unblighted and unapologetic if it is to remain free with a purpose of service to the nation. But back to today's realities where press freedom or the lack of it is not limited entirely by ownership or a failing quality of journalism or how the law on defamation is used. Fear is a critical component that curtails freedom. At one level it is the fear that the State might go after you for reporting on an issue that damages their image or questions their credibility. At another, the fear that the management might boot you out because you chose to carry two sides to a story, or questioned a policy that probably the owner had some interests in. In both situations, self censorship kills freedom. And if there are a string of

deaths of journalists while at work or losing their job because they disagreed with a management diktat, then the fear runs deep and cages expression and consequent plurality. So the matter before us is not the 138 this year or 140 ranking (2014) or 131 ranking (2012). It is whether the press will get due freedom and if political parties are ready to address it through their manifestos. It would be a wonder if civil society stands up and makes the matter personal enough to emotive over. And it would be even more powerful if journalists themselves came together to protect their right to expression as it is their diversity and plurality that will help us learn more about the length, breadth and width of what our nation is while checking the powers that be as the Fourth Estate. (Sharif Rangnekar is a communications consultant and a former journalist.)

Below is the memorandum submitted to MP Rajendra Agarwal, Chairman, Joint Committee on Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 by NESO

We, on behalf of the North East Student's Organization (NESO), which consists of All Arunachal Pradesh Student's Union (AAPSU), All Assam Students' Union (AASU), All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU), Naga Students' Federation (NSF), Khasi Students' Union (KSU), Garo Students' Union (GSU), Mizo Zirlai Paul (MZP), Twipura Students' Federation (TSF) submit the memorandum to express our dismay and displeasure for bringing the proposed Bill. The NESO represents the students' community of the entire region belonging to different languages and religions submit the memorandum to express our dismay and displeasure for bringing the proposed Bill. The NESO represents the students' community of the entire region belonging to different languages, different tribes, different communities and different religions.

Sir, we feel that the North East Region remains a distant place for the Union government. The Union government do not understand our problems and our aspirations. Our social structure, our history and our cultural values are unknown to the rest of the country.

The proposed Bill is the latest example that the lawmakers of the country have no regard for our future of the North East Region.

The entire North East Region is infested with foreigners from the erstwhile East Pakistan and, now, Bangladesh. They have infiltrated into and polluted every aspect of our social life. The politicians have supported them to threaten identity of the indigenous people of the region. All the states have suffered badly due to the illegal flow of the foreigners without any hindrance.

The content and purpose of the Bill have shocked the people of the North East Region. People are wondering how the government of India could think of introducing such a Bill. We have no doubt that the proposed Bill is an attempt to impose the burden of the post-1971 Hindu Bangladesh in the entire

region, in general and on Assam, in particular, of they are allowed to stay in Assam, they will spread to the entire region in course of time.

The proposed Bill defeats the very purpose of signing the Assam Accord.

The NESO fully supported of the Assam Accord by the All Assam Students' Union setting 25 March 1971 as the cut off year for detecting and deportation of the foreigners from Assam. The people of Assam showed remarkable sense of humanism and accommodation by agreeing to accept the burden of all the illegal immigrants who came before 25 March 1971. The entire North East Region has been accepting migrant from the erstwhile East Pakistan event in the pre-Independence period. It is obvious that the proposed Bill is a political conspiracy to impose the burden of the post-1971 Bangladesh on the North East Region, whether Hindus or Muslims.

It should not be adopted by Parliament under any circumstances. Such an undesirable step by Parliament will once again agitate the entire region. We all have a responsible to avoid such a potentiality. We request the honourable Committee to remember that we are speaking on behalf of the entire students' community as well as people of the whole region.

The illegal immigrants have systematically occupied the government land, the forest land and tribal land in every state if the region. The ethnic communities have suffered politically and socially. The Assam Accord has promised to evict the illegal immigrants from these areas. The promised in the Assam Accord the post-1971 foreigners from Bangladesh should be detected and deported without any further delay. The presence of several dozens of lakhs of foreigners from Bangladesh is harming the economy of the state. It is affecting the entire region. The indigenous population of Tripura was outnumbered by the illegal migrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan and Bangladesh. Tripura has already lost its tribal identity.

The proposed Bill is another effort to encourage infiltration of the Hindus from Bangladesh into the different states of the North

East Region. We shall resist creation of another Tripura in any part of the North East Region.

We request our lawmaker, the honourable members of the Committee to appreciate our effort to strengthen fabric of the country. Religion might have played a part at the time of creation of India and Pakistan. But the Indian Constitution was prepared in a secular framework. Religion was not allowed to play any part in the making of our Constitution. The proposed Bill is antithesis to secular idealism of India. *That region was a factor during partition and so religion should be a criterion to decide citizenship is a false notion.*

If there is any harassment of Hindus in Bangladesh, the Union Government should force the Bangladesh Government to take care of life and property of the Hindus there. There are no records and records of harassment of Hindus in Bangladesh. It is pertinent to mention that the prime minister of India Shri Narendra Modi praised the prime minister of Bangladesh Mrs Sheikh Hasina for her good governance during Shri Modi's last visit to that country. The Bangladesh continue to enter the North East Region not because they are persecuted in Bangladesh, but because they have been encouraged to come here by keeping the border open. The proposed Bill is a climb down by the Union Government.

In totality we oppose the proposed Bill and demand that Inner Line Permit system should be introduced for the entire region. Furthermore, constitutional safeguards should be provided to the people of the NE states. Federal authority should be granted to the states to assert rights over land and natural resources. All Assam Students' Union is a part of the NESO. AASU has already submitted a memorandum to the JPC in Delhi. We endorse the views of AASU and se enclosed the memorandum as an Annexure.

Blood samples collected for scribes' LFT

By NJ Thakuria
Guwahati, May 16,

The city based GATE Hospital yesterday conducted a comprehensive liver function test (LFT) for scribes at Guwahati Press Club, where around 140 member-journalists participated in the camp. The reports of collected blood samples will be available for free of cost at the press club office on or before Saturday. The participants also got their blood pressure & sugar checked in the camp, where Dr Mahibul Islam was available for consultations. Laboratory technicians Jitu Talukdar, Malabika Nath & Bonti Rani



and nurse Sumi Rajbongshi assisted in the camp, where Mintu Ranjan Dutta, chief operating officer of the hospital was also present. Experienced physicians from

the hospital will be available on 26 May's weekly media OPD clinic (3pm to 5pm) at the press club premises for free consultations on the participants' blood reports.