

National News

Labour Codes threaten Press Freedom: IJU

By a correspondent, New Delhi, July 25,

The Indian Journalists Union (IJU) on Wednesday gave a clarion call to the working journalists, editors to raise their voice against the nefarious designs of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to cut into the roots of press freedom in the country by repealing two legislations that protect the unique character of the profession of journalism. In two Labour Code Bills, one on Working Conditions and the other on Wages, introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the government proposed to repeal the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1955, and the

Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of wages) Act, 1958 along with 11 other labour laws. In a statement on Wednesday, the Indian Journalists Union (IJU) President and Press Council of India member Amar Devulapalli and Secretary General and IFJ Vice President Sabina Inderjit lamented that the government sought to equate 'fourth estate' with any other industry, but worse has brazenly favoured the corporate media barons who have persistently been demanding to abolish the Wage Board and do away with the Working Journalists Act. The IJU said the media houses time and again challenged the recommendations of the wage boards for the newspaper industry and the

constitutional validity of the Working Journalists Act in Supreme Court unsuccessfully. They said that "the government forgets the basic foundation for the Working Journalists Act was laid by the Press Commission in 1954 when it put into perspective the nature of the journalists' job saying "his work cannot be measured as in other industries" and that "insecurity of tenure is peculiar to this profession...unemployment would not necessarily have that result in other professions." The IJU leaders said that "A free and independent Press is paramount to any democratic society and any attempts to undermine the functioning of the 'fourth estate' must be fought tooth and nail as it

would have adverse affect on the democratic polity. The Government is misleading the country, when it claims that it has consulted all stakeholders, for it has never discussed the proposed changes with the journalist trade unions in the country". The IJU urged MPs, both opposition and ruling party, to ensure that the Labour Code Bills are referred to concerned Parliamentary Standing Committee or a Joint Select Committee so that the provisions of the proposed bills are scrutinised minutely. At the same time, the IJU has cautioned the journalist fraternity across the country that it does not protest and garner support against the Government's surreptitious move; it would be a death knell for independent media and rights of journalists.

Rajya Sabha passes POCSO Amendment Bill with provision of death penalty

Agency New Delhi, July 25,

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019 has been passed by Rajya Sabha. The bill seeks to enhance punishment, including a provision for death penalty, for committing sexual crimes against children. Replying to the debate on the Bill, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said government has sanctioned 1023 fast track courts for speedy dispensation of pending cases under POCSO and sexual assault. 18 states have given their consent to set up the fast track courts which will be established within a span of two years. The Minister said government's priority is to ensure that justice is delivered to every child in the country. The total expenditure in setting up these courts will be 767 crore rupees out of which 474 crore rupees will

be borne by the Centre. She said these Courts will function in addition to the existing sessions courts. Ms Irani said, an evaluation would be made to ensure the quality of justice that was dispensed, through an institution empanelled by Niti Aayog with regards to this process, which the government is about to undertake. She said that currently 75000 children are in 2000 child care homes. She said, a National data base of sexual offenders has also been launched by Home Ministry last year and contains data of six lakh 20 thousand sexual offenders in the country. The data helps when such person goes for employment and the institution sends their information for police verification. In order to curb child pornography, the Bill provides that those who use a child for pornographic

purposes should be punished with imprisonment up to five years and a fine. However, in the event of second or subsequent conviction, the punishment would be up to seven years and fine. The Bill defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a child including photograph, video, digital or computer generated image indistinguishable from an actual child. According to the amendment bill, those committing penetrative sexual assaults on a child below 16 years of age would be punished with imprisonment up to 20 years, which might extend to life imprisonment as well as fine. In case of aggravated penetrative sexual assault, the bill increases the minimum punishment from ten years to 20 years, and the maximum punishment to death penalty.

Technology

Zoom Me and Kytes Mobiles Enters the Fast Growing India Market

By-Sakshi Jaiswal

Shenzhen Guowei Network Service Limited, a professional and reputed Mobile Equipment OEM/ ODM supplier headquartered in Shenzhen, China has today announced that it has partnered conglomerate, Golden Impex to launch its mobile brand, ZoomMe and Kytes in the India market. The company is looking at bringing 3 Smart phones & 7 Feature Phones in the market under both this brand.

The brand was launched by famous Bollywood actress & Model, Ms Neha Sharma. Speaking at the launch, Mr. Rajeev Tiwari, Vice President - Sales & Distribution said that the primary business objective at the outset is to provide the right product, at the right time, at the right price and forge a strong business relationship. "Our target customers primarily would be people who are possibly fence-sitters in the feature phone segment but eagerly anticipating an opportunity to enter the smartphone segment. We offer the price advantage to make this target audience readily buy Smartphone from their nearby retail outlet. Our product is designed to offer the best of 4G experience on the Latest Android platform."

Talking to the media during the launch, Mr. Ma Jian - Vice President - Overseas Trade, ZoomMe Mobile, Said We are the leading manufacturers of both feature phones and smart phones besides internet of things (IoT) related product including smart wearable device to home appliances. With the launch of our smart phones we are entering a very robust but still growing Indian mobile phone market. We are confident that our value for money products which are technically sound will be able to create a niche in India". Under Kytes brand, the range of feature phone with key features like Vibrator, Multiple Language Support, Call Recording, FM Radio, Digital Camera, bluetooth etc), includes 'Kane', 'Hawk' with 1050mAh Battery, 'Pride' with 2200mAh Battery, 'Power' with



3000mAh Battery, 'Hero' with 1500mAh Battery, 'Marathon Plus' with 2500mAh Battery and 'Parker' with 1750mAh Battery. The price range starts from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1200. Under Zoom Me brand, the mobile phones launched today are a part of its popular and state-of-the-art 'M' series. The M series mobiles have three variants M1, M2 and M3. The M1 range is equipped with 18.9 Full View, 14CM 2.5D IPS Display and comes with a RAM of 3GB and ROM of 32 GB, which is expandable to 128 GB. Based on Android 9.0 operating system and MediaTek Cortex A53 Quad Core processor, this smart phone has a dual rear camera set up (13.0MP + 2.0 MP with flash) and 13.0 MP front camera with flash. Moreover, the M1 smart phones also flaunt fingerprint sensor and a powerful 3200mAh battery. The M1 smart phone will be available at a retail price of Rs. 7349/- On the other hand the M2 range of smart phones are based on Android 8.1 operating system, MediaTek Cortex A53 Quad Core processor, 12.60 CM 2.5D 18:9 Full View IPS Display, 16GB storage expandable upto 64 GB, 2.0 + 5.0MP AF Primary camera with flash and 2.0 MP secondary camera, fingerprint sensor and 2400mAh battery. The M2 smart phone will be available at a retail price of Rs. 4785/- The M3 range of smart phones are based on Android 9.0 operating system and is equipped with MediaTek Cortex A53 Quad Core processor, 15.5 CM IPS

Display - Waterdrop Notch, 3GB RAM, 32GB Storage expandable upto 128 GB, 13.0MP + 2.0MP AF Primary camera with flash and 8.0 MP Secondary camera. This phone is powered with fingerprint sensor and a battery of 3300mAh. The M3 smart phone will be available at a retail price of 7875/- "The industry reports suggest that the next wave of growth in mobile internet users is going to come from rural areas, which clearly means that the demand of smart phones will increase significantly in such places. In fact in rural India, mobile handset penetration is much higher than TV. It is matter of time before all these basic mobile phone users will switch to smart phones. We as a brand are well placed to cater such an evolving rural market besides consumers in metro and secondary Indian cities," added Mr. Rajeev Tiwari, VP Sales & Distribution. The company has three R&D centers in China in cities including Shenzhen, Guizhou and Kunming. It's global sales network is present in key global markets like Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, South America, the USA, Iran, France, Africa among others. Furthermore the company have tie-up with Creations Corporation Private Limited for Manufacturing under Make in India Program, who will be having life time exclusive mass production rights for Zoom Me and Kytes while its being manufactured and sold in India. There are 268 Mobile Manufacturers Registered in India & wear Number 269. the

company is trying to achieve a retail reach of 7,000 outlets. "In the 2nd phase, the estimated target is to be present in 10,000 outlets pan India. A total business topline of Rs 1000 crore by 2020 should keep us in good stead, said Mr. KPK Selvaraj, President at Golden Impex, the Brand Owners of ZoomMe Mobiles in India. Talking to the media during the launch, Mr. S Praneesh - President, Golden Impex, said that the primary business objective at the outset is to provide the right product, at the right time, at the right price and forge a strong business relationship. "More than capturing market share in the category, we would like to consistently build equity through positive word of mouth via 2 main channels - retailers and end customers. This can be possible through keeping the basics right and constantly value-adding to the product and service, coupled with strong messaging through offline and online mediums. From there on we are looking at YoY growth to the tune of 30%," said Mr. S Praneesh - President, Golden Impex. About Zoom Me Smartphones & Kytes Feature phones: Kytes and ZoomMe mobile phones is a brand launched by Shenzhen Guowei Network Service Limited in association with a Conglomerate Golden Impex. Under Zoom Me Mobiles brand, the company has 3 models which starts from Rs 5000 and goes upto Rs 8000. Whereas Kytes Mobiles is a mid-market brand which has 07 models and the price range is 500 to 1200.

News from South East Asia

Singapore makes its biggest ever illegal ivory seizure

Agency Singapore, July 25,

Singapore has made its largest ever seizure of smuggled ivory, impounding a haul of nearly nine tonnes of contraband tusks from an estimated 300 elephants, authorities said Tuesday. The illegal cargo, discovered Sunday in a container from the Democratic Republic of the Congo being shipped to Vietnam via Singapore, also included a huge stash of pangolin scales — the third such seizure in as many months. Officials said both the ivory and pangolin scales were in a container declared to be loaded with timber destined through Singapore, a major transshipment hub for global

trade. On inspection, authorities found 8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory, the National Parks Board, Customs and Immigration and Checkpoints Authority said in a joint statement. The ivory haul was valued at \$12.9 million and is "the largest seizure of elephant ivory in Singapore to date", it said, and was estimated to have come from 300 African elephants. Also found in the container were 11.9 tonnes of pangolin scales and estimated to be worth about \$35.7 million. The scales were estimated to have come from 2,000 of the mammals. It was the third interception by Singapore of smuggled pangolin scales since April and brought the total haul in

just three months to 37.5 tonnes worth \$112.5 million. Singapore said the seized items would be destroyed. Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are critically endangered. They are the world's most trafficked mammals because of their meat, which is considered a delicacy, and their scales, which some believe to have medicinal qualities. Elephant ivory is coveted because it can be fashioned into items like combs, pendants and other exotic jewellery. The global trade in elephant ivory, with rare exceptions, has been outlawed since 1989 after the population of the African giants dropped from millions in the mid-20th century to around 600,000 by the end of the 1980s.

Malaysia restarts rail link project with China after cost cut

Agency Kuala Lumpur, July 25,

Malaysia restarted the China-linked East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project on Thursday (July 25) after downsizing building costs by a third to lighten the government's debt burden. The rail project, led by China Communications Construction Co and Malaysia Rail Link Sdn., was cancelled a year ago by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's new government after he balked at the RM65.5 billion (\$52.1 billion) cost. He revived talks later and in April struck a deal with China to cut it down to RM44 billion. Malaysia hopes "the ECRL will bring economic benefits to the country, not just in construction, but that it would

also connect all the railway tracks to the ports," Transport Minister Anthony Loke said at the project relaunch in the east coast state of Terengganu on Thursday. "Hence the shipping and logistics industry would certainly enjoy more encouraging industry growth." The rail project is one of several infrastructure projects that Tun Dr Mahathir has sought to revive to help stoke economic growth, after a wave of spending cuts and a corruption crackdown last year following his election victory. For China, there is a boom in its Belt and Road Initiative, which has seen Asian governments from Myanmar to Maldives reassessing Chinese investments amid concern

over sovereignty and large borrowings. The 640km rail will connect Peninsular Malaysia's eastern coast, whose economy lags the wealthier western coast, to states near the capital of Kuala Lumpur when completed in 2026. The amended deal increases local contractors participation while realigning certain routes. The project's cost had ballooned as construction went underway, with the finance ministry estimating that the price tag could reach as much as RM81 billion. Dr Mahathir said the original cost was inflated and would have been lower if the deal inked during his predecessor Najib Razak's time as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative - was offered through an open tender.