

AMSU observes Realization Day by maintaining physical distancing

IT News
Imphal, April 17

All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) today observe 40th Realization Day "Mikap Thokpa Numit" at Pishum Chingamacha, Hao Ground, Singamei. Unlike yester years the AMSU observed the day with few members paying tributes to the two students' martyrs- P. Premananda and H. Lokendro, who were killed in police action during anti-foreigners

movement of April 17, 1980. As people across the country are maintaining lockdown called to fight against the COVID-19, and as government advice physical distancing of at least 1 metre besides using facemask while going outdoor, the AMSU volunteers maintain the advisory while paying the floral tributes to the martyrs. Talking on the occasion President of AMSU Peter Laishram drew the attention of the government to introduce

classes using cable TV and others electronic media as internet connectivity are very low at interior parts of the state besides student's inability to afford smart phones. The AMSU President also stated that the organization is ready to extend all support in distributing books to the students. Peter Laishram further said that the volunteers of the AMSU will donate bloods in collaboration with major hospitals and blood banks.

Lifting and distribution Of PDS rice under PMGKAY continues

IT News
Imphal, April 17

Following the State Government's initiative to ensure that the people of the State are provided uninterrupted supply of foodgrains, 9096.01 quintal of rice under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) allocated for Public Distribution in certain Assembly Constituencies of the State were lifted from various FCI godowns on Thursday. For Nungba A/C, 1549.40 quintal of rice under PMGKAY was lifted today from FCI godown, Sangaprou whereas 512 quintal was lifted for Tamei A/C under PMGKAY from FCI godown, Jiribam.

In Imphal West, 539.93 quintal and 896.39 quintal of rice under PMGKAY were lifted for Patsoi A/C and Konthoujam A/C respectively. For Imphal East, 1458.29 quintal, 1753.80 quintal, 1440.05 quintal and 946.15 quintal of rice under PMGKAY were lifted for distribution at Lamlai A/C, Thongju A/C, Keirao A/C and Khurai A/C respectively. There were also reports of lifting and sale of rice under Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) at different districts of the State. For Pherzawl District, 75 quintal of rice under OMSS was lifted. Thoubal District also reported lifting of 75 quintal of rice under OMSS and sale of 17.5 quintal of rice under OMSS. Kangpokpi District reported

sale of 15 quintal of rice under OMSS covering 152 households. In Churachandpur, 75 quintal of rice was distributed at different Sub-Divisions i.e 15 quintal at Samulamlan, 20 quintal at Singhat, 10 quintal at Sangaikot, 10 quintal at Henglep, 5 quintal at Suangdoh and 15 quintal at Kangvai. It may be mentioned that the State Government has been distributing PDS items to every household in all the districts of Manipur under NFSA, PMGKAY and OMSS to ensure none to suffer on account of non-availability of foodgrains due to the ongoing lockdown in the State to contain outbreak of COVID-19.

COVID-19 racism continues to NE people at Metro-cities; Mumbai man arrested for spitting on Manipur girl

IT News/Agencies
Imphal, April 17

Racial discrimination continue to haunt the NE people in major metropolitan cities in India, with another case of flushing bucket of water to two Manipuri youths who were waiting for buying groceries at Mahipalpur in New Delhi. The incident happened on Tuesday. What is more shocking is that after the matter was complaint to police, those people continue to call them Coronavirus in front of the police and the police

did nothing until a complaint has been lodged with the help of the NE-Help Line. Meanwhile, news channels reported that A 29-year-old man was arrested on Thursday for allegedly spitting on a girl from Manipur, 10 days after the incident happened in Mumbai, as per reports. The man, identified as Amir Khan, a resident of Kurla (West), was arrested by suburban Vakola Police with the help of the CCTV footage which showed the scooter's registration number, the report said.

As per reports, the man, a salesman, has been charged with Sections 270 and 352 of the IPC for malignantly doing an act known to be likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life and a punishment for assault or criminal force otherwise than on grave provocation. The incident happened on April 6 when the 25-year-old woman along with her sister were on the way to collect grocery items distributed by the Naga Students' Union Mumbai (NSUM).

While trying to cross the road near the Kalina Atulji main signal in Santa Cruz (East) area in Mumbai, the man on a scooter came close to where they were standing, take off his mask and spat at the sisters, an act that displays audacious racism towards the Northeast people. Unfortunately, there were no policemen in the area at the time of the incident and the man escaped from the spot. While her sister luckily escaped from the spat, the girl couldn't and received a spit stained on her shirt.

YCPIP condemn attack to the residence of Mr. Ashaibam Nandakumar and 12 others at Andro on April 10

IT News
Imphal, April 17

Youths Action Committee for Protection of Indigenous Peoples (YCPIP) expressed strong condemnation to the deadly attack at the residence of Mr. Ashaibam Nandakumar and 12 other residences at Andro on 10th of April, 2020. The attacker attacked the residences with various sophisticated weapons like

gun, machetes, rods, etc which can cause death of a person. Various rounds of bullets were fired and destroyed the household materials including four wheeler vehicles and other expensive items of the houses, a statement said "We have a fear that the attack was motivated by the local political leaders in connection with some of the prolonged activities carried out by Mr.

Ashaibam Nandakumar for the welfare and protection of rights of indigenous people of Andro area and to uphold the United Nation's Declaration on Rights of the Indigenous People", YCPIP statement said and appealed the Manipur Human Rights Commission to take up a Sue Motto under Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and strictly monitor the investigation

process and direct the Director General of Police to arrest the people involved in Mob Justice on the 10th of April, 2020. The YCPIP also appealed the Chief Minister of Manipur for his intervention by directing the Police Department to establish a Special Investigation Team at the earliest as the attack is suspect to have been politically motivated.

Press Club of Assam observes foundation day

IT News
Guwahati, April 17

Press Club of Assam (PCA) today observed its fourth annual foundation day in the city with very limited programs in view of novel corona virus outbreak in the country. In the morning hours, PCA president Kailash Sarma and general secretary Hiren Kalita launched plantation program under its Mission Green initiative at the premises of Ugratara temple in Ujanbazar locality. In the meeting, conducted under the guidelines of national lockdown, four working journalists were selected for different PCA posts, which were lying vacant for sometime. PCA president Sarma and general secretary Kalita assigned senior journalist Nava Thakuria as its working president, Animesh Nath and Dhiren Sarma as vice-presidents and Amar Kashyap as organizing secretary in the meeting.

Relief Materials distributed

IT News
Senapati/Imphal, April 17

Relief materials were distributed in row to more than 300 students, needy persons and those who are stuck in the areas of Maram. Today distribution were made at Maram area in Senapati

district with streamlined by systematically collecting the data using a cloud form and informing everyone who registered to get the materials. Distribution of relief materials to stranded students of Senapati & Mao area in connection with total lock

down due to COVID-19 jointly organised by District Legal Services Authority, Senapati, Senapati District Bar Association, Senapati District Students Association and Chuidil Line- 1098 Senapati under the sponsorship of Manipur State Legal Services Authority.

Irabot Foundation Manipur submits memorandum to CM concerning the problems of farmers

IT News
Imphal, April 17

Irabot Foundation Manipur (IFM) today submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Manipur to take up essential measures for farmers & entrepreneurs amidst covid-19 outbreak and post lockdown. The memorandum was submitted after the IFM convened an e-meeting with various hand to mouth farmers and entrepreneurs specified in different fields through Video-conferencing. "Most importantly the farmers and entrepreneurs met certain financial loss where they found resistance in marketing their own products, range from vegetables to FMCG products. The E-meeting came up with an aim to

forecast all the grievances and difficulties face by them amidst post-19 outbreak. Moreover, covid lockdown, most of farmers and entrepreneurs expect certain things from the government. Certain recommendations were acquired during the video-conference discussion. The Irabot Foundation Manipur warmly suggests such recommendations to add up substantially within the existing policies of the government", the memorandum submitted said and recommended the following: 1) Daily essential commodities should be treated as most priority. Engage SHGs for making face mask, hand sanitizers, soaps etc. to boost their economy. 2) Set up high level committee to monitor and recommendations for peoples'

welfare scheme. 3) Make assessments of loss and provide incentives during lockdown. 4) Take up digging of pond, cleaning of rivers and lakes, releasing of dam water in time for agricultural activities. 5) Sanitization for the whole state should be taken. 6) Free distribution of seeds and available of agricultural machineries should be made compulsory. 7) Exemption of fees for any school, college, universities and other institutions should be made. 8) Special Economy Package should be given to all the sections. 9) Fast-track irrigation committee for agricultural and allied should be set-up. 10) Release of all the pending funds regarding flood in 2017 and draught in 2019

Migrant crisis in Mumbai, Govt to take action against erring social media groups

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 17

The Maharashtra Government has decided to take action against all those, including social media, responsible for spreading misinformation that special trains will be run to enable migrant workers to return to their native places, which led to labourers' agitation near Bandra railway station in North West Mumbai on Tuesday. While self styled leader of UP and Bihar workers, Vinay Dubey has been remanded to police custody till 21 April, on charges of inciting workers to demand special trains or proceed to their native places by padyatra, a reporter of a Marathi TV channel Rahul Kulkarni was arrested and released on bail. The channel maintained that

the news that the railways may run special trains was aired based on a circular issued by the South Central railway. The news was aired out on Tuesday early morning and it was withdrawn when it became clear that the lock down was extended till 3 May, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation. Besides, the channel also carried clarification that no special trains will be run. Kulkarni covers Osmanabad district. On Tuesday daily wage labourers who are not able to earn since the government imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 25, gathered at the station in large number. They were hoping that the lockdown would end on April 14, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the lockdown has been

extended till May 3. Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said that the wrong information was spread through 11 mediums, including a video clip circulated by Dubey and other social media posts. The police has collected information about all accounts and the action will be taken against them. On acceptance of a cheque of Rs 25,000 given by the accused Vinay Dubey, as a contribution to Maharashtra Chief Minister's Relief Fund, Deshmukh said that one person (auto rickshaw driver) came to him and handed over the cheque to him. He never knew Dubey and he merely accepted the cheque, in absence of the chief minister, like the cheques are accepted from other citizens.

AR extends humanitarian assistance to Veer Naris and Ex-Servicemen

IT News
Imphal, April 17

Due to ongoing COVID-19 lockdown, the Veer Naris and Ex-Servicemen have been facing problems to meet their basic daily needs. Somsai battalion of 10 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) distributed basic

ration essentials to Veer Naris and Ex-Servicemen of Assam Rifles on 15th April 2020 at Ukhrul. The ration assistance provided were 05 Kgs of Rice, 2 Kgs of Daal, 1 Kg of Salt and 2 Kgs of Sugar to each of the six families. The Ex-Servicemen greatly appreciated the humanitarian gesture of the Assam Rifles and

expressed their heartfelt gratitude. Assam Rifles assured its continuous support to the brave hearts who have dedicated their lives in service of this country and have time and again proved that the Assam Rifles are willing to extend a helping hand to those in need.

★ Editorial

Politicization of COVID-19 pandemic will end human kinds from this planet

When the world today needs to join hands for fighting the notorious Coronavirus that is invading humankind when leaders of countries already affected are formulating a mechanism to counter the unseen enemy, it surprises, to many when some so call leaders are politicizing to welcome the invaders for their mere selfish gain. Forget about the politics of US President Donald Trump and the befitting response from the Director-General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Leaving aside the politicization of using the war against the unseen virus over the crisis of migrant labourers, it is shocking to learn that in this small state of Manipur with just around 30 lakhs population some people are playing politics playing with the stomach of the people.

When everyone knows that, assuring food to all the people irrespective of rich and poor, caste and creed are the only means to enforce the lockdown which at present is left as the only weapon to fight the unseen enemy, some people are intentionally trying to make good use of this crisis time.

Everybody knows that it is next to impossible to put all the people locked into their rooms without getting proper food. The beginning of the first nationwide lockdown for 21 days beginning from March 24 midnight called by the Prime Minister of India received support from all quarters but faced some criticism when the issue of daily wage earner started coming up and when state government started distributing minimum edible requirement through local MLAs, the government particularly the Chief Minister who has been taking the matter with extreme seriousness cannot concentrate to the war against COVID-19 pandemic as he and his team were disturbed by complaints of not getting food that he had announced after approval by his government.

It was a correct decision for the Chief Minister to hand over the matter of rice and other edible items through district administration under the supervision of the Chief Secretary by an order issued on April 2. While doing so the N. Biren Singh administration also announced that 25% of the local area development fund can be used by MLAs for COVID-19 related cases. This means that the MLAs can distribute essential items to his people using his local area development fund.

At this juncture when the state government is taking the matter with extreme seriousness when MLAs are worrying about their people of not getting adequate foods, when many people come out to help the poor and needy in getting their food, why some people are trying to earn money by smuggling in products of tobaccos and betel leaves. Of course, these items may not be illegal but are unnecessary items at this time of crisis.

The most shameful act was noticed after an MLA started labeling his name in the food items he distributed to the people of his constituency.

What is more worrying is the mindset of these people who wanted to politicize the issue of COVID-19 pandemic for their gains. It is a humble appeal to all of them that politicization of the crisis may sabotage the government measures to contain the virus and once it goes out of hand no one will be left. Because the virus knows no religions, casts, creeds or rich or poor. Even the politicians will not be given the privilege to live. Remember, the British Prime Minister, the German Counsellors, etc.

And one thing that would like to remind those government authorities is that, how could a person start open sell rice through e-marketing when the people are starving. And how could the government let free the retailers and wholesalers to increase the price of essential commodities at their will? And not the least, why many people are stocking fuel when there outing is prohibited.

At the time of crisis, we all human being should fight the unseen enemy with the most effective weapon. Interpretation of weapon here is the regulations and guidelines provided by the government – stay home.

We are defeating the virus and we will eradicate it from this planet only after we all unite.

“At the time of a pandemic, no outsider should enter the affected place nor a person shall leave the affected place.”

By - Sanjenbam Sadananda Singh, IRS

Chaoba is a diesel auto driver, but due to lockdown, he is not able to earn money to make both ends meet. His children are not able to go to school as their school is closed. His son Tomchou, eldest of the four children is in the 10th standard. He is also not able to pay his school fees on time, even though there have been appeals to school authorities for relief. His wife, Thambal is expecting their 5th child but she is not able to go the hospital for a scheduled check-up. There are thousands of Chaoba or Tomchou or Thambal in Manipur, let alone in the whole country or the world.

As we have heard and seen in the news, TV, social media, the global pandemic COVID-19 is a very contagious virus. In laymen term, it is called pandemic because it has endangered the health and wellbeing of multiple countries of the world. Super power and developed countries like USA, Italy, Spain, France, UK etc. are all affected by this pandemic. Altogether, more than 170 countries are affected by COVID-19.

This extended lock down period is to be treated as the final lockdown for various reasons. Further extension could further jeopardise the health both mental and physical, education, economy, could stretch administration, health professionals and other frontline warriors to the limits. It could throw thousands of people in the brink of acute poverty, job loss, frustration, domestic violence, and even public riots for want of resources. More importantly, it could further spread the virus onto uncharted nook and corners of the state, if left to the luck and lockdown alone.

Further, people are facing twin issues of survival from hunger and risk of contracting the virus. The

immediate concern being the hunger. When a hungry child cries for food, no parents would tolerate to see such scene. This is true for both rich and poor families though this lockdown hurt the poor and vulnerable sections of the society the most. This is the problem of the consumer sections of the population.

Thirdly, the seed sowing season is approaching. Huge farmer population of the state are facing twin problems. The harvested products should reach the consumers especially the Imphal areas and the new seeds should be sown after preparing the fields. The necessary seeds, fertilizers and other requirements are like the oxygen to the farmers. Failure of this sector of the economy would adversely impact most of the people of the state. This is true in the case of allied sectors such as poultry farming.

Fourthly, the patients with ailments who need critical medicines on time. They need timely intervention. Without special arrangement of medicine and medical attention, they would suffer anyway with or without the virus. Various such crucial appointments stand cancelled due to the virus compounding the problems.

Fifthly, challenges faced by the students for timely completion of syllabus. Those students who are going to appear for Matric and 10 plus 2 exam next year are at higher risk of missing crucial part of their education. The private school teachers and guardians are facing a dilemma. The guardians need relief from school fees while the teachers need salary from schools.

Last but not the least, those people who are stranded outside the state. Apart from the virus, racial discrimination is also another issue where there were many instances in various parts of the country. The

provision of food and other essential items are also a big headache.

These are testing times which require a team work of the government, administration, citizens, local clubs, various NGOs and local meira paibis. Instead of reaction when someone in the state is tested positive as has been seen, including unwanted communal cross fire in the social media, this is the time for a collective fight to defeat the virus. This is not normal time but the basic necessities should be prioritized along with the total war against the virus.

At the time writing this, the total number of confirmed cases in the country has crossed 12,000 and two million cases worldwide. As per the latest news, Manipur is classified in the Green Zone as the state has only two confirmed cases of which one has recovered. Thus, the next few days of extended lockdown is crucial to contain the virus with an effort at all levels, amid the planned gradual reopening of the lockdown. How prepared the state is in case of a new case remains a moot question. Some notable solutions come to my mind. The FCI and local administration through local clubs can procure the foods and vegetable produce from the farms (in case of import too) and store and then sell it at designated places at specified places with a fixed price control mechanism. Here social distancing and quantity control can be done. People should be assured that their basic necessities are taken care of by the government even in the form of the credit system through PAN card or Aadhar card basis. The medicine supply should continue and online delivery of medicines can also be made. Proper stock of required medicines can be ascertained from medical and pharmaceutical associations.

During this extended lockdown, proper tracing, isolation and testing can be done. Mass testing should be preferred. Enough stock of PPEs and quarantine facilities should be made ready. The next 28 days should be free of the new case in order to declare a state free from the virus. In case of Manipur, this 28 days period is far from over. So, we cannot be complacent now.

What should be done for those stranded outside the state? It is not advisable to arrange a special flight to charter them home. However, they should be taken care of by cooperating with the concerned state government. For example, Delhi government should be asked to help the Manipuris living there. Student organisation or NGO can be collaborated by both governments to arrange the basic requirements for the stranded people. Delhi police North East Cell can take an active role to address any distress call. On the same line, stranded labourers should be helped by the Manipur government. Apart from basic transportation, movement of people coming to Manipur or going out should be controlled effectively.

The virus would be eventually overcome but by then how much damage has been done is up to us to say the least. This pandemic could teach us many lessons. We could become less greedy, be caring of the environment, no spitting in public, helping each other especially among various communities, less consumerism, importance of small things, appreciating the farmers and other front line Covid19 warriors. Stay home, stay safe and we care, so we share.

***** The Writer Sanjenbam Sadananda Singh, IRS is currently posted as Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Kolkata.

COVID-19-reduction in number of deaths, but active cases surge in Mumbai BMC gives priority to symptomatic patients; Medical Superintendent of Sassoon Hospital transferred out

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 17

There has been a sizable reduction in number of deaths due to coronavirus in Mumbai, with the number of deaths

confined to single digit, due to change in testing norms by the BMC. However the number of positive cases continued to rise. On Friday 34 new cases were detected. They included 23 in Pune, 6 in Mumbai, 4 in Malegaon and one in Thane. Besides 6 persons, including doctors, of Bombay Hospital tested positive.

In view of the constant increase in number of patients and resultant fatalities, Dr Ajay Chandanwale, Medical Superintendent of Sassoon Hospital, Pune was transferred all of a sudden on Thursday night. In response doctors of the Sassoon Hospital staged protest demonstrations outside hospital on Friday.

By and large there has been reduction by 35 per cent in new patients in Mumbai, officials said. Out of the 7 deaths on Thursday, 5 were men and 2 were women. 4 of them aged over 60 years and 3 were from the age group of 40 to 60 years. 6 out of these 7 patients had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease. The death rate in the last week was 9 to 16 on an average. As of now the number of positive patients is 3236, with 194 deaths in Maharashtra. As against this the number of recovered patient was 205.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that 83 per cent of the deceased suffered from co-morbidities. Over 300 patients were fully recovered. An audit will be conducted about the fatalities to assess whether the patients died mainly due to coronavirus or due to other ailments. Six more laboratories are being started to take total number of laboratories to 36 to ensure faster testing. Till last week, there was a quantum jump in the number of cases. However now the number of cases have come down due to the implementation of micro-plan for containing local outbreak of COVID-19.

Now the BMC has begun first testing only symptomatic people to reduce the load on testing laboratories. Senior citizens or those with co-morbidities also do not make the cut unless they are symptomatic. Asymptomatic people are the second priority. In Mumbai, samples are being tested at the pathology labs at Kasturba and KEM hospitals and branches of the 16 private labs approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Between February 3 and April 12, the city tested more than 24,000 people, of which 5.8% were positive. Till now high-risk contacts of a COVID-19 patient would also be tested. However, now the BMC tests

only those with symptoms. Private labs have been collecting swab samples from people's homes and a few drive-through testing facilities. Besides, fever clinics and health camps are being held in containment zones. As per the ICMR strategy unless a person does not exhibit symptoms, he does not transmit the virus. As such the BMC has begun following this testing strategy. In Mumbai 70% cases are asymptomatic. Including government and private labs, BMC can carry out a maximum of 2,200 tests per day. As against this, it receives 3,000-4,000 swabs a day, as such it has to prioritise.

The latest testing strategy released by the ICMR on April 9 says that symptomatic individuals — those with international travel history, contacts of positive patients, healthcare workers — and patients with severe acute respiratory illness (fever and cough and/or shortness of breath) should be tested. Asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case should be tested once between days five and 14 of coming in contact. In hotspots, clusters and in large migration gatherings and evacuee centres, all symptomatic patients should be tested.

Airlines Told To Refund Flight Tickets Scrapped By Lockdown

Agency
New Delhi, April 17

Airlines will have to refund tickets booked during the COVID-19 lockdown within three weeks without cancellation fees if a customer requests for it, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Thursday. The directive will apply to all domestic and international tickets booked during the first phase of the nationwide lockdown, that began on March 25 and was extended till May 3 on April 14, for travel

through the entire period. Several consumer groups had raised complaints after most private airlines refused to refund the tickets, offering them options to reschedule instead. India had banned all international flights from March 22 and domestic ones from March 25 to check the spread of coronavirus in the country.

However, most airlines except national carrier Air India continued to take bookings for domestic flights for the period beyond the first phase of the

lockdown on April 14. After the lockdown was extended till next month, the DGCA issued a circular saying all international as well as domestic flights will remain suspended till May 3. Private airlines, however, said they will not refund the tickets already booked and will offer free rescheduling but will charge customers for the fare difference, if any, at the time of re-booking.

The move triggered anger among customers who said it was unfair to those who have purchased a service that the airlines cannot deliver, albeit through no fault of their own. The DGCA's new order will spell more trouble for airlines that have been pummeled by the worst crisis in history following the coronavirus pandemic.

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