

Journalist impostor rounded up, handed over to police

IT News
Imphal, April 22

A person identified as Sorokhaibam Robert Singh, son of Sorokhaibam Kanta Singh of Langthabal Lep Makha Leikai, who posed himself as journalist, by using a fake identity card was rounded up by volunteers of All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) today morning. The person was caught while trying to fill fuel to his vehicle from a petrol pump at Haobam Marak, where fuels for journalists were being issued. When the volunteers of AMWJU told him to show his I-Card he showed a fake identity Card without hologram. He was later handed over to Kakwa Police Station.

UNLF condoles the demise of its cadres



IT News
Imphal, April 22

Proscribed group United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and its army wing Manipur Peoples' Army (MPA) condole the untimely demise of cadre Pte. Tongbram Benerji @ Angamba.

A press statement issued by M. Sak-hen Director Department of publicity, UNLF, said that Pte. Tongbram Benerji @ Angamba, MPA No. 2740/44 batch 44, is the son of Tongbram Ibochouba and Tongbram Ongbi Nandini of Wangkhei Thangapat Mapal. He passed away on April 20, 2020 Monday morning at around 2.20am following an illness at an hospital of khamti area.

Late Tongbram Benerji @ Angamba passed out Basic Military training of MPA 44 batch and a regular army of MPA from December 23, 2017 and after a month, and on January 15, 2018 he was transferred to GHQ 291 battalion. He was arrested on March 1, 2019 by Myanmar Army and served two year imprisonment in Myanmar jail. The UNLF statement said that the demise of Pte Angamba is a great loss for the revolutionary movement and the people of the Manipur.

Lack of Infrastructures, Equipment in District Hospital Tamenglong a serious concern for denizen

IT News
Tamenglong, April 22

When people across the world including the state of Manipur is preparing all possible means to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, Tamenglong District Hospital is yet to make any preparation. Even as the Tamenglong District Administration has taken every possible measures to prevent the spread of the deadly virus, the District Hospital still does not have a single COVID-19 Test Kit; no ICU bed, and not even a single ventilator except the Pediatrics ventilator which is yet to be installed as there are no specialists available. Tamenglong District Hospital

has only two isolation wards prepared so far and there are no sufficient Personal Protective Equipment's (PPEs) ready for Health workers and in addition there is no sufficient health workers in the district which is a serious concern for the people of Tamenglong. It is worth mentioning that Tamenglong District which is about 150 Kms from the state capital share border with Assam where Assam has reported 35 positive Coronavirus cases and among the total people infected 1 has succumbed to COVID-19. The public of Tamenglong look up to the state government, elected representatives of the district, ADCs, District



Administration to make available the COVID-19 Test Kit, ventilators, sufficient ICU wards, isolation wards and Consignment of PPEs to District Hospital, PHCs and CHCs to tackle Pandemic COVID-19. The forerunner who has been spearheading to improve the infrastructure, facilities and manpower of Tamenglong

District Hospital also expressed its concern regarding the preparedness for any unforeseen case of COVID-19. The NGOs after its studies found that the hospital despite having lack of manpower, some official nurses were even substituted, which poses serious threat to the patients and to the substituted entity themselves, not to mention the ethics of their work. The forerunner also expressed its deep concern for what is coming post lockdown after May 3rd, where many people from other parts of the COVID-19 infected red zone state of the country will flock back into the state and town and to their own village. If no proper guidelines are taken up by the District Administration and medical faculty of the District, it will cause the spread of the covid-19 in the said areas like wildfire with little or no methods to contain the situation.

The NGO appealed the state government and elected peoples' representative to make the immediate medical facilities demands available to the Tamenglong District Hospital and also make efforts to do all require to contained the viral outbreak during and post lockdown.

National Highway construction activities to resume after partial relaxation of Lockdown

IT News
Imphal, April, 22

Works Minister Thongam Biswajit Singh today instructed concerned private companies involved in construction projects in rural areas especially national highway works and bridges outside the limits of municipal corporations and municipalities to resume work. The Minister held a meeting with the concerned company representatives and officials of the PWD today in this regard at his New Secretariat office. Regarding an official directive

to maintain government issued protocols and guidelines while resuming work, Biswajit instructed the company representatives to strictly adhere to the protocol including maintaining social distancing, adequate arrangements for temperature screening of workers, premises and works sites to be disinfected properly. He also instructed the company representatives to ensure that the workers are already available on site and no workers are required to be brought in from outside. During the meeting, the

company representatives also highlighted their work progress and hindrances they meet while executing their work. While informing all concerned to inform him if they face inconveniences while executing their work, the Minister also instructed them to ensure that all projects are completed within the targeted deadline. It may be mentioned that the meeting was also attended by Commissioner Works RK Dinesh Singh, Chief Engineer of PWD and officials of the department.

Maharashtra demands special trains to transport migrant labourers

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 22

The Maharashtra Government has demanded that the special trains be made available to enable migrant labourers stranded in the state, especially Mumbai, to return to their native places, once the lockdown period gets over on May 3. During a video conferencing discussion with five member central team led by Additional Union Secretary Manoj Joshi, on Tuesday, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the state government has been providing food to nearly six lakh migrant labourers every day. However since the central government has indicated that the spread of COVID 19 may continue till 15 May, it will be better if the centre prepares a guidelines about transporting migrant labourers to their native places, with End to end precautions like providing them quarantine facilities. The Maharashtra government has

already written to the prime minister and the railway ministry, Thackeray pointed out to the delegation. Besides, since the cooked food is perishable, the centre should think on the lines of providing food grains to those without ration cards and the state government will bear the responsibility of its distribution. This will reduce the load on the government employees handling other emergency jobs. Maharashtra has set up COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 hospitals (to deal with morbidity ailments like diabetes, high blood pressure etc) and has increased the number of isolation wards. As such the centre should provide PPE kits, ventilators and other equipments, since the safety of doctors, nurses and health workers is of utmost importance. Eighty per cent Maharashtra population is not affected by COVID-19. The coronavirus entered Maharashtra via USA and Dubai. The situation

prevailing in USA is known. However the centre should study what steps Dubai has initiated to avoid recurrence of such deadly virus, Thackeray pointed out. Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Pravin Pardeshi said that 10 districts of Maharashtra are totally unaffected by COVID-19 and the duration of doubling the number of patients is 18 to 21 days in Maharashtra (except Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Malegaon). The central team visited Worli Koliwada area in South Central Mumbai on Tuesday, which was a COVID 19 hotspot a few days back. However now it is free of the coronavirus due to the strict containment policy adopted by the BMC. Besides Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Health Minister Rajesh Tope, Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Pravin Pardeshi and Mumbai Police Commissioner Paramvir Singh participated in the conference.

Churachandpur DFO distributes materials to VDVK SHG for Singnat & Behiang Kendras

IT News
Imphal, April 22

Division Forest Officer, Churachandpur Forest Division N Ganesh IFS distributed materials for Singnat & Behiang Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Self Help Groups at the Kendra Common Facility Centre at Hajiang to 32 VDVK SHG within Singnat Forest Range. The VDVK SHG works on collection, processing and marketing of minor forest produces found within their region and add values to those forest produces. N Ganesh IFS said protection & preserving the natural forest are ultimately beneficial and healthy for the people and their living and request the people to take active part in these activities. Active participation in value additions of minor forest produces will bring in better skill development and raise the economy of the people for better living in the region and in general.

Guv' and CM wishes the people on the occasion of Khongjom Day

IT News
Imphal, April 22

Governor of Manipur, Dr. Najma Heptulla and Chief Minister of Manipur, N Biren Singh wishes the people of Manipur on the occasion of Khongjom Day. In a message to the people of Manipur, the Governor said "On this occasion, while paying homage to the valiant heroes who fell at the Battle of Khongjom and other fronts in the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891, we must renew our vow to preserve and defend the sovereignty of our country and prepare to face any challenge that might come our way. Let us forget any differences and re-dedicate ourselves to the task of nation building. Let us strive for bringing understanding, peace and harmony amongst ourselves so that every citizen is free from wants." In his message to the people of Manipur, CM of Manipur N Biren Singh said "Khongjom Day has immense significance for the people of Manipur. It reminds us of the courage and

heroism of our forefathers who made selfless sacrifice to uphold freedom of their motherland in the gallant Battle of Khongjom in the year 1891. The historic Battle of Khongjom witnessed the deep patriotism of Paona Brajabashi and other brave heroes of Manipur who fought against the British forces. On this solemn occasion, while paying humble tribute to the brave sons of the land, let us pledge ourselves to be equally brave and resurgent in facing the challenges posed by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic raging mercilessly across the world. Through unity and cooperation, we can defeat the disease and rise again." Khongjom Day is celebrated on 23rd April every year in Manipur commemorating the supreme sacrifices made by the forefathers of Manipur who dies for the freedom of their motherland. Displaying tremendous courage and immense patriotism for their motherland fought against the mighty British empire without even a thought of surrender.

CSOs distribute essential items to villagers



IT News
Imphal, April 22

Coordinating Body Khurai in association with Yaiphare, Lamphel, Sagolband Youth Team and Top Sinpanglung distributed altogether 13 essential items with specific medical items at Kwatha Khunjaio, Kwatha Khunou and newly settled today, with the support of the different sections of the people of Manipur in connection with the outbreak of COVID-19. The villagers welcome the relief team with pomp and gaiety. Nataji Memorial Club Khurai Kongpal Thoubandong, Imphal East opened a Food bank at its office premise from today.

In a press statement signed by Leishram Sanajaoba, Vice President, NMC Khurai Kongpal, it is stated that the

food bank is to help to the needy people of the area during the lockdown to prevent covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand Manipur Muslim Welfare Organisation (MMWO) head office help to those are at hatta-Golapati, Mantripukhi, Khurai-khabesoi, keirao, Mayang Imphal chrai, Mayang Imphal jangbi, uchiwa wangan, phabachhao and who are differently persons also help to establish food item during this pandemic covid-19. Proprietor of the Sangai Express daily newspaper Sapam Nishikanta also distributed food items to the needy people of Kwakeithal Nganapithon and Keishamthong Longjam Leikai area. In per house hold rice 25 kg Mustard oil half litre, salt 1 packet each, soap, cabbage 2 kg, onion 1 kg, dal 1 kg.



Officer-in-Charge of Singamei Police Station - P Sanjoy handing over edible item to destitute woman during difficult times.

★ Editorial

How prepare is the state, to face COVID-19 attack

With no positive case of COVID-19 reported in the state of Manipur, after the two patients, tested positive have been tested negative, Manipur government showed a sign of relief. State cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister had relaxed the lockdown at some sectors without violating the Central government advisory on the lockdown while announcing the state as COVID-19 free. However, he too have stated that - it is just the beginning of the long war against the killer virus.

Coincidentally, it was also the day that the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned of the worst of the Coronavirus yet to come. "Trust us. The worst is yet ahead of us. Let's prevent this tragedy. It's a virus that many people still don't understand", Tedros told media persons yesterday.

Whether, the people of Manipur have reason to be relieved or remain more cautious with the announcement by WHO, is a matter that the N. Biren Singh administration needs to ponder upon. Saying so the Manipur government did take some good decision to lift the lockdown for Agricultural sectors and rural area, as we all know that we can't simply sabotage the whole set up for solving a crisis. Complete measures for running the state while tackling the crisis created by the spread of Novel Coronavirus across the globe is also the duty of the administration.

What is needed at this hour of difficult time is the preparation to face the challenges. The character of the virus is yet to be understood and more findings are coming up each day. There are reports of relapsing of the virus even after cured. There are also reports about the virus ability to remain in the human body for a period of 37 days.

Well it was by God's grace that the 2 positive patients have been reported negative after treatment at JNIMS and RIMS. Both the patients have been discharged.

But the question is that, have those patients discharged after being tested negative completely cured of COVID-19, or can the medical experts assured that both are cured of COVID-19 other than saying that they were found negative while tested. If so, then has the medical department understand the character of the virus? Enough research could have been done from both the patients to understand COVID-19. However, except for providing treatment with assumptive medication no, research to understand more on the virus had been done by the State Health department. The way that the state prepares to fight the pandemic showed more like a "yes sir" attitudes of colonial days.

When a District Administrator of Bihwara in Rajasthan ploughs his whole energy to find a model to protect the people, what study had been done by any of the state district administration to find a solution? What encouragement from the government side had been given to the administrators to protect the people from both hunger and the virus?

We have witnessed the hardship during the first lockdown and in this 2nd lockdown too, the people are going to face some hardships. After May 3, nobody knows what will be the kind of measures the government takes up. But if in case cases of positive COVID-19 detected in the state, is the government ready to take up the challenges. A million dollar question?

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh

Biodiversity is vital for supporting all life on Earth. It provides all our food, many industrial products and medicines. Biodiversity also ensures clean air, water and fertile soils. It provides opportunities for recreation, scientific research and education. Biodiversity is declining rapidly throughout the world. The challenges of conserving the world's species are perhaps even larger than mitigating the negative effect of global climate change. Species extinction and the degradation of ecosystem are proceeding rapidly and the pace is accelerating. The world is losing species at a rate that is 100 to 1000 times faster than the natural extinction rate. Mass extinction of species have occurred five times previously in the History of the world- last time was 65 million years ago when the dinosaurs and many other species disappeared. Previous periods of mass extinction and ecosystem change were driven by global change in climate and in atmospheric chemistry, impacts by asteroids and volcanism. Now we are in the 6th mass extinction event which is a result of a competition for resources between one species on the planet-human and all others. The process towards extinction is mainly caused by habitat degradation, whose effects on biodiversity is worsened by the ongoing human induced climate change. Biodiversity and healthy ecosystem are the insurance plan that we must prioritize as it protects us against a variety of risks - including pandemics, how human activity in nature contribute to disease emergence. Our world is made of a web of connections, made possible by biodiversity. Loss of species weakens these connections and can alter the performance of an entire ecosystem. Our future of food depends on biodiversity. Both biodiversity loss and climate change are two of our greatest threats at the moment-even while endure Covid-19, we mustn't lose sight of this. Their impacts will be greater but we can act now to minimise their impacts, we talk about climate change a lot but

biodiversity loss is as important an issue. How do we stop this loss of life?

If you want to understand how the biodiversity crisis will affect you and your daily life, just look around. Where are you right now? Are you at home, working in the dining room, managing kids and may be watching "Tiger King" on Netflix? May be you're one of the millions of people for whom the situation is much more dire and you're wondering how the few items you have left in the fridge can make an actual family meal or how you're going to pay your bills. Or worse, you're caring for a sick family member or grieving the loss of a loved one and wondering how we can stop a tragedy like this from happening again. Well, you're stuck at home and your life is turned upside down because of the biodiversity crisis, plain and simple. Renewed focus on the global biodiversity crisis began in May, when a UN report issued the dire warning that up to one million species could go extinct, many within decades, without totally transforming the ways in which we use and abuse the natural world. Since then a big challenge of NRDC and for anyone who is talking about biodiversity loss and ecosystem decline has been communicating the possible impacts on people and their everyday lives.

Those days are over and here's is why: Covid-19 is a zoonotic virus, which means it came from animals. Though scientists are still working to determine the specific host animals and the pathway that the disease took from animals to humans. Most agree that wild animals were the original carriers of the disease. Wild animals were the carriers for other coronaviruses as well such as SARS, MERS and H5N1 (Avian flu). Millions of animals are taken from the wild each year for domestic and international commercial trade in wildlife. Many of the animals are used for food, like those in the wildlife markets in China that are suspected of being the source of Covid-19 or for other purposes like traditional medicine, luxury goods or as pets. Some of the wild life trade is legal. And make no mistake. Wildlife

markets and wildlife consumption occur everywhere. While China is a large market for wildlife, the U.S., Japan and Europe (the European Union and the United Kingdom) and many other as well.

The direct exploitation of wild species for food or for other purposes is the second leading driver of global biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse after habitat loss (it's the leading driver for marine species). As more and more animals are taken from the wild for use by people, the risk of transfer of zoonotic diseases from wild species to domestic animals and human grows. Conversion of wild lands for development agriculture and resource extraction, along with climate change also increase the risk of transfer of disease from wild species to humans. The overall impacts of the biodiversity crisis will be widespread and severe but they have also been amorphous and difficult to quantify or describe with any certainty until now. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic unfortunately, at least some of those impacts can be measured in terms of massive economic losses, total disruptions in society and tragically rates of illness and loss of life. Decision successes and failures and population response times and actions are factors which may increase or decrease the severity of those impacts. One question you may be asking: Did the biodiversity crisis cause the Covid-19 pandemic? The answer is no, at least not any more than climate change can be called the cause of a specific weather event like Hurricane Katrina. But the biodiversity crisis which is driven in part by global wildlife trade is making it

much more likely that such pandemics will occur just like climate change is exacerbating the conditions that make frequent intense Hurricane or other severe weather events more likely. Plus, the global nature of Covid-19 pandemic makes it more similar to a scenario where intense destructive weather events are happening simultaneously all over the world with catastrophic impacts for people and the planet. We'll be talking a lot about the specific connections and links between the biodiversity crisis and Covid-19 in the coming weeks and months, along with exactly what NRDC thinks should be done about it when it comes to wildlife trade. For now, it's time we recognize the biodiversity crisis for what it is-an immediate threat to our lives, our economy, and our safety- and begin to act accordingly.

Dealing with the biodiversity crisis require political will and needs to be based on a solid scientific knowledge if we are to ensure a safe future for the planet. This is the main conclusion from scientists from University of Copenhagen after 100 researchers and policy experts from EU countries were gathered this week at the University of Copenhagen to discuss how to organise the future of UN Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The biodiversity crisis- i.e the rapid loss of species and rapid degradation of ecosystem- is probably a greater threat than to the global climate change to the stability and prosperous future of mankind on Earth.

The writer can be reached to: sjugheshwor7@gmail.com

National News

COVID-19 containment going well in Chandel and Tengnoupal so far: Letpao

IT News
Chandel, April 22

YAS and Water Resources Minister Letpao Haokip had chaired the review meeting to discuss the measures taken to contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19, including distribution and availability of essential items of the two districts of Chandel and Tengnoupal. It may be mentioned that the containment efforts are regarded to be of paramount importance in these two districts as they share international territorial boundary with the neighbouring country Myanmar, and Letpao has been assigned as the District-in charge for supervision of these two districts. The CMOs and SPs, in the

meeting today, brought up the major issues faced by them—mostly in fencing and guarding the porous Indo-Myanmar border, and the shortage of basic medical-related items such as masks, PPEs and good-conditioned ambulance vehicles. Speaking to media persons after the meeting, Letpao said that the challenging part under his supervision is that more than 90% of the population of the villages located in border areas have heavily relied on Myanmar for the basic needs for their survival. But they have been facing severe hardship now with the sealing of the border fencing and the hindrances and restrictions faced by them to get essential items from Imphal. So, the focus now has to be on the opening of fair price shops availing essential items at certain

locations of Chandel and Tengnoupal at the earliest, he added. Here, it is worth mentioning that the State Cabinet meeting held few days back had resolved to open fair price shops in certain designated areas throughout the state for availability of essential items without overpricing. The Minister also hinted that better and more effective tackling measures will be arranged in border-lying villages as it has been reported that some Manipuri prisoners at Myanmar Jail will be freed by the Myanmar authorities, and they should not bring any COVID-19 related health dangers upon their return. He further added that to boost the morale of the police personnel who have been frontlining in containing this pandemic, rice items will be supplied from his personal side to the police teams deployed in these two districts. In spite of the fear looming large over the location of these districts in the border, Letpao appealed that so far, there has

not been any serious issues arising out of these pandemic in the districts and the two district administrations along with the respective medical and police have been successful in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who have been quarantined had successfully completely, and those remaining undergoing are also doing fine as of now. He appealed the people of these two districts not to panic and he will make sure that they are not affected and are not deprived from food and other essential items. He assured that he will look into challenges faced by the frontlining departments and will ensure that all such problems are solved as fast as possible. The review meeting was held at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Chandel. The meeting was attended by the DCs, SPs, CMOs, SDOS and other top officials of the districts of Chandel and Tengnoupal. Later, the Minister and DCs distributed rice items to officials and village heads for distribution to the remaining areas.

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 22

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent a notice to the Maharashtra police chief, in connection with the recent incident of lynching of three persons in Palghar district and called for a detailed report within four weeks, on action taken against culprits and relief granted to kin of the deceased.

Based on a complaint in connection with the incident, a notice has been issued to the Maharashtra director general of police (DGP) over the mob lynching, in the presence of police personnel in Palghar district on April 16, the NHRC statement said. The commission has observed that the incident is apparently indicative of "negligence by the public servants". The death of the three persons in such a cruel manner by an unruly mob, that too during the ongoing countrywide lockdown under extra vigil by the administration and police, amounts to "gross violation of the right to life of the victims", it said.

The saints of "Juna Akhara", Swami Kalpvrikshgiri (70), Swami Sushilgiri (35) and their driver Neellesh Telgde (30), were brutally attacked reportedly by the local tribals, between 9:30 PM and 10 PM at Gadchinchale village, on 16 April. They were on their way to Surat (in Gujarat) to attend a funeral of their guru Sri Mahant Ramgiri. They were travelling from Kandivali (in North Mumbai) to Surat. The villagers stopped their vehicle and began attacking them on suspicion that they were thieves/ child lifters. Eventually all the three died on the

spot.

In all 101 persons have been arrested and remanded to police custody till 30 April and 9 juveniles have been sent to remand homes. The incident has sent shock waves across the country with seers threatening to gherao the Maharashtra Government.

On Tuesday, Mahant Narendragiri Maharaj, President of Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad said in Nashik (Maharashtra) that lakhs of Naga sadhus will march to Maharashtra from all over the country if the state government fails to take stringent action against the accused.

The Naga Sadhus, literally meaning 'Naked Yogis', are a part of the Shaivite sadhus. Their physical appearance of ash-covered bodies and matted dreadlocks resembling Lord Shiva comes from being Shaivites or followers of Lord Shiva. Even today, they carry tridents.

In the meanwhile a blame game between political parties is on with opposition BJP squarely blaming the Maharashtra Government led by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for the incident. BJP has also blamed CPM and has claimed that the accused named in the FIR include 5 workers of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and one worker belonging to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The CPM workers are: Jairam Dhak Bhavar, Mahesh Sitaram Raote, Gangadhar Deoji Rao, Ramdas Rupaji Asare and Sunil Somaji Raote. Sitaram Chowdhary, NCP worker and Panchayat Samiti member has also been named in the FIR. Some of the main culprits are still absconding, BJP sources have claimed.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.