

Irregularities at State Labour department:

Either the former Chairman of MBOCWBB misinform SPIO or intentionally mocks RTI Act

IT News
Imphal, Aug 17:

More irregularities in the functioning of the Manipur Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board (MBOCWBB), Labour Department, Government of Manipur has been found out after the then Chairperson of the MBOCWBB sent a legal notice to Imphal Times for the publishing of a news item which stated that the then Chairperson Sanglakpam Preshejoit Sharma had

sanctioned an amount of Rs. 13,18,16,800/- for taking up skill development programmes to an NGO called Rural Social Service Society, at which the Chairman himself was the Chief Functionary as well as the General Secretary of the NGO.

On June 10, 2020, the State Public Information Officer of the MBOCWBB, L. Bijeta Devi, while providing information sought through the Right to Information (RTI) Act, has stated that the MBOCWBB has no information about the annual

report and audited copy of account along with auditor's report of the MBOCWBB for the year 2016-17 & 2017-18. On July 29, 2020, in a legal notice served to Imphal Times, by the counsel of former Chairperson MBOCWBB Sanglakpam Preshejoit Sharma in connection with a news report under the heading - "Labour Minister's brother-in-law sanctions over Rs. 13 crores for skill development Training Programme, when he was the Chairman of MBOCWBB to his own NGO" published on

July 25, 2020 issue, it is stated that, "All the alleged NGOs submitted their annual report to concern authority in time. In addition, the Department of Accountant General (AG) had conducted audit for the relevant year as usual, i.e. during the tenure of Sanglakpam Preshejoit Sharma as Chairperson MBOCWBB. On June 10, 2020, the SPIO of MBOCWBB L. Bijeta Devi had stated that the MBOCWBB has no information about the annual report, and audited copy of

accounts or the auditor's report, how could the former Chairman Sanglakpam Preshejoit Sharma in the legal notice to Imphal Times stated that they have all the record. This is clear evidence of irregularities being practice, as the office has the intention to hide information sought through RTI. Or else it is nothing but a humiliation and dishonour to the Right to Information (RTI) Act by the SPIO, L. Bijeta.

Former PM Devi Gowda reacts to the development on solving NSCN-IM issue

IT News
Imphal, Aug 17:

Former Prime Minister of India and member of Parliament Rajya Sabha H D Deve Gowda in a press released stated that the Newspaper reports indicate that the Union government's negotiations with NSCN (IM) to resolve the Naga problem has run into rough weather. He said that from recent statements made by those involved in the negotiations it is apparent that distrust has crept in. The Naga ceasefire agreement in 1997, which followed my meeting with Mr.

Isak Chishi Swu and Mr. Thuingaleng Muivah in Zurich, in February 1997, was a result of constructive diplomacy. We should ensure that the progress made in the last 23 years by successive governments is not forsaken now. There is the Constitution and also the 2015 framework agreement, which should help us move towards a solution it added. He further said that he sincerely hope that distrust is put aside, talks continue, and a peace accord is reached at the earliest. The people of the North East deserve to live in harmony and witness economic progress.

RIMS appeals to public not to discriminate health workers

IT News
Imphal, Aug 17:

In the last few months, doctors, nursing officials, paramedics and other frontline workers of RIMS, Imphal have been facing social stigma related to corona virus from their localities. They have been serving the nation as warriors fighting the battle against corona virus and it is high time that we should appreciate them in this difficult time. The authority is requesting the public not to create an atmosphere of discrimination and fear psychosis. We should not break the moral of our corona warriors instead salute them for the work they are doing. Just because they working with patient does not mean they are affected. We deeply anguished to see report that doctors, nursing officials, paramedics and other frontline workers are being ostracized in their localities. It is high time that we all should fight this COVID-19 pandemic together and defeats it.

National Education Policy 2020 will transform India into a global knowledge powerhouse: Th Radheshyam

IT News
Imphal, Aug 17:

New National Education Policy 2020 will transform India into a global knowledge powerhouse, but it will require extensive discussion, information dissemination and participation of all stakeholders for effective implementation. This view was expressed by Th Radheshyam Singh, Education Minister, Manipur, at the Webinar organized by Press Information Bureau and Regional Outreach Bureau, Imphal today.

In his keynote address, Radheshyam recalled that

Albert Einstein had said that if we spend hours to understand a problem, it will take us only minutes to find a solution. He stressed on the need to understand and discuss the comprehensive and transformational National Education Policy that was announced by the Central government recently. Education Minister said that the policy aims at providing the best possible education system that is rooted in the Indian ethos. He hailed it as a historic moment in the life of our nation. Radheshyam pointed out that the new policy does away with the language barrier that was

keeping large number of students away from schools. He said that data shows that only 20 percent of tribal students in the county reach high school due to this barrier. He said that students till class 5, and preferably till class 8th, will be taught in their mother tongues under the new policy, helping increase in enrolment and decrease in dropout rates. Dr. M Meenakumari Devi, Director, State Education Research and Training, summed up the salient features of the policy and gave an overview of the steps being taken to implement it. Earlier, in his welcome address, Additional Director

General (Guwahati and Imphal Region), S N Pradhan said that Prime Minister has called for wider discussions through webinars and seminars to take the provisions of the policy to the people. He urged the media to give platform to such discussions so that the implementation process becomes smooth and fast. Abhishek Dayal, Director, PIB Imphal thanked the Minister, participants and the media persons for actively participating in the webinar. The webinar was attended by over 50 persons including media persons and officials of state government, PIB and RoB of Guwahati and Imphal region.

Health Minister Distributes Medical Kits to Truck Drivers

DIPR
Imphal, Aug. 17:

Health and Family Welfare Minister Shri L. Jayantakumar Singh has distributed medical kits to truck drivers at Keithelmanbi, along Imphal Jiribam road, today. Health protective items like hand sanitiser, face mask, shields etc. were handed over to the drivers and handmen of the trucks plying along the Imphal Jiribam road. The state government, specially the health department is very

much concerned about the health and hygiene of the people during this pandemic period of COVID-19. Minister also lauded the role played by the truck drivers during the nationwide lock down. The fearless effort of the drivers to provide essential food items during this juncture was also appreciated by the minister. Minister Jayantakumar said that the truck drivers of other routes will also be provided with protective health gears as similar to today's occasion. He said that maintaining SOPs by every one of us is an effective way to contain this pandemic of COVID-19. Such event will also be organised at ISBT, Chingmeirong as next location, he added. The occasion was jointly organised by the Manipur Truck Drivers' Association and Highway Truck Owners' Welfare Association. He said that the health department will also provide necessary medicines when required by the associations.

SoP turns flop show at Jemon Gas Agency



IT News
Imphal, Aug 17:

The must talk about social distancing or community distancing that has been ordered by the state authority to contain COVID-19 pandemic turn as flop show after authority of the Jemon Gas Agency, Singam failed to follow the SoPs by advising the customers who came to collect their LPG cylinders. According to a customer, people who came to collect LPG as per announcement were waiting in queue maintain the social distancing since early morning today. However, after the authority of the Jemon Gas agency

open the counter some fault play were noticed and thus rate over the attitude of the Jemon Gas authority the customers out of anger lost controlled and throng to the counter resulting a heated argument. "If any person among them was a coronavirus carrier, there is no way that those who came to collect LPG which is essential commodities will be free from the virus", a consumer said. Almost all consumers understand and followed the protocol but it was the authority of the Jemon that instigate to violate the protocol, an angry consumer said adding that He pray that no one among them have the virus.

Police Gallantry: Enquiry set up, 2 police personnel suspended

IT News
Imphal, August 17:

In connection with awarding of Chief Minister's Medal for Gallantry to a Police officer who was involved in a drug haul case, LM Khaute DGP Manipur ordered to enquire into the lapses in connection with the proposal for award of Chief Minister's Medal submitted by SP- Imphal East, Manipur in respect of the said officer of Imphal East District. A committee was formed consisting of K. Radhashyam Singh, IGP(Int), Manipur-Chairman and S. Gautam Singh, SP-CID(SB), Manipur and Joyce Lalremmawi, SP-CID(CB), Manipur. The

committee will carry out fresh verification of antecedents and past records of all the recipients of Chief Minister's Medal on the occasion of Independence Day, 2020. Also, an inspector E. Roshan Singh working as a reader to SP/IE who was found responsible for lapses in the initial processing has been placed under suspension by an order. Chief Minister N Biren Singh in a Facebook post admits the goof up, posting a snippet of Imphal Times publication and ordered to initiate an enquiry. Imphal Times in its yesterday edition, published about the said lapse which was pointed out by All Manipur Students Union (AMSU).

Poor mobile network irked Moreh residence

IT News
Moreh, Aug 17:

A team of Moreh Consumer Club (MCC) inspected mobile telecom Network Operators of Moreh particularly at BSNL Customer Care Center, Airtel and Reliance Jio today. The inspection was carried out after receiving complaints from some Guardians of Moreh who's children are facing lots of inconvenience during Online Class for their Education. As from past few years Network Operators i.e BSNL, Airtel and Reliance Jio couldn't provide Network to Consumer of Moreh properly and also they couldn't provide even 50% of the population. Airtel Provide 30/40 percent, Jio Provide 20/30 percent lastly BSNL Network Provide more than 60% but less than 10 days in a month. It show who Indian Network is developed in Moreh Town. The Network of Neighboring Country Myanmar which is considered as under developed country could cover more than 90% of the

Population as compare to Indian Network. "By Calculating the figure of the network, Indian network is less developed than Myanmar's Network which made Indian despicable to Myanmar", a member of the MCC said. During the Inspection the teams of Moreh Consumers Club led by it's President Seiboi Haokip appealed to the Incharges of Network Operators of Moreh to provide Network properly and to the maximum population in the Town within 5 days by seeing the grievances faced by consumers of Moreh. If they fail or no action seems by consumers club after their complaint to provide within 5 days then Moreh Consumers Club will take it as a very serious matter and will take strict Action against the Network Operators. Due to lack of Proper Network in the Town lots of youngster are losing their carrier, lots of business which can be done through Internet are failed and Even Banks are also facing inconvenience due to failure of the Network.

COVID-19 in India

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 17:

India's Covid-19 tally rose to 26,47,663 on Monday with a single-day spike of 57,981 infections, while the death toll crossed the 50,000 mark with 941 fresh fatalities, according to the Union health ministry data. The recoveries surged to 19,19,842, pushing the recovery rate to 72.51 per

cent, the data updated at 8 am showed. The total number of tests for detection of covid-19 also crossed the three crore mark in India, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research data. The death toll due to coronavirus infection climbed to 50,921 with 941 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours.

★ Editorial

NEP 2020 and the status of Colleges of Manipur.

Much criticism has been received on the new NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 from students' group to academic circles including those serving as teachers in the government sectors. The criticism and the argument about the feasibility of the new education policy seems to have direct impact creating apprehension to the government of Manipur. When teachers were and are the one to systematically analyzed on government policy before any such has been introduced, there were no proper discussion that invites ideas of all academic circles by inviting their suggestions. When the NEP 2020 has been approved by the Union cabinet the academic circle has been divided into two. One which accept and appreciate the idea terming it as a new reform that will transform the whole education system of the country. However, there are groups of highly intellect circle which criticized the new policy saying that it will sabotage the academic career of the entire student community. These arguments and criticism are all base on factual presentation of what has been happening in the country.

Yesterday, the Kangleipak Students' Association has stated the importance of setting up a committee to oversee the implementation of the NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 in the state at the earliest as the education being provided under the higher education system in the state to expand the horizon and present a better future prospect for the students.

It has become necessary to ascertain whether the colleges in Manipur are following the guidelines laid down by the UGC as to the teaching hours, Research and Academic contributions and Professional Development, Co-Curricular and Extension Activities etc. colleges functioning outside the RR and guidelines of the UGC need to be identified and categorized according to a state policy as a large number of colleges could not meet the parameters laid down by the NAAC such as lack of required number of teachers and inadequate teacher-student ratio thereby scoring low accreditation grades and losing out on funding by the UGC. The state government should take up steps to appoint the required number of teachers as well as provide the infrastructures for the colleges without any delay. Appointment of principal in charge for a large number of colleges and instead of a regular principal till their retirement reeks of corruption and a big factor for lack of accountability in these colleges, as according to the UGC guideline, regular principals are appointed for five years, and if one wishes to continue beyond this term, then an interview is necessary for re-appointment as principal which is not the case in the state at present. The state government should stop this trend and appoint regular principals for the colleges on a rotation basis immediately.

Teachers of government colleges and aided colleges who failed to meet the qualification prescribed by the UGC should be given an opportunity to meet the requirements under a timeframe and those who still cannot meet the qualifications within the given timeframe should be dealt with under a policy, and also the state government should adopt the recommendations for the 7th pay commission for the teachers without any delay.

The above mentioned reasons are the main cause for the failure of the colleges in the state to be included in the top 200 list of colleges and universities of India as determined by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India. The academic activities provided in the state is evidently lacking in depth and quality when compared with that of other states, and in order to make improvements, required parameters such as infrastructure, academic activities, research, faculties etc should be improved said the release.

National Education Policy (NEP)-2020: A Critical Review (Part 2)

By Surjit S. Thokchom*

Let us first have a look to the structural changes in the school education. The existing structure of school education is 10+2. Strictly speaking, it is 2/3+5+3+2+2. 2 or 3 years of pre-primary, 5 years of lower primary, 3 years of upper primary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. Before we try to answer significance of the proposed new structure of 5+3+3+4 in NEP 2020, let us understand issues and the problems of the existing structure in the last 3 decades. Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) was started in 1989 and post literacy classes were open for drop out children. This was in late 80s and early 90s. The ground realities of TLC period did not change over the years. What was the Indian realities particularly amongst the rural poor, urban poor and the children of the marginalized sections of the society? Within the existing policy, there were no provision for teacher for pre-primary level and there was no provision for mid-day meal for children below 6 years. Children below the age of 6 years were covered under Aangalwadi Scheme. There was no official collaboration between Aangalwadi and Lower Primary School either in village level or departmental level or ministerial level. But in practice, due to people's aspiration for children's education, existing govt aided or full-fledged government schools have to accept pre-primary (PP) children. This unofficial arrangement was done without sanctioned PP teachers, without separate PP rooms, without mid-day meal for PP, without prescribed books for PP and more importantly without a govt order. This pattern developed in the last three decades in the village level amongst poorer and marginalized section of both rural and urban society. As such Aangalwadi workers become unofficial and unpaid or underpaid para-teachers for PP. So, the functioning of Aangalwadi as an extension of lower primary schools is a practicing phenomenon, particularly in the rural areas. Therefore, Aangalwadi and the lower primary schools working together unofficially is a visible and feasible practices. There is however one important thing that in the lower primary school, majority of children drop out before entering class 3. Many of them detain in pre-primary and those who enter class 1 detain in the same class as

repeater and those who manage to cross class 1, they are likely to detain in class 2. This detention is somewhat resolved with RTE Act 2009 through no detention policy except in schools under minority act. But in terms of scholastic achievement, children's learning doesn't go beyond class 2. So, in reality, as of today, Aangalwadi workers work together with lower primary teachers. And the lower primary school effectively functions up to class 2 only. How shall we resolve this problem?

NEP 2020 ignores this crisis and take a regressive action: Take PP and class 1 & 2 as Aangalwadi and name it as 'Foundational stage'. Aangalwadi is extended up to class 2 with a new cadre of para-teachers drawn from Aangalwadi. The teacher may be a class 12 passed or below class 12 with no educational lower limit. Teachers will be trained through online for 6 months for class 12 passed and 1-year for below 12th class. The new structure of 5 years Foundational course is a new Aangalwadi structure. It is hugely diluted and heavily compromised Lower Primary school. The failure in the earlier policy will be now a legitimate success story of the new policy. This is called new structure for 3-8 years old children known as 'Foundational stage'.

Under the existing policy, children can be divided broadly into two groups; (i) school going children (ii) non-school going children. As of now the non-school going children say after class 1 cannot be treated as a bona fide enrolled child unless the child is brought back to the school in class 1 or 2. In other words, these children's exclusion from enrollment register is a blot towards 100% GER (Gross Enrolment Rate) towards the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). In the NEP 2020, every drop out children will be officially enrolled without asking them to come back to school to engage in formal learning and the GER will be 100 % without changing or improving the objective realities. In fact, 100% GER will achieve through further dilution of both investment and quality. This miracle is called NEP-2020. How? The magic as per NEP-2020 is called, "wider Choices". There will be 5 types of enrolled children. Right now, let us confine to Foundational stage only though this classification will consistently continue in the later stage of education also. The 5 types are: (i) Children in the formal school (private or government or government aided);

(ii) Children in the non-formal centers (run by NGOs); (iii) Children in the open schooling (either under NIOS or SIOS); (iv) Children in online schooling (Accredited private or public); (v) Children in home schooling (severely disabled child).

All the courses under online, open, home schooling, non-formal Centre will be treated as equivalent to a regular formal education. Under the new arrangement of NEP 2020, there will be no drop out children and GER will be 100% irrespective of quality, accessibility and education facilities as long as children are enrolled in one of the multiple streams. The quality dimension will be decided by outcome. Input norm will be relaxed. The dialectic relationship between input & outcome will be summarily rejected. A child in formal school with proper infrastructure and qualified trained teachers, a child in non-formal center, a child in online education, a child in open schooling will be treated as full-fledged formal education child and they are entitled to get access to all the facilities available in the school complex occasionally.

Let us go little bit deeper on the 'foundational stage' (3-8 years) in this stage. Who will decide the curricular framework, the curriculum and text books? As per NEP-2020, as it is mentioned in section 1.3, the curricular framework will be centrally prepared by NCERT and it will be called National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for early childhood care and education (NCFECCCE). This framework will have two parts; sub-framework for 0-3 years old and sub framework for 3-8 years old. The curriculum based on this framework and the pedagogy based on this framework will be centrally created by the Education Ministry (MHRD as of now). Planning and implementation will be jointly decided by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Please note the total absence of the state govt. and local bodies up to the level of curriculum, planning and implementation. Why? We shall come back again in this question after a while.

Now the Ministry will initiate a mission called National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (section 2.2). This is a restoration of earlier TLC exactly replicating the agenda of World Bank; equating literacy to education. It is difficult to comprehend why this regressive step is recommended. Of course, this mission will not cover children in the private school and govt. elite schools. While children of well to do family are busy with the latest technology, the children both from urban poor and rural poor along with children from marginalized sections of the society will be busy with literacy classes probably in evening time, with occasional visit to school complexes and they will be covered under this mission.

Let us now look to the issue of text books. NEP 2020 does not advocate the use of textbooks in this stage though it says introduction of limited number of texts in class 1 and 2. The curricular framework and the curriculum is centrally controlled by MHRD and the only possible contextualization in the local level is translating the instruction from Hindi and English to local languages. Beyond this, all the contextualization will be off record and unofficial. Of course, you will find the document decorated with beautiful words of flexibility as rhetoric.

Who will teach these children? There

will be four types of teachers: (1) 12th class passed Aangalwadi teachers with a 6 months certificate course through online training conducted by NCERT; (2) Teachers below 12th class with 1-year online training course conducted by NCERT; (3) Peer group teachers from amongst the students; (4) Trained volunteers (from NGOs). In addition to these teachers, there will be counselors and mentors probably from the outside the villages. What will be the pay structure? Who will pay? What about the job security? These are something that we can speculate on the basis of pattern we observe ever since structural adjustment was started in mid 90s. In any case, they will be underpaid contractual para-teachers. Some of them will be overqualified as the large numbers of SSA and RMSA teachers are likely to be ousted from their teaching job in preparatory, middle and secondary level due to closer of schools in the process of converting schools to school complex. About the school complex, we shall discuss later. Whatever, the expanded Aangalwadi under NEP 2020 will be a part of a school complex.

Let us acknowledge one important change here. Under existing policies pre-primary level curriculum is not available in most of the Indian states. The provision for teachers of pre-primary level is available in some states in recent years. Infrastructure provisions is also very limited and mid-day meal was never extended for preparatory level. All these in practice do not apply to the private schools and urban elites govt. aided schools. What we observe in the last few decades is the collective aspirations of parents both rich and poor to start formal education for their children as early as 2 years old. NEP 2020 clubbed the provision for Aangalwadi through social welfare department and the provision of class 1 and 2 through education department or SSA and promise to provide infrastructure and nutrition input as a part of the school complex. This provision is a restructured provision but not a new one. There is a new provision of imposing centrally prepared curriculum, text books and learning materials based on centrally prepared curricular framework. This is against the constitutional provision of education under concurrent list, Indian federalism and all the known pedagogical practices till date.

Whatever, there is one very pertinent but not yet answered question: why do Central government need to centrally develop, design, prepare and implement curriculum, text books and learning materials for children at the age of 3-8 years in a country like India with huge diversity. NEP 2020 strongly recommends to teach the 21st century skills and education right from the foundational stage that is 3 years old child up to higher education through 12 class. For a lay person, 21st century skills and education may mean the ICT, AI, Machine language, Climate change, renewable source of energy etc. But as per NEP 2020, 21st century skills and education mean ancient Indian knowledge (section 1.1.1), not the modern knowledge. Such imposed teaching of ancient Indian knowledge without a critical and rational examination of the same need to defy democratic norm and humane pedagogy! Can this be the reason for this over-centralization? If yes, will it work? Time for us to ponder and act!!!

(to be continued)

Deteriorating humanitarian professionalism: unsupervised healthcare system of Manipur

Need for non-panic and conscientious care for both corona and non-corona patients.

RISE - A women's network for inclusive social development, takes concern of the escalation of unfortunate deaths of non-covid-19 emergency patients due to negligence by the staffs and doctors in district, state and private hospitals of Manipur. On thinking through, it's only a tiny part of the collapsing healthcare system that has created the aura possible for callousness in healthcare services. The recent disheartening incident of Ms. Kanpatliu Kamei, 20 years old pregnant woman from Noney, Senapati district who died of being denied emergency natal treatment in five Imphal hospitals is an alarming red flag. This case and few other similar cases that went viral of treatment refusal, right at the hospital doors, add to the public panic especially during

current corona crisis. This further creates deep-seated mistrust for medical professionals, healthcare related administration and the entire state system that regulates and controls public services. Synchronously, our panic-struck public resorting to mob justices in the localities is only causing high risks of collateral damages.

Our observations from speaking to the victim's family and few concern professionals:

1. Questionable professional efficiency and inadequate infrastructure in Senapati district hospital.
2. Non availability of basic treatment facilities and ambulance in the district hospital.
3. Unprofessional approach by medical professionals such as lack of interpersonal empathy by the nurses, absences of doctors on duty in Imphal hospitals.
4. Mistrust between the

healthcare professionals and victims.

5. Top-down approach in communication and functioning of medical professionals and administration.

Our suggestions keeping in mind the current corona crisis:

1. Reduce the level of panic around corona virus infection by spreading meaningful awareness with care and maintaining strict SOPs to prevent community spread.
2. Identify the loopholes from top to bottom in the entire healthcare system.
3. Provide adequate equipment, care and support for frontliners working tirelessly in the hospitals and sufficient training in terms of its usage like PPE.
4. Give proper scientific and evidence based precautionary healthcare advice to dispel fake information.
5. Prepare comprehensive SOPs for non-covid emergency patients.
6. Update a list of hospitals for emergency care. Follow up and take appropriate stringent actions

against those that do not follow the directives.

7. Provide sensitised empathy training for professionals, nodal officers at quarantine centres and volunteers at groundwork.

While we appreciate the positive news coming in from public healthcare systems following procedure and attending the needs of the patients, like in the case of the Mayang Imphal PHC stepping up in the delivery of twins recently and RIMS with the delivery a baby girl of a COVID-19 positive mother, we also would like to press upon the authorities to review the systemic failures which caused the recent unfortunate and avoidable incidents of maternal and infant deaths. We urge the State and the healthcare providers to emphasise on humanitarian approach in dealing with patients regardless of their COVID status. We also appeal to the public to be mindful of the stress and pressure that frontline workers are going through at this juncture and provide them an enabling environment to dispense their duties.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail: imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-3590330 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.

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Nitin Gadkari lays foundation for different projects

DIPR
Imphal, August 17

Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stones for 13 different highway projects and inaugurated a road safety project of the State through video conference today. The total length of these projects is around 316 kilometres, and the total project cost is around Rs. 3000 crore. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh presided the virtual function from Manipur Bhawan, New Delhi, which was also attended

by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for DoNER and PMO Dr. Jitendra Singh and MoS Road Transport and Highways Gen. (Retd.) VK Singh. They were also joined from Imphal by Works Minister Th. Biswajit, CAF & PD Minister Karam Shyam, Water Resources Minister Shri Letpao Haokip, Agriculture Minister V. Hangkhanlian, Education Minister Th. Radheshyam, MP (Inner) RK Ranjan, MP (Outer) Shri Lorho Pfoze, MP (Rajya Sabha) Leishemba Sanajoba, Manipur Tribal Development

Corporation Chairman Vungzagin Valte, Advisor to Chief Minister K. Leishiyao, Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar and other officials. Speaking on the occasion, Nitin Gadkari announced that the foundation stone for an elevated highway in Imphal city as proposed by the State Government would also be laid soon for which DPR is being prepared. The Union Minister said that the Centre has taken up various projects keeping with Prime Minister's desire to develop infrastructure in the North East.

Regarding Central Roads Fund (CRF), Shri Gadkari also assured to release additional funds of about Rs. 250 crore as soon as the utilization certificates for earlier works are received from the State. He also urged the Chief Minister to speed up land acquisition and utility shifting works in the State so that road projects could be expedited. The Minister also informed that dredging has been completed in Brahmaputra and Barak rivers, and it is now possible to transport people and consignments through waterways. He also suggested

linking of Imphal with this river routes. He also called for adopting alternate fuel for public transport in the North East as it is cheaper and environment friendly. Gadkari also highlighted the role of MSME sector in improving the employment and economic scenario in Manipur. Informing about the recent expansion of MSME units, he exhorted the Chief Minister to consider setting up of Special Designing Centres where quality of local handloom and handicraft products can be improved for export to foreign countries.

In his speech, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh thanked Shri Nitin Gadkari for revamping Imphal-Jiribam and Imphal-Moreh

roads. He informed the Minister that condition of these two important roads are good in most sections though landslide happens in some places during rainy season. He further said that Makru and Barak bridges, for which foundation stones were laid under the Union Minister's guidance, would be completed by the end of this year. Stating that lots of developmental changes could be seen in the State ever since the erstwhile 'Look East Policy' was changed into 'Act East Policy' under the supervision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Shri N. Biren Singh said that works for upgradation of four-lane highway of Imphal-Moreh road

are going on in full swing. Construction of Imphal-Jiribam highway is also underway though the project was slightly delayed in the beginning due to land compensation issues. Apart from it, construction of Moreh bypass road and Pallel-Chandel road would also start soon, he added. Imphal being a small city, is very congested now, as such there is need for an elevated highway, Shri Biren said and added that people of Manipur are thankful to Shri Gadkari for responding positively to the proposal of the 25-km-long Imphal City elevated highway project. He also requested the Minister to upgrade the Imphal-Moirang road to a four-lane highway.

Increase number of forensic labs says NHRC webinar panelists

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, Aug 17:

At a recent webinar hosted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), panelists made several suggestions, including the increase in number of laboratories and introduction of forensic study in MBBS course.

The panelist cited lack of adequate number of forensic laboratories and manpower leading to delay in administering justice. They suggested that training of forensic science be given in MBBS course and a post of a district medico-legal expert be created.

Several suggestions emerge during the online discussion. Some of which were: to bring in uniformity under an SOP for conducting forensic examination, to fill in the vacant posts in forensic science laboratories and to provide them with sufficient infrastructure and funds,

Introduction of Forensic study and training in MBBS course, introduction of forensic law studies as a separate course curriculum in integrated BSc (Forensic) LLB, to increase the number of forensic labs in proportion to the number of cases to examine to avoid delay in administering justice, creation of the post of District Medico Legal expert, to introduce professionalism in the photography and videography of post mortem, to make post mortem an important activity for medical professionals with proper orientation to the Doctors about medico-legal procedures and to improve mortuaries with proper equipments to facilitate conduct of post-mortem.

The panelists also suggested introducing forensic law studies as a separate course curriculum in integrated BSc (Forensic) LLB and to bring in greater professionalism in the photography and

videography during the process of post-mortem. Making post-mortem an important activity for medical professionals with proper orientation to the doctors about medico-legal procedures; and improving mortuary setup with proper equipment and environment to facilities conduct of post-mortem, were other suggestions from the participants, he said.

Inaugurating the webinar, the NHRC Member, Justice P. C. Pant said that forensic examination is important evidence for successful administration of criminal justice. There is a need for the Judiciary and investigating agencies to be aware of general procedures & principles followed in forensics while collecting & examining the physical evidences from the scene of occurrence. There is also the need to create awareness among media and public about not disclose sensitive

information that can hinder the process of investigation & trial.

Justice Pant said that the NHRC has also been raising the issue of increased pendency in forensic labs due to which cases pile up in trial courts and under trial prisoners languish in jail. NHRC has issued guidelines from time to time, on conduct of autopsies, medico-legal reports, use of ballistics etc. There is a change in crime patterns with the surge of cyber-crime, which necessitates filling up of vacant posts urgently in Forensic laboratories, he added.

Secretary General Jaideep Govind, said that the objective of the webinar was to sensitize all the stakeholders about the functioning of the important fields of forensic science, especially in the context of custodial and encounter deaths and cases involving human rights violations.

NSCN-IM furnishes "original copy" of the Framework Agreement in public domain

Agency
Imphal, Aug 17:

The NSCN (IM) on Sunday furnished in public domain what it claimed is the "original copy" of the Framework Agreement as well as the alleged "manipulated copy" of FA circulated by Government of India's Interlocutor RN Ravi, who is also the Governor of Nagaland.

"As a follow up for public scrutiny on how RN Ravi misinformed and misled the Government of India we furnish here the original copy and Ravi's manipulated copy of the Framework Agreement," said a statement issued by the MIP NSCN/GPRN. While the content of the two

copies (alleged original copy and manipulated copy) appears to be almost similar, what is significant (and as claimed in a earlier NSCN (IM) statement) is that the word "new" is missing in "enduring inclusive new relationship of peaceful co-existence of the two entities" in the alleged "manipulated copy" of FA.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction that dialogue between the Government of India and the NSCN has successfully concluded and we are confident, it will provide for an enduring inclusive new relationship of peaceful co-existence of the two entities," the purported "original copy" of FA says. But the alleged "manipulated

copy" of FA says: "It is a matter of great satisfaction that dialogue between the Govt. of India and the NSCN has successfully concluded and we are confident it will provide for an enduring inclusive relationship of peaceful co-existence of the two entities."

The NSCN (IM) said it is furnishing the two copies of the FA to expose the "hidden agenda" of Ravi "to create schism" among the Nagas. "The issue is of serious nature as the very essence of FA had been found missing or manipulated in the copy circulated by Ravi to his favored Naga civil society organizations, including NNPGs to give different narratives," it added.

Death is not the greatest loss in life, the greatest loss in life is what dies inside us while we live

By: Thangminlun Haokip

Everyone has a purpose and destination in life. And yes, we are endeavouring to live a life we dream and desire. We live each day trying to make a living and making it better or worse, depending on the efforts and reactions we give to our challenges we face each day. We surround ourselves with different taste of people- people with different dreams, different lifestyle, different ways of living; one who is always filled with positivity while another living a life of hatred with negative thoughts winding their life that even they themselves don't like the way they look at things for an instance. We are living in a diversified world where people have unique perception and ideology that even a blind man would be able to see in someone's eye, because we have our own way of looking at things, a significant vision towards something that is different from others.

What hinders us today, in the society and the world in a larger aspect is that most of us succumbed to despair- to our own thoughts and don't live our life while we

are actually living. Many among us are dying while we are actually living and breathing. Our soul is crying deep inside of us because we often forsake it by not living while we live. Often do we forget that the limit of life and its beauty is boundless. Don't limit yourself within your thoughts. You are what you think. If you think and believed that you are capable in doing something then you can do it. Our subconscious mind can do in a way that is unimaginable to us. Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become reality, because once the subconscious mind accepts an idea, it begins to execute it. It is a program for our mind to channel our thoughts in the right direction and execute its function command by our conscious mind. So, most of us spent our day being gloomy and sad, being unable to be happy and not able to bring out the smile in us because we don't channeled our thoughts in the positive direction. Thinking of what someone had said to us, quarrelling with our friends, family members, or because we don't have what we

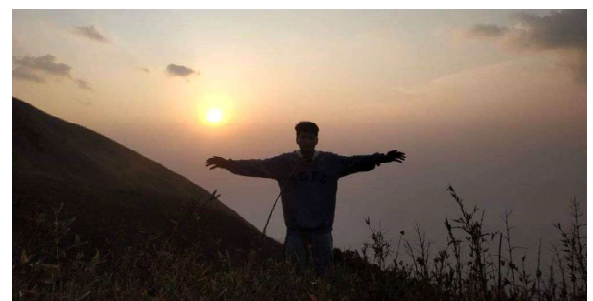
desire. All these negative but useless thoughts which will bring no positive impact but only a hindrance in our life filled our mind, that we remain sad and uncontented in our life. No matter what we're going through, we are capable to break out from the negative side.

We keep pondering on the other side of our life- the ugly lifestyle we lived, the possessions we could not afford to have, the luxuries we cannot enjoy, the sparkling clothes in the storeroom we dream to wear one day, the seven-storey building with all kinds of decent lifestyle we would like to enjoy and what not, are what makes us feel uncontent; when we are actually showered with countless blessings with the life we are given today, when millions are lying breathless in the graveyard, when thousands are lying on their deathbed only waiting to breathe their last, dreaming how they would wish to be alive today- this day. Imagine yourself as one among those. How precious the life we have today would be, the small things which you have negligence as waking up ever morning safe and sound, the sun that shines everyday, the

family you're together with, the friends you surround yourself with, would then be the greatest gift and possession in our life.

The things you dream to have today would then mean nothing to you. For nothing is worth if we are not health and happy with it. What good and benefit is to a man to own a thousand acre of land with branded cars and coveted property if we are not able to enjoy them because we don't have a good health and have no satisfaction upon them. Life is too short and we only live once. So why not live life to the fullest and actually live the life we want.

Steve Job once said, "Your time is limited, don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma, which is living the result of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinion drown your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition, they somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary." How do you feel about our life today? Are we living our best life? Are what we should be asking ourselves today. If our



answer to the above is a no, maybe, or not sure, that means we're not living our life to the fullest. Which really shouldn't be the case, because you're the author of your life. Create and live the life you design and destiny. Pen your own story. Why settle for anything less than what we can get? We deserve nothing but the best. So, live everyday on a fresh new start. Don't be held back by what happened yesterday or the past. Life is too short to ponder upon the past which we have no control over, live in the 'now', live in the present moment. And do the things you love. If you

don't enjoy something, then don't do it. Spend your time and energy on things that brings you happiness and fulfillment. And most importantly, learn to be positive and always train yourself to think positive. Take perceptions that empower you, not those that bind you. If you can learn to see the positive side of everything, you'll be able to live a much richer life than others. Above all, live yourself. You are the one who is solely constant in your life. Remember to always treasure and love yourself. Or no one's going to love you like you do to yourself. Of all these, never forget this:

love life. Living and thriving on this planet is a fascinating experience for all of us. How we're on earth with millions of species, over 30,000 different lifetimes and over 7 billion people and everyone of us are struggling and thriving in our own way. So, as we live on earth, remember to love life. Its the only way we have to live. As Norman Cousins rightly quoted, "Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss in life is what dies inside us while we live." So, let's bring out the potentiality we have within ourselves, let us live the life we desire while we are living.

India sets new landmark of conducting three crore Covid tests; recovery rate crosses 72 %

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 17:

The total number of COVID-19 cases in the country has risen to 26 lakh 47 thousand 664. The Health Ministry said, there has been a spike of 57 thousand 982 cases and 941 deaths were reported in India in the last 24 hours. The number of active cases stand at 6 lakh 76 thousand 900 active cases. India has reported highest single day recoveries of 57,584. The overall recovery rate from Covid -19 has crossed 72 per cent. The

recoveries surged to 19 lakh 19 thousand 8 hundred 42. The death toll due to coronavirus infection climbed to 50 thousand 9 hundred 21. The case fatality rate has declined to 1.92 percent. India has set a new landmark of conducting three crore Covid tests. Union Health Ministry said, expanded diagnostic lab network and facilitation for easy testing across the country have given a substantial boost. During the last 24 hours, more than seven lakh 31 thousand tests have been

conducted. The Ministry said, India is on its resolved drive to increase its testing capacity to 10 lakh tests per day. The Tests per Million have seen a sharp increase to over 21 thousand. The cumulative testing rose from one crore 20 lakh on 14th July to three crore on 16th August. The aggressive testing leads to early identification and isolation of Covid positive cases. The Ministry said, enhanced and timely testing is not only keeping the positivity rate low but also the fatality rate.

CDC says no re-infection yet after recovery from Covid-19 — what does this mean?

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 17:

There has been no case of a recovered patient having been re-infected with the novel coronavirus till now, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States has said. But recovered people can have low levels of the virus in their bodies for up to three months after they were first diagnosed, and this can be detected in the diagnostic tests. This is the reason why there have been instances of recovered people having tested positive again within the three-month period. But such people do not transmit the virus to others, the CDC said in a new guidance released

over the weekend. "Reinfection with SARS-CoV2 (the virus responsible for the Covid-19 disease) has not yet been definitively confirmed in any recovered persons to date. If, and if so when, persons can be reinfected with the SARS-CoV2 remains unknown, and is a subject of investigation," the CDC, which is part of the United States Department of Health, said. The assertion can put to rest speculation about people getting re-infected with the virus. The CDC, however, did not say that recovered patients develop immunity for three months, just that there has been no confirmed case of a re-infection during this time. It said retesting a person within the three month period was therefore "unnecessary".

Even if they test positive, it most probably would be because of left-over traces of virus ("persistent shedding") rather than a case of re-infection. The CDC also said that persons with mild to moderate symptoms can be released from isolation 10

days after they first tested positive, while those with severe symptoms need to be kept in isolation for a maximum of 20 days. "Available data indicate that persons with mild to moderate Covid-19 remain infectious no longer than 10 days after symptom onset. Persons with more severe to critical illness or severe immunocompromise likely remain infectious no longer than 20 days after symptom onset," it said. "Recovered persons can continue to shed detectable SARS-CoV2 RNA in upper respiratory specimens for up to three months after illness onset, albeit at concentrations considerably lower than during illness, in ranges where replication-competent virus (those that can replicate and spread) has not been reliably recovered and infectiousness is unlikely. The etiology (cause of the disease) of this persistently detectable SARS-CoV2 RNA has yet to be determined," it said. "Studies have not found evidence that clinically recovered persons with persistence of viral RNA

have transmitted SARS-CoV2 to others," it said. The CDC said its new recommendations were based on more than 15 international and US-based published studies that looked at the length of infection, duration of viral shed, asymptomatic spread, and the risk of spread among various patient groups. "Researchers have found that the amount of live virus in the nose and throat drops significantly soon after the Covid-19 symptoms develop. Additionally, the duration of infectiousness in most people with Covid-19 is no longer than 10 days after symptoms begin, and no longer than 20 days in people with severe illness..." it said. It said the latest findings strengthened the case for relying on "symptom-based, rather than test-based strategy for ending isolation" of infected patients, so that persons who are "by current evidence no longer infectious are not kept unnecessarily isolated and excluded from work or other responsibilities".

India, Nepal to hold high-level meeting today amid border row

Courtesy HT
New Delhi, Aug 17:

India and Nepal will hold talks on Monday under their "oversight mechanism" to review development projects funded by New Delhi in the Himalayan region. This will be the first high-level contact between the two sides since ties were hit by a border row. The joint oversight mechanism was launched in 2016 and reviews progress in bilateral projects. The meeting between Indian envoy Vinay Mohan Kwatra and Nepal's foreign secretary Shanker Das Bairagi, who

jointly chair the mechanism, is being seen by some quarters in Kathmandu as a positive development after the border row took relations to a new low. "The mechanism will only focus on the implementation of India-funded projects in Nepal. However, it could help break the logjam in relations," said a person aware of the developments. During its seventh meeting in July last year, the mechanism reviewed the implementation of projects such as cross-border rail links, petroleum pipelines, roads, bridges, integrated

border check posts, energy, irrigation, and post-earthquake reconstruction. The border row erupted late last year after Nepal objected to the inclusion of Kalapani region, which is claimed by Kathmandu, in a new map of the union territory of Ladakh that was issued by India. The row was exacerbated in May, when India opened a new road to Lipulekh region on the border with Tibet, as this area too is claimed by Nepal. In June, Nepal's Parliament approved the new political map of the country that showed Kalapani, Lipulekh

and Limpiyadhura, which are all controlled by India, as the part of the Himalayan nation. India had termed as untenable the "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims by the neighbouring country. The foreign ministry further said that Nepal's action violates an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks. In recent weeks, the two countries have also engaged in a war of words over the origins of historic figures such as Lord Ram and Gautam Buddha.

Sports

Dhoni to concentrate on entertainment business

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Aug 17:

India's star cricketer Mahendrasingh Dhoni who announced his retirement from international cricket, on Independence day, will be concentrating on entertainment business and has already set up the "Dhoni Entertainment Private Limited (DEPL)", with office in Mumbai. DEPL is an unlisted private company, incorporated on 25 January, 2019 in Ranchi, Jharkhand, has two directors - Sakshi Singh Dhoni and Suraj Singh. It has office at Andheri in North West Mumbai. DEPL, which has ventured into making television shows and content for the OTT platforms, has joined hands with "Banjara Asia" a leading production house. A biopic on Dhoni- "M S Dhoni, the untold story" was released in 2016 by Disney+Hotstar. Besides "The Roar of The Lion", a Hotstar documentary, was the first project of DEPL. "After my biopic, I always wanted to do something in the entertainment space," Dhoni had said during the launch of the documentary. "Banjara Asia" has 10 per cent tie up with "Endemol Shine". The new joint-venture between DEPL and Banjara Asia will create premium content for the India and south east Asian markets. "Banjara Asia" is a production company creating premium content for television, films and OTT platforms. Our expertise covers all genres including entertainment,



factual, scripted and reality not only across all territories in India but also in Asia. "Banjara Asia" is the most recent addition to the "Banjara Group" which already has production entities in 16 territories across the globe. The 39 year old Dhoni, the two-time World Cup winner for India, however will continue to play for Indian Premier League (IPL). Under his captaincy, India won the 2007 ICC World Twenty20, the 2010 and 2016 Asia Cups, the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup and the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy. He represented India in 350

ODIs, 90 Tests and 98 T20 Internationals. He is an ODI legend with 10,773 runs, averaging more than 50 despite batting between No.5 and 7 for a major chunk of his career. In the Test format, he accumulated 4876 runs at an average of 38.09 and led India to more wins (27) than anyone else before him. He retired from red-ball cricket in December 2014. He is also India's most successful wicketkeeper of all time. With a total of 195 stumpings and 634 catches in international matches, he has set a benchmark with his clinical wicket keeping skills.

International News

Ban on Myanmar's largest observer group to have 'huge' election impact

Agency
Yangon, Aug 17:

The banning of Myanmar's largest election monitoring group will have a "huge impact" on the transparency of November's national polls, the organisation's director said. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won the last election in a landslide victory five years ago and the next national poll is planned for November 8. The People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) had expected to play a crucial role in a vote where coronavirus restrictions will

likely mean many international observers are blocked. But its director Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint announced Thursday that the group had been barred by authorities. "It's a very sad day," he told AFP, adding that his organisation — which boasts more than 2,900 observers — had successfully monitored the 2015 vote, 2017 by-elections and 2019 municipal elections. "To bar PACE has a huge impact on the transparency of the process." The move has caused outrage with more than 450 civil society groups issuing a joint

statement calling for the decision to be overturned in the name of a "free and fair" election. The Union Election Commission (UEC) at the end of last month told PACE it would be barred from elections for "receiving assistance from international organisations without being officially registered". Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint said his group has always been open about its funding, but argued that receiving foreign money was legal. The government had put bureaucratic obstacles in its way to prevent it from registering, he said.

"Without PACE the elections will not be credible," said Khin Zaw Win, director of policy advocacy group Tampadipa Institute. He also questioned the impartiality of the UEC, whose members under Myanmar's constitution are entirely selected by the ruling party. "You can't run a real respectable democracy without a reliable election commission," he added. The polls are expected to return Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling NLD party to power despite rising disillusionment among the country's many ethnic minority groups.

Case registered against two youths who led Karen Martyr's Day ceremony

Agency
Karen, Aug 17:

Kyauktada Township police station registered a case against two Karen youths for organizing Karen Martyr's Day ceremony on August 12

in front of Maha Bandoola Square, Yangon under section 20 of Peaceful Assembly and Marching in Procession Law. Policemen from Kyauktada Myoma police station arrested the two Karen youths Saw Sa Qua La and Sa Thein Zaw Min

while they were holding the ceremony. The youths who organized the ceremony said that they had already informed the authorities on August 9 about holding the ceremony from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and held it in

accordance with guidelines and precautionary measures adopted by the Ministry of Health for COVID-19 pandemic prevention. But the police force only granted them permission until 11 a.m. so the police arrested the leaders.