

CM inaugurates Covid Care Centre Lamboikhongnangkhang



IT News
Imphal, Aug 3:

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh inaugurated a 300 bedded Covid Care Centre (CCC) at Manipur Trade and Expo Centre, Lamboi khongnang khong in Imphal West District today. Briefing the media persons, Chief Minister stated that there is evidence of local transmission of COVID-19, however there is no community transmission of

the disease in the State. He maintained that awareness among the people is very much needed to contain further spread of the disease. He also appealed to the people to come out openly for early treatment instead of concealing their COVID-19 status if tested positive. The Chief Minister said that presently, a total of 300 beds have been installed in the CCC, Lamboi khongnang khong and it will be upgraded to a 1000-bedded Centre as it

has enough space for extension. He appreciated the Health Department and other officials for setting up the Covid Care Centre so that infected people can get timely treatment. Deputy Chief Minister Y. Joykumar and Health Minister L. Jayantakumar, Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Principal Secretary (Health) V. Vumlungmang, Director (Health) Dr. K. Rajo and other officials were present during the function.

Over 11 lakh 86 thousand people recover from COVID-19 in the country so far; Recovery rate reaches 65.76%

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 3:

Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry today said, a total of 11 lakh 86 thousand 203 people have recovered from Corona virus infection in the country so far. In the past 24 hours, 40 thousand 574 recoveries were reported across the country. With this, the recovery rate reached 65.76 per cent and the case fatality rate has further declined to 2.11 per cent. The Health Ministry said, a total of 52 thousand 972 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in the country in one day taking the total number of cases to 18 lakh three thousand 695. Presently, the total number of active cases in the country is five lakh 79 thousand 357. In a single day, 771 deaths were reported taking the nationwide toll to 38 thousand 135.

Meanwhile, India achieved a remarkable feat by conducting more than two crore tests in the country since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in India. The Indian Council of Medical Research today said, a total of two crore two lakh two thousand 858 tests have been conducted in the country so far. Three lakh 81 thousand 27 tests of Corona virus samples were conducted by the various laboratories yesterday. At present, one thousand 348 laboratories across India are conducting the tests for COVID-19 including 914 government laboratories and 434 private laboratories' chains. Meanwhile, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given nod to the Serum Institute of India (SII) to

conduct phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccine developed by Oxford University. The approval for conducting phase 2 and 3 clinical trials by the SII was granted by DCGI Dr VG Somani late last night after a thorough evaluation based on the recommendations of the Subject Expert Committee on COVID-19. The expert panel at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) had on Friday recommended granting permission for phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the vaccine - Covishield on healthy adults in India. The firm has to submit safety data, evaluated by the Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB), to the CDSCO before proceeding to phase 3

clinical trials. Currently, phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the Oxford vaccine are going on in the UK, phase 3 clinical trials in Brazil and phase 1 and 2 clinical trials in South Africa. On the other hand the World Health Organization has warned that the coronavirus pandemic is likely to be lengthy. The statement comes after an emergency committee of WHO met to evaluate the crisis six months after sounding the international alarm. The committee also warned of the risk of response fatigue given the socio-economic pressures on countries. The panel gathered for the fourth time over the coronavirus crisis, half a year on from its January 30 declaration of a public health emergency of international concern - the WHO's highest level of alarm.

HRD Minister, Sports Minister to launch 'Fit India Talks'

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 3:

The government's flagship program Fit India is launching a series of interactive sessions with some of the top sports persons of the country intended to inspire the school children. The sessions, titled Fit India Talks, will premiere today in the presence of Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Sports Minister Kiren Rijju along with badminton star PV Sindhu and Indian football team skipper Sunil Chhetri. A host of leading sports celebrities will be sharing their experiences of childhood, stories on how they got inspired, their failures, struggles and their success. This will give the audience a very inspirational yet interesting account of their journeys - from common school students to world-class champions. There will be a total of six sessions which will go on till 14th of this month. The likes of badminton star Ashwini Ponnappa, Indian women's hockey team skipper Rani Rampal, table tennis star Manika Batra, shooter Apurvi Chandela and inspirational Paralympian Deepa Malik will join in at the sessions.

Scheduled for PG and UG semester examination should be reconsidered - AMSU

IT News
Imphal, Aug 3:

The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) today showed serious concern to the July 6 announcement by the UGC to complete terminal semester examination by September. A press statement by the student body said that a case has been pending in the Supreme Court in challenging the new guidelines of the UGC and hearing is scheduled on August 10. The Court also directed the Home Ministry to submit its stand in connection with the UGC guidelines. A statement issued by Bruce Pebam, Human Resource Development Secretary, AMSU Headquarters, said

that over 18 lakhs people have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic in the country and in Manipur too there are cases of fatalities due to the pandemic. This is the time that we the people should prepared well to fight the virus by following the guidelines of the WHO to fight the pandemic. As per the guidelines of the UGC, the Manipur University had also issued notification for conducting the terminal semester examination of the Under Graduate and Postgraduate from the 1st week of September along with the time table. The AMSU said that conducting examination by lifting the lockdown risky for the students. On the other

hand conducting exam without classes for even two months which should be conducted for three months is not fair, the AMSU statement said. As per the guidelines of the UGC the examination can be conducted, online, offline or blended mode but for the Manipur state no proper guidelines has been framed so far. Before conducting the exam guidelines for conducting the exam by maintaining the SOP should be framed by expert committee. The AMSU appealed the Manipur University authority to review the decision to hold terminal exam for the Undergraduate and postgraduate semester exam.

Ningol club demands to hand over Lhukhosei Zou case to CBI



IT News
Imphal, Aug 3:

Demanding handing over of the Lhukhosei Zou drug haul case to CBI, volunteers of the Ningol Club started poster campaign today and staged protest at Heirok Part -II market. Ningol Club is a civil body formed by like minded ladies of the state to fight the

social menace. Speaking to reporters Secretary general of the Ningol Club Yaiphabi Ningthoujam said that government should act by understanding the sentiments of the people by handing over the case of king pin drug lord Lhukhosei Zou should to Central Bureau of Investigation. She said that

the government should not try to protect the drug lord who had attempted to spoil; the society, She said Zou, the virus of the society should be punished as per the law of the land. If the drug lord is not punished what is the use of the the War on Drug, the Ningol Club secretary questioned.

Time Scale Promotion Scheme for teachers of JNIMS approved

IT News
Imphal, Aug 3:

State cabinet has approved time scale promotion scheme for teachers (Assistant Professor and Associate Professor) of JNIMS which is in the nature of a flexible completion scheme wherein no additional posts are created is being proposed. As per a letter to the director JNIMS by the From the Deputy Secretary (Health & FW), Government of Manipur, it is stated that The existing persons on the basis of critical assessment are

promoted to the next higher level, or scales are upgraded without altering the combined authorized strength of posts. The key features of the proposed scheme are as follows :- (i) For Promotion to professor from Associate Professor the appointing Authority shall upgrade 22% of total regular posts of Associate Professor to grade of Professor. (ii) Requirements for research publications, number of years of service in Assistant/Associate Professor etc shall strictly be as per MCI guidelines issued from time to time

(iii) Promoted officers shall be placed en-block junior to those who are already holding the post of Associate Professor or regular basis. (iv) Such officers carrying personal promotion shall be subsequently adjusted against identified specific posts in their own specially on availability of clear vacancies. (v) Provided that the total number of Associate Professors in position shall not exceed the total number of Assistant Professors in position. (vi) Screening for time

scale promotion will be done the selection Board headed by Chief Secretary as contained in the JNIMS service rules. Amendment of rules 7(C) of time scale promotion rules, 2018 as follows : "Not more than 50% of the sanctioned strength of the S R s / . T u t o r s / Demonstration/ Lady Medical Officers shall be upgraded in a year Actual up-gradation will depend on the SRs/Demonstrators/ Lady Medical Officers fulfilling the requirements for Assistant Professors prescribed by MCI from time to time"

Centre asks states and UTs to allow smartphones and tablet devices for hospitalized COVID-19 patients

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 3:

The Central Government has written to all states and Union Territories asking that smartphones and tablet devices should be allowed for hospitalised COVID-19 patients so that they can interact with family and friends through video conferencing. This is expected to provide the patients psychological support. Though mobile phones are allowed in hospital wards, the letter was issued following some representation from the kin of patients alleging that mobile phones are not being

allowed by the hospital administrations. In the letter to the Principal Secretaries of health and medical education of States and UTs, Director General of Health Services in the Health Ministry, Dr Rajiv Garg said, appropriate protocols for disinfecting devices and allocating time slots can be developed by the hospital concerned to facilitate contact between patients and their family. He stressed that administrative and medical teams should be responsive to the psychological needs of patients admitted in COVID-19 wards and ICUs.

★ Editorial

It's within the community, authority should accept it

Even as the government of Manipur and its concerned department still deny community transmission of COVID-19 in the state, the way that people are being infected indicates that the dreaded virus has already started spreading at the community level.

Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, Yumnam Khemchand had accepted it. He had said that the virus has started spreading at the community level while speaking during a valedictory function of the quarantine center opened at Manipur College, Imphal on Sunday. Some Civil Society leaders had also said that community transmission of COVID-19 has already begun and is in the initial stage. Many people including experts have similar views and why shouldn't it be with the various circumstances shreds of evidence of people being tested positive with the virus.

The virus was first traced to returnees from outside the state. There were rumours about lapses of management at the quarantine centers, which is mandatory for all returnees, and some believed many volunteers had contacted the virus from the quarantine centers who then spread to their families and localities. Today, there are many persons infected by the virus who neither have travel history nor came into close contact with infected persons. This is most worrying scenario which hints towards contraction of the deadly virus from nowhere - a case of community transmission.

There was not that much panic among the people when front-line health workers contracted the virus from those infected persons whom they treated, however, when persons without travelling record or contact tracing with those infected tests positive with the virus, it is common sense to be panic. And it is obvious that people assume the virus now spread at the community level. There are now possibilities that any person get infected if proper precautionary measures other than freezing the normal life has been taken up.

Now, what matters is why the state health department cannot accept the reality when even the speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly himself had accepted that the virus is spreading at the community level. And moreover why is the government reluctant to accept death of patients with Covid-19. However, it turned reality. They should not fear criticism of general public. What is matter is sincerity in meeting the challenges.

Is it because that announcement of the virus to have been spreading at community level will create chaos in the society with a tendency to sabotage the containment measures being taken up by the government?

From those returnees from outside the state, frontline workers including doctors, nurses, police have been invaded by the killer virus. It does not confine to these frontline line workers community alone, it now spreads to the staff of Manipur University, DIPR, PWD etc.

Everyday district administrations declared 'containment zone' at places where people are tested positive with the virus. In the Thoubal district, almost all areas have been declared as containment zone. Similar is with almost all districts of the state including Imphal East and Imphal West.

The very act of the district administrations indicates that the perception of the people about the virus being spread at the community level is true.

For around 6 months we have been experiencing the impact of the dreaded virus. After so many lockdowns and curfews, the situation is not improving but is rather deteriorating. At this crucial time ignoring the reality by the government will only worsen the situation as we cannot be imprisoned forever by way of imposition of indefinite lockdown or containment zone.

After all we can't keep going with the government version of handkerchief, mask, etc as announced in radio and other state communication mediums. Our situation is critical now, better to refer entirely on standard WHO guidelines. They prescribed only N95 and 3 layers surgical mask. So far, no quality checking, even in the hospitals, sub-standard masks are issued.

It is time that the government accepts the reality and announces the community transmission of the virus. If the situation is declared officially, new measures and policies could be framed to let life going with the new normalcy.

It may be recalled that the World Health Organisation (WHO) had stated that its time that we learn the virus and live with it by protecting ourselves and taking up all possible measures. It is time that the government congregate all experts and frame a policy to live life without imprisoning the people. After all, we have to move on we can't starve ourselves to death. The first step towards finding a lasting mechanism for the society will be the acknowledgment of reality.

Remember a stitch in time saves nine. It is still not late.

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National Education Policy 2020: Some Salient Features

By- Prof. N. Rajmuhon Singh
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Introduction

The National Educational Policy has come a long way from its first formulation in 1968 followed by its modified versions of 1986 and 1992, and now the National Educational Policy 2020 (the NEP 2020).

On 29th July, 2020, Union Cabinet had given approval to new education policy for the 21st century. The cabinet had also approved a proposal to rename the Ministry of Human Resource Development as the Ministry of Education.

The NEP 2020 is an outcome of the most exhaustive consultations carried out by Government of India under the leadership of the modern Chanakya Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The NEP 2020 is a landmark document which proposes several structural changes in the early as well as the higher education system. The new policy will be the key to unlock the main gate to robust education system rooted in Indian ethos in the globalized education and knowledge era.

Some important new features found in the National Education Policy 2020 are highlighted as follows.

School Education

• NEP 2020 has set a target of achieving 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.

• The NEP 2020 has provisions to ensure universal access to school education at all levels-pre school to secondary.

• The 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to age 3-8, 8-11, 11-14 and 14-18 years respectively.

• The school curricula and pedagogy will aim for holistic development of learners by equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on experiential learning.

• Students will have increased flexibility and choice of

subjects (liberal arts). There will be no rigid separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra and co-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams.

• For universal access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), the Anganwadi Centers will be strengthened with high quality infrastructure, (with a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building), play equipment and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Funds for these programs will be provided by the central and state governments.

• The NEP 2020 advocates for mother tongue/local language/regional language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond.

• A new examination system called Performance, Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge (PARAK) would be introduced for students upto class IX.

• Under NEP 2020, the center will also setup a 'Gender-Inclusive Fund' to build country's capacity to provide equitable quality education to all girls and transgender students, etc., etc.

Higher education

• NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035, and there would be only one regulatory body for the higher education sector.

• Undergraduate education is to become more broad-based, multi-disciplinary, and holistic with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification. Students will get certificate after 1 year, advanced diploma after 2 years, Bachelor's degree after 3 years and Bachelor's with research after 4 years.

• Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) as par with IITs, IIMs, are going to be setup as models of best disciplinary education of global standards in the country.

• Under NEP 2020, National Research Foundation will be created as an apex body for fostering and strengthening a strong research culture and building research capacity across the country.

• Central Advisory Board of Education will be strengthened, remodeled and rejuvenated for developing, articulating, evaluating and revising the vision of education.

• The higher education system shall have multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning that offer undergraduate programs, with high-quality teaching, research and community engagement. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge society and economy and keeping in view of the requirements of the fourth industrial revolution, characterized by increasing proportion of employment opportunities for creative, multidisciplinary and highly skilled workforce-the higher education system under NEP 2020 must, at the earliest, be re-adjusted re-vamped, and re-energized to meet these requirements.

• Open and Distance Learning like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will be expanded to play a significant role in increasing GER.

• The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) which is an autonomous body will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the uses of technology to improve/enhance classroom process, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streaming educational planning, administration and management.

• Under NEP 2020,

Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) to be established to ensure the preservation, growth and vibrancy of all Indian Languages including classical, tribal and endangered languages.

• All professional education will be integral part of the higher education system. Stand alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agriculture universities etc., will aim to become multidisciplinary institutions.

• Public and private higher education institutions (excluding medical and legal education) will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards which will be under the control of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to be set up under NEP 2020.

• Affiliation of college is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an autonomous degree-granting, or a constituent college of the university.

• Under the NEP 2020 the world's top 100 foreign universities will be facilitated to operate in India through a new law, etc., etc.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 is a transformation step in the right direction on a number of fronts. However, any policy is only good as its implementation. Achieving successful implementation of this new NEP 2020 demands a long-term vision, availability of expertise on a sustained basis, and concerted actions from all concerned actors (stakeholders) encompassing national, state, institutional and individual levels. Many challenges are yet to be faced and then, make the vision a reality. If we could do so, NEP 2020 will help transform India into a 'Global educational powerhouse' as envisioned by the Prime Minister.

REORIENTATION (Skills and Minds) - The need of the Hour

By-Lt Col L Manongba (Indian Army veteran)

There is a favourite phrase amongst many - the New Normal. The implication of such a term, is what we need to interpret correctly and intelligently. Many eminent and wise citizens have spoken of the issue of returnees & unemployment to respective states country wide. One felt the need to add on & express further. Focussing on the state in particular, many have rightly highlighted the availability of 'jobs in the state' which at present are being taken up by approx 40,000 non local workforce. There has also been return of an equal number or more of youth in the age group of 25 to 40 Yrs, who had been engaged in various jobs in all parts of the country. A comprehensive data is already available with the Govt, thanks to the Covid-19 scares & our positive responses in attempts to segregate the negatives effectively. The pandemic of Covid - 19 is showing no sign of retreat and 'series of Lock-Downs' is probably going to stay in these parts for much longer than expected or desired.

There is an urgent need for REORIENTATION & READJUSTMENTS. The boys and girls who were in a financially 'Self-Propelling - Mode' pre March 2020, will certainly find it hard to reorient themselves in the kind of work that they may take up locally. These are mostly in jobs like construction sector requiring unskilled, semi-

skilled and skilled labour. Masonry, carpentry, tiles work, plumbing work, electrical fitting, painting works, petty shop keeping, etc. The local boys & girls earlier worked in numerous cities, and were engaged in job sectors of private security guards, staff jobs in hotel, restaurant, shopping malls and tourism sectors. Few of them who probably were with higher educational qualifications & with knowledge of English, computer skills etc may have worked in call centres.

REORIENTATION would involve - skill training & learning which is much easier for these highly skilled youth with very observant eyes and characteristics. The other aspect of this is 'Mental Conditioning' - which will take more than just mere words of counsel, because such expectation would be contradictory to the very reasons why these boys and girls went out in search of opportunities.

Lastly, the favourite 'Punching Bag' of Non Locals taking up Local Jobs - is a universal phenomenon. To use this recently 'Acquired' Weaponry in form of ILPS (Inner Line Permit System, gifted by the respected HM Shri Amit Shah), to justify 'Cries of Foul' in 'inward movement' of the much needed workforce would be Unwanted as well as Unwarranted. This movement of peoples should not be translated into a fear of being overwhelmed, however right sounding or imagined; it certainly cannot be stopped if we want

developmental activities to continue. This is a worldwide activity - may be Mexico Vs USA, India Vs Bangladesh or elsewhere. Chinese movements worldwide is of course another matter altogether; that is with an intense intent of much dreaded 'Overshadow Effect' (refer Bertil Lintner's World Wide Web - Chinese Migration in 21st Century).

For us, one may only attempt to regulate it legally, which is already being done by the Govt with best of intent & earnest since 01st Jan 2020. Appreciations must be credited to the Govt, both central and state. The Govt must be allowed to do what it does best.

As one understands, the purpose of ILPS regime is not for the fiduciary gains. Nor is it justified to use it as a 'NO ENTRY' signboard to the rest of the countrymen. This is different from RAP (Restricted Area Permit) meant for Foreign citizens visiting these areas. In both the cases, the Govt is the legal entity which is ensuring proper implementation. (As per the author Rs 1 Crore was collected as state Govt revenue, in 7 months since 01st Jan 2020 from 33,500 people who came into the state for various purposes.) If one may add, this amount may just as well meet the overhead expenses of manpower & other expenses in manning the state's 7 ILP check gates and others. This though is welcome, but it can't be the mainstay of our economy where 91% of Revenue comes from Central funds to the tune of Rs 16,500 Crores.) The two major benefits of the

same (ILPS) may be, safety provisions to unregulated sale / purchase of already limited space and land (which is still debatable & is subject to interpretations / implementation); Secondly & more important is the mental 'Kavach' suiting Xenophobic mind-set of many.

Without going into the merits and demerits of such a system, one feels that necessary workforce flowing into the state for various development works, cannot and should not be blunted by use of the new arsenal. Before that the state's youth must learn to Re-Orient their Minds, pick up necessary tools and tackle & proceed towards the opportunities that lie ahead, if they want to survive in days of or post Covid 19.

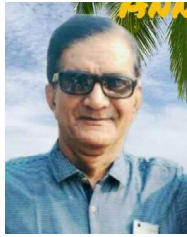
That will be a reality of oft quoted - NEW NORMAL. Lest, the 50,000 plus & growing youth would find themselves unprepared; and there would be none else to blame except themselves. REORIENTATION (Skills and Minds) is the urgent need of the Hour.

**** The author is a socially concerned, responsible well-wisher of the state, country nation. He is President, Tri Services Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association, Manipur (TSEWA-Manipur) & General Secretary, Armed Forces Ex-Servicemen Association Manipur (AFESAM). The contents are personal reflections. He can be contacted at mail ID - colmanongba@gmail.com.

JFA expresses grief over journalist Prakash Kr Jha's demise

IT News
Guwahati, Aug 3:

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA) expresses grief at the demise of senior scribe Prakash Kr Jha last night (1 August 2020) at Guwahati medical college hospital. Born in Bihar and started his career in the media with the Patna based independent nationalist English daily Indian Nation (now defunct), Jha also worked for Hindi daily Samarg for its Kolkata edition. Later he shifted to Guwahati to work for Hindi daily Uttarkal. Jha also worked for two prominent Hindi dailies Purbanchal Prabhari and Dainik Purboday. He was proficient in translation from English to Hindi language. Jha (64) left behind his wife and three daughters with a host of well-wishers. His cremation is scheduled to take place in Bhootnath crematorium tomorrow. Prakash Kr Jha



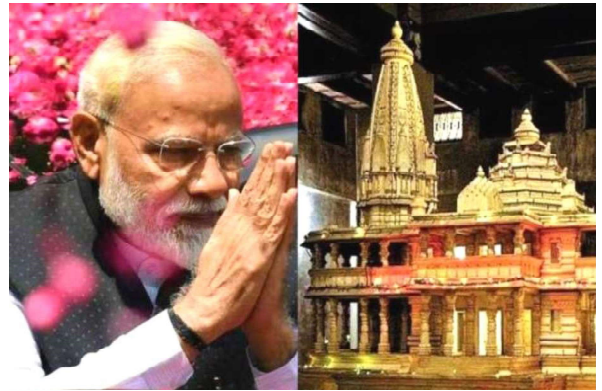
becomes the tenth Assam based media persons who died in the Covid-19 lockdown period. Earlier the printer-publisher of Asomiya Khabar (Rantu Das) died on 3 July, who incidentally became the first victim of novel corona virus infection in northeast India, said JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria, adding that Assam also lost Ripul Kalita, Manik Sarma, Pijush Kanti Das, Mozahedul Haque, Padmeswar Chitrakar, Bhaskar Dutta, Pranjal Hazarika and Dimpi Kashyap during the pandemic.

No political speeches at Ram Mandir Bhoomi puja function

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Aug 3:

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be attending the bhoomi puja (ground-breaking ceremony) for the Ram temple in Ayodhya on 5 August, the function will be religious and no political announcements will be made. According to sources, Modi will be reaching Ayodhya between 11 AM to 11.15 AM. On reaching Ayodhya, he will offer prayers at "Hanuman Garhi" for about three minutes. He will be at "Hanuman Garhi" totally for 7 minutes and then will proceed to the venue of the main function. A team of SPGs has already reached Ayodhya ahead of Modi's visit. The Hanumanagarhi temple, is the famous temple en route to the proposed Ram temple. It was visited earlier by Rahul Gandhi in 2016, Priyanka Gandhi in 2019 and their grandmother Indira Gandhi many years ago.

The bhoomi puja will be done by the PM between 12:30 PM and 12:40 PM on the auspicious 'abhijeet muhurat'. There will be limited number of VIPs on stage and at bhoomi puja spot, given social distancing norms and Covid-19 protocols. Modi will be in Ayodhya, for nearly three hours and will leave for New Delhi by 2.30 PM. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, has invited the select invitees including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath and Ram Temple Trust head Nriya Gopal Das. Some of these VIPs are expected to speak on the occasion, the general secretary of the trust, Champat Rai, said. Besides, the religious heads of different faith including S h a n k a r a c h a r y a representing Hindus, the heads of Sufi sect, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhisms, Islam and Buddhism have been invited. The list also includes



Sunni Central Waqf Board Chairman Jaffer Farukhi, local social worker Mohmed Shariff and Iqbal Ansari, the main litigant in the Ayodhya land dispute case. The invitations have been extended over telephone. The coronavirus situation is

being closely monitored in Ayodhya where, the number of positive cases has surged, as testing has been increased ahead of the bhoomi puja function. Many security-men posted at the Jannabhoomi premises are being tested to eliminate the possibility of any infected person on the

premises. In Ayodhya, total cases have crossed 1194 (544 active cases). So far, 36,000 tests have been carried out and an overall positivity rate is 3%. Fourteen people have died in Ayodhya due to coronavirus while the recovery rate stands at 53 percent.

Living with the pandemic: Community transmission has started!!!



By - Janghaolun Haokip

The #Imphaltimes headline on day two of august reads "Community transmission has started, we should all take responsibility in fighting COVID-19." For the next couple minutes I was wondering "but how?" the next morning I read it in some other newspapers; the news was everywhere; COVID-19 had intruded and claimed our territory!

But how did the wheel turn when the recovery rate was higher than the number of infections that showed that the pandemic will somehow go? If I remember right, the rate of recovery went as high as sixty per cent which was very much on a positive note. Consequently, there was hope and I believe we were all celebrating silently with eagerness of having to go back to leading a normal life; normal office hours, normal schooling, normal activities, and normal fun among other normal-s.

However, the news of community transmission came as a shocking shock to many people. The once high hopes now should die and people must once again brace themselves for another wave of uncertainty due to the pandemic. In my village, we had to hold another meeting wherein we framed certain guidelines that clearly professed that the time for being 'normal' has yet again come to an end, or at least up to sixth of

August. No tuitions, no games, no meetings, and nothing; meaning people have to stay home at all times. The dangers have heightened as certain places have recently been declared as containment zones. With it, many localities have been sealed with no movements allowed.

Whatever the reasons or the failure in policies and programmes to combat the spread of the pandemic, the situation we are in right now is something which has raised several troubling questions that are negatively affecting the minds of the people. The elderly people I know are always murmuring of 'end-times' and the 'curse of the gods'. Parents are worried about so many things, and on the other hand the youths too are regretting all the fun they would miss. The leaders may as well be extremely perturbed by this sudden spike in the effect of the pandemic. One may therefore believe that we have come to a somber mark in our fight against the pandemic.

Furthermore, the recent rise in the impact is a matter of concern not just because it has threatened lives on an incomparably larger scale than the first wave, but also because it came as a fire-service to the almost burning political scenario of the state. Had it not been COVID-19, the state would now be "dashmurdabad" or "dashmurestign". It came in a time when the BJP government is challenged and the Chief Minister is questioned. One may ask whether it is a mere coincidence or the more critical and cynical intellectuals may ask if there are any villainy links between the two.

What is also puzzling about the pandemic is that its stated modes of transmission, in most cases, belie what we witness in reality. The results

often come as a shock as two closely associating individuals as that of a mother and child would have different test results of COVID-19. Wherefore the mode of transmission is really baffling. One may ask if the doctors, organisations and government are only jabbering at something which they do not really know. In addition, everyone everywhere is talking about COVID-19; its remedies, such as drinking hot water, garlic, exposure to sun, and the most recent 'staying in water' for a stipulated amount of time without the necessary evidence to support their passionate claims.

Nevertheless, the entire world wants the pandemic to go. But what do we do when it worsens; when at first you worry about people who are coming home from across the country and abroad but now you have to literally worry about yourself too even while you are staying put at home. What can you do when you are only worried about the front liners and people who are working close to the 'contained' and 'quarantined' but now you literally do not know where the virus is and it could strike you anytime and from anywhere. One thing is sure, even if the Pandemic does not come to physically or biologically harm us, it has already started doing a great harm to our mental and emotional health. It has rendered us victims of the imminent threat it poses to our health and our entire existence, not to forget to think about the validity, credibility, and morality of our system of governance.

But in the end, we have to live with it somehow. Be it the face of a political conspiracy or be it a real threat, the sudden spike has to be endured somehow. People must be cautioned to take precautions to help combat

the spread. We must be ready for any adverse consequences, meaning we must be prepared at all times. The severity must be heedfully realised; and with it the necessity to put our fight against the pandemic into practice. Surely you can't go shopping anymore, nor go out for fun. The directives clearly stated no outdoor activities except on really serious matters.

Inevitably, the reports in the coming days will worsen, if not a terrible indication towards an imminent havoc. The guidelines will have more lists included. But whatever it is, stay calm. Do something you love at home, discover your hobbies or you could make your parents proud by doing all the house chores. Keep calm because the pandemic will go. It will disappear just as it appeared. It will relieve our hearts as much as it had burdened. Those of us who didn't go in with fate to the dark dungeon of the pandemic will still be alive. We will once again live a normal life.

And with a light heart: There is no need to panic, my friend, no need to be careless too. Take it easy and just be responsible, be a decent human being. Just stay home, do something you love or if there is nothing you love at all at home, just go out to your backyard or your veranda, but the washroom must remain your last option still, and if you plan to cross your gate, please remember you are on a mission to exterminate the world. The pandemic will go, and humans will stay. Just make sure you deserve to stay on.

India-made Rakhis cause China losses worth Rs 4,000 crore

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, Aug 3:

Even as "Raksha Bandhan", was celebrated across the country on Monday, most of the people preferred Indian rakhis and there was also a trend of purchasing them on line, due to social distancing protocol.

According to reports, shopkeepers depended on indigenous supplies and no imported Chinese rakhis were sold. It was stated to be a big blow to China-made rakhis causing an estimated loss to the tune of Rs 4,000 crore, to the Chinese manufacturers exporting rakhis to India. With this India also broke the myth that it cannot successfully boycott Chinese goods.

Raksha Bandhan is a traditional Hindu festival celebrated in India, Nepal and other parts of the Indian subcontinent. On this day, sisters tie rakhi or an amulet around their brothers' wrists, as a symbol of a brother's responsibility to care for and protect them. The festival is usually celebrated on the last day of the Hindu lunar calendar in

the month of Shravana (on a full moon day).

On 10 June, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) had given a call for celebrating Rakhi as "Hindustani Rakhi" this year which has turned out to be a success. With the cooperation of CAIT around one crore Rakhis were made across the country using Indian goods and made by women working in the commercial sectors, at homes, and in Anganwadis.

CAIT had engaged woman artisans to prepare rakhis from seeds, pulses, rice, wheat and foodgrain, madhubani paintings, handicraft items and even cow dung. The "Modi rakhis" were made in Delhi, Madhubani painting rakhi in Bihar, seed rakhi in Pune, fabric rakhi in Jaipur, tribal products rakhi in Jharkhand (Jharkhand) and the one using tea leaves was made in Tinsukia (Assam). All these rakhis, the Chinese rakhis made of foam, faux, pearls, drops, threads and other decorative material were in great demand.

A variety of new-designer Rakhis were made from Indian goods and this year

not a single rakhi was imported from China. Even Chinese raw material was not imported. The National President of CAIT, B.C. Bhartia, and National General Secretary Praveen Khandelwal said that according to an estimate around 50 crore rakhis are sold every year at about Rs 6000 crore, while the China-made Rakhis or products worth around Rs 4000 crore were imported were being imported, for the past many years.

About the next step to boycott Chinese goods, Bhartia and Khandelwal said that on 9 August (Quit India movement Day), traders from all over the country will start the "China Quit India" campaign. On this day, traders will gather at more than 800 locations across the country and shout the slogan of 'China Quit India'.

On the other hand, after a long wait of 500 years, on the foundation laying ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on 5 August 5, traders all over the country will light a lamp or clatter bells in their shops and homes.

Monsoon to get active over parts of central and western India from tomorrow

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 3:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) says the monsoon will enter an active phase over parts of central and western India from tomorrow bringing heavy rains over the next three-four days.

It said, a low-pressure area is likely to develop over the

north Bay of Bengal and move into Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, and then to central Maharashtra and Gujarat, bringing heavy rainfall. Jharkhand and Gangetic West Bengal may also receive moderate rainfall on Tuesday and Wednesday. A monsoon trough is likely to shift southwards and strengthen during the next

three to four days and lash Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala with widespread rainfall.

The weather department has issued a red warning for coastal Maharashtra and Goa for tomorrow. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected today over Mumbai and isolated extremely heavy showers on Tuesday and Wednesday.

President of India Celebrates Raksha Bandhan with Nursing Professionals

PIB
New Delhi, Aug 3:

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, celebrated Raksha Bandhan with members of the nursing community at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today (August 3, 2020). Those who met and conveyed Rakhi greetings to the President included representatives of the Trained Nurses' Association of India, the Military Nursing Service and the President's Estate Clinic. During a brief interactive session, the nurses offered rakhis to the President and also narrated their experience in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The President felicitated them and described them as saviours who are not only saving lives but also

risking their own lives in the line of duty. Such commitment to duty earns respect for nurses who have been performing the role of front-line Covid warriors, he said. Traditionally, on the day of the festival of Raksha Bandhan, sisters seek their brothers' protection to keep them from harm's way, the President said, adding that in case of nurses, it is they who through their dedication and commitment extend a helping hand to their brothers and ensure protection for all people. Referring to the two members of the Military Nursing Service (MNS) who had tested COVID-19 positive while dealing with patients but recovered soon and resumed their duty with renewed vigour, the President thanked the entire nursing

fraternity for their sincere dedication and services to fellow citizens during the pandemic. He also conveyed his best wishes to the entire nursing community on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. Earlier, as they shared their experiences of helping the COVID-19 patients, each nurse offered her own narrative, but they all seemed unanimous in their opinion that COVID-19 patients suffer severe mental stress due to wrong impressions about the disease and the problem needs to be addressed medically and through counselling. The President gave a patient hearing to the nurses' opinion and complimented them for the exemplary services to the nation.

India crosses a milestone, conducts more than 2 crore COVID tests Tests Per Million increases to 14640

24 States/UTs have better tests per million than national average

