

## Lack of kits for extracting RNA to test COVID-19 at RTPCR reduce providing test result Supply for the kits awarded to a private firm called M/S Meitram Medicos

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

At a time when maximum testing for COVID-19 is urgently required with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic at local level, number of samples that are presently tested at both VRDL of RIMS and JNIMS cannot increase more than 1200 at an average per day, besides having equipment to test more than 2000 per day due to lack of reagent kits Gene Mag DNA/RNA Extraction Kit for automated RNA extraction machines installed each at JNIMS and RIMS. The kit which is supposed to be supplied by the Health department through the ICMR has been converted into contract work by awarding the supply order to one M/S Meitram Medicos. Both the RNA extraction machines installed at

JNIMS and RIMS during middle week of July had the capacity to extract RNA for 96 samples at one go and it takes only around few hours to be sent to RT-PCR. At the time when the 96 capacity RNA extractors have been installed in July, 100 extraction kits (50 for JNIMS and another 50 for RIMS) has been provided by the State Health department. But as the state health department had reportedly stopped supply of the kits by now both the automated RNA extraction machines remain useless. However, RT-PCR testing are still going on at both VRDLs of RIMS and JNIMS with other manual RNA extractor machines. JNIMS at present have 2 RNA extractor at which one is the newly installed 96 capacity machine and other with 12 capacity as per source. The Institution also have another 2 Qiagen RNA extractor with the

capacity of 12. At RIMS VRDL with the newly automated equipments, the total RNA extractor is 5 according to a reliable source. Among this three of the Qiagen RNA extractor had the capacity of only 12 while one has the capacity of 14. Lab technicians has been working round the clock at both the VRDLs however, the announcement by the Health Directorate about the testing capacity of around 2000 per day turn out to be a blatant lie as the automated genetics RNA extractor machine with the capacity of 96 sample is out of stock since the last couple of days. When Imphal Times contacted the Medical Superintendent of JNIMS to enquire about this, the Medical Superintendent simply said that he have no idea of the stock. When the matter was asked to State Health



Department authority, an authority said that there are adequate stock of testing kits and no VRDLs has send report. "At present around 500 to 800 sample arrived per day and there is no backlog at both the VRDLs of RIMS and JNIMS in the testing", a source said to Imphal Times. At a time when there are possibilities of community spread and the district administration declaring

containment zone at many places, the number of samples received are enormous but the authority justifies saying the number of sample has been reduced as testing has been done through Rapid Antigen test and TruNat. However, source with the Imphal Times said that the sample collection has been intentionally delayed and lowered as some people are making profit out of the pandemic.

According to health expert, it is stated that the RTPCR is a gene based test that can detect presence of even 1 virus in the nose/pharynx coz it changes RNA to DNA and goes on amplifying that virus through 35 cycles giving 35 billion copies of 1 virus if done properly and in a standardized lab. TruNat tests an enzyme RdRp used by RNA viruses during multiplication in the body. So if negative, it's a guarantee of no infection. But if positive, it needs to be confirmed that this RdRp is of nCovid19 origin, hence follow up by RTPCR. As for the Antigen, it tests the spike protein that the virus needs to attach to human cell. So, if positive, means virus is present, but if negative, may mean virus too small in quantity at the time to show up on test so negatives have to be reconfirmed by RTPCR. That means, in all the test conducted to make sure

that the spread of the virus is contained RTPCR test is a must. The number of testing can only be increased with the number of RNA extracted from the sample and sent to RTPCR which is still considered as not accurate one. Instead of making sure that there is no deficit of RNA extractor kits for the two newly installed machines why the State Health Department is outsourcing it to contractors/suppliers for procuring of the much needed kits. At this time of crisis why is the need for the Department to award the supply work to private firm called M/S Meitram Medicos, when it should be done directly by the Health Department.

No proper facilities at IIT COVID Care Center  
IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:  
Complaining about the lack of proper facilities at the center, a video was uploaded on social media by a mother of a 3 months old baby. The 3 months old baby was diagnosed with COVID-19 and they had to remain at the CCC as per protocol. However, when arriving at the center, there were lack of proper facilities, even power was not available at the center, said the mother from Yaikul Hiruhaba Lekai. She further lamented on whom to complain when there is emergency as there were no authority to be seen at the center. She urged the authority to look into the matter urgently.

## Hill Tribal Council Moreh appeals not to interfere in Lukhosei Zou Case, let the judiciary do the needs

IT News  
Moreh, Aug 8:

President of the Hill Tribal Council Moreh, Joshep Ginkhosei Lungdim today appealed to let the judiciary decide the drug hauled case of Lukhosei Zou. Speaking to reporters at its Moreh office Joshep Ginkhosei Lungdim said, "we are all citizens of India and we are all equal in the eyes of the Law. No want is above the law. So let us give a chance to the judiciary, let them give a fair trail

to Lukhosei Zou". He further added that this world of drug cases particularly in Manipur state, there have been cases were crores and crores worth drugs have been seized. "Till today non of the cases has been as popular as the case of Lukhosei Zou", he said and questioned why other cases have been set aside and his case is so popularize by parties, Individuals and organization so much. "Let the judiciary decides. If he felt guilty let him be penalized. If he is innocent why him be

called so long. Let ua also respect the sanctity and independence of judiciary of the Court", he said. The Hill Tribal Council Moreh appealed all individuals, Political Parties and organization not to take deep interest in his case just to put him behind bars. "That would not be fair. Therefore the Hill Tribal Council Moreh through this Press Meet appeal to one and all to refrain from taking part in this case".

## CRY appeals to revoke MoUs for extraction of minerals and to stop construction of Dams

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

Ahead of the World's Indigenous Peoples Day which falls on August 9, the Center for Research and Advocacy, Manipur (CRA) greets the people of the state and expressed serious concern with the increased case of infection of indigenous peoples to COVID-19 infection, abetted by limitation in health in health infrastructure and inadequate testing facilities in Manipur.

A statement said that the increased loss of lives due to

denial of urgent medical needs of non-COVID patients by medical establishment in Manipur on pretext of following Covid-19 regulations if a matter of serious concern. The CRA also stated that the aggressive pursuance of extractive industries, unsustainable energy projects and large infrastructure projects under India's Act East 2022. Several memorandum of understanding were signed for dam building, oil exploration, mining, agribusiness etc. in Manipur. The jubilant Energy and Oil

India Limited commenced oil and gas exploration works in the year 2012 and 2017 without peoples' consent in Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Imphal West Districts etc. The CRY demanded the government of Manipur to withdraw MoUs and all licenses granted to oil companies, mining companies, dam building companies etc without recognizing peoples' self determined rights over their land and without their consent. It demanded to revoke all MoUs signed for mining and for revocation of dam building proposal.

## Campaign for "Ayush treatment intervention in fighting of Covid-19" Launched

Imphal, Aug. 8:

Health and Family Welfare Minister L. Jayantakumar Singh has opened the campaign for "AYUSH Treatment Intervention in fighting of COVID-19" at Pishumthong Community Hall today. Representatives from eight clubs and organizations in Keishamthong Assembly constituency attended the inaugural function. Speaking at the occasion Minister Jayantakumar said that during this very juncture of COVID-19 we all need to take self precautions to contain this pandemic. He said that maintaining health hygiene and following the SOPs notified by the state government is very necessary. Keeping our surroundings

need and clean with proper sanitization by using disinfectants if necessary, is also recommendable. Above all increasing of immune system by taking good food & food supplements and physical exercises will also help to protect ourselves from this viral disease. This needs to be preferred by both symptomatic and asymptomatic people, he added. Minister said that with the objective to help to boost the immune system of the people to some extent the campaign for "AYUSH Treatment Intervention in fighting of COVID-19" is being introduced. The campaign will continue covering the remaining parts of the state. All the population may not be

able to cover by the campaign but maximum is being targeted to be covered, headed. Mentioning about the ill effects of using sodium hypochlorite, Shri Jayantakumar said that using disinfectants like sodium hypochlorite very frequently may cause health hazard since the chemical contained in it is harmful to human health according to experts. Hence, using such disinfectants should be cultivated only when there is high necessity, he added. Jayantakumar also appealed the public to strictly adhere to the health advisories of the state government. He also expressed deep concerned over the sudden increase of

COVID-19 cases amongst the persons without travel history and also amongst the central paramilitary and armed forces posted in Manipur. Ayurvedic immune booster products, such as AYUSH IMMUNE PLUS, Ars. Album-30, Chamanprash etc., were distributed as a part of the inaugural occasion. Minister also distributed face masks and hand sanitizers to the representatives of the clubs from Keshamthong A/C. Director, Department of AYUSH, Manipur Dr. Y. Lukhoi Singh, Member Secretary, National Ayush Mission, Manipur, Dr. A. Guneshore Sharma, Social Worker Smt. Arunapriya, President Yaifaljamjng Lup, L. haridash Singh and others also attended the occasion.

## Stormy TV assures partnership based on integrity, transparency and trust

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

A news item published on many media outlets in the Northeast as a part of a statement issued by Manipur Students' Association Delhi (MSAD) alleging and linking StormyTV with human trafficking is alleged to be completely baseless and false, said a press release by Stormy TV. Stormy TV strongly condemns such defaming allegations as a company looking to work towards empowering the youths of the Northeast through its platform and are optimistic about Northeast India and bringing our

innovative world-class AI technology to empower the talents of northeast India in line with the vision of 'Digital North-East 2022', said the press release. The release further said, "Once we got to know about the allegations and news being published around it, the StormyTV team reached out to these organisations and upon clarification, it has now been resolved with the student bodies and organisations issuing an apology letter accepting that the allegations were false and that there was no involvement of StormyTV in such heinous crimes at all. We also share the

concern and interest of these bodies to build awareness towards the safety of girls/boys/child from the region against human trafficking or any kind of exploitation. We, as a legitimate business, assure that our platform will never use any of the contestant's image or details for any form of illegal work and is focused on driving this partnership based on integrity, transparency and trust. StormyTV complies with all data privacy and security requirements under the Indian law and places the highest importance on user privacy and integrity."

# ★ Editorial

## Is the MSPDCL taking due advantage of COVID-19 pandemic?

During this challenging time of COVID-19 pandemic, electricity plays an important role. Whether it is work from home or for any other activities depends on electricity. Everyone heave a sigh of relief with the coming of Prepaid Electric and with the conversion of Manipur Electricity Department to Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited (MSPDCL) and Manipur State Power Company Limited(MSPCL) in 2012. Gone were the days of regular load shedding and irregular power supply. Most of the people are now paying their Bills regularly and using power economically, all thanks to the prepaid system.

Albeit, for the past few weeks most of the consumers are experiencing frequent power cuts. When contacted to the concerned authority about the reason of the power outage, there seems to be always a reason or two for the power cut. One time, it will be a particular division feeder tripping or jungle cutting or some other reasons.

It is acceptable to have power outages due to a problem or two but to have power outages everyday, is not acceptable. We understand that the people at the Power Department is working day and night to curb such problems, but at times feels like there is something wrong as the frequency of the power outages has increased manifold. Is it because of outdated or faulty infrastructure being used for power distribution or is it because of the increase in power load as people are staying at home and using more power? One way or the other, this need to be addressed.

Also, few days back there was complaint from some consumers about the problem of recharging their account, as the process of Online recharge is too confusing for some users. The portal for recharging online was down for quite few days and many were left in the dark as how to recharge their account. Yes, they did developed a portal where one can send a recharge request and wait for the people from MSPDCL to send them manually the recharge voucher. One has to wait like 3 to 4 hours in order to get their recharge voucher whereas in some worse case scenario, one has to wait like 24hrs. A big company like MSPDCL unable to develop a fully automated and efficient portal for recharging is such a big shame. On the bright side, the old recharge portal that enables consumers to generate voucher instantly seems to be working fine as of now.

People are asking if we are going back to those dark days of frequent load shedding and many are sceptical if power are being misused. MSPDCL need to evaluate and work on to provide efficient power supply to the people, otherwise there may come a time when people will refuse to pay their bills like old days and use unscrupulous means.

## Why the idea of reservation within reservation for North- Eastern STs makes sense!



By: T S Haokip

The just declared UPSC 2019 results have seen a particular ST community outside the North-Eastern region grabbing nearly 40% of the total ST seats reserved. This is not the first instance and not the only type of examinations dominated by the said particular community; SSC, IBPS, and Railways- the largest recruiter for Govt and Public sector enterprises too have similar pictures. The founding fathers of our constitution having felt the genuine need for an idea of equality in terms of employment and opportunities apart from politics had envisaged in the constitution the provision for the state to reserve seats for certain sections of the society who were underprivileged, backward and cut out from social, political and economic developments not just under the British Raj but for centuries altogether. While many argued that the idea of positive discrimination is against equality, it is in practice an initiative to ensure equality on a larger perspective. The idea of the importance of representation in legislation has among many- a geographically earmarked constituency and as such has met its intended purpose. However, in the case of job opportunities, there is a systematic flaw; it does not guarantee equitable opportunities to all as more backward communities in the STs are yet to taste the fruit of reservation.

### Performance scene in 2019-2020

The number of successful ST candidates from North East India in the UPSC exam 2019 is just 4 candidates with three states having predominant tribal population

securing nil; Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram. While Nagaland and Tripura are contented with one successful candidate each, ST candidates from Manipur where 40% of the state population belongs to STs scored zero. The sum of all the Tribal communities from NE India clearing UPSC exam 2019 is less than 20% of those qualified candidates from a single Tribal community outside NE- The Meenas. Since long, the said community has occupied the majority share of Tribal vacancies in various recruitment process. Nevertheless, it is not the particular community's fault; the system has inherent flaws, if we are to consider that the affirmative action in recruitment is intended in true spirit to uplift the tribal community as a whole.

### Peculiar Concerns of NE Tribals

The promise for equality enshrined in Article 15 and 16 of the Indian constitution, which is the basis that allows the Government to formulate a system that ensures that the socially, historically and currently underprivileged groups are represented well in politics, jobs, and education cannot be said to be successful without NE tribals represented adequately in the system. The argument is all the more valid when one considers the criteria to which a community can be listed in ST and the instances of which there have been periodical addition of communities in the scheduled list while the size of the piece of cake to be shared remains the same. Graver is the situation when one considers a situation where a more advantageous community is added to the scheduled Tribe list; as then, many backward tribal communities will find it tougher to avail the opportunity, thereby defeating the whole purpose of reservation itself. That seems to be the case at present.

Already the people of North East India, especially the tribals have faced innumerable social stigmas even after 70 years of Independence. Development is still a far cry in most areas where things as basic as

education, housing, electricity, and all-weather roads are yet to make its mark. While representation in legislation exists, the lack of NE tribals in the top executive echelon, where policies are drafted could be one factor for the region to be alienated from the showers of development India is supposedly drenched with.

### Creamy-layer concept among tribals?

Some people have mooted the idea of introducing creamy layers among the STs in the same manner and fashion as done among the OBCs. The move, while it may be feasible for mainland tribals, who have communities with many generations of advancement, upliftment and development initiatives, will not be feasible among NE tribals as most of those individuals to be categorized as creamy layers are first-generation achievers. For the 1st generation individuals of NE STs that could be classified as creamy layer, their responsibilities are huge and their dependents are vast- sometimes a whole village. If their ward(s) are excluded from the opportunity of availing ST reservation, the odds of that family returning to the same situation where their parents first begin- all in a span of one generation, is imminently high. It is therefore not advisable to cream them out at least for now.

### Argument of efforts

Amid the trending discussion on the performance of NE Tribals in UPSC exams, some voices opined that it is efforts that matter and that it is the lack of efforts among NE tribal candidates that eventually have resulted in their dismal performances. The argument might partially hold for many non-serious contenders. However, that does not justify the underlying concerns why irrespective of rendering in their 100 percent, many people from the underprivileged ST communities will never match when they are judged with the same yardstick as those in a better position since the

past many generations. Arguments like this have failed to consider the conditions of how tribals were subjugated for centuries; most importantly, it is an indirect justification to do away with reservation altogether, ignoring the fundamental cause and concerns which first necessitated an affirmative action of equality.

### The percentage of opportunity

In the same way, 7.5% of vacancies are reserved for the scheduled tribes, at least 20% of those ST seats should be reserved for the NE STs. This will ensure at the least, that the benefits of reservation are not reaped by a single affluent community- all in the name of scheduled Tribes, of which the NE tribal have been the marginalized lots. The intention here is not to be mistaken for advocating a rigid solution but rather exploring the possibilities to ensure that the whole purpose of reservation is not defeated as is possible in the present system.

### Tactical solution

Reservation within reservation seems to be the only ideal option to ensure that our goal of uplifting the tribal people is achieved in a holistic manner. The present system rather presents a picture of the mere fulfillment of a statute i.e the existence of a scheme for the upliftment of tribal people by way of providing special opportunity in jobs and recruitment. Serious concerns like the unmistakable disproportionate division of shares, where the majority of it is benefited by only a section or a particular community have been overlooked by our policy-makers as well as those implementing it. Reservation is a magnificent tool to draw the gap, which is only widening, between the tribal people and other general communities. If we truly believe in our commitment to uplift the tribal people, the reservation policy for STs with regards to NE tribals has to be relooked.

(The writer is a freelance writer and author of the book HILLY DREAMS)

## Good girls don't drink

By- Chanda Ashani

Why is it that whenever there is any talk of values, it is women's behaviour, their dress, their attitude that comes into question, even though there are more men than women in India? Societal values and morality should apply to everyone, men and women, says Kalpana Sharma. 21 October 2005 - We always knew women were capable, strong, responsible, caring. But must they for all time to come also be the only ones to carry the burden of upholding societal "values", whatever these are? Why is it that whenever there is any talk of "values", it is women's behaviour, their dress, their attitude that comes into question? How come that when there are more men than women in India, and their numbers will continue to grow as the trend to eliminate girls before birth also keeps pace, they are not asked to think about their attitudes, their behaviour? The incident in Chennai The provocation for these thoughts, naturally, is the incident in Chennai where photographs of

men and women consuming alcohol and a few couples dancing and kissing at a private party, behind closed doors, in a posh hotel, were printed in newspapers. This blatant intrusion into the privacy of individuals was completely overlooked as the police, Chennai's very "moral" police, got into action and cancelled the hotel's license. For those of us who do not live in Chennai, the incident seemed incredulous. Could this be happening in a democracy? In a country not ruled by the Taliban or its equivalent? Where under the Constitution men and women are equal? Where kissing in private or in public is not a crime? Where drinking alcohol in private or in public is not a crime, with the exception of a few States that have a specific policy? What is even more extraordinary is that the ire of the morality folk was directed entirely at women. Men can drink, apparently, but women should not. By the same measure, are we to presume that men can kiss but women should

not? It sounds absurd but the entire episode has been so completely farcical that one can hardly believe that it took place at all. Advertisement for a shoe brand it is also notable that there has been hardly any protest from women about this attack on them by the police and by political parties. Why are the women in Tamil Nadu silent? Do they accept that men must police their morals? The issue highlights a deeper division between women's groups that has a history. It keeps surfacing every now and then, usually centring on issues of women's bodies, women's sexuality and women's right to choose. In the 1980s, for instance, there was considerable difference on the portrayal of women in the media. While some women, usually belonging to the more conservative right wing parties, attacked hoardings and advertisements that displayed women's bodies to sell products and argued that such depictions were against "Indian values", other women's groups were more concerned about stereotyping and negative images of women that the media perpetuated. One instance of the former was the advertisement for a shoe

brand that depicted two well-known models appearing to wear nothing else apart from the shoes they were selling. Charges of obscenity were leveled against the models and the makers of the advertisement by some groups in Mumbai. But over and above this, some women were particularly incensed that the female model, a Maharashtrian, should be seen in such a pose with a Maharashtrian man to whom she was engaged to be married. Maharashtrian "values" were offended, we were told, an echo of the Tamil values currently being offended in Chennai. A case was filed against the two models and, after all these years, it is still pending in court. It was not clear what was considered obscene i.e the fact that the couple appeared nude, or that they were Maharashtrians who had posed for such an advertisement. The dance bars a similar debate has sprung up around the dancing bars issue in Mumbai. Maharashtra Home Minister R.R. Patil justified the ban on these bars saying that scores of women had petitioned him to do so because these bars were corrupting their men. So in order to preserve the "values" of their

men folk, bars in which women danced to please these men were closed down. And thousands of women, as well as some men, were put out of work. Whether this has contributed to raising the "moral standards" of the men who frequented these bars is a moot question. But once again the debate has raised many questions. In licensed dance bars, women performed for men who expressed their satisfaction by throwing money at them. This is not the best way for a woman to earn money. But neither is prostitution. Yet, there is no demand to outlaw prostitution. Nor is there a demand that there should be prohibition throughout India. Yet, the combination of alcohol and women flaunting their bodies and earning money has been banned. So why are dance bars considered a corrupting influence if both prostitution and alcohol are not banned? The women who dance in the bars would perform the identical "item" numbers that you see in most Hindi films. Bollywood has used the "item" number play to attract men to the theatre. There is never any connection between the suggestive dance number and

the story of the film. Yet, there has been no demand that all such "item" numbers be banned. Many more people watch films than visit dance bars. Hence, why the double standard? Societal values and morality should apply to everyone, men and women. And they must extend beyond the way people dress or behave to a whole gamut of other issues and attitudes. Is it "moral" that our society continues to discriminate against people on the basis of their caste or community? Is it "moral" that children die every day in India from starvation while we boast of our economic growth rate? Is it "moral" that medical technology is used to eliminate girls even before they are born? These are some of the questions we should ask, not whether a small elite group in our society is "misbehaving" behind closed doors. Kalpana Sharma is Chief of the Mumbai Bureau and Deputy Editor with The Hindu, and a regular contributor to India Together. Her opinions, which appear in a regular column with The Hindu, are concurrently published on India Together with permission.

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# International Human Rights Association Condemns hospital denial to provide treatment to pregnant mother ; demands resignation of Health Minister

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

The news of a pregnant woman who was denied admission by various Hospital authorities which subsequently led to the death of the pregnant mother and her child came as an utter shock to many. In fact, such inhumane act of apathy is indescribable but despairing and mournful to the core.

A statement by the International Human Rights Association, Manipur said that the rights body is

extremely perturbed by how and why such acts of insensibility and irresponsibility still have places in our society. This extremely unfortunate incident shows a grave violation of Human Rights, and of the fundamental right to life.

"We strongly condemn any organisation or individual involved in the denial of admission or denial to initiate treatment leading to the death of the woman and her child. Such act of indifference can only bring adversities to the

society in general and to the state in particular", the Rights body said.

The International Human Rights Association demanded the government to take stringent actions against the perpetrators. In addition, the rights body also demanded immediate resignation of the Health Minister on humanitarian grounds since the deplorable incident is a clear portrayal of incompetence and the lack of dedication towards serving people in the true sense of service.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge and appreciate the concern and timely intervention of the general public, the leaders and positions alike to fight against a crime that is no less a cold-blood murder.

It is an appeal therefore, to the concerned authorities and individuals to therefore put into action the requisite mechanisms that are important to bring Justice to the deceased mother and child while also assuring that such unfortunate incidents will no more have a place in our society.

# Lifting and distribution continue for PDS rice under NFSA and PMGKAY

DIPR  
Imphal, Aug 8:

To ensure availability of foodgrains, specially rice, across the State, PDS rice under National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) are being lifted and distributed in the State.

In continuing lifting of PDS rice in Imphal West district, a total of 2009.4 quintal of rice under NFSA for the month of July. The lifted quantities with the ACs are 1630.6 for Sagolband AC and 378.8 quintal for Yaikul AC. In the

district too, 6218.35 quantity of rice under NFSA was distributed in Thangmeiband, Lamsang & Langthabal ACs while 4186.45 quantity under PMGKAY was also distributed in Lamsang, Sekmai & Yaikul (P) ACs. In Thoubal district, 772.30 quintal and 1279 quintal of rice under PMGKAY for the month of July were lifted on August 3 & 5, 2020 respectively. It is also reported that 2051.3 quintal of rice under PMGKAY was distributed to the beneficiaries of Wangjing Tenta AC today. Another 5.1 quintal & 1.5 quintal of Rice

& Chana Dal (for migrant worker for May & June) was also distributed to migrant workers of Assam, UP and Bihar.

In respect of Nungba AC in Noney district today, 128.9 quintal of rice under PMGKAY for the month of August was lifted from FCI godown, Sangaiprou.

The State Government has been distributing PDS items in all the districts of Manipur to ensure none to suffer on account of non-availability of foodgrains on the backdrop of the outbreak of COVID-19 and the ongoing lockdown in the State.

# CRPF distributes 5 Kg rice to 80 beneficiaries during crisis time

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

109 BN CRPF in co-ordination with Shatrughan Kumar and Mr. A. K. Singh, Chief Advisor, Mongsangei distributed 5 KG Rice each to 80 beneficiaries and also sanitized the houses of local villagers of Mongsangei area with an object to help the needy



people of Mongsangei during the lockdown period today.

During the program Vinod Kumar Commandant-109 Bn in his brief speech advised to wear protective face masks, to keep themselves safe, wash hands by use of soap and maintain utmost hygiene in their day to day affairs since asymptomatic cases are on the rise. They should seek

immediate medical help in case they feel unwell from designated Hospital.

He further emphasized that in view of prevailing situation in the country due to COVID-19, people should take all preventive measures and observe complete lock down and follow all instructions issued by the Government as well as local administration. Shri. Vinod

Sawant, Deputy Commandant, Inspector Sukhbir Singh and Jawans of 109 BN have conducted the programme maintaining social distancing and other precautions of COVID-19. Mr. A. K. Singh, Chief Advisor, Mongsangei, Mr. Surender Singh, President of Sun Club, appreciated the efforts of 109 Bn CRPF in providing assistance to villagers.

# Lets make a world free from Nuclear – NEDF

IT News  
Imphal, Aug 8:

The North East Dialogue Forum has shown solidarity to the victims and survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki because of the bombing of Atom Bomb on 6 and 9 of August 1945 by the USA.

In a statement the NEDF expressed strong condemnation appealing not to repeat such acts in human history.

The NEDF demand to the International Community including UN for a WORLD FREE NUCLEAR FROM NUCLEAR WEAPONS with the dream for 'A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE'.

The statement further added that it is 75 years now that the first two bombs were dropped in Japan - Little Boy, a 12,500 TNT made from uranium on Hiroshima on August, 6, 1945, at around 08:16 A.M. (Japanese Time) and Fat Man, a 22,000 tonne made from plutonium on Nagasaki on 09 August, 1945 at around 11:02 A.M. (Japanese Time). Though the two bombs had cut off precious and innocent lives of the two cities there and then and totally to some 2,20,000 souls by the year ending and leaving many impaired for life and generations because of radiation effects, human nature has not changed as there is no repentance to turn over a new leaf, though the globe is for world peace while the strategy is to growl, intimidate and threaten through having nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, right from

extracting and commercializing atomic minerals at the expense of land resources, indigenous communities' lives and sustainable livelihoods, including changing land laws and social/economic/environment impact assessment analysis and reports to suit the political convenience in having nuclear industries and thereby go about strutting one's chest of belonging to the elite Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) and so move around by wearing an imaginary placard "Nobody touch ME".

The acquisition of such nuclear weapons undergoes a meticulous axe and grind through the process of obtaining atomic minerals which are radioactive beginning with mining and leaving behind, hazardous ores, tailings and wastes detrimental both to human life and the environment by making it polluted, poisonous thereby cutting off/shortening life of humans, fauna, flora and all living organisms and as such, contributes immensely to enhancing climate change and thereby, making the world become uninhabitable. And to exist precariously, utmost precautions must be taken similar to, if not worst, the existential grim reality under the pandemic of COVID-19. Around the world - faith groups of Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Jain, Buddhist and Christian traditions under the name Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons, Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs) like Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons including faith-based organizations, viz. The World Council of Churches, General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Hibakusha (survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic holocaust) have persistently called for a WORLD FREE NUCLEAR FROM NUCLEAR WEAPONS with the dream for A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE.

In like manner, the North East Dialogue Forum (NEDF) expressed its solidarity with all those calling for a NUCLEAR FREE WORLD, i.e. whether as a weapon or nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to generate electricity and right from the mining process.

The NEDF calls for immediate stoppage of uranium (including all other atomic minerals) mining anywhere and everywhere as

- Uranium mining is taking place in complete disregard of native/indigenous people's/tribal land thereby taking away aboriginal/indigenous people's rights and livelihoods;
- Uranium is used for making nuclear bombs by converting it to plutonium in the nuclear reactors;
- Uranium mining rapidly produces large volumes

of liquid and solid waste, which remains hazardous ad infinitum, pollutes the air around thereby has a catastrophic environmental effect on the immediate surrounding and also contaminates the downstream area;

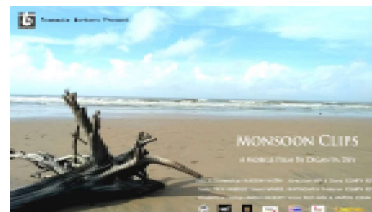
- Radioactivity in the form of radon gas permeates and accumulates in solids, liquids, gases, and finds its way to human beings directly and indirectly;
- Health hazards are stupendous and deadly and continues through generations even causing genetic mutation;
- There is no method or strategy to stop radiation-contamination from uranium mining waste and its spread.

The forum also urged upon one all, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, nationality, faith/religious belief, colour, gender, to be resolute for a NUCLEAR FREE WORLD and that all Governments, irrespective of ideology, form and type to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) so that our dream becomes a reality here and now.

The forum also call for freedom from (a) human rights violation in the form of rape, murder, torture, harassment, exploitation and from (2) gender, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious discrimination. The forum further call for freedom of speech and expression with the democratic right to dissent and to exercise the human right to life in letter and spirit.

# Film Review of Monsoon Clips

By- Diganta Dey



Film : Monsoon Clips (2019)  
Director : Diganta Dey

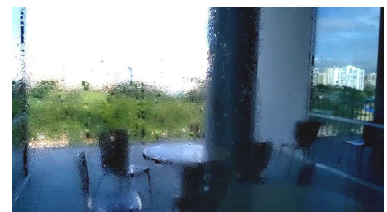
"Love", this four lettered word has enormous power and vast meaning. It not only defines the compassion and emotional attachment of a person with his/her beloved but also stands as an untamed weapon of world's hatred. The irony begins with the film when a fighter plane wing commander Md.Hussain speaks his soul to his beloved wife. It is the war (or the machine of war) that is taking his life slowly and on the other hand it is his love that is trying it's best to retain this precious soul on Earth.

The entire set up of the film is located in Monsoon of Kolkata as Ila, Hussain's wife is a Bengali Hindu woman. I believe the Bengali tone in Ila's Hindi diction is intentional. Director has wisely chosen Anamika Singha's comparatively childish and ungroomed voice opposite mature Deep Basu's voice over as Hussain which beautifully depicts the pampered Ila's evolution from a sweet forgetful loving wife to an independent woman who leaves her known surroundings in search of true meaning of 'Love', that too with a great

feeling of emptiness which she earned due to the Death of Hussain. It is not only the story of Hussain and Ila's inter-religion Love but also the story of Ila's journey towards finding herself.

The main sub-plot of the film revolves around the futility of Mig-series aircraft of Indian Airforce. No doubt this Russia made war aircrafts had been a great instrument for our country

to win several wars but unfortunately the high rate of crashes of these aircrafts became a great concern for all of us. The film at its very beginning states that it is a tribute to the martyrs of our motherland and especially



to Indian Airforce which has lost their Brave pals due to the negligence of the system. The music of the film is quite notable with a beautiful background music of violin which successfully mixed the melancholy of the rainy season along with Ila's pain. To conclude it is a beautiful story with an experimental way of telling and a watch worthy film no doubt.

The Film is releasing on 15th August 2020 in OTT platforms like Indieshots, MycinemaHall & in international OTT 'UK Film Channel'.

\*\*\*\*\*The writer is a film director, Writer, Producer and Teammate Workers



# Zyklus starts second phase of Covid-19 vaccine candidate trials

By IT Correspondent  
New Delhi, Aug 8:

Drug maker Zyklus Cadila has started phase 2 clinical trials to establish the efficacy of its anti-coronavirus disease (Covid-19) vaccine candidate, the company said in a statement.

"Its plasmid DNA vaccine 'ZyCoV-D', to prevent Covid-19, has been found to be safe and well tolerated in the Phase I clinical trial. The doses of the vaccine administered to healthy volunteers in the Phase I clinical trial, which began on 15th July 2020, has been well tolerated," Zyklus Cadila said in a statement.

The vaccine was found to be safe, immunogenic and well tolerated in the pre-clinical toxicity studies conducted on animals. The vaccine was able to elicit a high level of neutralizing antibodies in animal studies. The company received the central drugs controller's approval for human trials on 2 July 2020. The Phase I dosing to establish the safety of ZyCoV-D is an important milestone,"

Pankaj R Patel, chairman, Zyklus Cadila, said.

"All the subjects in Phase I clinical trial were closely monitored in a clinical pharmacological unit for 24 hours post dosing for safety and for 7 days thereafter and vaccine was found to be very safe. We now begin the Phase II clinical trials and look forward to evaluating the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine in a larger population," he added.

The Phase II study of ZyCoV-D will be conducted in over 1,000 healthy adult volunteers. "The 7 day safety of the vaccine in all the subjects enrolled in the Phase I clinical trial has been endorsed by the independent Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB), which has been constituted to oversee the safety aspects of the clinical trial," the company said.

According to the company, the vaccine candidate is safer because of its DNA vaccine platform, which requires injecting genetically engineered plasmid (small

DNA molecule) containing the DNA sequence encoding the antigen(s) against which an immune response is sought.

The platform provides ease of manufacturing the vaccine with minimal biosafety requirements (BSL-1). The platform is also known to show much improved vaccine stability and lower cold chain requirements, making it easy for transportation to remotest regions of the country. Furthermore, the platform can be rapidly used to modify the vaccine in couple of weeks in case the virus mutates to ensure that the vaccine still elicits protection," the company said.

The plasmid DNA, when introduced into the host cells, would be translated into the viral protein and will elicit a strong immune response mediated by the cellular and humoral arms of the human immune system, which play a vital role in protection from disease as well as viral clearance. The

vaccine candidate was developed indigenously at the company's Vaccine Technology Centre in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Experts in the government have maintained that India will take the lead in manufacturing the Covid-19 vaccine when it is developed. "There we will take the lead as we have the requisite manufacturing capacity," Niti Aayog member and also chairman of one of the national task forces on Covid-19 Dr VK Paul said.

Meanwhile "Novavax" the US company is the latest in a long line of pharmaceutical companies to have shown encouraging results in the initial stages. In one study, 56 volunteers who were administered doses of the candidate produced a high level of antibodies without any side effects. In another trial it was found that the COVID-19 vaccine candidate protected monkeys against coronavirus. The Pune-based Serum Institute of India would have exclusive rights for the supply of the "Novavax" COVID-19 vaccine in India.

# Capt. Sathe, ex-IAF Pilot, who died in Kozhikode plane crash

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Aug 8:

One of India's most decorated pilots who served in the Indian Air Force (IAF), Captain Deepak Captain V. Sathe (58), who died, along with co-pilot First Officer Akhilesh Kumar and 18 passengers, in a tragic plane (Air India Express flight IX-1344) crash at Kerala's Kozhikode (Calicut) airport on Friday evening.

Wing Commander Sathe was an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA), Pune (Maharashtra) and flew Air India planes after retiring from IAF. He was commissioned into the IAF in 1981 and retired in 2003. Then he joined Air India and was operating the Airbus A310. Later he shifted to Air India Express, a subsidiary of Air India, where he was operating the Boeing 737, a narrow-bodied plane, the officials said.

Sathe had won the Sword of Honour – one of the most prestigious military awards – at the Hyderabad Air Force Academy, and was an accomplished fighter jet pilot, before shifting to the commercial airlines.

"Capt Sathe was from 58th course of NDA, Pune and was from Juliet Squadron. He passed out from Air Force Academy with Sword of Honour in June 1981 and was a fighter pilot in the IAF," noted Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale (Retd) as he reminisced on his death.

Group Captain Christopher (IAF) (retd), tweeted "Capt



Sathe was the topper of our course. Stood first and won the prestigious Sword of Honour on 11 Jun 1981. My his soul rest in peace".

His father was a brigadier in Indian Army, while his brother died in Kargil war. Capt Sathe was residing at Powai in North East Mumbai. He is survived by Wife, two sons and daughters-in-laws.

The AI Express aircraft that crashed was a part of the government's "Vande Bharat Mission" from Dubai to Kerala. According to reports, the tabletop runway was very slippery that caused the plane to skid off and fall into a gorge, splitting into two pieces. Capt Sathe had made a first attempt to land amid heavy rain, which he had to abort. He made a second attempt, during which the plane crashed, Civil Aviation Ministry sources said.

"The instrument landing system guides a pilot till a certain height and then it is up to the pilot to see the runway touch point and decide on

landing. The pilot has to assess whether he or she can complete the aircraft landing process after the touchdown," said an air traffic control official. "When it rains heavily, as was the case in Kozhikode, the aircraft needs more runway length to finish the landing process because of the slippery surface."

The AI has arranged a special relief flight from Mumbai and Delhi for rendering humanitarian assistance to all the passengers and their family members. It has also established a passenger information centre and a toll-free number has been made available for the family or friends of those who may have been on board flight IX-1344. "The toll free number is 1800 2222 71. For those calling from outside, please call international country code," it added.

The death toll currently stands at 18, including both pilots, and at least 123 people, of the 191 onboard have been injured in the incident.

## Sports

# India Hockey Captain Manpreet Singh, Four Other Test Positive For Coronavirus

Agency  
New Delhi, Aug 8:

The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and four other players have tested positive for COVID-19 but the national camp will resume in Bengaluru as scheduled with those who are fit to train, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Friday. Besides Manpreet, defender Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, drag-flicker Varun Kumar and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak have also tested positive for the dreaded virus.



"I am self quarantined at the SAI campus and I am very happy with the way SAI authorities have handled the situation...I am doing fine and hope to recover very soon," the 28-year-old Manpreet said in the statement issued by SAI.

"I am very happy that they made testing of athletes mandatory. That proactive step helped in identifying the problem right in time."

The players tested positive after returning to the national hockey camp at the SAI South Centre in Bengaluru following a month-long break.

A SAI source, however, said

that the camp will resume from August 20 as planned with the fit players.

"As of now the camp is on and will resume as planned. The fit players can start their individual training and the players who have tested positive for COVID can resume later after recovering but they will have to pass a fitness test," the source said.

The national players were earlier stranded at the centre for over two months (till June) when a national lockdown was imposed to contain the virus. After coming back from the break, the players were in mandatory quarantine before

training's resumption at the centre. According to SAI, Pathak's result came late from the state government.

"...SAI made it mandatory for all athletes, who reported back to the camp to take a rapid COVID-19 test upon arrival," the SAI said in a statement.

According to the SAI source all the players who have tested positive were part of a 10-member group who have travelled together and there are chances of more positive results come out.

"Don't be surprised if some more positive results come out," the SAI source told news agency.

# Taking a flight to Mumbai? Here are the new quarantine rules for govt officials

IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, Aug 8:

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has made 14-day home isolation compulsory for all domestic passengers arriving in Mumbai and put a stamp on their left hand for identification. As per the latest order issued on 3 August 2020, by Additional Municipal Commissioner P Velasu, this is as per standard operating procedure (SOP) formulated by Maharashtra Government on 25 May for all incoming domestic

passengers.

"Some instances have come to the notice that some government officials after landing in Mumbai show their government ID card and secure exemption. For exemption, it has to be made in writing to [amc.project@mcgm.gov.in](mailto:amc.project@mcgm.gov.in) at least two working days before landing stating full details of the work and also justifying their request for home quarantine exemption," the order read.

The Maharashtra government had issued Standard Operating Procedures for passengers of domestic flights when services

resumed after a gap of two months owing to the coronavirus-induced nationwide lockdown.

The guidelines stated that all passengers will be stamped and will have to go to 14-day home isolation. Aarogya Setu app on passenger's smartphone is a must and passengers should not be from containment zones. The home quarantined will self-monitor their health. Local district/municipal administration has been authorised to give exemption from quarantine for contributing to an office or for other important work after

checking passengers.

The state government appointed the additional municipal commissioners in the state as the nodal officers for the purpose of enforcing the SOP norms and said every arriving air passenger will be required to declare after arrival that he/she has not been affected by Covid-19, neither shown any symptoms of Covid-19 nor resided in any containment zone.

Maharashtra's total number of COVID-19 cases now stands at 1,46,268 positive cases, including 3,05,521 recoveries and 16,476 deaths.

# Canadian pastor jailed in Myanmar for defying coronavirus ban

Agency  
Yangon, Aug 8:

A Canadian preacher who claimed Christians were safe from coronavirus was on Thursday jailed for three months in Myanmar after he and dozens of his followers became infected when he held a banned service.

The Southeast Asian nation has so far weathered the pandemic well with just 357 confirmed cases and six deaths, although the low numbers tested make many fear the true figures are far

higher.

Toronto-based David Lah, 43, was born in Myanmar and often returns to his motherland to preach. The country imposed a ban on gatherings in mid-March, but footage emerged in early April of Lah holding a service in Yangon.

"If people hold the Bible and Jesus in their hearts, the disease will not come in," he proclaimed in one video to a roomful of faithful.

"The only person who can cure and give peace in this pandemic is Jesus."

Lah tested positive for coronavirus shortly afterwards, and dozens of confirmed cases were traced back to his followers.

The preacher was arrested after recovering from the illness in May and faced up to three years in jail for violating the Natural Disaster and Management Law. On Thursday, however, a Yangon court chose to be lenient.

Lah and his colleague Wai Tun had been sentenced to three months imprisonment, Lah's lawyer Aung Kyi Win told reporters outside the

court, adding that time already served would be deducted. A waiting crowd of the preacher's followers erupted into cheers and celebrations at the news.

The scandal even touched Myanmar's Christian vice-president Henry Van Thio and his family, who had attended an earlier service with Lah in February, although they later tested negative.

About six percent of Buddhist-majority Myanmar's population identifies as one of the various Christian denominations in the country.

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