

Private schools flout Govt rules on teacher-student ratio putting future of education at stake

IT Exclusive
Imphal, July 19:

Many private schools in Manipur have been flouting Govt rules by over-admitting students much above the upper limit. According to the Manipur Non-Government Schools and Colleges Recognition Rules 1975, the maximum number of students is fixed at 45 for classes vi to viii and 36 for land 2.

However, most of the private schools such as Heritage Convent, St. Joseph School, Little Flower School, Nirmalabas High School, Catholic High School etc. have students which is more than the maximum number of students in one class room. Source said that in most of



the stated private school number of students in class 1 and 2 exceed more than 60 in one class room. Source from the Catholic runs schools however said that it was due to pressure from various people that they have to intake

student more than the number fixed by the government. "This has heavily compromised the quality of education imparted to the students as the interaction time between the teacher and students in the class is

reduced considerably", a private school teacher told Imphal Times. The teachers' workload has also increased many fold and are being underpaid at the same time, he added. There has been a growing public concern about the gross violation of these teacher-student ratio in private schools where parents from all strata of the society spend enormously for their children. If the rules are not followed by these private school management in the coming session, their sheer profit making ambitions are going to destroy the future of school education in Manipur. Sources say, a PIL in this regard has been already conceived by concerned citizens.

Keithel Imas warns peoples' uprising if elected representatives continue to fight for power

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

The must talk about 'battle for power' between the Ministers and MLAs of the state amidst terrible time due to COVID-19 pandemic has angered the Khwairamband Keithel ladies. Talking to reporters today afternoon at Khwairamband Keithel here in Imphal Th. Shanti, president of the Khwairamband Nupi Keithel Sinpham Amadi Saktam Kanba Lup, a body of the largest women market, warns peoples' uprising if the elected representatives do not stop their selfish act of fighting for power.

"These elected representatives should not forget that people may rise if they continue their selfish act

for power when people are facing extreme suffering", Shanti said.

The Khwairamband Keithel, which is perhaps the largest women's market in the country, known for its uniqueness, has been shut down since March 2nd week following the COVID-19 pandemic as precautionary measures.

"Over six thousand vendor ladies who have been feeding their families are facing extreme suffering due to the shutting of the Keithel in the last 4 months", Shanti said and added that when people across the state fear about the spread of the coronavirus at community level after frontline workers including health workers and police personnel have been tested positive, those elected representatives

have gone hidden despite helping the people. Shanti warned the elected representatives to immediately stop fighting for power among the representative by asking them to divert their mind to find solution for serving the people during this difficult time. She further said that the government should rather think about the suffering of the vendor ladies and think of a solution to open Khwairamband Keithel which have been shut down for around 4 months.

While lambasting the representatives terming the act as irresponsible, the body of the Khwairamband Keithel vendor ladies said that whoever involved in the drug smuggling case in the state should not be let free.

Is there a separate COVID-19 SOPs for VVIPs? - Joykishan

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Congress MLA Khumukcham Joykishan today questioned the government if there is a separate COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the MLAs, Ministers and the VVIPs in Manipur. "None of the MLAs, Ministers, and the VVIPs have followed the COVID-19 SOPs framed by the government in Manipur", Joykishan said talking to reporters at his Thangmeiband residence today afternoon.

He further said that common people are mandatorily quarantined for 14 days at either government set up centers or private hotel if they came from outside the state as per the SOPs. However none of the VVIPs, MLAs and the Ministers who had travelled outside the state and returned backed had never followed the SOPs, the Congress MLA added. It may be mentioned that in the wake of the political battle between the Congress party and the BJP during Rajya Sabha Election held on June 19, two Congress leaders who had visited the state were forced to quarantined at a hotel. However, when BJP leader Hemanta Biswas and NPP leader Conrad Sangma visited the state to settle the issue between the BJP and the NPP, both didn't follow the SOPs. The 4 NPP MLAs also did not follow the SOPs when they return from Delhi.

Student bodies express concern over school closure threat, warns of intense agitation if student's interest hurt

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Various student bodies have expressed grave concern over the threat by private school body for closure of the schools demanding revocation of the June 26th order issued by the government of Manipur.

The State Government had asked private school owners not to charge any fee from the students during Covid lockdown and to pay 50% of the salary

amount to teachers. Objections to the order have already been expressed by the Private school owners association and threaten to shut the schools if the order is not revoke by July 20.

Leaders of various students' body said that they will not remain quite if any action that may hurt the interest of the students happen. Peter Laishram, President AMSU, called the whole issue unfortunate and termed the objections raised by the school owners as anti

people. The school closure threat may create panic amongst the student and it will not be conducive for studies, he further added. Sajad Bhuiyamayum, Vice President, MSF, warns that if the tussle between the Govt. and the private school owners hurt the interest of the student, MSF would not keep quiet.

Leishangthem Lamyamba, Secretary, DESAM, further warns of intense agitation for any disturbance in academic atmosphere and offered mediatory role if required.

Thongam Biswajit meets Union Power Minister Rk Singh; assured assistance in multiple projects

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Minister of Power, Thongam Biswajit met Raj Kumar Singh, Union Power Minister and discuss in length about the state of power in Manipur at his official residence in Delhi. The union minister of state (Independent charge) during the meeting assured Biswajit of multiple projects including procuring of 2 lakh prepaid meter, 10 crore budget District Headquarter power improvement scheme, 140 crore System improvement upgradation, 300 MW generation capacity small hydro power projects, among others. Minister Raj Kumar Singh is said to have listened to the various schemes approved by the state cabinet and especially lauded the efforts of the state govt. regarding the 100 MW



and 50 MW capacity solar power plant project taken up in the state. Minister Biswajit said the state will be able to save a lot of money by avoiding monthly payments made to other states for purchase of power once these projects are materialized. The

opportunity of meeting Union minister during the Covid crisis and to brief them about the ongoing projects taken up by his department, are all taken in public interest and people should not see his Delhi trip from a political angle, he further added.

ADGP Arvind Kumar taken to AIMS Delhi at Air Ambulance

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Additional Director General of Manipur Police (ADGP) Arvind Kumar who sustained serious injury after he allegedly shot himself at around noon yesterday and have been undergoing treatment at Raj Medicity Hospital here in Imphal have been shifted at AIMS Hospital New Delhi today evening in a

special Air Ambulance flight. According to source, ADGP Arvind Kumar has been accompanied by his wife and IPS Officer Mrs. Anupam. A bullet that hit at his chin pierced near his ear without touching his brain, a hospital source said. Even though he was reported safe till late today afternoon hospital source said that there are possibilities of blood clotting at his brain. Quoting

police source, today's media report said the ADGP shoot himself with his service revolver in his office located at the premises of the 1st Manipur Rifle at around 1 pm yesterday.

Arvind Kumar is a 1992 batch IPS officer of the Manipur cadre and had served in the Intelligence Bureau as its Joint Director in New Delhi before coming back to Manipur Police.

Clinical trials of "Covaxin" to begin at AIIMS from Monday

By Raju Vernekar
Pune/New Delhi, July 19:

With its Ethics Committee giving approval the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi is set to start human clinical trials of the indigenously developed COVID-19 "Covaxin, from Monday onwards.

The Ethics Committee gave its nod on Saturday for trials of "Covaxin", developed by the Hyderabad-based "Bharat Biotech" in collaboration with the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has already given approval for clinical trials earlier.

AIIMS-Delhi is one of the 12 sites selected by the ICMR in conducting phase I and II human trials. In phase I, the vaccine would be tested on 375 volunteers, of whom at least 100 would be from AIIMS. The first phase the trials would be conducted on 375 participants across 12 clinical trial sites in the country. The AIIMS Patna and PGIMS Rohtak have recently

begun the vaccination process.

Dr Sanjay Rai, Professor at the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi said that the healthy volunteers having no co-morbid conditions and without a history of COVID-19, aged more than 18 years and less than 55 years, would be eligible to participate in the randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial. A few volunteers have already registered for the trial. Anybody willing to participate in the trial can send an email to Covaxin.covid19@gmail.com or an SMS to or call on 7428847499, he added.

The DCGI has permitted two vaccines — one developed by the "Bharat Biotech International Limited" in collaboration with the ICMR and another one by "Zydus Cadila Healthcare Ltd", Ahmedabad, for human clinical trials in two phases. ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said that these two vaccine candidates have successfully undergone toxicity studies in rats, mice and rabbits.

Covaxin is an "inactivated" vaccine, which is made from using particles of the COVID-19 virus that were killed so that they would not be able to infect or replicate in those injected with it. Injecting particular doses of these particles serves to build immunity by helping the body create antibodies against the dead virus.

Zydus Cadila's "ZyCoV-D" is a "plasmid DNA" vaccine which uses genetically engineered plasmids, that are coded with the antigen (a toxin or substance given off by the virus). The DNA sequence injected would match that of the virus, helping the body build antibodies against it.

Both Bharat Biotech and Zydus Cadila began vaccinating participants on 15 July. The "ZyCoV-D" phase I and II trials target 1,048 participants and are to be conducted at one site—Zydus Research Centre in Ahmedabad. "Zydus Cadila", plans to conduct trials in phase I and II on 1,048 participants at one site—Zydus Research Centre in Ahmedabad.

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Vice President hails media for partnering with people in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic

PIB

Vice President of India and Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah has hailed the media for empowering the people with necessary information, analyses and perspectives about various aspects of the outbreak of coronavirus and the COVID-19 pandemic and partnering with the anxious people in the ongoing fight against the disease. He called media persons on the ground as 'frontline warriors' for their dedicated efforts in presenting the narrative of the pandemic for wider awakening.

In his Facebook post titled "Media: Our Partner in Corona Times" today, Shri Naidu dealt at length with the role of media over the last few months since the virus outbreak and complimented the media and media persons for "effectively discharging their core function of informing, educating and empowering the people to cope with the pandemic and for being an important part of our lives during the crisis as trusted partners." He said that when people run into adversity, they look for information regarding its causes and consequences, its duration and

the means of coping with it and it falls on the central and state governments and media to equip the people accordingly.

The Vice President noted that besides being a vehicle of much required empowerment of people for taking informed actions against the spread of virus and fighting the disease, media played the role of a chronicler of the pandemic for use by prospective historians of the pandemic and as the bridge between the people and the governments for regular communication on the preparedness. He further said that media also set the agenda for debates in the parliamentary institutions with analytical insights into various aspects of the pandemic and its impacts on different sections of the society.

He referred to special communication campaigns undertaken by the media to promote preventive measures like wearing masks, social distancing, frequent washing of hands, healthy eating, regular exercises, spiritual orientation etc.

Shri Naidu commended the spirit of the media for pursuing the mission of informing the people despite running into

tough time itself. He said; "with the economy contracting due to restrictions, advertisement revenues have dried up. Scale of operations had to be adjusted and a good number of media persons had to take a cut in the pay. But, by and large, the media persisted with the mission of empowering the people, when it is needed the most." He also referred to the particular problem faced by the print media of hard copies not being distributed as they were presented as the carriers of the virus.

Regarding print media, Shri Naidu said; "I follow more closely the print media. The amount of space provided for coronavirus and the unfolding pandemic, outscored even war time reporting. Innovative product spaces have been introduced and persisted with to cater to the information hungry readers. Extensive analyses of various aspects of the disease and its impacts still continue in a mission mode."

Naidu, however, sounded caution regarding some sections of television noting that they should have avoided and should, henceforth, desist from hyping the situation as creating panic

would further destabilize the already anxious minds of the people. He urged the netizens to use social media for disseminating only authenticated information about the virus, the disease and its cure instead of giving currency to misleading myths.

He noted that masked reporters persisted with unmasking the ground realities like the hardship of migrant workers on their way home and in the process, some of them were tested positive and some even lost their lives. Calling media persons as 'front line warriors' for their dedication in presenting the pandemic narrative, Shri Naidu paid tributes to such spirited media persons and offered condolences to the bereaved families.

The Vice President observed that without the pro-active and missionary role played by the media, there would have been a vacuum in the fight against the pandemic. Regarding the agenda setting role of the media, Shri Naidu stated that; "By highlighting various aspects of the pandemic and documenting the same in factual and analytical manner, the media has set the agenda for debates and

discussions on the management of the pandemic in our parliamentary institutions. Media reports would be the principal sources of reference for raising relevant issues."

Alluding to some comments in the media, Chairman of Rajya Sabha Shri Naidu said that the parliamentary scrutiny of handling the pandemic is on course.

Shri Naidu stated that "With the easing of restrictions on domestic air travel and to a lesser degree on rail travel, the Department Related Standing Committees of both the Houses of Parliament have resumed their meetings this month. They have undertaken examination of various aspects of management of the pandemic and its fall out. This, in effect means, the required parliamentary scrutiny of the handling of the pandemic started in about three and half months of the last sitting of the apex legislature of the country. Any other shorter time frame may not have been possible given the situation prevailing in the country."

(The Committee on Home Affairs this week reviewed various aspects of management of the pandemic with the Home Secretary presenting evidence.

Home Ministry is the nodal ministry for handling the pandemic. Last week, the Committee on Science & Technology reviewed research and scientific preparedness in the context of the pandemic. Each meeting lasted over three hours.)

Shri Naidu recounted that the last Budget session of the Parliament had to be adjourned sine die on March 23rd a few days ahead of the schedule as the MPs wanted to be with the people in their hour of crisis and the Parliament is required to meet again within six months of the last sitting.

The Chairman stated that he and the Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla have so far held several rounds of discussions on enabling the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees and the monsoon session of the Parliament in the context of corona induced social distancing norm as the logistics of seating and participation of MPs in the proceedings required detailed deliberation and planning.

Naidu further said that the Government has recently reached out to both the Presiding Officers on holding the monsoon session of the Parliament.

PEMS

Life's pain

By- Dr Nunglekjam Premi Devi

Walking through such a pain, I know not life's about;
I cried and cried for nothing, lying upon her bosom;
She tried pushing me out, out into this worldly pain;
My first ever pain "aang ngau, aang ngau" too thrilling;
I remembered not how hard 'he' better hit me;
Forcing me to gain 'pains', those pains of happiness;
Cutting and caring that umbilical cord of mine;
What a sigh! My 'mother' so relieving and promoting;
Those laughs and those talks, still lingering;
I cried and cried even when I am hungry
I knew not, she's trying, trying so much;
Consoling and patting, patting on my body;
She watches me upon, day and night so everlasting;
Guarding upon my lines, I see life's so tangy;
Life's too patty, don't and dos, too many;
Choices! Never an easy option, those pains;
Piercing and cutting; falling down and hitting;
Don't go there; don't jump; sleep, go and sleep;
Doesn't matter, how I feel like, how I dealt with;
Life's always be criticizing; 'lean upon some for nothing'
'Blame me for unnecessary count' am I?
'Blame me for useless presence' am I?
'Blame me for extra surviving' am I?
'Blame me for how lazy I at work' am I?
'Blame me for how stupidity and silliness' am I?
I knew not, life's too painful, life's so harsh;
Twisting and turning; sit here and stand up;
Calculating and reckoning; walk faster and walk in front;
I never reckon happiness would suffice enough;
Love and hatred; living and death;
Disease and infections; Famine and floods;
Cancer and AIDS; Fever and Diabetic;
Rape and murder; Abortion and Flushing out;
Gun and drugs; women and weapons;
Corruptions and laws; Sickness and headaches;
Marriage and divorce; Delivery and motherhood;
Young and old; affairs and extra affairs;
All matter of purpose, it's too harsh overcoming those;
Life's a misery, it's painful.

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Book Review on environmental change and biodiversity: Uttarakhand Experiences

By: Konthoujam Khelchandra Singh

Environmental Change and Biodiversity: Uttarakhand Experiences is written by R.B. Singh and Suraj Mal, Published by Rawat Publications (ISBN 81-316-0301-6). In the book, the authors vividly highlighted some of the key concerns of environmental change in general with specific focus on biodiversity loss at global and local level. The study presented in the book is well supported by a case study on environmental change and biodiversity loss in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserves of Himalaya with a purpose to evaluate the biodiversity status in the last two-three decades. The authors presented the used of multidisciplinary approach to answer the following questions: 1) What are the spatial patterns of environmental change and biodiversity loss and their driving forces across the world in general and the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand in particular? 2) What are the linkages between land use/cover change, landslides and biodiversity loss? 3) To what extent community participation can help for conservation of biodiversity?

The entire book is divided into nine major chapters. The first three chapters of the book are dedicated to Global and Indian experiences of environmental change. In the first chapter, the authors clearly indicate environment had changed and modified the various components of environment to such extent that these changes are adversely affecting all the living organisms in the planet. Significance of biodiversity and driving forces influencing the India's biodiversity has also been emphasized clearly. Environmental changes, biodiversity loss and extreme events have become a worldwide phenomenon.

The second chapter deals with environmental change in Uttarakhand; where the authors stressed on Uttarakhand's experiences of environmental changes and biodiversity in general and climate change and extreme climate events in particular.

Expansion of roads, communication facilities, hydroelectric projects and illegal felling and poaching has degraded floral and faunal biodiversity drastically. Change in the socio-economic status of people adds to the factors for degradation. The sharp changes in the extreme climate events such as heavy snowfall, rainfall, droughts, and extreme temperature conditions have also increased. The third chapter gave importance to environmental change and biodiversity with focus on the conceptual framework and research design. The authors furnished a synoptic review which was divided into general literature review and literature review of the study area. The research methodology included the identification of the problem then defining of the research problem and hypothesis. Both primary and secondary data were collected and based on the analysis the conclusion were drawn.

Environmental profile of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve presented in the fourth chapter gave a detailed account about the salient features of the Biosphere Reserve including historical background, geology, flora and fauna etc. The authors highlighted the pressures on the biodiversity of the region which resulted in the alteration of several species leading to extinction of many species. The authors stress that the biodiversity of the regions needs due attention in order to maintain sustainability of the entire ecosystem in a time where the world is engulf with whole lots of environmental problems. In the fifth chapter, land use/cover and biodiversity using remote sensing, GIS and perception approaches were highlighted. Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve is a high altitude biosphere reserve having two important national parks. Though the biosphere reserve is located in highly rough and difficult terrain, it has experienced changes in the land use/cover in the recent past. The authors observed that banning of

construction activities and tree felling has not achieved the desired result in terms of conservation of biodiversity. The authors reported that land use/cover change has been found to be the main cause for the loss of biodiversity in this fragile region.

An inventory of biodiversity using remote sensing and GIS has been presented in the sixth chapter. Here, the authors gave a lucid account on the biodiversity of the region which are characterised by the presence of highly endangered and threatened species such as snow leopard, common leopard, brown bear, black bear, musk deer etc. Furthermore, intensified land use/cover change coupled with landslides led to disappearance of some species from the region and some have become endangered. The authors underscored the need of the local people involvement in the planning process in order to conserve all the species in particular and ecosystem in general. Landslide hazard and biodiversity had been dealt with great detail in the seventh chapter. In this chapter, the authors found increase in landslides which are attributed to anthropogenic activities like road and dam construction. The occurrence of landslide often leads to devastation of flora and fauna in the region. The authors apprehend that the loss of flora and fauna is likely to increase in the near future as the landslides will increase in the study area.

Biodiversity conservation global to local initiatives have been described in the eighth chapter. The initiatives taken at global level for biodiversity conservation has been highlighted. The authors describe the history of conservation efforts in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve along with the conflict between the local communities and reserve authority. The current community based conservation efforts in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve has also been presented by the authors. The ninth chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions. The patterns of environmental change

and biodiversity loss and their driving forces across the world in general and the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand in particular have been critically described in the book. Moreover the linkages between land use/cover change, landslides and biodiversity loss indicate the intricacies and the extent of community participation in the conservation of biodiversity. The unprecedented loss and changes in biodiversity are taking place at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels. One of the major concerns of biodiversity loss is the reduction in the capacity of natural and managed ecosystems to render quality ecological services, such as production of food and fibre, carbon storage, nutrient cycling and resistance to climate and other environmental changes.

In conclusion, it is evident that current trends of habitat conversion and destruction are reducing the number of species at such a rapid pace that extinction of contemporary species is leading to imbalance of ecosystem. The problem of biodiversity loss needs to be minimized in order to keep the ecosystem functional. Therefore, assessing the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss and environmental changes, and establishing the bases for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are major scientific challenges of our time. Based on the significance of the findings of the case study, a concrete implementable strategy and action plans could have been highlighted to augment conservation and management efforts in the fragile Himalayan environment. Finally, this book will be really useful for researcher working in the domain area of environmental change and biodiversity issues.

(The author is a Chevening Scholar currently working in the Department of Environmental Science, Puchungha University College, Aizawl, Mizoram. He can be contacted at: kkhelchandrasingh@yahoo.com)

Scribes continue to die of Covid-19 complications, JFA expresses anguish

By our correspondent
Guwahati, July 19:

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA), while expressing grief over the increase of casualties among scribes due to novel corona virus infections in different parts of the country, urges the media houses to arrange the compulsory screenings for their employees. The forum also requests every scribe to be cautious and careful in safeguarding themselves while reporting the pandemic. Local media reports reveal that a senior television reporter from Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh succumbed to Covid-19 complications on July 17, 2020. Madhusudan Reddy, who was based in Kadapa, was hospitalized as he suffered from fever and breathlessness. He becomes the second media covid-19 casualty from Tirupati district after video journalist M Parthasarathy, who died on 12 July undergoing medical attentions. Earlier, three Orissa journalists (Simanchal Panda, K.Ch Ratnam and Priyadarshi Patnaik) succumbed to the virus infections. New Delhi based scribe Tarun Sisodia killed himself undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences. The printer-publisher of Asomiyi Khabar (Rantu Das) died of heart-failure at a Guwahati hospital, who later tested positive for Covid-19. Chennai based news

videographer E Velmurugan, Chandigarh based news presenter Davinder Pal Singh, Hyderabad based television scribe Manoj Kumar, Agra based print journalist Pankaj Kulashrestha and Kolkata based photojournalist Ronny Roy earlier died of Covid-19 complications. The forum in a statement expressed annoyances that over one hundred Guwahati based media employees, working for news papers, news channels and news portals, as corona-warriors turned positive for the virus infection. But shockingly the

worrisome development has not been properly reported by most of the city based media outlets. "Need not to remind that it is the duty and responsibility for newspapers, news channels, digital outlets to report correctly about the Covid-19 warriors within the media fraternity," said JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria adding that they continue playing an important role along with the doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, police personnel, etc during the pandemic.

No doctors of TRIHMS infected with COVID-19

Fake news circulated in Social Media

PIB
Ghy, July 19:

A news report is being circulated widely in social media that 8 doctors of Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHMS) in Arunachal Pradesh are infected by COVID-19. The Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Arunachal Pradesh in a statement clarified that the news is fake as no doctor of the TRIHMS is infected with COVID-19. Dr. L. Jampa, Nodal Officer, COVID-19 Monitoring Team and Dr. Dipu Lowang, Assistant Nodal Officer COVID-19 Monitoring

Team expressed concern over rampant sharing and forwarding of fake news like this which hampers the efforts of the doctors who are in forefront to fight the pandemic. They urged the people to refrain from posting fake news, especially pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic as it is likely to create fear and panic among the people. Posting of unverified information which can create panic and fear among the people is a very serious offence and can invite legal action against the rumour mongers. People should refrain from spreading false news in this hour of crisis.

A red alert in view of increasing number of doctors' deaths

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, July 18:

With increasing number of doctors succumbing to corona virus, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has sounded a red alert and has appealed to the government to provide better Personal Protection Equipments to all those dealing with patients, including doctors, nurses and other health workers. As per an IMA survey, 99 doctors have died and 1302 doctors have tested positive for coronavirus across the country till date. Most of those who have succumbed are family physicians, Maharashtra Medical Council President and IMA member Dr. Shiv Kumar Utture said here. The break of doctors died is: less than 35 years of age-07, 35 years to 50 years-19, more than 50 years-73, Total 99. The break of doctors tested positive is: Practising doctors-586, residential doctors- 566 and house surgeons-150, Total-1302. Dr.Utture said while general death rate of corona virus is around 5 per cent, it is nearly 9 per cent of doctors fraternity, raising questions about their safety. As such all doctors have been asked to take precautions to safeguard themselves. Today there is no control over the manufacture of the PPE and that is the reason doctors and health workers

are succumbing to the infection. As such the Government should prepare guidelines for manufacture of PPEs and ensure that only those who are qualified and capable of manufacturing the PPE of standard quality are allowed to manufacture them. The person wearing defective PPE is unwittingly exposed to the deadly virus. IMA has already made certain suggestions to the

Government to combat the disease and hopefully the Government will implement them, he said. The Government has not officially declared the number of doctors' deaths. However when IMA began collecting information individually from the doctors across the country, the information about the extent to which the doctors are affected by coronavirus was revealed, Dr Utture said.

ICMR to conduct study to evaluate effectiveness of BCG vaccine in preventing morbidity and mortality in elderly

Agency
Imphal, July 19,

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the BCG vaccine in preventing morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 in elderly individuals. The study will be conducted on people aged between 60 to 95 years of age living in COVID-19 hotspots in the country. This study will be carried out in six states - Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra,

Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi. The ICMR's National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT) in Chennai is heading the study. The study will document whether BCG vaccine can prevent the occurrence of the CoronaVirus infection and its progression among elderly individuals. The study uses the same BCG vaccine that is administered to newborn babies as a part of the National Immunization programme in the country.

Manipur to set up additional 100 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra

Alternative policy for jhum cultivation in the pipeline: Forest Minister

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Awangbow Newmai had inspected the Kaziphung Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK) at Hungbung and Ukhrul Central VDVK, Rashing Hall at Awungtang in Ukhrul district yesterday. The Ministerial team also visited the Duncan Ecological Park, Somsai. The Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Yojana which aims to transform the economy of tribal people in the State was launched in the State by Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh on October 14, 2019. Under the scheme, the State Government will focus on collection, processing and value addition of non-timber forest products.

Manipur has 77 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) comprising of 1,995 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 23,259 beneficiaries. 8 VDVKs are in Noney district, 4 in Bishnupur district, 11 in Ukhrul district, 5 in Pherzawl district, 10 in Churachandpur district, 6 in Kamjong district, 3 in Tengnoupal district, 9 in Senapati district, 5 in Chandel district, 2 in Thoubal district, 1 in Imphal East district, 8 in Tamenglong district, 3 in Kangpokpi district and 2 in Jiribam district.

Addressing the gathering at the Kaziphung VDVK in Hungbung, Minister Awangbow Newmai announced that the Centre has agreed to open additional 100 VDVKs in the State. He also informed that the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED) will fund for the storage of the forest products and construction of hut bazaars in the border areas. Stating that the State is working to find an alternative for jhum cultivation, he said a project will be prepared soon which will control jhum cultivation and find an alternative for people depending on the practice. Joint discussion between



departments of Agriculture, Horticulture & Soil Conservation and Sericulture has already been initiated. He opined that clearing of the forest areas will have an adverse negative impact in the lives of the people of the State. Stating that the department has undertaken various projects and few are under the pipeline in Ukhrul district, he said Duncan Ecological Park in Somsai is under progress, 11 VDVKs which is the biggest in the State with good progress report, projects to be covered in 3,500 hectares of land areas under the CAMPA scheme, 12 villages to be covered under the KMW (popularly known as German project), 925 hectares of land areas covered under the Green India Mission and 40 hectares of land areas under the National Bamboo Mission. MH Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Forest, Environment and Climate Change) said that there are 5 new projects in the pipeline for medicinal plant, bee keeping and others to be submitted to the Centre for fund allocation from the NEC and Ministry of Agriculture. He hoped that within a year, Manipur will get sizeable fund from the Centre. He also stated that watershed development has lot of

potential and that the department is going to prepare a project on watershed development and seek financial assistance from Central agencies or lateral agencies like ADB and World Bank among others. He said the Government is committed for livelihood development and economic enhancement of all the people of the State especially in the hilly areas who are working in the forest area to make their life comfortable. He concluded his speech by stating that the Government cannot achieve anything without the co-operation of all the stakeholders living in the valley and the hills. K. Angami, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of Forest Force (PCCF and HoFF) said that Forest Department is the nodal agency for implementing the scheme in the State. While in the district level, the Deputy Commissioner is the head and District Forest Officers (DFOs) are the chief executing officers which supervised the execution part, he added. The policy matter is taken up by the DC under a committee. Each VDVK comprises of 15 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and each SHG consist of 20 members. Ukhrul has 11 VDVKs and total number of SHGs are 179 and number of beneficiaries comprising

mainly women are 3,321. The fund allocated from Centre to the State Government is transferred to the DFO who uses the money in the ratio of 40:20:40 which comprises of training, giving payment for collection of the products from the forest and equipments. The SHGs members are given training by the master trainers, he added. Stating that registration of another 100 VDVKs are under the process, he said that another new 16 VDVKs in Ukhrul district will be opened and another new 14 VDVKs in Kamjong district. He said Manipur is number leading in the country but we need a policy to sustain so that SHGs members remain energetic and encouraged. TRIFED has agreed to do funding for making storage and construction of hut bazaars. He said from this year the department has enabled the SHG members to collect wild fruits and medicinal plants which can be made as products. The function was also attended by K Leishiyoi, Advisor to the CM and MLA Phunyar AC, Khashim Vasum, MLA Chingai, Alfred Kanngam Arthur, MLA Ukhrul, Yaransho Ngaling, ADC Chairman, Ukhrul, forest officers and staff among others.

DC Tamenglong distributes TV Sets

IT News
Tamenglong, July 19:

To enhance learning experienced for the under privileged students of the Tamenglong district amidst the covid19 pandemic DC Tamenglong distributes TV Sets to the schools under ZEO Tamenglong. During the program Armstrong Pame, IAS, DC, Tamenglong stated that as the students are one of worst effected section due to this pandemic and the need for the education is of paramount necessity in order to overcome this huge problem a joint initiatives under the vision of District Administration and Zonal Education Office Tamenglong this mission along a vision was conducted. Armstrong Pame, IAS, DC Tamenglong along with the



ZEO, Mr.Dimonang Pamei, MES and the School Management Committee provide a sets of TV to 10 (ten) schools. The 10 schools are Happy Villa PS, Gadailong UPS of Tamenglong block, Tegauram PS, Taningjam PS, Phoklong Khullen PS, Aben PS (run by an NGO)Tousem High School, KGBV New Mandeu under Tousem Block and Makui High School and Lenglong High School under

Tamei Block. The DC of Tamenglong distributed the TV Sets at the DC Conference Hall to the respective Head Master of the schools in the presence of Mr.Satyajit Elangbam, District Programme Manager, Samagra Siksha, Tamenglong and staff of ZEO Tamenglong. The DC further expressed that the special initiative will be covered to more number of schools in the future.

JFA bats for CBI probe into cow-smuggling

IT Correspondent
Guwahati, July 19:

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA), while appreciating Assam chief minister (also in charge of home portfolio) Sarbananda Sonowal for showing the initial political will on Dhubri journalist Rajib Sarma's arrest incident, bats for a high level probe (preferably by the Central Bureau of Investigation) into the cow-smuggling racket that continues to exist in different parts of the State bordering Bangladesh.

The issue of notorious cattle smuggling menace in Dhubri in western Assam lately comes to the public notice after the journalist's arrest from his residence at Gaupur in a midnight coup that spread shock wave across the country as his ailing father Sudhin Sarma collapsed on 16 July 2020 morning finding it too difficult to bear with. Lately the district police chief and a forest officer, who alleged Rajib as an extortionist, have been transferred.

Reacting over the issue, the Supreme Court's senior advocate Upamanyu Hazarika commented that the arrest of a journalist, who used to report on the racket and corrupt practices involved with it, in a criminal complaint demonstrates the depth & strength of the cattle smuggling mafia in Dhubri. Raising serious questions over the efficiency and intentions of the government in controlling the menace, Hazarika alleged that in the last five years cattle smuggling has only increased.

Talking about the CID investigation, precisely confined to the scribe's wrongful arrest, Hazarika argued that the issue of ongoing cattle smuggling should have been the subject matter of investigation entrusted to the CBI. The convenor of Prabjan Virodhi Manch also asserted that the cows from different parts of India are transported to Assam by the land route for smuggling to Bangladesh and hence Hazarika opined for strict regulations over inter-State transportation of the cattle.

Actual case load of COVID in the country only 3,58,692; Recovered cases increase to 6,53,750 - PIB

Timely, proactive, and graded strategy initiatives for effective COVID-19 management in the country, led by the Center and implemented by the State/UT governments, have ensured that actual case load of COVID patients remains manageable. The actual case load of COVID in the country is only 3,58,692 today. The number of recovered cases has further increased to 6,53,750. The difference between recovered and active cases is progressively growing. It stands at 2,95,058 today. Medical attention is being provided to all the 3,58,692 active cases, either in home isolation or in hospitals for severe cases.

Coordinated measures taken by the Union and State/UT governments have ensured effective overall management of the COVID pandemic. The Union Government continues to support and supplement the efforts of the State governments by sending Central teams of experts to areas witnessing increase in caseload. A central team has been deployed to Bihar to assist the State in assessment of COVID management in the state and to provide all necessary support. The team consists of Shri Lav Agarwal, Jt Secy (Public Health), MoHFW; Dr S K Singh, Director, NCDC; and Dr Neeraj Nischal, Associate Professor (Medicine), AIIMS, New Delhi. The team will reach Bihar tomorrow. The focus of containment strategy remains on house-to-house survey, perimeter control activities, timely contact tracing, surveillance of containment and buffer zones, aided by effective clinical management of severe cases through a Standard Of Care approach. Continuously expanding hospital infrastructure has aided in increased recoveries.

The latest 24 hours saw 17,994 COVID-19 patients recovering. The recovery rate is now 63%. The latest testing strategy of ICMR allows all registered medical practitioners to recommend testing. RT-PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Point of Care (POC) Tests, boosted by TruNat and CBNAT have contributed to a surge in the number of samples tested; 3,61,024 samples have been tested in the last 24 hours; The cumulative number of 1,34,33,742 samples tested has raised the testing per million for India to 9734.6. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued Guidelines for Gated Residential Complexes Desirous of Setting Up Small COVID Care Facility by Resident Welfare Associations / Residential Societies / Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). For all authentic & updated information on COVID-19 related technical issues, guidelines & advisories please regularly visit: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> and @MoHFW_INDIA. Technical queries related to COVID-19 may be sent to technicalquery.covid19@gov.in and other queries on ncov2019@gov.in and @CovidIndiaSeva. In case of any queries on COVID-19, please call at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare helpline no.: +91-11-23978046 or 1075 (Toll-free). List of helpline numbers of States/UTs on COVID-19 is also available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/coronavirushelplinepdf.pdf>.

Govt issues notice to Twitter after recent hack

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 19:

India's cyber security nodal agency, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), has issued a notice to "Twitter" asking the micro-blogging platform for full details of the recent global hack targeting high-profile users, as it sought complete information on number of Indian users affected as well as impact on data.

According to sources, that CERT-In has also asked "Twitter" for information on number of users from India who have visited the malicious tweets and links, and whether the affected users have been informed by the platform about unauthorised access to their Twitter accounts. The government has also demanded information of vulnerability exploited by attackers and modus operandi of the attack and sought details of remedial actions taken by "Twitter" to mitigate the impact of the hacking incident. CERT-In swung into action after reports that hackers gained access to "Twitter's" systems to hack accounts of many global corporate leaders, politicians, celebrities and businesses.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Twitter accounts of famous figures began tweeting similar messages saying they were "feeling generous" and would double any "Bitcoin" payments sent to an address in the tweet. Among the individual accounts affected were former US President Barack Obama, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, tech billionaires like Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, and celebrities such as Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West. "Bitcoin" is a cryptocurrency

invented in 2008 by an unknown person or group of people using the name Satoshi Nakamoto and started in 2009 when its source code was released as open-source software. Hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of world leaders, celebrities, and tech moguls in one of the most high-profile security breaches in recent years, highlighting a major flaw with the service millions of people have come to rely on as an essential communications tool. The intent of the hack appeared to be to steal money from unsuspecting crypto currency enthusiasts.

21st State Handloom Day to be commemorated on Aug. 1

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

Handloom Promotion Council, Manipur would be organizing a subdued 21st State Handloom Day on August 1 following all SOP issued by with regards to Covid by the

Govt. The council has expressed regret to the weavers of the state for inability to cover all districts for the celebration and said the council will work for the improvement of handloom in the state once the Covid lockdown is removed.

Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates plasma donation campaign in Delhi

Agency
New Delhi, July 19:

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan today inaugurated a plasma donation campaign jointly organized by Delhi Police in AIIMS, New Delhi. 26 police personnel donated plasma during the campaign today.

Termining the plasma donors as Plasma Warriors, the Minister said, plasma donation will develop as a movement in the country and it will have a far reaching effect. While inaugurating the plasma donation campaign, he said, anyone who has recovered from the coronavirus can donate plasma twice in a month. Appreciating the role of the police personnel for donating the plasma, he said, their contribution will inspire others to come forward and join this movement. He said, the plasma trial has been conducted on 452 patients in 60 centres and the data analysis is underway. He informed that there is no harm in giving the plasma to the patients. He praised the role of corona warriors for playing an important role in containing the spread of the Coronavirus. Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, the country is performing well in terms of recovery rate and fatality rate. He said, the recovery rate in the country is around 63 per cent and the fatality rate in India is around 2.5 which is least in comparison with the global average. He said, India is continuously ramping up the testing facilities and 1262 laboratories are conducting more than 3.5 lakh tests per day in the country. AIR correspondent reports that in the Clinical Management Protocol of Covid-19, the Health Ministry put the Convalescent plasma under the investigational therapy which can be considered in patients with moderate disease who are not improving despite use of steroids.

Sports News

NEROCA, TRAU and KRYPHSA get financial boost from the state government

IT News
Imphal, July 19:

In what will come as a huge moral and financial boost, the state govt. has approved financial assistance to the tune of rupees fifty lacs each to the two I-league clubs of the state and a yet to disclose amount to KRYPHSA which compete at the premier Women's football league of the country. The two I-league clubs NEROCA and TRAU also known as the Orange Brigade and the Red Pythons respectively have already started preparing for next season after the 2019-20 season was terminated with few more games left because of the Covid crisis.

NEROCA made its I-league debut in 2017-18 season and with some gritty performances finished a respectable 2nd behind eventual winners Minerva Punjab football club that year.

TRAU meanwhile made its I-league debut in 2019-20 season and was at 6th position before Covid crisis put a stop to all matches by AIFC. Coached by ex India team gaffer, L Chaboa, KRYPHSA dominated Indian Women's League and won it in 2019-20 season.

Contd. from Page 1 Clinical trials of "Covaxin" to begin at AIIMS from Monday

The first phase "Covaxin" trials are expected to take over a month to complete, after which the data from the first trial will be submitted to the DCGI. After that trials for phase II will start. Both phases of the trial are expected to take around 15 months to complete. ZyCoV-D's first phase of trials is expected to take nearly three months to complete, following which the vaccine will move on to the second phase. Both phases of the trials are expected to take a year to complete.

Besides "Covaxin" and "ZyCoV-D", the DCGI has permitted the Pune-based "Serum Institute of India" (SII) to develop "pneumococcal vaccine" for which SII, has partnered with AstraZeneca, UK. The SII plans to make millions of doses over the next three months after it gets the manufacturing license, SII CEO Adar Poonawalla said.

