

## Veteran Politician O Joy urges Manipur Governor for dismissal of N. Biren Singh led Govt.

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Veteran Politician O. Joy Singh today urged the Governor of Manipur for dismissal of N. Biren Singh led government and demanded further actions to conduct the CBI probe into the alleged nexus between drug smugglers and the N Biren Singh government base on the



affidavit filed by a woman police officer Brinda Devi. Talking to media persons at his residence at Kakwa, O Joy said that as there has been a serious allegation from a police officer about the connection between drug lords and the Chief Minister, it is time that the governor intervened and dismissed the government and proceed to conduct CBI probe into the allegation. A memorandum in the connection has been

submitted to the Governor of Manipur today morning, O Joy said. In the affidavit all details of the affidavit filed by MPS Officer Th. Brinda about the alleged nexus with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and drug dealers Lutthosoi Zou who is currently in judicial custody that was flashed at various newspapers has been enclosed. In the affidavit submitted by him, O Joy stated, " ... dismissing him (N. Biren) will

bring some faith in the system and can ensure that ethical behavior is followed by one and all by those in public life". Meanwhile, Manipur Pradesh Mahila Committee today continue the sit-in protest in the office premises of the MPCC at BT road demanding CBI probe to the alleged nexus between accused drug smuggler Lutkhosei Zou and Chief Minister N Biren Singh. A large number of Mahila Congress workers joined the protest.

## Leishemba Sanajaoba to take oath as RS MP on July 22

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Leishemba Sanajaoba, the titular king of Manipur who has been elected as the Rajya Sabha MP from the state will take oath as the member of the Rajya Sabha on July 22. The Titular king who contested as the BJP candidate defeated Congress candidate T. Mangibabu with 2 vote. Out the 60 member Manipur Legislative Assembly only 52 voted in the election as 8 MLAs have been disallowed to cast their vote after they face the music under the 10<sup>th</sup> Scheduled of the Indian Constitution. Leishemba got 28 votes while the rival congress candidate get 24 votes.

The newly elected RS MP of



*"I will take oath in my mother tongue and wear traditional attire"*

Manipur today left Imphal for New Delhi to swear in as the member of the Rajya Sabha. Before leaving for New Delhi, Sanajaoba told reporters that he will take the oath as the member of the Rajya Sabha in Manipuri language and that too be wearing Manipuri traditional attires. "I will take oath in my mother tongue by wearing our traditional attires in the name of loard

Sanamahi, Pakhangba and Govinda", Sanajaoba said. Hours before leaving for New Delhi, Leishemba Sanajaoba along with others including MLA Indrajit, MLA Seityabatra and SP Imphal East conducted social service in and around the Shri Shri Govindaji Temple at palace compound.

## SASO condemns act of Dr. K. Rachandra

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Social Awareness Service Organization (SASO) today in a press note condemn the act of Dr. K. Rachandra who had reportedly refused voluntary blood donation of Meitram Sanatomba who had visited the RIMS blood bank for the same on June 28<sup>th</sup>. SASO termed the incident as demoralizing and said such act will create an unhealthy environment and may push the drug user community into hiding in near future. SASO further urged the concern healthcare service provider not to repeat this type of act and to stop projecting drug users in a discriminatory manner.

## 'Need To Strengthen War On Drugs' – AMYPCO

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

All Manipur Youth Protection Committee (AMYPCO) in a press release sought stronger effort in the "War on Drug" campaign initiated by the CM Biren Singh led BJP Govt. in the state. The State needs the war against drug to be a success story and it is possible only after proper investigation into the route, manner of the drugs cartel and identification of the king pin behind it. Strict and swift legal actions against perpetrators of this crime will help arrest the spread of drugs in the market, the committee suggested. It also termed the current war on drugs as a symptomatic treatment and urged the Govt. to strengthen its war on drugs keeping in view the presence of massive Poppy plantations, busting of manufacturing units by police forces in the state.

## AIIMS Delhi begins registration for conducting human trials of indigenously developed coronavirus vaccine COVAXIN

Agency  
Imphal, July:

AIIMS, Delhi has started the registration process for conducting the human trials of COVAXIN, today.

Principal Investigator for conducting these trials at one of the top medical institutes in the country, AIIMS Delhi, Dr. Sanjay Rai has said that the response for registration has been

overwhelming. Speaking exclusively to AIR News, Dr. Rai said that the first dose of the vaccine is likely to be administered to the volunteers on this Thursday.

## Court directs government to reveal fund utilized to combat COVID-19 pandemic

Except for the CM COVID-19 Relief Fund; no details for utilization of fund during COVID -19 pandemic revealed even after 4 days of the HC directives

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

A division bench of the Manipur High Court comprising of Justice Lanusungum Jamir and Justice Kh. Nobin Singh has directed the state government to furnish all information relating to all kind of action taken up for combating COVID-19 crisis including the one relating to spending public money, infrastructure, manpower, facilities etc. in the quarantine centres and in particular, the institutional quarantine centres. The directives was given along with various other directives while announcing judgment

order on July 16, 2020 in connection with a PIL filed to streamline the irregularities being notice while combating the COVID-19 pandemic. However, except for the utilization of the Chief Minister's COVID-19 Relief Fund, none of the government department, including the state Health Department have revealed the details of the expenditure utilized in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. "The State Government shall share all the information, without any discrimination except those which are exempted under the provisions of Section 8 of the Right to Information Act, 2005, with the general public

relating to any action taken by it towards combating COVID-19 crisis including the one relating to spending public money, infrastructure, manpower, facilities etc. in the quarantine centres and in particular, the institutional quarantine centres for combating COVID-19 crisis", the division bench directed the state government. The PIL filed by one J. Hillson Angam, from Senapati District in Manipur through his counsel M Rakesh pray the court to issue a writ in the nature of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ or direction thereby, directing the respondents to call for records with regards to

quarantine facilities in the State and to monitor the development on a weekly basis; to pass an order directing the respondents to set up adequate and proper quarantine centre in all the districts of Manipur to accommodate the returnees; to pass an order directing the respondents to follow the recommendation issued by World Health Organization and National Centre for Disease Control for implementing quarantine; to pass an order directing the respondents to provide doctor visits daily to all the quarantine centre, including the community/ village quarantine centre; to pass an

order directing the respondents to ensure that the quarantine facility provides clean and a hygienic environment by sanitizing and disinfecting the premises on a daily basis; to pass an order directing the respondents to appoint a sanitation worker in each ward to sanitize and disinfect the toilets and rooms surfaces touched frequently at least once a day; to pass an order directing the respondents to provide clean bed sheets, towels and hot water daily to the patients in their rooms; to pass an order directing the respondents to appoint an attendant in each ward to assist the inmates in getting essential items like food, soap, sanitizers, bed linen, etc.; and to pass an

order directing the respondents to appoint a counselor at the quarantine facilities to provide psychological support and remove psychological fear and panic amongst all quarantine people and healthcare professionals/ staffs including doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and security personnel. Following the PIL the Manipur Human Rights Commission also inspected the quarantined centers being open in the state and found some of the quarantine centres are located within the village. (Contd. on Page 4)

## Twin brothers who stood together in 8<sup>th</sup> position in class XII exam felicitated

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Emanuel English Academy, Yaingangpokpi today accorded a warm reception and felicitated the students of the academy who performed at this year's COHSEM examination (Class XII). The function organized by the management committee at the school's auditorium was attended by teachers, parents and students of the academy. Twin brothers Nongmaithem Paribhan Meitei and Nongmaithem Pariton Meitei who secured joint 8<sup>th</sup> position in Arts stream, along with joint toppers of subject *Thang-Ta*, Kangajum Diana Devi, Ngangom Suchitra, Nongmaithem Linthoibi, Nongmaithem Rishita, Sorokhaibam Lanthoi and



Yendrebam Tejlakshmi were felicitated during the function. 6 other subject toppers of the academy and COHSEM Inspire Award nominee, Ngangom Suchitra and Nongmaithem Linthoi Devi were also accorded a warm welcome by the school management. They were awarded with a memento and cash award. Tree saplings were planted by the students as a sideline for the function.

Sunder Salam, Founder EE Academy, lauded the efforts of the students and credited the strong show of the school to the students, teachers and parents. He further sought cooperation of the local people and parents of the students, in his efforts to provide quality education to the weaker sections of the society in rural areas.

# ★ Editorial

## Manipur today is living on the mercy of New Delhi

Almost all people have lost trust to political parties when it comes to fulfilling the aspiration of the people. But these people does not give a damn of giving vote to someone who can spent more money during election time. The one time hope of the people -The Manipur People's Party(MPP) which still have lots of revenue resource is in the verse of extinction and the communist party whom people once believed as the only savior of the common men today existed just for name shake. Congress Party and the BJP, which are the major opponent party does exist along with other political party based at other states here in Manipur, but in the form of a multinational companies. Politicians today have turned professional human traders and none have problem in joining any of the political party which gave them better offers - no matter in position or money.

48 years after Manipur become a full-fledged state of India, money, power, culture, identity have been completely handed over for full control to New Delhi. Everything today is left to the mercy of New Delhi. It is the New Delhi that decides who will rule the state and it is them that will decide how the people will eat for survival even during the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

If one recalled, the first Indian dignitary to arrive at Imphal after annexation of Manipur on October 15, 1949, was appropriately the Governor of Assam, Jai Ramdas Daulatram. That was in the second week of June 1961. He was followed by the Commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, General K. Cariappa in the last week of April 1952. Their visits were apparently to complete the spade -work for the grand appearance of India's democrat-turned-empire builder, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru, the first prime Minister of India paid his first ever visit in Manipur on October 23 and 24 of 1952. The then Maharaja Bohhachandra of Manipur arranged a variety show programme of dance and music for the Indian dignitary which cost him Rs. 1025 and 14 annas. Jawaharlal Nehru again visited Manipur in March 1963 accompanied by his daughter, Indira Gandhi, for a meeting with the Burmese Prime minister U Nu, at Imphal.

The then India's Minister for Home and states, Dr K. N. Katju, also visited Manipur in the first week of November 1952, that is between the first and the second visits of Jawaharlal Nehru. All those visits were for consolidation of New Delhi's power in the strategic frontier state and were motivated by the fear of possible joint insurgent movement by the Burma Communist party and armed peasants led by Hijam Irabot in Manipur.

It just took 20 years for India to reverse the phenomenon. After Manipur was annexed as a part of India dependency phobia to the people have been injected and 20 years later after Manipur became a state of India people started living on the mercy of New Delhi.

Four people who have been elected as representative of the people using their means in the electorate gambling now is in Delhi begging those at New Delhi to have mercy on them. They want the chief minister to be replaced but they are left with no choice other than begging to those sitting at New Delhi. It is not only the four elected representatives but also there are 8 more others who traded the voters well during election but lost everything due to greed for power and money. Of the 60 so called elected people none seem to show extreme seriousness to the suffering of the people. People across the world are dying of COVID-19 pandemic, it is also killing the normalcy here in the state and these people do not bother.

The erstwhile sovereign kingdom, with a history of over 2000 years, today survives at the mercy of New Delhi and people unhesitatingly support the idea of living on the mercy of New Delhi.

## Digital Challenges during COVID-19 pandemic

Sustainable digital technologies have proven to be a boon and a bane during the Covid-19 pandemic. ICTs, while have enabled connectivity, sharing of information about the pandemic, new ways of working, and collaborative research and development; there were also instances of misinformation about the pandemic which has put lives of millions at risk. Be that as it may, leveraging life changing technologies for the good of the economy and society is well recognised in terms of less travel, more modern means of communication and widespread use of innovations like tele-medicine, online education, and tele-banking that would transform access to services in low-income countries.

However, the digital divide still persists across the globe, with only 50% of the global population having access to the internet. For example, UNESCO points out that while digital technologies and distance learning strategies were deployed at record speeds to enable continued education for the estimated 1.5 billion children around the world affected by school closures, 40% of school children don't have access to digital technologies, rising to 80% in sub Saharan Africa. This wide disparity needs to be bridged. Urgent need for securing investments in bridging digital inequality rests with the governments and development partners so that global connectivity can be achieved. Partnerships at the global level to achieve SDG 17 itself is at stake with countries closing the borders and waves of hyper nationalism blurring the vision of global solidarity at the time of crisis and for its recovery.

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## Conflicts of laws on Child Marriage and Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act, 2012

By- Chongtham Victor

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCM Act) seeks to prohibit the solemnization of marriages of girl below the age of 18 years and boys below the age of 21 years. The Act prescribes penalties for the solemnization, promotion, and allowing of child marriages. A male above 18 years of age can be punished under the Act for contracting a marriage with a girl under 18 years. The Act is, however, silent on sexual relations in a child marriage. It extends legitimacy to children born of child marriages thus indirectly acknowledging sexual intercourse within a child marriage. Under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), sexual intercourse by a man with his wife above 15 years of age, is an exception to rape. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 raised the age of consent to 18 years but did not disturb this exception. As a result, sexual intercourse with a wife above 15 years of age and below 18 years of age will not amount to rape under the IPC.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act), was enacted to protect children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and to provide a child friendly system for the trial of these offences. The Act provides for seven specific sexual offences against children and stipulates child-friendly legal procedures that must be adhered to during investigation and trial. Under the POCSO Act, the term "child" has been defined to mean "any person below the age of eighteen years". The Act does not recognize sexual autonomy of children in any form. Children can also be held liable for committing sexual offences under the Act. As a result, sexual interactions or intimacies among or with children below the age of 18 years constitute an offence.

This note examines the implications of the POCSO Act on child marriages in general and 'love' marriages in particular. The POCSO Act and the Marital Rape Exception: As stated above, the IPC provides for a marital rape exception which states that "[s]exual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape." No such exception has been grafted into the POCSO Act under which an act of sexual intercourse with a person under 18 is an offence irrespective of the gender or age of the victim or the accused. Further, one of the grounds of aggravated penetrative sexual assault is penetrative sexual assault by "a relative of the child through blood or adoption or marriage or guardianship or in foster care or having a domestic relationship with a parent of the child or who is living in the same or shared household. As per the Indian Penal Code, 1860 the child commits penetrative sexual assault on such child". This is punishable with a fine and a minimum term of 10 years imprisonment which may extend to life imprisonment.

It is clear that under the POCSO Act, a spouse of a person below the age of 18 years can be prosecuted. Irrespective of whether the marriage has been contracted voluntarily, a person having sexual contact with a person under 18 years can be punished. Further, it is now mandatory for those who have information about the commission of a sexual offence to report it to the local police.

The question that now arises is this: Will the POCSO Act override the IPC? The response to this can be found Section 42-A of the POCSO

Act which was introduced by the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013. This provision states: 42-A—

— Act not in derogation of any other law, - The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force and, in case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall have overriding effect on the provisions of any such law to the extent of its inconsistency. The above provision essentially implies that in case of conflict between the provisions of the POCSO Act and any other law, the former will override. Owing to Section 42-A of the POCSO Act, the exception under the IPC will not apply. Thus, in all cases of child marriage where the bride or groom is below 18 years of age, a charge of aggravated penetrative sexual assault can lie against them under the POCSO Act.

**The POCSO Act, Child Marriage and Love:** Section 42A read with the definition of child and the offences under the Act has the potential to lead to unintended consequences - the most severe of which could be the resort to child marriage in order to evade criminal prosecution. Since the passing of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCM Act), a child marriage is voidable at the instance of the child who was party to the marriage. The option to annul the marriage can be exercised by a child who was a party to the marriage within 2 years of attaining majority. Section 12 of the PCM Act stipulates the circumstances under which a child marriage will be void. These include being taken or enticed out of the keeping of the lawful guardian or being forced or compelled by deceitful means to go from any place. There have been a sizeable number of cases in which girls between the ages of 16-18 years have left their homes on their own and with a man of their choice. In such cases, it is routine for the parents of the girl to slap a case against the man alleging kidnapping from lawful guardianship, rape, and sexual assault. Even prior to the enactment of the POCSO Act, such cases have put the lower courts in a quandary - should criminal consequences follow in cases where girls elope with and/or marry a man they claim to love? In regards to the Section 3, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Lajja Devi) v. State, the Delhi High Court observed that it is "distressing" that the IPC "acquiesces child marriage" by stating that sexual intercourse by a man with his wife above the age of 15 and below the age of 16 years is not rape. The Indian Majority Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 and the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 also recognize child marriages and "destroy the very purpose and object of the PCM Act to restrain and prevent the solemnization of Child Marriage." The court then distinguished the position of girls below and above 16 years of age. With respect to girls above the age of 16 years, it held: "If the girl is more than 16 years, and the girl makes a statement that she went with her consent and the statement and consent is without any force, coercion or undue influence, the statement could be accepted and Court will be within its power to quash the proceedings under Section 363 or 376 IPC. Here again no straight jacket formula can be applied. The Court has to be cautious, for the girl has right to get the marriage nullified under Section 3 of the PCM Act. Attending circumstances including the maturity and understanding of the girl, social background of girl, age

of the girl and boy etc. have to be taken into consideration."

In cases of marriage of a girl below the age of 16 years, her consent would be immaterial. However, the court stated that "...there can be special or exceptional circumstances which may require consideration, in cases where the girl even after attaining majority affirms and reiterates her consent." They also held that consummation with a wife below age of 15 years is an offence and in such cases whether she is married or applicable personal law provides otherwise, is irrelevant. As is evident from the above ruling, the distinction based on age was linked to the marital rape exception under the IPC. It is pertinent to note that the POCSO Act had not been enacted when this judgment was passed. However, with the passing of the POCSO Act and the increase in the age of consent, this interpretation will no longer hold good. Yet, it appears that some Special Courts have continued to apply the above ruling to quash cases against persons accused of offences under POCSO Act and IPC. While increase in such cases has been a cause of concern, the later developments in these cases have serious implications. A 15-year-old girl eloped with and subsequently married a 22-year-old man. Based on a complaint by the mother, the couple was traced and the man was booked for kidnapping and rape under the IPC and POCSO Act. Delhi district court rejected the view that the POCSO Act criminalizes even consensual sexual relationships, acquitted the accused, and observed: "I am afraid if that interpretation is allowed, it would mean that the human body of every individual under 18 years is the property of the State and no individual below 18 years can be allowed to have pleasures associated with one's body. In my opinion, it would neither serve the object of

present enactment, nor the purpose of criminal law to hold the accused guilty on the ground that he had sexual intercourse with a girl below 18 years." The mother of a 14-year-old girl alleged that her daughter has been repeatedly raped by their landlord and had become pregnant as a result of it. The accused was arrested. However, at the bail hearing the parties decided to compromise the matter as the accused agreed to marry the girl and offer financial support to her mother. He was granted interim bail and the couple married in the course of the trial. Thereafter, the prosecutrix and her mother turned hostile. They claimed that the prosecutrix was 18 years of age and was in love with the accused. She had indulged in sexual intercourse with him under the belief that he would marry her. When she became pregnant, he refused to marry her and she then filed a case against him. The accused claimed that he did not commit fraud by performing marriage with her on account of this case. On its part, the Court attempted to discern the consensual nature of the decision made by the girl and then finally acquitted the accused when the girl refused to support the prosecution's case. A Muslim man was arrested for kidnapping and raping a 17-year-old girl. At his bail hearing, he claimed that the couple loved each other and intended to marry. The concerned Judge rejected his bail and observed "Merely because both the girl and the accused happen to be from the same religion i.e. Muhammadan-whose Personal Law provides for a different age of marriage than the one provided under the statutory law of the land-does not mean any special indulgence is required to be given to the accused as far as criminal law of this land is concerned."

(Contd. on Page 3)

## Letter to the Editor

### On inclusion of 'Manipuri' language as one of the Associate Official Languages of Assam State

Dear Sir,

Through the column of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to draw the attention of the Government of Assam towards the issue of inclusion of the 'Manipuri' language as an Associate Official Language of Assam State. In Assam State, the prevailing medium of instructions at high school (Class X) as well as at higher secondary (Class XII) levels are English, Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and Manipuri languages. In a recent notification by the Government of Assam, it has been notified that for government jobs, jobs at PSU banks, jobs at other Departments/Ministries of Assam Government and competitive examinations conducted by Assam Civil Service Commission (APSC), the aspirant candidates are required to appear in one of the languages of either Assamese or Bengali (for candidates hailing from Barak Valley districts i.e. Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj), or Bodo (for candidates hailing from Bodoland Territorial Region). Thus, just because of this very language hurdle, the aspirant Manipuri candidates, who have studied in the schools in Manipuri medium of instructions, are deprived of appearing in various employment oriented examinations. On the other hand, it is to be noted that, 'Manipuri' language is also one of the 22 Scheduled Indian languages in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India, since the year 1992. However, unfortunately, the Government of Assam has not yet included the 'Manipuri' language as one of the Associate Official Languages of Assam State. Therefore, the Government of Assam is requested that 'Manipuri' language may please be included as one of the Associate Official Languages of Assam State, so that the indigenous Manipuri community of Assam can have the rights and status as the centuries old indigenous inhabitants of Assam State as well as be proud Indian citizens. Many Manipuri youths are being deprived of the opportunities for jobs and employment, due to non-inclusion of Manipuri language, as an Associate Official Language in Assam State and the recent Government of Assam notification of 05 August 2019.

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Tensubam Gokul Singha.  
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## Seven arrested in connection with black marketing of "Remdesivir"

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, July 20:

Seven persons were arrested by Mumbai police on Sunday in connection with black marketing of "Remdesivir" injections, recommended for COVID-19 cure, after Mumbai Food and Drug Administration (FDA) busted a racket by conducting raids. Acting on the tip-off, FDA tracked one of the accused and placed a fake order. On Saturday night the accused called the FDA officials (who were posing as customers) near Bal Rajeshwar Temple at Mulund in North East Mumbai. FDA reached the appointed venue. Then two persons - Vikas Dubey and Rahul Gada, came with one vial of "Remdesivir" and quoted the price of Rs.30,000 per vial. The MRP of "Remdesivir" of "Hetro company" is Rs 5400 and that of "Cipla" is Rs 4,000. The two accused were promptly taken into custody.

Six more vials were seized from the houses of the accused and based on the information given by them, five more persons were arrested and a total of 13 vials of "Remdesivir" were seized. The arrested persons were identified as: Bhavesh Shah, Ashish Kanodia, Ritesh Thombre, Gurvir Singh, Sudhir Pujari (working for Delpha Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Ghatkopar, North East Mumbai). Most of them were working either as Medical Representatives or as Counter Salesmen in chemist shops. They used to procure "Remdesivir" from distributors by giving false medical reports of their relatives. The operation was carried out under direction of FDA Joint Commissioner (Vigilance) Sunil Bhardwaj and Police



Inspector Satish Taware, by Drug Inspector Sharadchandra Nandekar and others. The accused have been booked under provision of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and Essential Commodities Act 1955. Maharashtra government has made it compulsory that a person wanting to buy "Remdesivir" will have to produce an aadhar card. Now the purchasers will be required to produce doctor's prescription, his/her mobile number and a report stating

the patient for whom the "Remdesivir" is being purchased has tested positive for the virus, FDA Minister Rajendra Shingne said. "Remdesivir" has proved to be an important drug for the treatment of Coronavirus. The shortage of the drug across the country, including Mumbai was reported earlier. In fact, in Mumbai, the drug is directly made available to the hospitals. The shortage and importance of the drug has resulted into several instances of black marketing of the drug.

## North Eastern handicrafts promoted on virtual platform at 49<sup>th</sup> edition of IHGF-Delhi Fair Three Exhibitors From NER

IT News  
New Delhi, July 20:

The 49<sup>th</sup> edition of IHGF Delhi virtual which begins from July 13 concluded yesterday. Three artisans from the North Eastern states have been awarded Ajay Shankar Memorial awards during closing ceremony of 49<sup>th</sup> edition of IHGF Delhi fair virtual for best virtual booth.

India's North Eastern Region is one of the richest in terms of sustainable crafts made from natural and eco-friendly materials and a home to a large number of tribes and sub-tribes who are engaged into manufacturing of crafts made out of local material available in abundance in the region said Rakesh Kumar, DG-EPCH. The craft of this rich region has always been provided platform at the world largest fair called IHGF-Delhi fair regularly. 25 artisans and entrepreneurs participated and displayed their exquisite crafts



Lucky Keisham

Shantmanu Sutradhar

Victor Talukdar

in theme pavilion set up during 49<sup>th</sup> edition of IHGF-Delhi fair virtual. They displayed the complete range of handicrafts of the region such as water hyacinth, muga silk and eri silk, apart from products made out of cane, bamboo and terracotta informed Ms. Jesmina Zeliang, Member COA EPCH & Regional Convener NER. The awards to the three participants from the North Eastern States are given in the memory of late Ajay Shankar,

former Development Commissioner Handicrafts. The exhibitors awarded from NER included M/s Disha Enterprise, Jorhat, Assam was given gold award. Mr. Shantmanu Sutradhar received the award. M/s Lucky Manipur Handicrafts Kauna Bags Imphal, Manipur was given silver award. Mr. Lucky Keisham received the award and M/s Mesmerizing Bamboo Fusion, Aizawl, Mizoram was given bronze award. Mr. Victor Talukdar

received the award informed Shri Neeraj Khanna, President fair. Apart from entrepreneurs, Regional Design & Technical Design Centre O/o Development Commissioner [Handicrafts], North Eastern Region, Guwahati was also given away the Certificate of award being the associated Institute for motivating the entrepreneurs to participate in 49<sup>th</sup> edition of IHGF-Delhi fair virtual said Shri Rakesh Kumar, DG-EPCH.

## Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates COVID19 Plasma Donation Campaign

PIB  
New Delhi, July 20:

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today flagged off a Plasma Donation Campaign at AIIMS Delhi today. The event was co-organized by Delhi Police where 26 police personnel who had recovered from COVID volunteered to donate their blood plasma. Expressing his gratitude to the Delhi Police for this initiative he said, "It is very sad that a dozen Delhi police personnel died due to

Corona. In spite of these casualties, they are doing a great job deploying personnel to contain the spread, while the number of containment zones has jumped from 200 to 600." Dr Harsh Vardhan saluted the contribution of these volunteers by conferring certificates to 26 Police constables. Of these, Shri Om Prakash was donating his plasma for the third time today. The Union Minister stated that these donations will have a long-lasting impact on other countrymen who will get inspired to donate their plasma. Every

single donor counts in our journey towards victory over COVID-19 and we need more and more of these plasma warriors to help fight the pandemic till a definitive treatment or vaccine is developed, he added. He acknowledged the huge potential of this strategy and the government's will to tap into it. He commented, "As of now convalescent plasma therapy has been approved for compassionate use with various plasma banks being set up to ensure round the clock availability. Despite the fact that India has one

of the highest cure rates amongst COVID-19 patients, the plasma donations has yet to pick up. I am happy that AIIMS, New Delhi is organising this plasma donation campaign with the support of Delhi Police Corona Warriors." Fondly remembering the contribution of Delhi Police as an integral part of the success of Pulse Polio campaign in 1994, Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that tens of thousands of police constables had joined the Abhiyaan and created a huge awareness drive. The 100 phone number was also

dedicated for this cause, he reminisced. Plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients contains protective antibodies to the novel SARS-CoV-2 virus. It can provide immunity to patients of Covid-19 when transfused. Considering its potential benefit, plasma therapy is provided to those patients who are not responding to conventional treatment. Anyone who has recovered from COVID-19, and has completed 28 days after the completion of treatment or home isolation, is between 18 to 60 years of age with a weight of more

than 50 kg is eligible to donate their blood plasma. The Blood Bank will assess their eligibility for blood donation and check the level of COVID-19 protective antibody levels in their blood before they can donate. The blood of a survivor usually has a high concentration of such antibodies and when given to a susceptible person, these antibodies circulate in blood, reach tissues and neutralize the virus. The process of donation is completed in one to three hours and plasma can be collected on same day.

## COVID-19 patient commits suicide

IT News  
Mumbai, July 20:

A COVID-19 patient Prashant Ambekar (40) ended his life after jumping down from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor window of the COVID centre located at Tata Amnara Housing Complex in Kalyan, about 38 kms from Mumbai on late Sunday evening.

The deceased residing at Dombivali in Thane district who had tested positive, was admitted to the centre on 17 July and was allotted a room on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the centre. However mentally upset deceased was not opening the door and had refused to take treatment. Since he continued his defiance, worried hospital staff, accompanied by doctors reached his room on Sunday. However he refused to open the door. After a lot of persuasion he opened the door.

Then the hospital administration decided to shift him to 5<sup>th</sup> floor ward and he was taken along. However he gave a slip to the hospital team and escaped and jumped down from the window. He died on the spot. This is the fourth suicide by a COVID-19 patient in and around Mumbai. A 29-year-



old female Covid-19 patient, who was under treatment at BYL Nair Hospital in South Mumbai had committed a suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling with her scarf in the bathroom of ward No 25 on 15 April, 2020.

On 9 May, a 60-year-old COVID-19 male patient had committed a suicide at Seven Hills Hospital in Andheri in North West Mumbai. Similarly a 63-year-old female COVID-19 patient admitted to ESIS hospital in Kandivli East in North Mumbai had committed suicide by hanging herself with a saree on 17 May, 2020.

Also the 53-year-old man, a resident of a fisherman colony in Mahim, admitted to the BYL Nair Hospital had committed suicide by hanging himself inside a bathroom of the hospital on 4 June, 2020. Initially the deceased was admitted to private hospital on 22 May and had tested negative. But since his reports indicated he had pneumonia, he was admitted to the Nair Hospital on 31 May and tested negative for the virus again. However he continued to be under treatment since he had breathing issues.

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## Conflicts of laws on Child Marriage .....

Further, she held "Muslim parents are as much entitled to protect their minor daughters from sexual abuse and exploitation as any other Indian irrespective of religious considerations. No separate parameters can be adopted for Muslim offenders only because the complainant happens to be from the same religion." A disparity in the approach and views of judges is apparent from the aforementioned cases. Two have taken the position that girls who engage in consensual sex cannot be seen as victims and consequently their lovers cannot be treated as criminals. In the last case, the Judge has gone by the letter of the law and not permitted any religion-based exceptions. These cases have posed considerable difficulties before the court. They have found it difficult to convict the accused when the prosecutrix did not support the case of the prosecution and claimed to have gone willingly with the man.

In the above circumstances, it needs to be noted that neither the POCSO Act nor the PCM Act can be truly applied for the following reason:- (I)

In the absence of medical evidence, the oral evidence of the child becomes crucial for a case under POCSO Act. If she turns hostile, there is little that the Special Court can do in the matter. (ii) A marriage is only voidable under PCM Act at the option of the child party. Since in these cases the child turns hostile, the situation does not arise where a petition for nullity is filed.

In the second case, it appears that marriage provided the parties with a way out of the criminal proceedings. Though the above decisions of the Special Courts do not hold any precedential value, they effectively undermine the provisions of the POCSO Act which do not permit any exceptions. More importantly, these decisions underline the problematic aspects of uniform age of consent. Given that the age of consent is pegged at 18 years, sexual intimacies and interactions among or with children in the age group of 16-18 years has been criminalized. In India, even though child marriage is prohibited under secular law, it enjoys sanction under the Hindu Marriage Act and Muslim Personal Law thus complicating matters. The

opinion of the higher courts on this is crucial. If personal laws are allowed to override the POCSO Act, it will lead to the discriminatory application of the law. The judiciary has recognized the autonomy of children to an extent by quashing complaints in cases of consensual marriages. If the above trend continues, in order to evade a minimum term of 10 years rigorous imprisonment, a young couple may have no choice but to marry to avail of such an interpretation of the law. This appears to be an inevitable consequence of having a uniform age of consent. In this regard, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Bill, 2010 is instructive. It proposed that any consensual sexual act that may constitute penetrative sexual assault should not be an offence when it is between two children who are both above 14 years of age and are either of the same age or the difference in age is not more than three years. It is imperative that the Act be amended to address this

anomaly. Section 3 of the POCSO Act prepared by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights deals with 'unlawful sexual act with the child' and states that any sexual act with the child under the age of sixteen years with or without the consent of the child is an offence except in the two circumstances mentioned. The situation mentioned here is the exception in Section 3(ii) reads as "Any consensual sexual act penalized by this chapter (except for sections 23, 25, 27 and 31) is not an offence when engaged in between two persons who are both over 14 years of age and are either of the same age or whose ages are 5 within 3 years of each other." Situations mentioned under Sections 23 (Unlawfully stripping the child in public view), Section 25 (Child pornography), Section 27 (Blackmailing for a sexual act) and Section 31 (Stalking a child) are excluded from these exceptions and will continue to be offences irrespective of the age of the children involved in such act. (Concluded)

# Education Minister calls on chairperson NCTE and Secretary UGC

IT News  
Imphal, July 20

Education Minister Dr. Thokchom Radheshyam today called on the Chairperson, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Shri Vineet Joshi to discuss about the prevailing conditions of the D.M. College of Teacher Education, Imphal (DMCTE) and Hindi Teachers' Training College, (HTTC) Imphal at NCTE Office, Dwarka. During the meeting the Minister apprised the Chairperson, NCTE about the

steps taken by the State Government in making good of the shortcomings of the institutions and for restoring the recognition granted to the B. Ed. Course of DMCTE and for conducting Hindi Shikshan Parangat Programme of HTTC considering the importance of the institutions in the State and the education system. D.M. College of Teacher Education, Imphal runs two (2) Courses, i.e. B.Ed. and M.Ed. Dr. Thokchom Radheshyam also met with the Secretary, University Grants Commission

(UGC), Prof. Rajnish Jain at his office chamber and impressed upon him to grant the recognition of Dhanamajuri University under Section 12 (B) of UGC Act at the earliest to facilitate availing grants and funds from UGC and other funding agencies. The DMU has already received 2(F) recognition under the UGC Act. The Minister said that the Committee Meeting will be held soon and is hopeful that the Ministry will work for the upliftment of the education sector in Manipur.

# Jiribam SP urges media to exercise restraint

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Superintendent of Police, Jiribam, Moirangthem Mubi, today urged media in Jiribam to exercise restraint in publication of news items which is likely to cause fear and panic among the public.

The cop while speaking on the sidelines of the inspection of the renovation of Covid care centre at Harinagar, lauded the progress of the renovation work and expressed that the centre would be functional very soon. He further cautioned people and the

media in particular to exercise restraint in publication of news related to Covid cases in the state without proper verification. District Commissioner, W. Malemnganba Chenglei also overtook the work progress of the renovation work.

# Soft launch of OctaNE - A CoE in IoT in Agriculture at Guwahati, Animation at Shillong and Emerging Tech-AR/VR at Imphal under phase -1

IT News  
New Delhi, July 20:

Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) soft launched the first phase of OctaNE - A Centre of Excellence (CoE) in IoT in Agriculture at Guwahati, Animation at Shillong and Emerging Tech-AR/VR at Imphal and simultaneously launched the Open Challenge. STPI OctaNE is a ground-breaking initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and managed by STPI to transform the digital profile of North-East by providing a robust startup ecosystem to rev up innovation & entrepreneurship in emerging technology. STPI OctaNE is poised to nurture startups in emerging tech in a collaborative model by facilitating mentoring, funding, marketing & IPR while enabling them to address the challenges of local industry & build software products. Network of 8 STPI CoEs for North East will transform innovation & entrepreneurship in the region. The services available for the beneficiaries of OctaNE shall include Physical infrastructure including 450-seater state-of-the-art incubation (200- Guwahati, 150-Shillong and Imphal-100). Along with E-Commerce facilitation and Tinkering Lab in each of the three centre, mentoring, financial support through seed funding, technical support, marketing support, IPR/Patenting facilitation and legal, accounting & other support services will be provided to start-ups. The soft-launch of "OctaNE & Idea Challenge

Programme" is done by Dr. Omkar Rai, Director General, STPI and Shri Rajiv Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Govt. of India in the august presence of Shri Kumar Venkatesh, President & Partner at AXLerate Now and Chief mentor for CoE in IoT in Agriculture, at Guwahati and Shri Biren Ghose, Country Head, Technicolor and Chief mentor for CoE in Animation at Shillong, Shri P K Das, Director, STPI-Guwahati and Shri Subodh Sachan, Director STPIHQ. "Our CoEs are collaborative efforts of stakeholders from government, industry, academia, industry associations and state governments. In two years of time, STPI is going to be the largest startup ecosystem in the nation," asserted Dr. Omkar Rai, DG, STPI said while delivering keynote address on the launch of OctaNE CoE. Dr. Rai further added, "For Atmanirbhar Bharat IoT can play a key role in precision agriculture, in realising the vision of Hon'ble PM in doubling farmers' income & North-East has the potential for sectors like agriculture, horticulture & floriculture." "North-East, we are providing the fundamental support to create the ecosystem for the growth of start-ups. OctaNE is the realisation of the vision of Digital North East 2022, which was launched in 2018, and our commitment for North-East. We are taking a small but a very important step today in the journey of North East Vision 2022," said Shri Rajiv Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Govt. of India. "There is a demand for the

development of innovative products in our country. If we need to increase GDP of the country, we have to focus on Agritech. Agritech start-ups growing at the rate of 25 per cent YoY. Every 9th Agritech start-up in the world is originating out of India. Huge opportunity for Agri culture IoT startups as the adoption of IoT is rising faster and it will driver of change. Adoption of tech can significantly increase farmers' income in the country," cited Shri. Kumar Venkatesh, President & Partner, AXLerateNow & Chief Mentor of CoE in IoT in Agriculture at Guwahati. "Today the transformation in digital tools has enabled us to start this CoE in Animation. The business of art will reduce the gap between man and environment. STPI CoEs will provide a canvas to paint new stories of our times," enunciated Shri Biren Ghose, Country Head, Technicolor & Chief Mentor of CoE in Animation. "STPI OctaNE will create a robust ecosystem for startups to boost R&D, innovation & entrepreneurship in the region. Funding support will be provided to startups for cloud hosting, mentor support & IP creation," stated Shri Prabir Kr. Das, STPI-Director, Guwahati while sharing presentation on STPI OctaNE. **Highly Value Partnerships** OctaNE is collaboration between industry associations, academia, and angels the model is built on a solid groundwork. Stakeholders of OctaNE are Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), STPI, STPI NEXT, State Govt. of

Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFI) and Technology Incubation Centre (TIC), Tea Board of India. **Academia:** IIT Guwahati, IIM Shillong, IIT Manipur, IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, Manipur University, IIT Guwahati, NIT Shillong, NIT Manipur, Assam Agricultural University, IIM-CIP, NIELIT Shillong, NIELIT-Guwahati, NIELIT Imphal, Assam Don Bosco University, Toonz Animations, NIELIT Kolkata, Assam Rajiv Gandhi University, North Eastern Hill University. **Industry:** Skills Tech Initiatives & Ventures P Ltd., Salt Lake City, Kolkata, DZ Engineering, Branch Office: Guwahati, Total Start Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Developers, Kolkata, Olatus Systems P Ltd., Guwahati, Webx Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Guwahati, Healthnine Technologies P Ltd., Kolkata, Lamzing Technologies P Ltd, Imphal, Edelstein Techno Solutions Pvt. Ltd, Imphal, Chillibreeze Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Shillong. **Open Challenge Program** STPI OctaNE launches the Open Challenge Program to inspire startups in the North East region to take part in the program and transform their brilliant ideas into path-breaking products in AgriIoT, Animation, AR & VR. Open Challenge Program is a platform where a startup gets an opportunity to solve problems through innovative solutions. The objective of Open Challenge Program is to identify, recognize & reward aspiring and early-stage tech entrepreneurs.

## Sports News

# David De Gea spills thrills Chelsea in FA CUP Semi Final Fixture

IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Chelsea defeated Manchester Utd 3-1 at Wembley on Sunday and will face its city rival Arsenal for the coveted FA Cup on August 1st. The game's highlight were the howlers from the Manchester Utd custodian David De Gea whose pedigree of commanding a whooping fee and being the highest in the league, was brought to naught by Frank Lampard coached side. David De Gea's shaky form since the beginning of the year continued and his misery was compounded by an own goal from Hary Maguire. Chelsea dominated the proceedings and shook the net as early as 11th minute when a cross from the right by Captain Cesar Azpilicueta crossed was flicked by an in form Frenchmen Giroud into the net. De Gea got his hands on the ball but not enough to stop the ball from spinning

over the line at his near post. David's night worsened after English International Mason Mount who latched on to a poor pass from Brandon Williams sent a long ranger and which would have been a routine save for the Spainiard, but end up only

steering into the corner of the net in the 46th minute. Utd Captain Hary Maguire's own goal in 74th minute when he diverted Marcos Alonso's cross into his own net was the final blow to what would be regarded as an abject display by the Reds. Bruno

Fernandes pulled a goal back from the penalty spot late on after Callum Hudson-Odoi fouled Anthony Martial but it could not even be described as a consolation as Chelsea closed out the win to fix a final clash against its London rival Arsenal.

# TRAU signed talented youngsters for elite league



IT News  
Imphal, July 20:

Tiddim Road Athletic Union (TRAU), signed four youngsters from various clubs for competing in the Elite league (U-18) previously known as the Youth League run by All India Football Federation

(AIFF). The Imphal based I-league club with an eye for the future talents managed to get the players sign on the dotted lines after scouting them for months. The youngsters, Naorem Nanao Meitei (Kerala Blasters), Shoraisam Sagar Singh (HAL), Thoudam Bungeha Singh (Football

Academy of Bangalore), Thoudam Naresh (TYDA), will shortly be donning the red and green uniform of the Red Pythons. TRAU is currently coached by L Nandakumar and was placed at 6th position of the I-league before the league was terminated prematurely due to Covid crisis.

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# Court directs government to reveal fund utilized to combat COVID-19 pandemic

The Commission in its observation stated that Toilet and bathroom provided in the majority of quarantine centres are inadequate and lacks basic facilities including water supply. The Commission felt inadequate on the allocation of rupees 200 per inmate per day to cover his/her meals, drinking water it also observed that the release of the allocated amount was either due or delay. The commission presented observation on the running of the QC and the problem being faced by the inmates at quarantine centers has been well observed by the division bench of the Manipur High Court. After hearing the counter affidavit from the respondents, the divisions bench gave the following orders:

**before the High Level Consultative Committee headed by the Hon ble Chief Minister, Manipur for consideration and to take appropriate decisions accordingly;**  
- The State Government shall consider to constitute various committees consisting of experts only, probably, in all major Departments which shall collect information, relevant data, discuss with the stakeholders including CSOs, farmers, entrepreneurs, workers etc., assess the impact of the COVID19 crisis and submit their reports with suggested remedial measures to the State Government through their respective Departments so that an effective action plan can be made well in advance;  
- The State Government shall share all the information, without any discrimination except those which are exempted under the provisions of Section 8 of the Right to Information Act, 2005, with the general public relating to any action taken by it towards combating COVID-19 crisis including the one relating to spending public money, infrastructure, manpower, facilities etc. in the quarantine centres and in particular, the institutional

quarantine centres for combating COVID-19 crisis;  
- The State Government shall frame an exhaustive rules and regulations to regulate the functioning of the State Government towards combating COVID-19 crisis or modify [30] PIL No. 16 of 2020 Contd.../ suitably the existing SOP, depending upon the change of circumstances touching on all aspects of the matter and keeping in mind the shortcomings, difficulties, drawbacks, complaints from the public etc. faced by the State Government in the recent past, to meet any kind of eventuality so that there would be no occasion for the public to raise any voice;  
- The Manipur Human Rights Commission is requested to submit its bill to the State Government towards the expenditure incurred by it while conducting the spot inquiry within a week from the date of receipt of a copy of this judgment and order and in the event of such a bill being submitted by it, the State Government shall consider it and if found correct and proper in order, shall make the payment thereof as quickly as possible, preferably within a month from the date of receipt of the bill.