

## 4 BJP Ministers who went to New Delhi returns; deny responses to media query

IT News  
Imphal, July 21:

The speculated crisis among the BJP leaders in the N. Biren Singh led coalition government over differences among the BJP legislatures for change of Chief Minister is not reaching out to the public as the 4 Ministers from the BJP who had allegedly went to lobby the central BJP leaders for change of Chief Minister refuse to give any comment to media query after they arrived at Imphal airport. The gesture of the 4 Ministers showed uneasy relationship with the Chief Minister of the BJP led coalition government. Earlier, before leaving for New Delhi, the four Ministers had

stated that they were visiting Delhi to apprise the central Ministry for taking up various developmental measures in the state. The four of them had bull-shitted media report which stated that the 4 Minister were on their way to lobby the Central leaders of the BJP for change of the Chief Minister. However, a cable TV news network based in Imphal had created suspicions prompting people to believe media report which stated that there were rivalry among the legislatures of the BJP some preferring to change the Chief Minister. The Cable TV news report had stated that the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was not informed about their visit to

New Delhi.

The Four ministers, despite various speculations refused to divulge anything to media personalities who were awaiting the return of the ministers at the Bir Tikendrajit International Airport at 11 AM today. The four cabinet ministers had left Imphal on 17<sup>th</sup> of this month and speculations were rife among the political fraternity and the public that the ministers were camping at Delhi to pursue BJP central leaders for change of leadership in the state. Works and Power Minister, Thounaojam Bishwajit, Education Minister, Thokchom Radheshyam, Social Welfare Minister,

Nemcha Kipgen and Agriculture Minister, V Hankhalian, during their stay at Delhi had met various union leaders including National party president JP Nadda on 18<sup>th</sup>. The group of ministers met Union Minister for Animal Husbandry, Giriraj Singh, Minister of Power (Independent Charge), RK Singh and others, during their stay and said to have discussed in length about the various schemes and projects to be taken up in the state. It may be mentioned that the ministers had earlier claimed their visit to Delhi as purely related to various works in their department, and not any political agenda.

Agency  
New Delhi, July 21:

The Central Government has asked the States and Union Territories Governments to increase testing capacities to deal with Covid-19 pandemic. In a letter written to all the States and Union Territories' Governments, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry and the Indian Council of Medical Research said that the evolving scenario demands for enhanced testing capabilities to handle any surge in testing demand. The Central Government said, more labs for COVID-

19 testing should be added and existing testing capacity can be enhanced. Government has also devised a strategy to enhance the testing which includes short term and long term measures. As a short term measure, the Central Government has suggested that RT-PCR machines available with the research and educational institutions under the State and Central Government be temporarily deployed in the District Hospitals and testing labs. Besides, the States and Union Territories have been asked to procure rapid antigen kits to enhance their testing potential. The Health Ministry said, addition of private diagnostic labs with two RT PCR machines each will enhance the capacity by 48 thousand tests per day. It advised to add at least five labs per State into the network.

The Ministry has advised that the District hospitals need to be provided with a BSL-11 facility with at least one RT PCR machine. It said, ICMR is procuring 125 automated RNA extraction machines and the state governments must procure additional RNA extraction machines to enhance testing capacity significantly. Government today said a total of seven lakh 24 thousand 578 people infected with Covid-19 have recovered in the country so far and the recovery rate is 62.72 per cent in India. And the case fatality rate continues to decline in the country and has come down to 2.43 per cent.

## MSAD warns against spread of illicit social media platforms, urge caution

IT News  
Imphal, July 21:

Shaikhom Chingkhengbanba, President, Manipur Students' Association Delhi (MSAD) in a press statement warned against the illicit activities of various social media platforms which in the name of online prizes, modeling contracts and stage performances, are actively engaged in recruitment of young girls from Western South East Asia)WESEA region for

prostitution, forced labour, sexual slavery and others. The platforms organize online audition, Selfie contest etc through their websites and collect private photos and details of young girls from WESEA. Even few naïve people from the region are also involved in the recruitment process, he added. MSAD drew the attention of one 'Stormy TV' promotion post for modeling and reality show which has gone viral on various social media sites and

claimed such platforms often hide behind fake names of modeling, Artificial Intelligence, Start ups, Sports etc to cover their true identity. He further condemned that the mainland Indians target WESEA girls for prostitution business and question why such behaviors should not be seen as a form of racial discrimination. The student body urged parents, society to be cautious of such activities and expressed the immediate need for awareness programme in this matter.

## Bangladesh floods: 26 lakh people affected, 21 people die

Agency  
Dhaka, July 21:

Flood continues to ravage several areas of Bangladesh, especially in the north eastern parts of the country. Flood has affected 18 districts in the country including Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Jamalpur, Rajshahi, Faridpur and Feni. Large parts of Kurigram, Shariatpur and Sunamganj districts remain under water due to floods.

According to the Ministry of Disaster Management more than 26 lakh people have been affected by floods in the country. 21 people have died so far due to floods. Relief measures have been taken up by the government in the flood affected areas. It has set up 1443 flood relief centres where more than 61 thousand people have taken shelter. Close to 600 additional medical centres have also been set up in these districts.

## COVID care centre shifted

DIPR  
Bishnupur, July 20:

Due to immense pressure from the local public for allowing District Hospital, Bishnupur to resume its normal functioning, the District Administration along with Medical Team, Bishnupur Municipal Council members, COVID Relief Committee members and Meira Paibi leaders inspected and decided to relocate COVID Care Centre from the District Hospital to Old DC Office Complex at Loukoipat, Bishnupur with immediate effect. Bishnupur has been using District Hospital as COVID Care Centre since 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.

## “Media in Manipur” released today

IT News  
Imphal, July 21:

Intellectual Forum of North-East (IFNE), All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) and Editors' Guild Manipur (EGM) jointly organised a book release function at the auditorium of Rotary Club located at Mantripukhri, Imphal today. The book – Media in Manipur, Volume I & II, a compendium of articles written by various media personalities and research scholars, is published by Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi. The program was attended by Dr. RK Ranjan Singh, MP Lok Sabha, Dr. NG Ngalingnam, Director, IGNTU-RCM, Nishikanta Singh Sapam, Owner, The Sangai Express, Bijo Kachchingabam, President AMWJU, Khogendra Khomdram, President, Editors' Guild Manipur, Ramkung Panmei, President, Manipur Hills Journalists Union.

## RNI portal opened for e-Filing of Annual Statements 2019-20 Publishers can file Annual Statements till 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

PIB  
Imphal, July 21:

The online portal to file Annual Statements for the Financial Year 2019-20 has been opened by Office of the

Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) through its website <http://miefiling.gov.in/>. The last date to file Annual Statement is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The office of RNI is a

Media Unit under Ministry of Information & Broadcasting which is constituted under the Press & Registration of Books Act (PRB Act), 1867. Under Section 19-D of the PRB Act 1867, "...it shall be the duty of

every publisher of every newspaper to furnish to the Press Registrar..." an annual statement for their respective publications. Non filing of Annual Statements amounts to violation of the above

section-t. Publishers can email their queries with regard to filing of Annual Statements 2019-20 at [annual\\_statement.rni@ngmail.com](mailto:annual_statement.rni@ngmail.com). Instructions to file annual statements are available on the website (<http://mi.nic.in/>).

## “We will despatch people to jail from here” SC in AGR case

By IT Correspondent  
New Delhi/Mumbai, July 21:

The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday reprimanded telecom companies including “Vodafone India” of Aditya Birla group for their failure to pay pending dues of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to the Department of Telecom (DoT) and posted the matter for next hearing on 10 August 2020.

A three-judge bench of Justices Arun Mishra, S Abdul Nazeer and MR Shah, while hearing the pleas by telecom companies to allow staggered repayment of their AGR, observed that there can be no going back on AGR dues and said the calculation given by the telecom department is to be treated as final, adding that there is no scope for any re-assessment or re-calculation of said dues.

It also said that it wants to look into the bonafide of the decision to invoke insolvency on the part of several companies with AGR dues of over Rs 38,000 crore, that are currently in liquidation. Accordingly, it asked RComm, Videocon and Airtel to submit all records and details of insolvency within seven days. Issue of companies under liquidation is to be considered on 19 August.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the court that there is no confusion about the SC Order and no room for re-assessment. As per DoT, Bharti Airtel owes a sum of Rs 43,780 crore, of which the company has paid Rs 18,004 crore, so the balance is Rs 25,976 crore. Vodafone paid Rs 7,854 crore, balance is Rs 50,399 crore. Tata Telecom

paid about Rs 4,197 crore, balance due about Rs 12,601 crore. Mukul Rohatgi, Counsel for “Vodafone Idea” told the court that entire net worth of the company has been wiped out over the last 15 years and an equity of over one lakh crore brought in by promoters, has also been eroded. All the revenue was spent on liabilities, tax and other dues. Total revenue of over 10 years was Rs 6.27 lakh crore, of which Rs 4.95 lakh crore was spent on expenses. Now no assets were left with company, except “spectrum”. Under the circumstances, the refund of Goods and services tax (GST) worth Rs 8,000 crore accruing to the company can be retained by the government. However the bench said that “We want to make clear again

that there is no space for self assessment. Otherwise we will have to draw serious contempt against everyone. This would be a violation of our orders. It seems the DOT is allowing room for re-assessment. Who in the Govt has the temerity to do this? No one has the authority to overturn our orders. You don't know me, we will despatch people to jail from here.” **Total AGR dues and repayments so far:** As per DoT estimates, telecom companies owe a total of **Rs 1.19 lakh crore** with payments received so far at Rs 26,896 crore. The balance, therefore, is currently at Rs 92,520 crore. **AGR dues for Vodafone Idea:** outstanding dues as per DoT at Rs 58,254 crore. Vodafone Idea has paid Rs 7,854 crores so far including Rs 1,000 crore paid on 17 July 2020 and Rs 6,854 crore paid in

three tranches earlier. Balance due is Rs 50,400 crore (Vodafone's self-assessment pegs dues at Rs 21,533 crore). **AGR dues for Bharti Airtel:** outstanding dues as per DoT at Rs 43,980 crore. Bharti Airtel has paid Rs 18,004 crore so far-balance due is at Rs 25,976 crore (Airtel's self-assessment pegs dues at Rs 13,004 crore). **AGR dues for Tata Teleservices:** outstanding dues as per DoT at Rs 16,798 crore. Tata Tele has paid Rs 4,197 crore so far-balance due is at Rs 12,601 crore (Tata Tele's self-assessment pegs dues at Rs 2,197 crore) In October last year, the SC upheld the government's position on the calculation of statutory liabilities. The government suggested the revenue from the non-core businesses should also be included in arriving at the annual

AGR amount. A part of the AGR is paid by telecom companies as licence and spectrum fee to the exchequer. However the companies appealed to the court to provide the option of staggered payments over either 20 years or 10 years. But the court asked telecom companies to provide bank guarantees and a timeline of payments so that it would have ample security to grant such a long tenure for repayments. The SC, however had ordered that demand of past telecom dues from oil PSUs be withdrawn. Accordingly, the DoT withdrew a demand of over Rs 2.3 lakh crore it had made on state-owned gas utility GAIL India and Oil India (OIL) in past telecom dues.

# ★ Editorial

## BJP may be in trouble if differences exist between the party's elected representatives

To any politically matured and who is well aware of the happenings in the state of Manipur – a stable matured government who can bridge all the differences among all communities in the state will be the choice. Perhaps for the first time that civil body United Committee Manipur (UCM) has been an opposition party since it was formed paid condolence for the martyrs of NSCN-IM cadres. Civil society bodies across the state which have different opinions as most are set up on ethnic line now seems to come closure. And most matured politically sensible people are happy to imagine that differences among various ethnic communities are simmering resolving and with the people standing together it is not far that Manipur will march ahead. Peace and prosperity will once more restore.

The recent day's political development in the state hurt many politically sensible people who always wanted to see Manipur – a bright state. The crisis inside the political party that is leading the present coalition government is a sign showing that the stability of the government is being shaken and if these continue Manipur may be in deep trouble with the probability of either imposing President Rule or replacement of the government by an alternative one led by the opposition Congress.

The strength of any political party is depended on the organizational structure of that political party. It is the wisdom of the men and women working for strengthening and popularizing the party by the person leading the party along with his team. After almost many months the newly elected leader of the State unit BJP that is leading the coalition government today has a full-flagged team to run the party. If the new team works with heart and soul, the BJP may have less problem in the next general election as it would be no problem in getting the required number of seats for the formation of the government. Then the issue of distribution of power to the elected representatives even if the coalition government has to continue, will be not a problem.

When it comes to the present political scenario, the disunity among the elected BJP leaders is one problem that has to be seriously analyzed by the new BJP team. The number that they get in the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly election was not enough to form the government. And everyone knows that it was the wisdom of some top BJP leaders the managed to form the government even though opposition congress has more elected members.

The support of the Naga Peoples' Front (NPF) to the BJP led government here in the state when it is not even a partner of the BJP led NDA government in the center and when it is posing as opposition at Nagaland state Assembly should be a matter that needs to be pondered. NPP which has a similar number is a partner of the BJP led NDA government at the center and it will not be a problem for the party to go hand-in-hand no matter who is the Chief Minister from the BJP. But when it comes to the NPF, it is difficult to imagine that the party will continue its support to the BJP led coalition government as they are free to make its own decision.

Replacement of N. Biren by someone will only land the BJP in deep trouble. The strength of the BJP which is on the rise may be reduced as consolidation may take many years and by-election and the 12th Manipur Legislative general election is just knocking on the door.

The coming back of the four ministers who went to New Delhi demanding change of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh will decide the fate of BJP here in the state of Manipur.

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## High-end FORENSIC GEOLOGY in crime scenes

By: Herojit Nongmaithem  
Senior Geologist, GSI, Imphal Office



Experts have begun to entrust more on forensic science for solving some of the most puzzling crime or civil procedures nowadays. Invention of new technologies, methodologies have bent more dependency on forensic in bringing justice. Forensic science, also known as criminalistics is the application of science to criminal and civil laws, during criminal investigation, as governed by the legal standards of admissible evidence and criminal procedure. Forensic science is a combination of two different Latin words: **forensis** and **science**. The word-**forensis** relates to a discussion or examination performed in public. Trials in the ancient world were typically held in public and carry a strong judicial connotation. Taken together, then forensic science can be seen as the use of the scientific methods and processes in crime solving. Of the varied disciplines of forensics, forensic geology has proved quite handy in dealing some of the extreme criminal cases.

Forensic geology can be defined as the use of geologic principles and techniques to establish facts or provide evidences used in a court of law. A broader working definition includes the use of the same principles and techniques to establish facts or sequences of events regardless of whether they are used in court. Thus, the gathering and interpretation of geologic data for intelligence, espionage, and national security purposes can fall under the second definition of forensic geology. In brief it can be described as the study of evidence relating to minerals, oil, petroleum, and other materials found in the Earth, used to answer questions raised by the legal system.

Many authors, Murray and Tedrow (1975, 1991), Crelling (1998),

Croft and Pye (2004) have well documented the significance of forensic geology through books, seminars and publications. The INTERPOL Soil Science Symposium in Lyons, France in 2001 became a remarkable renaissance in forensic geology and pedology.

Back dated to the mid-19th century in 1856, a Berlin based geologist Prof. Christian Gottfried Ehenberg (1795-1896) helped the local police where the silver metals of Prussian railways have been stolen by replacing silver with sand. He analysed sand samples with his microscope that had been collected from the different stations the train had passed. He was able to identify the station from where the sand must have originated. Forensic geology is believed to begin with Sherlock Holmes writer, Sir Arthur

Conan Doyle. The character portrayed by Sherlock Holmes claimed to be able to identify where an individual had been by various methods, including his having memorized the exposed geology of London to such a degree that detecting certain clays on a person's shoe would give away a locale. In 1891, Hans Gross used microscopic analysis of soils and other materials from a suspect's shoes to link him to the crime scene. Georg Popp of Frankfurt, Germany was the first to use soil analysis for linking suspects to a crime scene during the early 1900's.

During the second half of World War II, the Japanese military developed a plan to attack the United States with unmanned balloons carrying explosive and incendiary bombs. The balloons

were designed to be self-regulating, releasing sandbags in order to gain elevation during cold nights and releasing hydrogen to loose elevation during warm days. It is believed that 9000 balloons were launched, of which an estimated 1000 reached North America. By comparing the sand to geologic maps and reports that had been published before the war, geologists suggested two possible launching sites along the northern coast of Japan. In reality, balloons were being launched from three sites. One of them was a site identified by the geologists.

A notable example of forensic geology occurred shortly after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. American geologists who had worked in Afghanistan were able to identify rocks in the background of a videotaped message from the terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden, and therefore the region of the country in which the message was taped.

Of the varied applications of forensic geology; forensic geophysics, geomorphology, remote sensing, geographic information system, mineralogy, etc. have elusive importance. These methods determine a material on a suspect linked to crime or not. Sometimes these methods help in demarcating a probable location from an unknown area to target the criminals or spot the crime scene materials.

One can become too vigilant towards the increasing criminal cases around the world. Forensic geology needs to be understood by the common public so that its applicability to solve crime puzzles can be brought to public domain. It will help in bringing justice in a much more effective way.

### (A true story)



By- Rabin Prasad Kalita

What else children need more than being able to learn the wisdom of life by staying under the shade of his father? I think there is no better life lesson for a child than watch his dad coming out of a tough state of affairs.

My dad succeeded over his poignant life because he always stuck to the positivity. He didn't let his awful physical condition to run by the mental stress because he wanted to live. It chanced me to learn some integral life lessons with lots of ups and downs.

He taught me to develop affirmative vibes that had worked out like an antibody to drive away from the negativity. That helped me to search for a good reason to smile. Here's a true story of mine which I would like to put forward as to how I came out of my mental commotion because of the positive state of mind I inculcated. I had undergone a lot of difficulties while my father was almost confined to his room due to his chronic kidney disease. My life got paused all of a sudden. I nearly lost hope of his survival after a tiresome marathon treatment. As he had a few respirations remained

## "The shade of my dad"

*"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." — Winston Churchill*

with him, hence the doctor had advised me to bring him home.

In those days, if the disease got tangled, then it was near to the impossible to save the person except those who were rich enough to afford higher medical fees. In my case, I could only plea to God for my dad's continued existence.

From day one at home, I was nursing him not as a dying guest rather treating him as my thriving dad. With my untiring attention, I could rob his mental desperation. "Everything will be an alright dad, just have faith was the only assurance to him". I assured him with a smirk on my face all the time. Being my elder brother was away from home, I had to be along with him 24/7. I was sticking with him like a button on a shirt so that he doesn't get even a small space to weave his sheet of pain. Kept no stone unturned towards his tending. My involvement in his service made me skip two academic years consecutively. I believed one day God will definitely hear my scream. I felt he had something better in its mind to shower on me any day. As I was listening to my father for all the years, who used to say "stay positive, relax, and just go with the flow, at the end all the dots will connect each other".

Dad never missed reciting the magnificence of Krishna Geeta at every evening. I sat beside and chanted along with him. I kept on listening to the glory of Lord Krishna. I could learn and discover

that the precious gifts of happiness are within me for free, the only thing I shall have to explore my inner self for a wise service.

He explained the critical myths of Geeta in a very simple way to make me understand its essence with many examples. He always advocated me to be optimistic in any circumstances and defined me in a rational way about what is success. He said, success is not what one possesses with a lot of wealth or tangibles, but success is that living happily with positive vibes.

When I grew up I could understand its inner meaning and its use in real life. One who thinks positive he will not be shackled with the odd while climbing the stairs of success.

Dad knew about our financial status at that crucial point of time. We were almost penniless and also left no quarter to borrow. Staying alive was a big challenge in front of us and rest all were secondary issues. So I kept my cool during this transition period and thought to set up a small business to run the home somehow. Dad advised me to contact a sawmill owner who he knew personally. Accordingly, I communicated the gentleman with a personal letter from dad. The mill owner was requested for a mutual agreement and to help us to sell firewood at our place.

As we had no money to invest, the condition was to sell and pay the dues to the owner before the delivery of his next trip of firewood. I did it happily from our home and somehow I could mitigate our needs.

Simultaneously, I was trying to pay back our swelling loans one by one. Gradually dad retrieved some hope and strength from his broken health though he had to fight hard. Dad was dejected being lying in bed for a long time. Therefore he had shown some interest to keep himself busy in some creative works to set aside his boredom.

Dad was a skilled artisan. He made a lot of beautiful handicrafts out of wastages since he was pretty young. People forgot to shift their eyes looking at his spellbound arts and crafts. He gave his hundred percent whatever he did. It won't be an exaggeration to say that he had mastery over many arts.

Hence, he wished to have some materials if I could provide. I too thought it's not a bad idea by which he could be happy. I was contented to fetch him those as per his requirement.

Seeing him felt relaxed while focussing on his favourite work; made me happy. By then, he had held his breath not only a couple of months but also for five long years. Rather he presided over us as head of our family from his six and a half by five square feet bed. What could have been happier than this for us! He was an undaunted fighter and also a source of inspiration. Therefore, the essence of positivity teaches me to be hopeful and encouraged me to find out an answer in a much complex phase of life. Hence, I gained more than I lost.



# Governor Dr. Najma heptulla and maharani haobam anamika launch mk. Binodini devi's "the princess and the political agent"



IT News  
Imphal, July 21:

Governor of Manipur Dr. Najma Heptulla, was presented with a copy of MK Binodini Devi's "The Princess and the Political Agent" by translator L. Somi Roy at the Raj Bhavan today. The occasion was particularly significant as the historic building was constructed by Col. Henry St. P. Maxwell, the eponymous Political Agent of the historical novel, as the British Residency. He and his consort Princess Sanatombi, the daughter of Maharaja Surachandra - and the heroine of the Sahitya Akademi winning "Boro Saheb Ongbi Sanatombi" the original Manipuri novel - were the first residents of what is today the Raj Bhavan of Manipur. Maharani Haobam Anamika of Manipur also attended with Crown Prince

Maharaj Kumar Jayendrajit and Maharaj Kumar Tamphasana. Maharani Haobam Anamika and L. Somi Roy also made a family prayer offering of the book to Ibudhou Pakhangba at His shrine in Kangla Fort. The prayer was led by Pena balladeer Mayanglambam Marjing who offered the Pakhangba Sethaba in the presence of the Maharani and retinue. The traditional ritual prayer at Kangla Fort was significant as Ibudhou Pakhangba is the founder of the ruling Ningthouja Dynasty of Manipur. His descendants include the current titular king of Manipur and Rajya Sabha member-elect Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba; Princess Sanatombi, the eponymous heroine of "The Princess and the Political Agent" who herself was born and grew up in Kangla Fort; and her niece, the book's author,

Maharaj Kumari Binodini Devi, the daughter of Maharaja Churachand of Manipur. Also present at the ritual prayer at the Ibudhou Pakhangba Temple were Maharaj Kumar Jayendrajit and Maharaj Kumar Tamphasana, as well as Thoidingjam Lakshmi Priya Devi, granddaughter of Maharaja Churachand; Mayanglambam Marjing, a balladeer; Pundit Chhanam Hemchandra, archivist and scholar, and Wangam Somorjit, historian - all of whom assisted in the novel's translation by L. Somi Roy. "The Princess and the Political Agent" is published by Penguin Random House India and is the first literary work from Northeast India to be included in its distinguished Modern Classics series. It is available on Amazon India in paperback and as a Kindle e-book.

## Sero-prevalence study conducted by National Center for Disease Control, MoHFW, in Delhi, June 2020

PIB  
New Delhi, July 21:

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [MoHFW] commissioned a sero-surveillance study in Delhi. This study has been done by the National Center for Disease Control [NCDC] in collaboration with Govt of National Capital Territory of Delhi, following a rigorous multi-stage sampling study design. Study was conducted from 27th of June 2020 to 10th July 2020. For all the 11 districts of Delhi, survey teams were formed. Blood samples were collected from selected individuals after taking written informed

consent and then their sera were tested for IgG antibodies and infection using COVID KAVACH ELISA approved by Indian Council for Medical Research [ICMR]. It is one of the largest sero-prevalence studies conducted in the country using the ELISA testing. 21,387 samples were collected as per lab standards and were tested. The tests done help in identification of presence of antibodies in the general population. These tests performed is not a diagnostic test but only provides information about past infection due to SARS-CoV-2 in individuals who test positive.

Antibody testing repeatedly done over time i.e. sero-surveillance, generates important evidence for assessing the spread of the pandemic from time to time. The results of the sero-prevalence study show that on an average, across Delhi, the prevalence of IgG antibodies is 23.48 %. The study also indicates that a large number of infected persons remain asymptomatic. This implies the following: 1. Nearly six months into the epidemic, only 23.48% of the people are affected in Delhi, which has several pockets of dense population. This can be attributed to the proactive efforts taken by the

Government to prevent the spread of infection including prompt lockdown, effective containment and surveillance measures, including contact tracing and tracking, as well as citizen's compliance to COVID Behaviours. 2. However, a significant proportion of the population is still vulnerable. Therefore, the containment measures need to continue with the same rigour. Non-pharmaceutical interventions such as physical distancing, use of face mask/cover, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and avoidance of crowded places etc., must be followed strictly.

## PM Narendra Modi says, country moving towards integrated, tech and data-driven healthcare system

Agency  
New Delhi, July 21:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, India is moving forward with the vision of a self-sufficient nation. He stressed that the country is moving towards development of an integrated, tech and data driven healthcare system which is affordable and hassle-free. Interacting with IBM CEO Arvind Krishna yesterday, Mr Modi said, this is a great time to invest in India. He said, Government is committed to

ensuring that the technological shift towards work from home is smooth. Talking about the impact of COVID on business culture, the Prime Minister said that work from home is being adopted in a big way and the government is constantly working towards providing infrastructure, connectivity and regulatory environment to ensure that this technological shift is smooth. He also discussed the technologies and challenges involved in the

recent decision of IBM to make 75 per cent of its employees to work from home. The Prime Minister appreciated the role played by IBM, in association with CBSE, towards the launch of Artificial Intelligence curriculum in 200 schools in India. He said that the government is working towards introducing students to concepts such as AI, machine learning etc at an early stage, to further the tech temperament in the

country. IBM CEO expressed confidence in the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Mr Krishna briefed the Prime Minister about the huge investment plans of IBM in India. AIR correspondent reports, IBM has a huge presence in the country, with over one lakh people working across 20 cities in the company. Other areas of discussion included the issues of data security, cyber attacks, concerns around privacy, and health benefits of Yoga.

## HRD Minister to launch Manodarpan initiative to provide psychosocial support to students

Agency  
New Delhi, July 21:

Union Human Resource Development Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal will launch the Manodarpan initiative of the HRD Ministry today. The initiative under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, aims to provide psychosocial support to

students for their mental health and well-being. Minister of State for HRD, Secretaries of the Department of Higher Education and the School Education and Literacy, and senior officials of the ministry will also be present on the occasion. Through a video tweet, Mr. Pokhriyal informed that

during the COVID pandemic, the HRD Ministry felt the need to focus on continuing education on the academic front and the mental well-being of the students. He further informed that the Ministry has, therefore, taken up an initiative, named, "MANODARPAN" covering a wide range of activities to provide Psychosocial

Support to students for their Mental Health & Well-being during the COVID outbreak and beyond. The HRD Ministry also stated that the "Manodarpan" initiative has been included in the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, as a part of strengthening human capital and increasing productivity.

## China shoots itself in the foot in the Himalayas

By Bertil Lintner  
Courtesy : Asia Times

So when the official mouthpiece Global Times wrote in a June 17 commentary that India would "pay a heavy price" and "face military pressure on two or even three fronts" if it retaliated for China's killing of at least 20 Indian soldiers with rocks and spiked clubs in a Western Himalayan border altercation, the newspaper was speaking Beijing's mind. The nationalistic newspaper also wrote somewhat cryptically that "Pakistan is a reliable strategic partner of China and Nepal also has close ties with China, and both of them are key partners under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative", an insinuation that certain of India's neighbors could be drawn into a conflict against it if tensions escalate. Another Shanghai-based scholar quoted by Global Times reportedly said that

India should not "believe that worsening China-US ties would provide a chance for India to challenge China" while suggesting any "unwise movements" could "bring about serious consequences" for India. When the border stand-off erupted earlier this month, the Global Times channeled Beijing's threat of armed conflict on June 7 by noting China had "organized a large-scale maneuver operation featuring thousands of paratroops plus armored vehicles [and] huge batches of supplies." That would seem to be overkill if the issue was truly over India's building of a new road on its side of the Line of Actual Control in the disputed frontier region. But the unofficial message was clear: Beijing is building alliances with its neighbors to counter what it perceives as a new India-US alliance that is part and parcel of a wider US strategy to encircle and

contain an increasingly assertive and powerful China. Yet if Beijing's muscle-flexing in the Himalayas is aimed at strengthening its position in the region at the expense of adversaries, its increasingly aggressive policies in recent months would appear to be making more foes than friends, particularly among those who see China's regional ambitions as a threat to their national interests. That could make the encirclement Beijing supposedly dreads a self-fulfilling prophecy. Many nations have rising reasons to fear. In April, a Chinese vessel sank a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea which prompted the Philippines, an old US ally that under the current president Rodrigo Duterte had moved closer to China, to vocally side with Vietnam. That was not surprising considering a Philippine fishing boat was in June last year rammed by a Chinese vessel in the nearby

Reed Bank area. China has also managed to antagonize a range of other countries in the region. On June 4, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsud said at a virtual news conference that China's territorial claims in the South China Sea "affect Indonesia's exclusive economic zone." On May 26, Jakarta had declared that China's so-called "nine-dash line" outlining its wide-reaching claims in the South China Sea lacks a basis in international law. Jakarta cited a 2016 ruling by Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague which had ruled in favor of the Philippines in a complaint against China's encroachments into the South China Sea, which China rejected as baseless. In May this year, a Chinese survey ship was involved in a month-long standoff with a Malaysian oil exploration vessel in the South China Sea. The ship, Haiyang Dizhi 8, eventually left the area

escorted by at least two Chinese naval vessels while Malaysia's West Capella also withdrew after "completing its planned work." Judging from postings on social media statements from civil society organizations and anecdotal evidence provided by individual local as well as international analysts, anti-Chinese sentiment is also on the rise in Myanmar. There, China wants to push ahead with a controversial hydroelectric dam project at Myittha in the far north of the country which was suspended by then-president Thein Sein in September 2011. When Chinese president Xi Jinping visited Myanmar in January this year, civil society organizations, mostly based in northern Kachin state where the projected dam site is located, issued an open letter to Xi stating that they "would never agree to restarting the Myittha project." Postings on Myanmar social media also express anger over

the fact that Xi did not say a word about the Covid-19 crisis during his visit. The outbreak of the disease in the city of Wuhan was then well-known by China's leaders but the extent of it was still kept secret for the outside world. Chinese doctors who had reported on Chinese social media platforms were even reprimanded for "spreading rumours." And many people in Myanmar appear to have mixed feelings about China's grand plans to establish an "economic corridor" through their country down to a partly Chinese-financed deep seaport at Kyaukpadaung on the coast of Myanmar which will provide China with direct access to the Indian Ocean. China's apparent rising disregard for what the world thinks as well as agreements it has signed with other countries was felt across the region when Beijing earlier this year announced plans for a new security law for Hong Kong.

Residents in the former British colony resented the move and demonstrated against it while Britain considered such interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs as a breach of the Sino-British declaration of 1984 under which London agreed to hand over the territory to China in 1997. The declaration was registered with the UN and Britain considers it a binding international treaty. Beijing, however, now argues that as soon as the handover was complete, it became null and void. That view was expressed earlier in June 2017 by a Chinese foreign ministry statement saying that the agreement was "a historical document that no longer has any practical significance." Until now Australia has been very reluctant to criticize China, which buys huge quantities of minerals, ores, grain and other natural resources from Australian producers.

(Contd. on Page 4)

# “Indigo” to lay off 10 per cent of its employees



By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, July 21:

After national carrier Air India refused to absorb 174 trainee cabin crew and withdraw resignations of 50 pilots, the Indian aviation industry has received another blow with “Indigo”, India’s largest airline by market-share, has decided to lay off 10 per cent of its workforce to offset the decline in revenues post the COVID-19 pandemic. Air India which had hired 174 trainee cabin crew on contractual basis, in November 2019 has refused to confirm their services and also has refused to reinstate 50 pilots who has resigned to join private airlines, but came back since they were not hired by their prospective employers due to pandemic. These decisions were taken in a meeting of AI and Civil Aviation Ministry officials held on 8 July, 2020. IndiGo Airlines CEO Ronojoy Dutta on Monday said in a statement “It is clear that we will need to bid a painful adieu to 10 per cent of our workforce and it is for the first time in the history of “Indigo” that we have undertaken such a painful measure. This is indeed a very unfortunate turn of events from the optimistic growth trajectory we had carved out for ourselves just

six months ago. But this pandemic has forced us to re-evaluate our best laid plans” “although the airline had cut pays across its personnel, these steps were not enough to offset the decline in revenues. It is impossible for our company to fly through this economic storm without making some sacrifices, in order to sustain our business operations,” Dutta said. “Indigo is flying only a small percentage of its full fleet of 250 airplanes. The fixed costs are as high as 40 per cent for airlines and that “Indigo” was spending Rs 40 crore a day during the lockdown. That number has come down. We are trying to whittle that down further by flying more, Dutta said. “Indigo” has over 23,000 employees. For those impacted by the layoff, the airline has announced a financial package, under which impacted employees will be paid notice pay in lieu of serving notice applicable to them. This will be calculated on the gross salary. In addition to notice pay, impacted employees will be paid a severance pay which will be calculated as one month of Cost to Company (CTC) for every completed year of service, subject to a maximum of 12 months. At a minimum, an impacted employee will receive at least 3-months’

gross salary, including both the above payments,” the airline said. The impacted employees will also be paid bonus and the performance linked incentive, when the company decides to make this pay-out to the rest of the employees during the financial year. While crew members will also get a longevity bonus, all the laid off staff will be able to cash their leave and will be given gratuity, the airline said. Apart from these measures, the airline said it will help the impacted employees through an ‘outplacement allowance’, which will help them to pursue career options. These employees will also get a one-way ticket back home. Domestic flights were suspended in March, coinciding with the national lockdown to limit the spread of coronavirus. The government later resumed domestic flights on 25 May, asking carriers to limit their operations to one-third of this schedule. Though this limit was raised to 45 per cent, airlines continue to operate at about 30 per cent. Data from DGCA showed that traffic plummeted by 83.5 per cent in June, year-on-year. Apart from “Indigo”, all its peers, including “Vistara”, “SpiceJet” and “GoAir” have been forced to take similar steps to reduce costs.

Contd. from Page 3

# China shoots itself in the foot in the Himalayas

But critical voices are rising at the highest levels, with foreign minister Marise Payne saying in mid-June that it was “troubling that some countries are using the (Covid-19) pandemic to undermine liberal democracy to promote their own more authoritarian models.” She hit out against China in particular for spreading “disinformation about the pandemic” and “the risk of racist attacks against” Chinese tourists and students in Australia. Payne also highlighted an announcement by Twitter that it would remove 23,000 China-linked accounts for “spreading geopolitical narratives favorable to the [Chinese] Communist Party.” It is not yet clear whether Australia will participate in India’s Malabar naval exercises with the US and Japan. Barry O’Farrell, the Australian high commissioner in New Delhi, was quoted this month in The Hindu newspaper as saying that “we would be delighted to participate in Malabar” but that it may “get in the way of the underappreciated growth

and significance of defense ties between Australia and India.” He added that such bilateral defense cooperation has “quadrupled in the last six years.” That cooperation includes maneuvers and intelligence-sharing in the Indian Ocean and a new agreement signed in June which will give Indian warships access to Australian naval facilities for logistical purposes. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison recently called India “a trusted friend of Australia” while India’s The Economic Times newspaper commented on June 5 that “the widening of the Indo-Australian strategic partnership is also significant amid the standoff at the Line of Actual Control between India and China and it could send a message to Beijing.” The US sent an even stronger message to China’s leaders when, in the first week of June, the guided-missile destroyer Russell transited the Taiwan Strait. It was the second such trip since May and US Pacific Fleet spokesperson Rachel

Maul said that it “demonstrates the US commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The US Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows.” The transit was no doubt in response to China’s saber-rattling against Taiwan and shows that the Covid-19 crisis, which has hit the US especially hard, does not mean that Washington has forgotten its defense obligations in the Asia-Pacific. China’s policies in that theatre have helped to forge a new informal alliance between Taiwan and Japan. Indeed, Tokyo called Taiwan “an extremely important partner” in this year’s annual foreign policy report. On May 20, Japan’s government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said Tokyo is “eager to deepen its ties with Taiwan as its president, Tsai Ing-wen, begins her second term in office.” From the Himalayan mountains to the South China Sea, China’s recent actions are redounding on Beijing in unforeseen ways and maybe

# PMGKY giving vital Social and food security to the poor

PIB  
Imphal, July 21:

When the first lockdown was announced as a measure to check the rapid spread of Covid-19 pandemic in the country, the Central government made it clear that it intends to protect crores of poor people from the adverse impact of the lockdown due to pandemic. It announced a financial assistance scheme to the tune of Rs 34,800 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKY) using the digital payment infrastructure. One of the most important part of the package is the Ann Yojana under which 80 crore poor people will get 5 kg wheat or rice and 1 kg of preferred pulses for free every month starting April for the next three months. This was further increased recently till November in an address to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In India more than 70% of the total farmers are small and marginal farmers. They are an important part of the Indian economy, not only because

of huge numbers but also because of the contribution they make to national economy. In a small state like Manipur most of the farmers are small and marginal farmers. One part of the PMGKY package is PM KISAN which is a truly an empowering project designed for ensuring dignified life for small scale farmers and is meant to address farmer’s issues like migration and improvement of crop intensity. Under the scheme, Rs 6,000 will be given per year to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares. The amount is given in three installments of Rs. 2000 each. Rs 16,394 crore has been front loaded towards payment of the first instalment of PM-KISAN to 8.19 crore beneficiaries. The impact of these measures are evident in the lives of the poor families of Manipur. For instance, Smt. Aning from Duithanluang Ward No-5, Tamenglong district Manipur got LPG for free under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. This has been a great help to her

during the hardship of the pandemic lockdown. She is grateful to the Central Government and State Government for this generous initiative. Speaking to us, another beneficiary Smt. Lv. Phaldon of Leigangching village from Chandel district expressed her gratitude to the Central Govt and State Govt for distribution of 5 Kgs of rice to each of her family members totalling tom 15 kgs for her three member family and 3 Kg of Dal free under PMGKY during this lockdown period. During this pandemic she said her family has limited source of income. But with this scheme her family’s hardship has been lessened to a certain amount. Another beneficiary has a similar tale to tell about how the Ann Yojana has benefited her family. Smt. Lhingboi from Teising, Churachandpur District expresses her gratitude and thanks the Government for providing free ration of 20Kgs of rice for her 4 member family under PMGKY during this COVID19 lockdown period. Smt. Sofina Dilibung of New

Chayang village from Chandel district expresses her gratitude to the Central Govt and State Govt for free distribution of 15 Kgs of rice to each for her family members, a bottle of edible oil and 3 Kg of Dal under PMGKY. Kihang Newme a marginal farmer owning a small piece of paddy farm from Katang Beukam village, Tamenglong district, Manipur has received the farming subsidy of Rs.2000/- under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Yojana. He is happy and grateful to the Central Government and State Government’s initiative during Lockdown period. Likewise Smt. Alule Newme from Katang Beukam village, Tamenglong district, Manipur is also a marginal farmer who had received the farming subsidy of Rs.2000/- under PMKY. She would like to thank the government for the welfare scheme of the government which had helped her at this juncture of the pandemic. All these numerous narratives from the field gives us the confidence that the poor are being helped and that we shall overcome this challenge by being united and focused.

## SPORTS

# Geeta Phogat expresses desire to make comeback and compete at Olympics

Veteran wrestler shared her views on Mudit Dani’s ‘In The SportLight’ virtual chat; PV Sindhu to be the latter’s next guest

IT News  
Mumbai, July 21:

Veteran Indian wrestler Geeta Phogat expressed her desire to make a comeback and represent the country at the 2021 Olympic Games during paddler Mudit Dani’s online chat show ‘In The Sportlight’. The Dungal girl said the postponement of the mega event came as a blessing in disguise for her as she now has more time to prepare for the Tokyo Games. “Since the Olympics has been postponed, I’m hoping to compete in it. This one year will give me sufficient time to prepare for the trials and the qualification events,” said Geeta, who became the first Indian woman wrestler to win gold at Commonwealth Games in 2010.

“I have gained some weight during pregnancy, so my priority would be to get fit. And after that, whatever qualifying tournament is there, I will participate and try to book a place for the Olympics,” she added. The next episode of lockdown online live Instagram chat series ‘In The Sportlight’, which was started by the 21-year-old fast-rising Indian paddler Dani with the sole purpose of delivering inspiration to other young athletes and fans, will see badminton star PV Sindhu while champion athletes like Abhinav Bindra, Leander Paes, Sathiyan Gnanasekaran and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju have already been part of the show. The World Championships bronze medallist Geeta

married fellow Indian wrestler Pawan Kumar Saroha in 2016 and the couple was blessed with a baby boy Arjun in December last year. Geeta said it was difficult to work out initially after pregnancy but she’s getting the momentum gradually. “I started fitness training sometime back but the doctor advised me to wait as I have to feed my kid. We wrestlers are not used to doing light workouts. But since the last couple of months, I have started getting into the groove. Training is difficult without an opponent so I’m doing whatever exercises are possible at home,” the wrestler said. Away from mat since pregnancy, the 31-year-old Geeta is aware that she has to work hard for the

comeback due to healthy competition in the Indian camp. However, she’s happy with the progress Indian wrestling has made in the last few years. “Lot of things have changed performance-wise for India in the last four to five years. Four of our wrestlers including Vinesh (Phogat) have qualified for the upcoming World Championships. This indicates how our wrestlers are prepared for the Olympics. Winning medals at the World Championship is very challenging and if we can repeat the feat as we did in 2019 then we will be strong contenders for the medal at Olympics,” concluded Geeta, who was the first woman wrestler to qualify for the Olympics in 2012 held in London.

# With ICC deferring T20 World Cup to 2021, IPL gets a window

Agency  
Imphal, July 21:

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday postponed the 2020 T20 World Cup that was scheduled to be held in Australia in October-November. The postponement paves the way for the BCCI to organise this year’s Indian Premier League (IPL) during

those months, likely in the United Arab Emirates. It is learnt that the Indian board will now approach Union Home Minister Amit Shah for approval. As per the ICC release, “disruption caused by COVID-19” forced the T20 World Cup postponement. According to a BCCI functionary, following the postponement, the Indian board will first write to the

Home Ministry, seeking approval to hold the IPL in India. As per protocol, the BCCI has to write to the Sports Ministry, the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Home Ministry. But at the moment, the Home Ministry is taking all Covid-related decisions in consultation with the Health Ministry. However, because of the coronavirus spread in

the country, the BCCI is not hopeful of getting the go-ahead to organise the tournament in India. As the board functionary said, having it in the UAE “shouldn’t be a problem”, for the curve has flattened considerably in the Emirates. He informed that BCCI office-bearers will seek an audience with the Home Minister sometime next week.