

Labour Minister's brother-in-law sanctions over Rs. 13 Crore for Skill Development Training Programme, when he was the Chairman of BOCWWB to his own NGO

IT Exclusive
Imphal, July 25:

At what could be termed as misused of government office, the then chairperson of the Manipur Building and Other Construction Worker's Welfare Board (MBOCWBB), Sanglakpam Presheojit Sharma had sanctioned an amount of Rs. 13,16,800/- for taking up a skill development training programme on one NGO called Rural Social Service Society, which he works as the Chief functionary. Rural Social Service Society is an NGO having its office at Khongman Zone -II, Imphal East District,

Manipur. According to government records, S Presheojit is the Chief Functionary as well as the Secretary of the NGO. One S. Sarat Singh is the Chairman of the NGO.

Whether a chairperson appointed by the government can sanction money to an NGO, which he is working as a Chief Functionary is void or not is a matter yet to be decided by legal experts, but ethically it amounts to gross misused of the office meant for taking up of welfare programme for people of the state.

No person have raised the issue even after knowing it as

the then Chairperson happened to be the brother-in-law of Labour Minister Th. Radheshyam. Sanglakpam Presheojit Sharma, the brother-in-law of Labour Minister Th. Radheshyam was appointed as the Chairperson of the MBOCWBB, State Labour department May 24, 2017.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh promises to root out corruption and misutilisation of public money turns as a mere joke to the common people as rampant misused of power in government office by politically appointed persons at various statutory body particularly in the MBOCWBB of the State

No annual report, no audited statement made to public for utilization of over Rs. 33 crores sanctioned to 12 NGOs in 2017-18 for taking up skill development programme under Manipur Building and Other Construction Worker's Welfare Board (MBOCWBB) of the state Labour Department Manipur

Labour department has been let free and never check.

Imphal Times further found that during the tenure of the brother-in-law of Labour Minister Th. Radheshyam, as the Chairperson of the MBOCWBB sanctioned a total of Rs. 33,93,12,090/- to 12 NGOs including the one he headed in 2017-18 for imparting skill Development

Training Programme. As per guidelines the training programme are supposed to be imparted to registered labourers and their family. Of the 12 NGOs, source said that amount sanctioned to 5 more NGOs were - Rs. 7,84,00,000/- to Virgo Enterprises, Rs. 3,10,00,000/- to BR CUBE Enterprises, Rs. 24,63,44,900/- to Thokchom

Enterprises, Rs. 1,88,40,000/- to Khongman Wool Knitting Embroidery and Sericulture Development Association and Rs. 1,12,80,000/- to Lingel Social Service Society. The source added that these five NGOs that the Chairperson Presheojit sanctioned the huge amount for Skill Development Works are either directly or indirectly

related to him as one among the functionaries of the said NGOs are his relatives. On further investigation by the Imphal Times, the MBOCWBB officials as well as those in the Labour department refused to provide beneficiaries of the Skill Development programme taken up by the 12 NGOs.

RIMS Students lauds Director A Santa for bringing drastic changes in the institution

IT News
Imphal, July 25:

Perhaps for the first time in over a decade students studying at Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) finally appreciated the Director of RIMS Dr. A. Santa.

In a press handout, the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences Students' Union (RIMSSU) Imphal extended its gratitude to the Director RIMS, Dr. A. Santa Singh for bringing a change for the students of RIMS, Imphal.

The statement signed by Rohit Shilal, President RIMSSU said that ranking of RIMS, Imphal at 28th and 38th position among the Medical Colleges/Institute in India by the National Institutional Ranking Framework in the year 2019 and 2020 are notable achievement under the director's administration. The statement further added that after Dr. Santa

become the director of RIMS lecture hall at RIMS which used to be flooded during monsoon season has been renovated and students are relieve with the installation for various street lamps inside the campus.

"All dilapidated street lights near boys' hostel and girls' hostel have been rectified and lighted", the statement by RIMSSU said.

It further said that Dr. A. Santa, Director RIMS have

also solved the long awaited reform in the mess system by taking quick administrative response. He repaired roads connecting hostels and the college. He solved the hostel water crisis that has adversely affected the institution. Renovation of the Hostel was also done under him. He also installed lights in the basketball court for the students.

The statement also stated that Director RIMS Imphal

also modernised and renovated the hospital building by procuring and installing the latest medical equipment viz MRI Machine, ICU Ventilator, BiPap Auto, 600 and 100 mA X-Ray machine, Echocardiography Machines, High End Ultrasound Machine, High End Anesthesia Workstation, Holter Machine, Manifold plant in ICU and Wards, Multiparameter Monitor, Brain Retractor system etc.

RIMS clarifies on contract employees issue

IT News
Imphal, July 25:

A statement from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) has clarified that the outsourcing of 404 contract employees through GeM has been directed by the Ministry of

Health & Family Welfare, Government of India and is not the decision of the Director, RIMS, Imphal. The Director, RIMS, Imphal in response to the said Ministry's directives requested the Ministry to reconsider the directive informing that those contract employees are

rendering service of more than 10 years of service. The statement further clarified that the Ministry vide letter dated 23rd July, 2020 that no request for outsourcing of manpower against contractual staff was received by the Ministry from RIMS, Imphal.

BJP observers left Imphal; had dinner with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh

IT News
Imphal, July 25:

The two BJP Central representatives who had visited the state of Manipur to access the crisis in among the BJP legislatures returned back today after taking opinions of almost all state BJP Functionaries, Legislatures and other Ministers of ally partners. The two BJP representatives arrived in the state on Thursday and stayed at Classic Grande for spend for two nights. During their stay the two representatives took opinions of the BJP Functionaries including the Ministers and the MLAs one after another. They were here in the state after four BJP Ministers Th. Bishwajit, Th. Radheshyam V. Hangkhalian and Nemcha Kigen went to New Delhi on a three day visits. The Ministers before their leaving had stated that

there was no issue among the BJP led government but rather they were visiting New Delhi to meet the concern ministers to apprise them for taking up developmental works and strengthen the BJP government in the state.

The state media however, were suspicious and most of them reported about a rebellion against Chief Minister N. Biren Singh by some BJP legislatures and their visit was speculated to lobby the central leadership for change of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. After the return of the 4 Ministers from new delhi they refused to talk to press and were reportedly on Home Quarantined and abstained from cabinet meeting convened on July 22 and also the foundation stone laying function of the water supply scheme for Manipur by the prime Minister of India day before

yesterday. BJP Central leaders sent National Vice President of BJP Baijaynt Pande and former Union Minister Manoj Sinha reportedly had collected all opinions of the BJP legislatures as well as the state BJP functionaries including the state Unit president S Tikendra and former president Th Chaoba. Interestingly, after taking opinions of all concerned the two central representatives had a dinner with chief Minister N. Biren Singh and discussed about the present political scenario of the state. However, at present what would be the decision of the central leadership in regards to the demand for change of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. The matter will be only decided by the central leaders after examining the report submitted by the two leaders.

India achieves remarkable feat of conducting more than four lakh COVID-19 tests in single day

Agency
New Delhi, July 25:

India achieved a remarkable feat today as more than four lakh samples were tested for coronavirus in a single day. Indian Council of Medical Research said that a record four lakh 20 thousand 898 samples were tested for corona virus within 24 hours. So far, laboratories have conducted one crore 58 lakh 49 thousand 68 tests in the country.

Starting from less than 100 tests per day, a multiple fold increase in a few months was

made possible by dedicated teams of research institutions, medical colleges, testing laboratories, Ministries, airlines and postal services. AIR correspondent reports, the government has adopted the test-track-treat strategy for early detection and containment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Central government has advised all States and Union Territories to keep up the strategy of aggressive testing, tracking and treatment to deal with coronavirus crisis. To

become self reliant in testing, government has promoted the indigenous manufacturers for developing equipments and materials required for Covid-19 testing.

In January this year, India had only one testing laboratory for COVID-19 at National Institute of Virology, Pune. Today, more than 13 hundred government and private laboratories chains are testing corona virus samples across the country. ICMR is continuously ramping up its testing capabilities by

approving new laboratories, RT-PCR kits, True Nat Test, CBNAT Test and rapid antigen test kits.

India is also producing millions of high quality, low cost testing swabs at a fraction of cost of the imported ones. However, in spite of these developments, access to testing still remains a huge challenge in a large country like India. Health Ministry and ICMR has asked the States and Union Territories to include additional testing methods to improve the availability of testing.

IT correspondent
Guwahati, July 25:

Journalists' Forum Assam, while expressing shock over the murder of another scribe in central India within a week, has urged the Madhya Pradesh government to punish the culprits under the law. The forum also reiterated its old demand for a special protection law to safeguard the working journalists across the country.

Local media reports reveal that journalist Sunil Tiwari (35), who worked for a Gwalior-based Hindi newspaper, was beaten,

stabbed and shot to death at MP's Niwari locality on 22 July 2020 when he was returning home in the evening hours. Sunil was attacked by a group of criminals and he succumbed to serious injuries on the way to a nearby hospital.

Sunil's family claimed that he was targeted for reporting over illogical activities of some influential persons. Few weeks back, he even expressed apprehensions in his facebook account and intimidated the police about his fear, but they showed little seriousness over his complaint citing that it was

his personal disputes with those individuals. Lately the police booked seven persons suspecting their role in the murder.

"We lost journalist Vikram Joshi (40) on 22 July after he was attacked by a group of goons in Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh). The goons shot at him in front of his two minor daughters. By now, nine suspects were arrested by the police," said JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria, adding that the robust Indian media fraternity urgently needs the special protection law for scribes.

★ Editorial

Bracing for the worst

In the growing list of casualties of Covid-19 among the frontline health workers in the state, a doctor posted at District Hospital, Senapati has reportedly been tested positive yesterday for the raging contagion that has brought the world to a standstill. As a precautionary measure, contact tracing of both primary and secondary contacts are actively taken up by the Rapid Response Team, Senapati as well as all primary contacts – both the hospital staff on duty and patients who attended Medicine OPD on the 20th and 21st of July are directed to report to the office of the District Surveillance Officer Senapati for immediate testing and the secondary contacts are advised to follow strict home Quarantine to contain the possible spread of Covid-19. While the unfortunate report is but another number in the continuously increasing total, the confusion over the possibility of community transmission in the state has been heightened with the media reports indicating a more than likely possibility while the state authority and experts have so far denied or rather refrained from confirming the same.

According to state officials, the spread of COVID-19 is divided into stages of no case, sporadic cases, clustering of cases and community transmission, the release said, "There is evidence of local clustering of cases at Jiribam police station. There is no community transmission." Meanwhile Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Wednesday announced 7 days total lockdown in the entire state starting Thursday afternoon which may be extended upto 14 days. The lockdown will come into force from 2 PM. Briefing the media, the Chief Minister said that the decision was taken by the state cabinet in an emergency meeting held on Thursday evening in view of the rising cases of COVID-19 particularly cases without travel history. What should the general public make of the two confusingly contrasting statements? Are we to feel reassured because the State Health Department official declared that there is no community transmission in Manipur, or take precautions and observe heightened procedures which will obviously hamper our already restricted lives even further? Notwithstanding the official stand on the prevailing situation, it has become imperative for everyone to have a clear understanding of what these forms or stages of transmissions mean and why they matter. The World Health Organisation (WHO) categorises the spread of a pathogen into stages as a way of indicating the level or severity of its permeation among the population. Stage 1 refers to imported cases where individuals pick up the virus from travelling to infected countries. Stage 2 is local transmission that occurs when infected persons can trace the persons they were infected by. Community transmission or stage 3, on the other hand happens when an individual with no travel history or no known contacts with confirmed cases thereby making the source of infection untraceable.

While there has been promising reports of various agencies and pharma companies already carrying out trials of vaccines for the present pandemic, there is no confirmed cure for the same, and while we can take solace from the assertion of the state health department's claim of absence of community transmission in Manipur, it would be prudent to assume the worst and follow more stringent preventive measures accordingly. It doesn't hurt to be a little bit more cautious, especially during this present time when nothing is for sure and mistakes can happen even with experts.

Poetry

To my goddess of love

May be meeting you was by chance
But seeing you was heavenly planned
Meek and shy like a messenger pigeon
But fly as high as a wild eagles
Beyond a thousand miles across
Over the sky you come and go
Like a mystic evening fancy clouds
You disappeared too soon today
But when another day comes
You'll reappeared till then I just hope
More memories awaits to be created
Remember! Unexplored places seemingly
Even more enchanting to explore one day.

No more tears of sorrows in your eyes
It'll be seen and cherished in my heart
If you can't hold back I'll wipe dry for you
But only if you allowed me.

By: Shongminthang Haokip

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Peeping through my yesteryears!



By - Rabin Prasad Kalita

Our eventful life from dawn to dusk might have separated us from clutching relationships with others. Life becomes too tough and chaotic running after achieving one's own goal. The very own "our" has already been transformed into the selfish "I", which has relatively made our pretty solidarity into dotted and dwarf.

What a wonderful my tiny village was! I become so pensive, remembering those sweet childhood days left behind. One cannot weigh the amount of cohesiveness amongst villagers.

The complete village looked enchanting when there was a celebration. Let that be a mere function or marriage ceremony, everyone came and extended their helping hands voluntarily and took care of each department willfully from the beginning to the end of the ritual. They became one on that particular day forgetting their difference if there was any misinterpretation earlier.

Each one of them shouldered one's assigned responsibility as if the ceremony was their own and made the ceremony into a grand success. This selfless collective works had made a perfect bonding of brotherhood solidarity amongst each other. I pray, those innocent hearts would still exist, but alas, they are long gone!

My innocent grooming to be perfect in all aspects gave me the confidence to look after the house with no fear when grew up. I did cheerfully which was not considered child labour then. I got up a little early along with other young elders of the family who went for plowing to the paddy field. Handing over the breakfast to the field workers who were still plowing was one of my

regular tasks before I proceeded for school. Collecting green grass and hays for cattle was also a part of my daily routine.

I enjoyed fishing after coming back from school. Fishes were abundant and found where there was a pool of water. Hardly there was someone who bought fishes; otherwise, it was exchanged in kinds, such as rice, grain, or vegetables.

I recall, at the time of harvesting, all the farmers of the village came forward and joined their collective hands while sowing and harvesting crops for each one of the inhabitants as per the turn.

Mostly our turn came in the middle of the first half of all the farmers in the village. We were exuberant by seeing them singing and cutting jokes with each other with the rhythm of reaping crops. The reapers were refreshed with the varieties of rice made redolent eatables like Pan Cake, banana leaf roll; kettle lid rice cake, etc. so that they don't feel hungry. When reaping was over, they brought all harvested crops in the same spirit and stacked them like a hill in our home.

At the end of the day, a wonderful palatable dinner was arranged for all of them. I was busy engaging all other friends of my age of the village pocket to help us host. All were helping each other and had the first with rapture to mark the evening into success. We couldn't express in words how happy we all were. This organized harvesting was continued until the last one of the farmer's crop collection was over.

Such a lucid bond garnished with fun and frolic amongst the villagers can never be found anywhere else. I saw real strength and unity amongst them.

Here is an uncomfortable elfin story I would like to share. In those days there had been no good communication like today has, because of which we faced a lot of tongue-tied situations.

One day my brother-in-law suddenly arrived at our home. Welcoming guests with a cup of tea with snacks and betel-nut is an old tradition in our society. Daily used items like tea leaves, salt, sugar, milk, or any such obligatory items may not be available all the

time at home. The deficiency was mitigated by borrowing from neighbours amicably.

Something similar happened to my mom that day. She got puzzled thinking of how she appeases her son-in-law who came after a long gap. She discovered a couple of items were short in the kitchen. As I was in school, fetching those items immediately from the shop was not possible for her.

While she was immersed in thought, some girls came through the backdoor to assist my mom. Thus the paucity was overcome in a snap. This was the true relationship we all had with our neighbours. If a guest from far-flung came all of a sudden at one's home, the news was broadcast in a minute around the village.

Erstwhile, the guest remained no more a stranger for the rest of the villagers. The villagers didn't hesitate to borrow anything from the nearby home if fell short of something. Even they were available at the host home for physical help until the reception was over. Exchanging cooked appetizing dishes during the lunch or dinner were common amongst neighbours. It was like one home but cooked in different places.

When Naamprasanga used to be in someone's house, then things were different, we all children would go crazy with happiness. The entire village became live with ecstasy on the heavy sound echoed from Nagara, Khol, or Taal (Cymbal) made the evening rhapsody. The devotional psalms orchestrated with those age-old percussions enticed us to unknown happiness. High pitched sound of cymbal made all of us thrilled and the whole things were converted to a festive evening for the children. We all children were waiting for the Prasad, the sacred food offered first to God.

My elder brother and I mostly studied in broad daylight because of the limited lantern at home to study at night. There was only one kerosene hand lamp in our entire house for which there was a tug of war on every evening with my brother. The winner got the opportunity to study smile fully under the lantern and the

looser had to read under the trembling light of the wick or glass bottle oil lamp. One of us had to forsake or wind up one's study a little early due to the insufficient light.

We recited sounding high syllable to syllable so that it goes to the ears of our parents. Else, an inquiry came from the other side, whether we were playing with the wick or chit-chatting each other. One can find the same up roaring tone reverberated all over the hamlet even if their parents were illiterate.

Most of the villagers slept before 8 o'clock. Some families were compelled to embrace their beds even in the early evening. Owing to the lack of kerosene to ignite the braided fiber of the wick to keep their homes bright at night, they were forced to go for bed a little early.

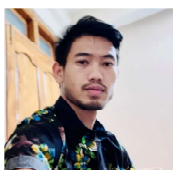
Herein my urban locality, the person who resides to my next door doesn't know me or even I don't try to connect him. Though I stay at a snoring distance from one another but yet, it seems far-off from physical contact. Nobody wants to know what's happening across the boundary wall of one's neighbor. But the untold truth is this; our entire perceptivity has been limited to the individual concern.

The legacy of our once unified society is forlorn today. The selfish "me" or "I" have taken over the charge in place. Unity is a far cry in this virtual world. In this space-age, high-tech gadgets are also equally responsible for pushing us to a considerable distance from one to one physical reach.

Texting through social media has become enough for all sorts of communications, even it is seen in between the family members while communicating from one bed to another. My eyes go moist thinking of those lovely childhood days sailed behind. Where is my once resilient and most organized society heading now?

(The writer is an Ex-Air Warrior and presently works in Indian Audit and Accounts Department Guwahati, Assam, India. He can be reached at E-mail: rabin1966@gmail.com)

Prime Minister calls for Vocal for Local to Manipur



By: Bramhacharimayum Sadananda Sharma

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi called upon the people of Manipur to be Vocal for Local, which is the only incantation for real identity of the manipuris. While launching a water supply project through video conference on 23rd July, 2020, the Prime Minister lauded the people of Manipur for their consciousness to keep their identity intact. Elaborating the exact meaning of Vocal for Local, Shri Modi referred to how the people of Manipur reacted to when a group people outside Manipur wanted to brand it as Modi Gamacha. The Prime Minister wearing the manipuri Leirum Lengyan in the water supply project launching ceremony appreciated the move of the people to retain the original brand name and urged to take similar efforts to protect other Manipuri products. The Prime Minister said that the

original Manipuri products and artefact should be value added, popularised and provide market access. Many of our local handloom and handicrafts need to be value added to meet the present time needs and provide market access. We must be vocal for our local products. This is what the Prime Minister interprets for Vocal for Local for Manipur and I consider the Prime Minister hit the nail on the head.

The Prime Minister expresses his deep appreciation for the people of North-East particularly Manipuris for their rich cultural heritage and the potential of tourism which if explored can be engine of economic growth of the state. The Prime Minister is of the opinion that in addition to tourism, the bamboo products and large scale introduction of organic farming can be another area for economic identity of the people of this region, for which the state government and the people of the state should be vocal. Kashmir which was once described as "Heaven on Earth" for its scenic beauty and for large number of domestic and foreign tourist attraction became the driving engine for economy for people of Kashmir. However, with the surge of militancy the ever growing tourism industry has been lost today in Kashmir and it will take time



to reclaim it. Notably, in Manipur as the law and order situation is developing in course of time. The Prime Minister took it as a challenge and opportunities for revival of tourism in the state. Indeed Manipur food cuisines are not only popular in the country but also liked by people across the world. The cultural events and exhibits such as Holi festival including Thabal Chongba, Lai Haraoba are quite memorable to the people across the world who had a glimpse of it. The hair-rising Thang-Ta exhibit is a matter of thrill to the people across the world. All these are good inputs for tourism and people have to inculcate the spirit of hospitality (Guest/tourist are god).

Launching of water supply project of over Rupees Three Thousand Crores is indeed a milestone in the path of development but more important is the Prime Minister's

clarion call for Vocal for Local. The state's own products of Handlooms, Handicrafts, local vegetable are gradually dwindling our cultural activities are also slowly influence by some forces outside the country. In the name of "western sankritana", our rich culture which is unique in the world is being attempted to ridicule in the name of Sanskritisation. Meiteilon, the language spoken by the majority population (popularly known as "Manipuri Lon") is even gradually diluted. In such a situation, the Prime Minister's call for Vocal for Local not only in economic activities but also in other fields will help in rejuvenation to a new height. Also, it can be a wake-up call from Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the people of Manipur to consider it as an opportunity to promote our own local traditional products.

Public toilet block inaugurated at Dental College, RIMS



IT News
Imphal, July 25:

A public toilet block was inaugurated today in the Dental College, RIMS, Imphal by Prof. A. Santa Singh, Director of RIMS, Imphal. In this block, there is a separate toilet room reserved for transgender as per Ministry guidelines. This is the first time in the history of RIMS that a separate toilet room was constructed and

inaugurated in RIMS, Imphal.

During the inauguration, the Deputy Director of RIMS Kaikum Doungel, Prof. Praveen Reddy, Principal, Dental College, E. Debendra Meitei, Chief Accounts Officer/Financial Advisor, faculty members of Dental College, Engineering Staff and officials were present.

A statement by Media Advisor RIMS, N. Phillip said that a communications has

been received from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India stating the ministry inadvertently mentioned as 12th February, 2020 instead of 6th February, 2020 in the Ministry's letter dated 6th May, 2020 regarding the outsourcing of contract employees of RIMS. It further mentioned that there is as such proposal from the RIMS to outsource the contract employees.

Assembly constituencies continue to lift PDS items

DIPR
Imphal, July 25:

Several Assembly Constituencies (ACs) continue to lift their allocated PDS rice and dal from certain godowns located at different parts of the state. In Imphal East District, 1,753.80 quintal of rice allocated to its Thongui AC under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was lifted yesterday. Keirao AC, Heingang AC and Khundrakpam AC of the District had also completely lifted their allocated 1,440.05 quintal, 1,890.05 quintal and 1,670.50 quintal of rice respectively under the same scheme on 23rd of this month. There was report on

lifting of 1,832.20 quintal of PMGKAY rice for Lamlai AC on 22nd July too.

Lifting of dal allocated to Imphal East District under PMGKAY for the month of June had also completed with 75.74 quintal being lifted for Khundrakpam AC yesterday. Kakching AC of Kakching District too reported completely lifting of 1,765.50 quintal of PMGKAY rice from FCI godown, Sangaiapur today. The lifted rice included 1,728.90 quintal under PHH and 36.60 quintal under AAY allocated for July.

Meanwhile, Chingai AC of Ukhrul District had started lifting of PMGKAY rice allocated for the month of August with 1,355.65 quintal lifted on 23rd of this month

from FCI godown, Ukhrul. Under PMGKAY, Langthabal AC and Mayang Imphal AC of Imphal West District lifted 1,015 quintal and 1,888.35 quintal of rice respectively on 23rd July while Thanlon AC (M u a l n u a m) and Churachandpur AC of Churachandpur District lifted 375.75 quintal and 529.95 quintal of rice respectively on the same day.

The PDS items allocated under PMGKAY, National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) are lifted for distribution to the beneficiaries of the State to ensure uninterrupted supply of food grain during the ongoing lockdown.

Assam Rifles provides assistance



IT News
Imphal, July 24:

Chandel Battalion of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) provided necessary assistance to the children of 'The Mission Blind School', Heikakpokpi in Kakching District on 23rd July 2020.

The school approached the Assam Rifles for provisioning of their dire needs as the school was running short supplies. Acting to the

response on humanitarian grounds the battalion provided the necessary supplies including Ration, Reusable Masks, White Cane, Clothes for kids and simultaneously 40 fruit bearing saplings were also distributed for plantation in and around school.

Students were also briefed about various precautionary measures like maintaining basic hygiene, sanitation, maintaining social distance and other precautions to

avoid the spread of disease and students were also sensitized about the growing environmental conditions including global warming and suggested ways to protect the environment by means of tree plantation. Assam Rifles continued its support to the needy since the lockdown started. The students expressed their gratitude for providing necessary assistance and imparting awareness amongst the students.

India's indigenous ventilator soon to start human clinical trials

By Raju Vernekar
New Delhi, July 25:

The National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), Bengaluru, a constituent of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi, which has developed 'SwasthVayu' India's first non-invasive ventilator is expected to start human clinical trials soon.

The device registered with the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), is an ideal to treat patients with respiratory failure in both COVID and non-COVID situations, either in the ICU or non-intensive medical conditions. The device is expected to provide relief to patients unable to get ICU beds.

"SwasthVayu" is equipped with advanced features like Bi-level mode (BiPAP), Continuous Positive Airway Mode (CPAP), spontaneous modes and 3D printed HEPA-T filter adapter connected



directly to the non-ventilated mask. It has a special provision to connect to the oxygen concentrator externally.

The device is expected to save the lives of numerous patients, suffering from respiratory failure-a medical emergency characterized by low oxygen and high carbon-dioxide levels in the body due to the inability to breathe appropriately as compared to a normal healthy person.

The ethics and scientific committee at Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru (Karnataka) has approved the device for clinical trials under Dr Satyanarayana, Head of

Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine as the Principal Investigator.

'SwasthVayu' has been developed in collaboration with Dr Satyanarayana Mysore HOD, Lung Transplant Physician, Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru and Dr Anurag Agarwal, Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) a constituent of CSIR.

Dr. Satyanarayana Mysore said that the device will be a bonanza for treating sleep-disordered breathing including Obstructive Sleep Apnea and other sleep apnea. Besides it will be of paramount importance in minimizing the

risk of virus spread. The device also has a special provision to connect to the oxygen concentrator externally.

Dr. C.M. Ananda, Chief scientist and Head Electronics Division of NAL said that the device has been subjected to trials on artificial lung models and has successfully passed stringent electrical safety, performance, calibration, bio-compatibility tests at National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

At the beginning of the pandemic, foreseeing the large outbreak of COVID 19 cases in India, there was a call by Prime Minister Narendra to all the entrepreneurs and scientists, to innovate and ramp up health care systems, including increasing the number of ventilators. However with growing number of patients, demand for ventilators is more and it would not be met even through imports. As such there was a compelling need for indigenous ventilators to mitigate the acute shortage of ventilators.

Most affordable Covid-19 test kit launched

IT Correspondent
New Delhi/Mumbai, July 25:

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) have approved an affordable RT-PCR based coronavirus COVID-19 diagnostic kit- "Corosure", developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-IIT Delhi (IIT Delhi).

The kit which has been approved with very high sensitivity and specificity by ICMR and DCGI, was recently launched by the Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

The base price of the RT-PCR assay is Rs 399. Even after adding the RNA isolation and laboratory charges, the cost per test will be considerably cheaper compared to the kits at present available in the market. The IIT Delhi has



given license to 10 companies to manufacture the kit using the technology developed by its researchers. The kit has been developed indigenously and is much cheaper than other kits.

Pokhriyal said that "Corosure", the probe-free diagnostic kit has been manufactured by Delhi NCR-based 'Newtech Medical Devices'. He appreciated that a leading educational

institution under the Union HRD ministry and a private company have joined hands to develop the kit, in the interest of the nation. It is expected to bring down the cost of COVID-19 RT-PCR testing.

The minister lauded the work done by the IIT Delhi researchers and congratulated everyone involved in the development and manufacturing of the kit. The

Minister appreciated Prof. Vivekanandan Perumal and his research team-Prashant Pradhan (PhD Scholar), Ashutosh Pandey (PhD Scholar), Praveen Tripathi (PhD Scholar), Dr Akhilesh Mishra, Dr Parul Gupta, Dr Sonam Dhamija, Prof Manoj B Menon, Prof Bishwajit Kundu and Prof James Gomes.

Union Minister of State for HRD Sanjay Dhotre, Union Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare and senior officials were present during the launch.

On the occasion Dhotre said that innovation and entrepreneurship are complementary to each other, and are also most crucial for an "Atmanirbhar Bharat" and IITs have very robustly nurtured these two. This very low-cost diagnostic kit is a great feat that the IIT Delhi has achieved in such a short period.

Woman arrested on charges of black-marketing drugs used for COVID-19 treatment

By IT Correspondent
Mumbai, July 25:

A woman was arrested on charges of selling tocilizumab injection, used for treatment of coronavirus, at inflated price at Ullhasnagar, (about 43 kms from Mumbai) in Thane district by officers of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) on Friday.

The accused who was identified as Neeta Panjwani was found selling tocilizumab for Rs.60,000 per injection as against authorised price of Rs 40,545. Acting on the tip off, that the accused has been selling the injection to gullible people at heavy price and was operating near the market, a trap was laid under guidance of Joint Commissioners Viraj Paunekar and Sunil Bhardwaj, by Drugs Inspectors Nishigandha Pashte, Nitin

Aher and Sandeep Narawane and the accused was arrested while negotiating with a customer.

She has been booked under provision of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and Essential Commodities Act 1955 and further inquiries are on to find out from whom she was getting the supply of medicine.

In India, tocilizumab is imported and then distributed by 'Cipla'. The black markets for tocilizumab spring up as demand for the COVID-19 drug surges and patients' families are being forced to shell out as much as Rs 1.4 lakh for 400 mg of the drug. Tocilizumab is not a new drug, nor is it a "miracle drug" that could treat COVID-19. It is being used to treat mostly rheumatoid arthritis. At present it is undergoing clinical trials to ascertain

whether it is a definitive treatment option for coronavirus. But as tocilizumab's importance grows, there is a growing problem of supply and affordability. The main reason is that the Swiss pharmaceutical major "Roche" has a complete monopoly over who makes this drug. Currently, only "Roche" and its subsidiary "Genentech" make it and "Roche" has not licensed it out to any other company.

In the meanwhile FDA, Maharashtra has been constantly booking black marketers engaged in selling drugs at high price. Seven persons were arrested on 19 July, 2020 from Mulund in North East Mumbai after laying a trap by FDA officials. The accused were selling "Remdesivir" injection at an inflated price. The MRP of

"Remdesivir" of "Hetro Pharma" is Rs 5400, while that of "Cipla" is Rs 4,000. The accused were selling the vial for Rs.30,000.

On 22 July, five persons were arrested by Thane Police, in connection with black marketing of "Remdesivir" and "Tocilizumab" injections. While the market price of Remdesivir is Rs 5,400 and Tocilizumab Rs 30,500, the accused were selling the two drugs for Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000, respectively. The accused- Arun Singh (35), Sudhakar Giri (37) and Ravindra Shinde (35), were arrested by the Anti-Extortion Cell of Thane police, near a petrol pump in Thane, where they had come to deliver the drugs. Based on their interrogation, other two accused- Wasim Shaikh (32) and Amitabh Das (39) were later arrested from Navi Mumbai.

"LIVING WITH COVID 19"

Bv - Joyshree Heisnam

The Global Recession has led to market instability. All the educational institution have been shut down and final year students and examinations are postponed. It creates stress on supply chains, decrease in government income, collapse of tourism industry, collapse of hospitality industry, huge unemployment, reduced consumer activity, plunge in fuel consumption, rise in LPG scales. South East Asians many countries are discriminated and stigmatized in the West. North-East Indians are not allowed to enter shops, harassed, even spat on their faces and are a prey for mainland Brownies. The Chinese government are not in good terms with U.S, Brazil, Australia, France etc. Corona Virus is the mobile element for the above mentioned issues. Since the inception series of health, economic, social, environmental, political problems are unceasing. Living with Covid 19 is like we are adapting ourselves in an alternate reality.

Covid 19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2(SARS-CoV-2). It was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan city of China. WHO declared it a global issue "pandemic" and health emergency. The pandemic spread to more than 188 countries with more than 5.91 million cases, of which 2.49 million recovery cases and 364,000 deaths. The virus is spread through people with close contact, via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, talking. The common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of smell and taste. On some cases progress to acute respiratory distress syndrome, multi organ failure, septic shock and blood clots. The onset of symptom is seen from 2 to 14 days. The disease primarily spread soon to old citizens and newborns. The disease enters our lungs which leads to serious respiratory problems which leads to death.

Many scientists and researchers are working hard in developing a vaccine. The only available precautionary measure is by using masks, sanitizers and good hygiene and social distancing. The world is undergoing complete lockdown, quarantine facilities, screening and isolation. The health related issues are: inadequate medical facilities and short supplies in such a short span of time is a big challenge faced by health workers. They are most at risk, many retired health workers are being called upon by the government to

give service eventually many health workers have died in it. India's pharmaceutical industry expects supply issues and The Trade Promotion Council of India estimates that 85% of active pharmaceutical ingredients imported from China. The U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a statement at least one drug worldwide is in short supply because of the lockdown.

The European Union's industry Chief estimates 1 billion losses per worth in tourism sector. India's GDP estimates are downgraded even more to negative figures signaling a deep recession. The rate of unemployment rose from 6.7% on 15th March to 26% on 19th April within a month. More than 45% of households across the nation have reported an income drop as compared to 2019. 53% of business in the country are significantly affected. Those in informal sectors and daily wage groups are most at risk. The inflation affect the migrant workers a lot and even refugees. A large number of farmers across the world who grew perishable goods are facing uncertainty. Various businesses such as hotels and airlines are cutting salaries and laying off employees. Young startups around the world suffer as funding decline. Stock markets in India posted their worst losses in history on 22nd March. Major world's electronics come from Chinese factories and a long suspension of production will negatively impact overall supply. Restaurants, food industry, mass entertainment venues such as concert halls, museums, parks, fashion industry are also affected. There is a slowdown in global construction industry and the workers. Employers should provide employees with a safe workplace condition.

The pandemic has not just gifted health and economic problems but also social stigmatization and racism especially profiling of Mongoloid in India. It has sparked unwarranted behavior towards health workers, infected persons, families, certain ethnicities and anyone with even a silver of connection to the disease. The Chinese, North-East Indians are being tagged "coronavirus" along with derogatory comments and are a victim to social media bullies and trolls. Several health workers of the region who work in mainland states are also facing discrimination and are now returning to their homeland. Dalits, migrant workers also faced hurdles and are either being killed or robbed by Bhakts. Religious leaders create

communal tensions eg: after the effect of Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi against muslim communities. Hindu fanatics in Odisha beheaded a man as human sacrifice to stop the pandemic.

The pandemic also spreads environmental concerns in both positive and negative ways. Contingency policies are linked to improvements in air quality, clean beaches, water, less environmental noise. Trees are being saved and the water of Ganga is now cleaner. Negative effects include increased waste and the reduction of recycling. Decreasing GHGs during a short period is not a sustainable way to clean our environment. The huge alarming increase in the number of pests, animals, birds will surely affect agriculture and horticulture.

Various political tensions are being created by Covid 19. It affected the political systems of multiple countries, suspension of legislative activities, isolation or deaths of multiple politicians, rescheduling of elections and ruins international relations. Australia demands huge revenue from China. India is not in good terms with three of its neighbor China, Pakistan and Nepal. Countries where conflicts and armed actors are prevalent also faced hardships especially those in war. Prison breaks have been reported in Venezuela, Italy and Brazil. In Peru, the authorities have arrested hundreds of citizens for breaking quarantine rules in some cases leading to violence.

The State and Non-State Actors are working hard hand in hand to fight the disruption of the pandemic. They are giving their best efforts in developing vaccine, fundraising for the needy, provide allowances, food grains, essentials, masks, sanitizers, shelters and also quarantine facilities. Government of India announced certain measures and Rs 1.7 trillion relief package for its citizens. About two-thirds of population will be covered under PMGKYA(food scheme). Farmers currently receive INR 6000/- every year through PM-KISAN scheme. About 86.9 million farmers are expected to benefit from this immediately. 30 million senior citizens, widows, disabled to get one time extra gratia amount of 1000/- in two installments over the next 3 months. Covid19 acts as a tool to check the political stability and accountability of the government. China, Taiwan, Russia are handling very well and also U.S, U.K can cope up comparing to nations like India. India being a populous and high illiteracy, high unemployment rate cannot tackle well. Corruption is rampant, black money,

illegal activities and opportunist capitalists are being benefited during such perils worldwide. Only government cannot face the challenges and needs the help of Non-State Actors(NSA). NSA play a significant role in coping the problems. The various activities are pharmaceuticals companies are distributing free kits and developing a vaccine. Moderna's RNA vaccine is amongst the front runners in the race, Chinese CanSino Biologies Inc is also a contender in producing vaccine. Media houses like BBC, Guardian, Economic Times, Alzazeera etc are proving pandemic coverage and news updates despite uncertainties. NSA like Alibaba foundation donated 5000 tests kits and 2million masks to U.S and Europe. Bill&Melinda Gates foundation funded \$250 million. The International Monetary Fund provides support to poorer countries by giving grants and debt relief. CEO of Twitter, BeyGood Foundation, Angelina Jolie, Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, Rihanna, Ryan Reynolds, have donated huge amount of money. Leonardo DiCaprio launches America's Food Fund with \$12 million. Ya All an organization in Manipur has been listed in U.N's top 10 Global initiative in Covid 19 for their Khudol initiatives. NGO's like Red Cross, Green Peace, Jeevan Rath, DONOR, Indian PRDTI are contributing too. Feminists like Finland's woman Prime Minister are effectively tackling too and IAS Tina Dabi's Bhilwara model of Rajasthan is also really appreciable in fighting the pandemic. Amazon, Flipkart and other delivery service workers are the frontrunners in providing essential needs services.

We are all in this together, cooperation, mutual understanding, respecting vulnerable communities is a must. Love and Humanity can only give hope. The vaccine might take some time to develop but we must stand as one to fight the disease. Instead of going for power struggle and trying to polarize by creating nuclear weapons and tests. The great nations must keep peace and learn from their mistakes i.e: the entire focus of the research were more tilted to missiles tests to occupy power on land, water, cyberspace and air. As Edward Abbey said "Growth for the sake of growth is ideology of the cancer cell." We must protect our environment and preserve biodiversity.

(The writer is a student of D.M College of Arts reading B.A 6th Semester in Political Science Department)

Govt. making all efforts for ease of doing business in Fertilizer Sector

PIB New Delhi, July 25:

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda has said that NDA Government is making all efforts for ease of doing business in fertilizer sector so that it can be made Atmanirbhar in true sense and farmer community can be served better. Elaborating Various initiatives taken by the government in this direction Shri Gowda said the Department of Fertilizers has rolled out a More Farmer Friendly DBT 2.0 Version in July 2019 to improve the existing DBT system and make it more user friendly. DBT

2.0 Version has three components namely, DBT Dashboard, PoS 3.0 Software and Desktop PoS version. DBT Dashboards provide accurate real time information about the position of supply / availability / requirement of various fertilizers. It can be accessed by any general public at <https://urvarak.nic.in> PoS 3.0 Software captures sale to different categories of buyers, generate sale receipts in multiple languages and provide soil health recommendations to the farmers to promote the balanced use of fertilizers. Desktop PoS Version is an alternative or added facility to PoS devices which is more

robust and secure. DBT in Fertilizers received 2 (two) awards namely, "SKOCH Gold Award for Governance" on 25.9.2019 and "Governance Now" Digital Transformation Award on 6th November 2019. Highlighting the efforts made by government to ease the supply network for fertilizers in the country Shri Gowda stated that coastal shipping as an additional mode of transportation has been promoted. For this the policy for reimbursement of freight subsidy for distribution of subsidized fertilizers through coastal shipping or / and inland waterways was announced on 17.6.2019 and 18.9.2019. During 2019-20, 1.14 LMT of fertilizers have been moved through coastal shipping. Referring to cost fixation rules for urea units union minister said that with the approval of CCEA his Department vide notification dated 30th March, 2020 removed the ambiguities in the Modified NPS-III. This will facilitate smooth implementation of Modified NPS-III which will result in grant of Additional Fixed Cost of Rs.350/MT to 30 Urea units and grant of special compensation of Rs. 150/MT to Urea units which are more than 30 years old and converted to gas which will incentivize these units to remain viable for sustained production. It will also facilitate continued operations of the urea units resulting in sustained and regular supply of Urea to the farmers.

Sports News

Commonwealth Secretary General lauded Fit India Movement

Agency New Delhi, July 25:

Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland has lauded the Fit India Movement of India as a unique initiative to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fit India Movement was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year. Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju virtually attended the Ministerial Forum of Commonwealth countries to share India's road on resumption of sporting events and also to contribute to the creation of a collaborative sports policy in

the post COVID-19 pandemic era. Speaking at the global forum, which saw participation from all Commonwealth countries, Mr Rijiju said, the Fit India Movement launched last year, has been very useful in fighting the pandemic since building fitness and immunity is crucial during these Covid times. He said, India has successfully created awareness about the importance of staying fit through a series of dedicated online programmes for citizens on fitness and well-being, all through the pandemic. He said, as members of Commonwealth nations, there is a need to stand in

solidarity on all issues especially in the present time. The Minister also spoke of diversification of sports delivery models and shared how India is successfully running online training programmes for athletes and skill upgradation courses for coaches. He expressed hope that India will have sporting events from September or October, even the big leagues in various sports are considering resumption. Mr Rijiju also shared the contribution of the youth volunteers of the Youth Affairs Ministry in the fight against COVID-19. He said, six million youth volunteers have worked relentlessly to

help civil bodies and citizens during COVID-19. He said, now, they are creating awareness about the new schemes that have been launched by the government to aid the poor in the unlock phase. He said, the government has decided to give free ration to the poor of the country till November and the volunteers are creating awareness in towns and remote villages about these schemes. Mr Rijiju also thanked the Commonwealth Games Committee for agreeing to add the disciplines of shooting and archery to the 2022 Commonwealth Games on India's request.

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HRD Minister, Sports Minister to launch 'Fit India Talks' to inspire school children

Agency New Delhi, July 25:

The government's flagship program Fit India is launching a series of interactive sessions with some of the top sports persons of the country intended to inspire the school children. The sessions, titled Fit India Talks, will premiere today in the presence of Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Sports Minister

Kiren Rijiju along with badminton star PV Sindhu and Indian football team skipper Sunil Chhetri. A host of leading sports celebrities will be sharing their experiences of childhood, stories on how they got inspired, their failures, struggles and their success. This will give the audience a very inspirational yet interesting account of their journeys - from common school students to world-class champions. There will be a total of six sessions

which will go on till 14th of this month. The likes of badminton star Ashwini Ponnappa, Indian women's hockey team skipper Rani Rampal, table tennis star Manika Batra, shooter Apurvi Chandela and inspirational Paralympian Deepa Malik will join in at the sessions. These will be streamed on Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank's social media pages, MHRD social media pages, Fit India Facebook & YouTube channel, SAI Facebook

Page, MyGov YouTube channel, SportsTak YouTube channel as well as the DD Sports Television and YouTube channel. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said that this is a series where the champion athletes will speak to the students and share their inspirational life stories. The Fit India Talks sessions are being organized in association with the Sports Authority of India and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.