

Truck loaded with a huge quantity of tobacco products escorted by IRB personnel seized and destroyed by local

IT News
Imphal, July 28:

A huge quantity of tobacco products ferried in truck escorted by the Indian Reserved Police (IRB) was today seized and destroyed by the local womenfolk and club members today morning. The incident happened at the Heingang Assembly constituency where the Chief Minister n. Biren Singh represents.

According to the report, morning joggers showed a truck escorted by the IRB personnel in a suspicious manner at around 5.30 am

today. The matter was informed to the Luwangsangbam Apunba Meira Paibi Lup – a women's body and based on the report, the volunteers of the women body followed the path where the truck was unloaded. The report further added that the huge number of tobacco brand products of different kinds were found to have been unloaded at the residence of one Laishram Ongbi Purnima Devi, age about 62, wife of late L. Barchandra. Volunteers if CADA too rush the spot and assisted the womenfolk in searching the whereabouts of the suspicious intoxicants.



While conducting a drive at the residence, the womenfolk, members of the CADA, and the club members of Luwang Sangbam area found 130 packed boxes of Tabab, Zarda, Khaini etc. all product of

tobacco from the residence. The seized material was later taken Luwangsangbam Maning Ching and destroyed by burning it.

What is more interesting is that the owner of the tobacco

products seized today tried to intimidate those conducting the drive saying that those are the property of MLA. If that is so, the hidden agenda of the "War on Drug" is becoming clearer, a volunteer told reporters. He also said that restrictions imposed on fine chewing of the pan and other tobacco products at public places and order to impose fine for spitting at public places will have no values. The local organizations question if there is an agenda to spread the COVID-19 pandemic if what the owner of the tobacco products is correct.

Police lodged FIR against political activist Errendro Leichomba under Sedition Act

IT News
Imphal, July 28:

Political activist Errendro Leichomba, who had contested the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election but defeated at Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency is once more in the news after police came to arrest him on July 26 midnight at his Thangmeiband residence.

Errendro is presently staying at New Delhi on some personnel work and the police return back without informing family to report at porompat police station. The police team said nothing about the reason of the FIR but said that he has been charged under Section 124 A (Sedition) and section 153 as well as section 505 of the IPC. Section 124 A of the IPC can punish that Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law.

Section 505 in The Indian Penal Code. (c) with intent to incite, or which is likely to incite, any class or

community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to 6 [three years], or with fine, or with both.

And Section 153 in The Indian Penal Code

Said that, "Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot—if rioting be committed—if not committed.—Whoever maliciously, or wantonly, by doing anything which is illegal, gives provocation to any person intending or knowing it to be likely that such provocation will cause the offence of rioting to be committed, shall, if the offence of rioting be committed in consequence of such provocation, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both; and if the offence of rioting be not committed, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both." Talking to Impha Times Errendro said that he have no idea of why such an FIR is lodged against him,

'Stop mining of Chromite and Limestone in Ukhrul, Kamjong, Tengnoupal and Chandel districts of Manipur'

IT News
Imphal, July 28:

Eastern Himalayan Youth Coordinating Committee on Climate Change (EHYCCCC) has appealed all concerns to immediately stop Mining of Limestone, Chromite, Nickel, Copper, Malachite, Azurite and Magnetite and various platinum group of elements (PGE) which are deposited along the hill range of Ukhrul District, Kamjong District, Tengnoupal, Chandel District and various parts of Manipur. A statement of the committee showing its serious concerns said that the extraction of the minerals from various part of the state will destroy large scale forest covered area that will bring disaster to climate change.

"Various scientists have already warned that the Eastern Himalayan will be the most vulnerable due global climate crisis, therefore, it is high time for the Government of Manipur, India and the extractive industries to rethink, revisit and stop the mining across the hill ranges of Manipur", the statement said.

The Committee said that to Recover the lost economy of India due to the Covid19 pandemic by sacrificing the Indigenous peoples land which are rich in natural resource by initiating the extraction of Natural Resources is a threat to right to lives of the indigenous peoples inhabited across the hill ranges of Manipur bordering to Myanmar as the indigenous peoples are dependent on the forest, river and mountains. Extracting the natural resources deposited in the land of the indigenous people without the proper knowledge and concern of the people is considered as one of the strategic step of Government of India, Manipur and other extractive MNC to suppress the right of the indigenous people.

Further it will adversely impact to the indigenous peoples inhabited in the border area of Myanmar due to dumping of toxic waste from the Mining sites to the small streams and rivers which flows down to Myanmar.

"The initiative to initiate mining of the minerals by the government of Manipur, India and extractive industries have failed to obtain Free Prior and Informed consent of the indigenous peoples and also have failed to follow and respect certain guidelines laid down under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Further it failed to conduct ground survey to assess the Human Rights Impact Assessment, Cumulative Impact Assessment, etc.", the Committee said.

The committee also recalled the incident of Baghjan, Assam on the May 27, 2020 where the Oil India Ltd drilled crude oil and caught fire which displaced more than 1600 house hold, polluting the river, lake and a wild life sanctuary. Also in Jaintia Hill of Meghalaya where 8 cement factories are located and also the coal mining which pollutes the rivers flowing down to Bangladesh due to dumping of toxic waste.

The Committee appealed the Government of Manipur, GOI and the Extractive Industries to Stop immediately the Mining of Chromite and Limestone across the hill ranges of Ukhrul, Kamjong, Tengnoupal and Chandel, Districts of Manipur. Further it demanded to to conduct Human Rights Impact Assessment and Cumulative Impact Assessment.

It also appealed to respect the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to respect the rights of the Indigenous Peoples.

"Why ILP at this crucial hour? What is the urgency?" - CSOs

IT News
Imphal, July 28:

Various civil society bodies of the state have questioned the rationale behind the government decisions to start the issuance of ILP to outsiders who want to enter the state. Special Home Secretary Gyan Prakash, in an order, had stated that issuance of the ILP permit to outsiders will start from July 21. Civil Society organizations United Social Development and Educational Organisation and All Khangabok Labour's Welfare Union questioned the

government about the urgency of allowing outsiders to enter the state when it is known that the novel coronavirus has been transported from outside the state. What urgency has compelled the government to take the decision of issuing the ILP to outsiders when the present crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic is on the rise.

As a measure to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the state government had suspended the issuance of ILP to outsiders since March 18. The virus that has been carried from among those people (sons and daughters

of the state) who have returned to the state and was confined to only those who return from other state, has now started spreading to people who have no travel history. Health workers who have been spending days and nights to provide treatment to the people tested positive with COVID-19 pandemic now have got the virus and some health workers who work close with infected people too have been tested positive.

The Two organizations questioned the rationale behind the motive for bringing in the outsiders by issuing them ILP at this crucial hour

Nadda exhorts BJP workers to strengthen the party base in Maharashtra

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, July 28:

National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) J.P. Nadda on Monday exhorted party workers to be committed to solidify party base to ensure that the BJP comes to power in Maharashtra on its own strength. BJP is at loggerheads with former ally the Shiv Sena ever since the ties between both the alliance partners were severed and Uddhav Thackeray formed the Government by joining hands with the NCP and Congress in November last.

Nadda made this appeal, while attending the state BJP working committee meeting held through virtual media. He claimed that the situation created by the Corona pandemic has been handled very efficiently by the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and due to timely decision to implement lock down, a major loss of life was averted in the country. The number of victims in the United States and Europe, rose sharply despite these countries have highly advanced medical facilities.

A Rs 20,00,000 crore "Atmanirbhar Bharat Package" announced by Modi to bail out battered economy, has benefitted different sections of the society and the party workers should strive to ensure that the benefits of the package reaches various sectors like industry and agriculture. Besides they should effectively communicate the central government's performance to the common men, Nadda said and appreciated the service rendered by the party workers during the lockdown period. Nadda said that the Maharashtra Government has completely failed to cope up with the situation arising due to the coronavirus. As such the party workers should highlight the "failures" of the state government before the people. The workers should be also be active in solving the problems of common men. He also appealed them to work resolutely, to ensure that BJP comes back to power in Maharashtra. While concluding the meeting, former CM and at present the leader of the Opposition in the state



legislative assembly Devendra Fadnis said the country has got strong leadership in the form of Modi. By responding aggressively to the infiltration of China on the Ladakh border, he has proved that the present India is not like the India of 1962. Party office bearers and workers should make efforts to do such dedicated work. Fadnis too lambasted the three party coalition government led by Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and alleged that it failed to cope with the situation created by the

Corona virus outbreak and despite suggestions, the government has not increased the number of tests of the patients. The people are hit hard due to the negative approach of the government. He further alleged that the alliance government had failed to provide assistance to the farmers who are facing difficulties due to lockdown. The government has left 12 Balutadar's (12 traditional village craftsman) in the lurch. Despite Central Government's substantial allocation of funds, the state government was

blaming the Central Government to hide its own failures. He also announced that the BJP will continue its agitation through non-violent means till first August till to ensure that the milk producers get remunerative prices for their milk produce.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, national joint organisational secretary of BJP V Satish, state BJP president Chandrakant Dada Patil, Kisan Morcha chief Dr. Anil Bonde, former MLA Sudhakar Bhalerao and others.

★ **Editorial** **Responsibility and Non-Discrimination in Combating COVID-19 in Manipur**

The mind of people across world is still filled in with the fear of death posed by the COVID-19 pandemic despite having claim for inventing and testing of new medicine for combating the disease and claims for high recovery rate. The number of covid-19 positive case has exponentially been rising in Indian Sub-continent ranking 3 in the list of most COVID-19 affected countries of the world. Baring Assam, all the North-Eastern States of India including Manipur were covid-19 green zone state for a significant period of time. However, situation has drastically been changed after the decision and consequent act of states making all out effort for returning back a huge number of people stranded in other states to their home states.

Interestingly, first passenger train, after the controversial merger of erstwhile princely state of Manipur into Indian Union in 1949, carrying as many as 1200 Manipuris stranded in Chennai has touched the territory of Manipur at Jiribam in the month of May 2020. Subsequently, ten of thousand of stranded Manipuris have returned back in Manipur either by train or by road from Covid-19 highly infected states such as Tamil Nadu, Mumbai and Delhi. Some of them were found covid-19 positive when tested in during their stay at the quarantine centres opened and managed by the government and CBO in different districts of the state.

It seems that both the institutional community and quarantine centres supported by the local volunteers with selfless sacrificing spirit have been kept in vigil in preventing deadly disease outside the centre. As a result of which there were no transmission of the disease outside the centres. However, things seem to have been upside down when government and political parties shifted their interest in finding out strategy for winning lone Rajya Sabha seat for Manipur thereby creating political crisis of changing the guard that linger on till date. It is of the opinion that covid-19 pandemic that takes in the form of humanitarian crisis could be effectively controlled by a stable and responsible government with the support of disciplined people. Government and political parties have political and moral obligation to remove trust deficit to the existing system as well, so as to avoid occurrence of unwanted incidents which may be in the form of mob violence.

There is nothing in the world which is more precious than human life. It is the core human right ever recognised from time immemorial. People of Manipur thoroughly know that there is no vaccine for curing Covid-19 save prevention. The current lockdown followed by curfew in view of local transmission in some part of Thoubal District creates panic in the mind of people living in the state. The degree of fear is so evident that some localities in Imphal have even closed road to prevent egress and ingress of outsiders. Besides, there were instances of discriminating positive people; even disinfected people form a particular family and locality which have not been declared as containment zone, but suspected of having frontline workers have been ostracised as if they are sinners. Such attitude towards the infected persons and frontline workers such as doctors, nurse, chemists, volunteers, media persons, police and health workers would not only hamper in combating covid-19 but also create a culture of concealment which will be a disaster to the people of Manipur.

Why Manipur senior IPS officer shoots himself (The man who seldom smiles, smiled that day)

By: Lunsich Kipgen (IPS)

18 July 2020 was a pleasant July day. No rain though July is a rainy season. No sunshine and so not hot and humid though summer time. Covid scare and panic had slowly disappeared though the number of people getting infected and those recovered from the same kept surging as well. Shops and business establishments in the city had slowly started to limp back to normalcy after months of severe lockdown. The situation in and around Imphal city was calm and peaceful with no untoward incident that July day till the big breaking shocking news went viral on e-media and took everyone particularly those in police department by surprise. "Manipur ADGP Law & Order shoots himself" was the shocker. The incident occurred around 1 pm and the man who pressed the trigger on himself is Arvind Kumar, a 1992 batch IPS officer of Manipur cadre and holding one of the most important posts in the police department - Additional Director General of Police -ADGP (Law and Order).

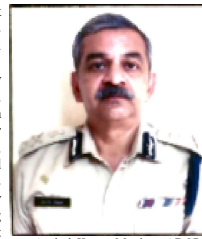
Very few in the state police higher hierarchical establishment knew Arvind Kumar well as he had spent a large chunk of his service period on central deputation. He was in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) for over fifteen years. He has been repatriated to his parent cadre Manipur recently (about four to five months back to be specific). He went on leave for sometime after he reported back to his parent cadre. This makes all the more difficult for many IPS officers including myself, the writer here, to understand his nature more as we rarely meet or interact each other. But one thing common for many officers of the state and elsewhere who have had at least a glimpse of his personality and nature is that Shri Arvind Kumar is a man of few words. But he would never like to keep a work entrusted to him pending. He is known as an introvert to the core and does not talk much. He was never seen smiling and much less laughing. This never meant that he never speak even when it is necessary or when somebody ask him something. It's just that he

does not talk much. He seems to be a nice good human being too.

Surprisingly, such a quite man who has never been seen smiling, laughing and even talking was seen not only smiling, laughing and talking that day minutes (not hours!) before he trained his gun on himself though restricted to split seconds each only anyway. Here is how such rare occurrence had been witnessed:

A committee under the chairmanship of Arvind Kumar constituted to determine and recommend officers of the department to be awarded two trophies in recognition of police related good works had a sitting in the office of the chairman on 17 July last. I was a committee member here. I was informed the day before that day that chairman sir wanted to complete the work soon. First the committee sitting was fixed at 11 am of the day and then postponed to 3.30 pm the same day. The committee met for the business and accordingly finished what was to be done that day itself. The following day, i.e. 18 July, we, the committee members were asked to attend a review sitting (meeting) to rectify an oversight in the exercise. The time fixed was 12 noon. We met at the appointed time and place, that is, 12 pm at the chairman's office chamber located at the 1st Manipur Rifles guest house first floor.

Since it was just a review and rectification exercise only the committee sitting did not take much time to complete the work. As usual we were served tea. As we had tea, I, in my usual way of commenting things mostly in lighter veins just said something with regard to the ensuing state level Independence Day celebration program as the names recommended for the said trophies were to be announced and given away during the Independence Day program only.



Arvind Kumar, Manipur ADGP Law & Order

"Due to this covid and the current state political situation the program (Independence Day) will be marked not only by social distancing but also political distancing", I just commented with a humour tinge. The mention of 'political distancing' seems to have amused Arvind Kumar (sir). He smiled and said "political distancing" after me and laughed (without sound). This was perhaps many of us, particularly the committee members heard Arvind Kumar (sir) speaking a word outside official matter and saw him smiling and laughing though for a very brief moment. The entire business in ADGP (L&O)'s office chamber including tea time lasted just about half an hour only.

As the committee review sitting was over around 12.30 pm we all dispersed from there and headed towards our respective destinations. I drove straight to my office located at 2nd Manipur Rifles gate barely two kms away from 1st M.R. A subordinate officer (Dy.IG) of mine who too was in the committee meeting drove behind me to my office as we had to discuss some official matters. As soon as we settled down in my office chamber and started discussing things a phone call for the Dy.IG disrupted came and disrupted him. He declined the call. But the call phone call rang repeatedly. "Excuse me sir, let me take the call". "No problem, just go ahead". As soon as the Dy IG said hello, his voice decibel went higher and soon turned to be a shouting - "What, ... what?!!....., Ok I am coming". "Sir Arvind Kumar shoots himself and is being taken to hospital", he relayed the shocking news to me even without cutting the line of his phone and stood to rush. "Ok, just rush ahead and inform me which hospital, me too rushing". Without putting things lying on my office table in order I too made a hundred meter sprint type driving

as I called on my mobile phone to know which hospital the critically injured was rushed. I was one of the officers to reach the hospital where the injured ADGP was taken. The officer's better half and one of her lady friend too soon arrived at the hospital. And within no time a host of senior bureaucrats both from the uniform and civil wing congregated at the Raj Medicity hospital where the injured was straight away stretched into the ICU ward.

How did he shoot himself? Since Arvind Kumar had just few days back taken over the charge of ADGP-L&O there were some young IPS officers of the rank of Additional SP from different districts trying to formally call on him that very day. These officers were waiting at the guest house officers lounge to get the signal to from the ADGP to "come in". They were waiting because the committee sitting was in progress. But even after the committee dispersed they never got the signal to enter the senior officer's office chamber. It was later on pieced together that the ADGP had locked himself up from inside as soon as we the committee members left his office room. What went on with the ADGP for about half an hour after we departed from his office is still not known and perhaps will never be known too.

Soon the staff of the ADGP sitting on the same floor heard a familiar but peculiar bang. At first they thought it could be a ripe mango falling and banging the CGI sheet roof. They rushed out to confirm it but found no mango around that could have created such a sound. Then they enquired if any of the police officers' escort including those of the young IPS escort personnel had accidentally or otherwise fired from their service weapons. No one did. This convinced the office staff that the gunshot was really from inside the ADGP's office chamber. The ADGP's office room and the staff's room are separated by an unoccupied/empty room.

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The Real War after the battle is won - **OPPORTUNITIES IN POST COVID DAYS - SKILLS, JOBS & TURBULENCE**

By Lt. Col. L. Manongba

"On 5th July, the minister, Shri Th. Radheshyam launched a website developed for online data collection of skills/work experience of the COVID-19 returnees of the State. It was indeed a welcome step towards the rehabilitation of our people who were otherwise employed in various capacities in different cities of the country." (Quote IFP - <https://ifp.co.in/mapping-skills-and-jobs>) This is one of the positive and heartening news in these tense Covid 19 days. One may generously say - "Kudos to the Govt for this proactive initiative". Most citizens although are focussed on - "How to keep themselves free" of the dreaded virus wandering in town. As a responsible senior citizen who spent 125 days under self-imposed strict Home quarantine, one had all the time in the world to ponder, mull-on, and write musings on things not very mundane. The Laptop & Galaxy Tablet became one's new arsenals of choice. The thousands of

kilobytes on the uninterrupted internet connections (though with a sharp pinch on my pocket!!) enhanced my mental calibre & became force multiplier of some sort to unleash my own war against the boredom of Covid 19. One has had many musings & reflections in these days of special meditation. However, one thought that troubled the mind has been - "What happens to these 65,000 odd returnees after 3 months of idling at home. What occurs after the euphoria of victory having reached sweet home after gruelling journey subsides; what happens after one gets gripped in the vice-like grip of reality - of joblessness, leading to desperation!!" These were the fear - The aftermath of COVID -19 struggles. One wouldn't dare think of beyond the state's affairs in this subject. Till 24th July 2020, 6.30 pm, as per State Govt press release, there are 62,015 state natives who have returned home. A fairly respectable guess will be -

* 70 - 80% of these will be young boys and girls (youth) students of schools and colleges / engaged in various jobs outside the state in all parts of the country.
* They would have been earning between Rs 15,000/- to 30,000/- per month on an average.
* This would have made the sizeable section of youth (23 - 30,000) as "self-propelling" if not self-sufficient.
* In terms of figures that would be (less the students) - 25,000 to 30,000 returnees (workforce - skilled / semi-skilled) X Rs 22500/- (mean income) = Rs. 52 Crores to 68 Crores worth of income earned by these youth with their hard work, skills, and diligence.
* They were gainfully engaged in various legal & respectable jobs and activities.
* Age profile of these returnees (youth section) - Students - 12 to 25 Yrs age (approx 20,000) + 23 to 30,000 youth in age group of 25 Yrs to 45 Yrs (Working group). This is a very Potent, Skilled / Semi-Skilled & Educated youth section who will now have to bank upon the initiatives taken by the state govt. Add to this the 'very imaginative nature' of the state's youth which has tremendous potential to contribute constructively & positively to the state and country.

The state Govt and State Labour Minister Dr Th Radheshyam (also the Education minister) have taken a great & welcome initiative in this very crucial aspect.
"On 5th July, the minister, Shri Th. Radheshyam launched a website developed for online data collection of skills/work experience of the COVID-19 returnees of the State. It was indeed a welcome step towards the rehabilitation of our people who were otherwise employed in various capacities in different cities of the country." (Quote IFP - <https://ifp.co.in/mapping-skills-and-jobs>) The Govt & Think Tanks of the state & citizens need to and MUST GRASP this WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY. These are very crucial & important databases, which COVID -19 has thrown up above the cacophony of fear and paranoia in our society. Today one can know exactly, - WHO all, HOW many, WHAT age profile, WHICH preferred states, WHAT job profiles etc did our youth go out for. WHY these boys and girls journeyed out & away from the comforts of their 'Home & Hearth' is well known to all and are well documented. That is the darker part and part of our tiny state.

The state natives thrive on a 'Pride of Plenty'. The facts and figures say otherwise. The 2020-21 state Govt budget presentation extracts are as follows -
• Revenue Receipts State Tax Revenue - 1324.65 Cr (7% of State RR)
• State Non Tax Revenue - 256.62 (1% of State RR)
• Share Central Tax - 5630.42 Cr (31% of State RR)
• Grant in Aid from Centre - 10,871.47 Cr (60% of state RR)
If we may add to this, the abstract / approx figure of -
• 25,000 to 30,000 working / gainfully engaged Returnees' Income, i.e. 50 to 60 Cr annually = 4.5% of State Tax Revenue / 23% of State Non Tax Revenue.
• These boys and girls of the state need to find equivalent of what they were earning Pre Covid 19. That is the challenge for all. That is what the state Govt has to focus on, once they have been able to tackle the Covid Battle.
• That is the Real War after the battle is won.
If the current & wonderful initiative taken by the state Govt and Education & Labour Minister Shri Th. Radheshyam is able to continue on a positive & uninterrupted note,

we can be sure that the future of the youth of this state is secured. We can then hope for a brighter future for our youth. These young minds of the state are very imaginative, energetic, independent, highly-skilled & are very adaptive. In the same breath, it won't be entirely wrong to caution those concerned with the true welfare of the state and nation that, these positive attributes & qualities of our youth must not be allowed to lapse into emptiness & void. Letting it fall into an abyss would be a grave danger. Getting out of that bottomless pit would be even more difficult. Let the Darker Past will try and cast its nightmarish shadows all over. One would wish the state Govt and responsible citizens will continue with these positive actions as being done until now.
(The author Lt. Col. L. Manongba (Indian Army veteran), who is a socially concerned, responsible well-wisher of the state, country nation, focussed onto the welfare of Ex Servicemen Community of the state in particular. The contents are personal reflections. He can be contacted at mail ID - colmanongba@gmail.com)

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PM Modi says, efforts underway to increase COVID-19 testing capacity to 10 lakh daily in coming weeks

PIB
New Delhi, July 28:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that due to timely decisions taken by the government, India is better placed in comparison with many other countries in terms of deaths due to COVID. The recovery rate is also higher than other countries and is improving on a daily basis. He said, the total number of people who have recovered from the virus is about to reach 10 lakh.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the launch of three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities via video conferencing yesterday. These facilities are located at the National Institutes of Indian Council of Medical Research, at Kolkata, Mumbai and Noida. He said that these hi-tech testing facilities will boost the testing capacity by almost 10,000 daily tests. He said, more number of tests will assist early detection and treatment which will bolster the fight against the Corona virus.

He added that these labs will not be limited to testing for COVID, but in future, will



also be able to test for Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Dengue and several other diseases.

The Prime Minister said that it was imperative for the country to develop Corona specific health infrastructure at a fast pace. He noted that the Centre had announced a package of 15 thousand crore at the beginning of this health menace.

Mr. Modi said, the country now has more than 11 thousand COVID facilities and more than 11 lakh isolation beds. Speaking about the testing facilities, Prime Minister said, the country had only one COVID testing centre in January. He mentioned in a small span of time, there are almost 1,300 such labs in the country now. He said that at present, more than five lakh tests are being conducted in the country daily and efforts are on to

increase this capacity to 10 lakh in the coming weeks.

Prime Minister noted that the country has become the second largest PPE kit manufacturer. He said, the country has progressed from not having even a single PPE kit manufacturer six months ago, to having more than 1200 manufacturers.

He also highlighted that from being dependent on imports, now more than three lakh N-95 masks are being produced in the country daily. He also highlighted that the annual production capacity of ventilators in the country has become 3 lakh and there has also been a significant increase in the production of medical oxygen cylinders.

Mr. Modi said, these developments have helped save lives and have converted India from being an importer of such products to becoming an exporter.

Manipur NCC cadets participate in 15 days online Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme of IIE Guwahati

IT News
Imphal, July 28:

Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati is conducting a tailor-made Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme extending over 15 days in which five selected NCC cadets of Manipur are participating with effect from 27 July 2020.

IIE is an autonomous organisation under the

Ministry of Skill Development Entrepreneurship. The aim of IIE is to provide training, research and consultancy activities in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) with special focus on Entrepreneurship Development.

Five NCC cadets from Manipur, SUO L Iberson Singh (Imphal College, Imphal West), UO Khaingam Khomdrang (DM College of Science, Imphal West), Cadet Thyam Ratic Rohe (MB

College, Imphal East), Cadet N Monita Devi (GP Women College, Imphal West) and Cadet Sunil Kumar Yengkhom (DM College of Science, Imphal West) have been selected to undergo this programme.

The programme shall be for 15 days duration covering numerous topics and assignments by subject matter experts. The entire programme has been conceptualised and tailor - made for NCC by an

expert team of IIE, Guwahati covering all relevant topics on entrepreneurship. The training will be conducted online.

Brig RS Sethi Group Commander, NCC Group Imphal informed this is a first of its kind initiative, which has been put together by NCC Directorate, NER based at Shillong. The aim is to provide youth with knowledge and skills which shall help them become successful entrepreneurs and wealth creators.

Government employees retiring during COVID pandemic will be receiving "provisional" pension till their regular Pension Payment Order is issued: Dr. Jitendra Singh

PIB
New Delhi, July 28:

Government employees retiring during COVID pandemic will be receiving "provisional" pension till their regular Pension Payment Order (PPO) is issued and other official formalities completed.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that after the Modi Government took over, the Department of Pensions had upgraded and equipped itself to deliver the PPO to the concerned employee without delay on the day of his or her superannuation. Besides this, in the last few years, taking cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on

digitalization, the Department of Pension also created a Portal, which could be accessed by any government employee approaching superannuation to find out the status of his or her pension papers, he said.

However, because of the disruption in the official work due to COVID pandemic and lockdown, Dr Jitendra Singh said, some of the employees who had retired during this period may not have been provided with PPO. But, as an evidence of the present government's sensitivity towards the pensioners and the senior citizens, a decision was taken that in order to avoid a delay in the start of regular pension covered under CCS (Pension Rules) 1972, the rules may be relaxed to enable seamless payment of "Provisional Pension" and

"Provisional Gratuity" till the regular PPO is issued.

As per the OM (Office Memorandum) issued by Department of Pensions, affiliated to the Ministry of Personnel, the payment of "Provisional Pension" will initially continue for a period of six months from the date of retirement and the period of "Provisional Pension" may be further extended up to one year in exceptional cases. These instructions shall also be applicable in cases where a government servant retires otherwise than on superannuation i.e. voluntary retirement, retirement under FR 56, etc. Dr Jitendra Singh said, this decision has been taken considering that because of the constraints of pandemic and lockdown, a government servant may find difficulty in submitting his Pension Forms

to the Head of Office or may not be able to forward the Claim Form in hard copy along with Service Book to the concerned Pay & Accounts Office in time, particularly when both the offices are located in different cities. This is very pertinent to Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) who are constantly on the move and whose Heads of Offices are located in cities different from where the Pay & Accounts Office is located. Vide another circular, Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DOPPW) has directed all offices maintaining GPF (General Provident Fund) Accounts to complete all credit entries including accruing interest to the employees two years before retirement and then one year before retirement so that Provident Fund is also paid accurately in time.

Contd. from page 2

Why Manipur senior IPS officer

This little distance plus the officer's room bolted from inside must have reduced the gunshot. The staff went straight and pushed the officer's office door but to their growing suspicion found the door bolted from inside. No option but to break open the same. Once opened, the ADGP was seen lying in a pool of blood. Those around immediately informed others and immediately evacuated the critically injured officer to the hospital though inquest and forensic formalities were not compromised either.

The doctors at the Raj Medicity immediately swung into action and tried their best to save the life of the critically injured senior IPS officer. It was ascertained that the officer had put the barrel tip of his service revolver on his chin and pressed the trigger. The bullet pierced through his left side eyes and exited through the skull. Those well wishers who thronged outside the hospital could do nothing but pray in their hearts for the extension of their injured colleague's life and to wait for the updates on his condition. By around 4 pm the same day much to the relief of all concerned well wishers it was announced by doctors treating the patient that he has regained consciousness and responding to treatment. They went on to inform that if his condition is stable next day, then he would be airlifted to Delhi for further treatment.

The following day, that is; July 19 (2010) being Sunday made no senior officers of the

police department relaxed due to the uncertain condition of the injured ADGP. The good news came soon that the condition of ADGP improved to the extent that he was fit to be airlifted. Air ambulance touched Tikendrajit Imphal International airport by 4:30 pm and the injured was flown to Delhi and treated at the premier medical institute of the country, the AIIMS. The more good news update shared by those attending the injured officer at the AIIMS is that the required surgery has been conducted successfully and he is responding well to his treatment.

Sources say that Arvind Kumar had a medical problem. Some says that the officer had depression. A senior police officer of the state (name withheld) commented "who does not have a medical problem or depression at one point of life?" If he (Arvind Kumar) had a medical problem or was suffering from depression he should have then been made to rest from work or counselled by appropriate counsellors. More than physical ailment or mental depression what human beings cannot endure is loss of face and grace though it does not mean to say here that Arvind Kumar had one such could not endure the same.

Police officers including working and retired training their guns on themselves are nothing new in the country. Shri Himanshu Roy, an IPS batch of 1988 Maharashtra cadre and then ADGP shot himself to death in May 2018

after leaving a suicide note that reads "no one is responsible for my death". He was said to be battling cancer. Amit Singh, an Assistant commissioner of Delhi Police shot himself to death in November 2018 for reason not known. Former Assam DGP Shankar Baruah allegedly shot himself to death in 2014 few days after CBI raided his residence premises in connection with a financial (Saradha) scam. These are just a few instances of high ranking police officers taking their own lives but there are many cases of police officers at the lower rung in the country committing suicide mostly using their own service weapons.

Self abrogation of shooting self to death in the army and para-military establishments in India too is very common. India ranks highest in suicide among the South East countries. According to WHO report, eight lakh people across the globe commit suicide every year. Not all who committed suicide leave suicide notes. ADGP Arvind Kumar's case at the most can be termed as a suicide attempt though he never left a note indicative of suicide tendency. It is not known if he had pressed the trigger of his firearms (revolver) accidentally or otherwise. If intentionally, then why did he shoot himself? Only he knows. And being a quite person he may never tell it too.

***** The writer is the The Inspector General of Police—Zone-III, Manipur

Dr. Harsh Vardhan participates in 2nd Empathy e-Conclave on "World Hepatitis Day" for creating awareness among parliamentarians

PIB
New Delhi, July 28:

On the occasion of "World Hepatitis Day", 2nd Empathy e-Conclave was organised with Sh. Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha as the Chief Guest and Sh. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister of Law and Justice (who participated digitally) along with Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare as the guests of honour. The event was organised by Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in collaboration with Airport Authority of India (AAI) for creating awareness among the parliamentarians.

At the outset, Dr. S. K. Sarin, Director, ILBS made a presentation and highlighted the importance of healthy liver and features of "Empowering People Against Hepatitis: The Empathy Campaign" by ILBS in partnership with AAI, undertaking several innovative initiatives across the country and reaching out to diverse populations.

Inaugurating the Conclave, Sh. Om Birla said, "It is my pleasure that I could participate in observing World Hepatitis Day for the second year in a row. In these trying times, when India along with

the whole world is fighting the pandemic, it is our dedication and will that have enabled us to come together via this e-conclave. We are committed to the WHO goals of elimination of Hepatitis C and of reducing the burden of Hepatitis B by 2030. We, as the representatives of people of India, have a larger responsibility of spreading awareness in people about this disease so as to make this a *Jan Andolan*."

Welcoming everyone to the Conclave, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "The theme of this year's conclave is "Keep your Liver Safe in COVID times", which is very apt and important especially in these testing times. Under the guidance of Hon. Prime Minister, the pre-emptive and proactive measures taken have helped us control the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. While the mortality due to COVID-19 is approximately 2 to 3 % and most cases are largely asymptomatic, it is important to create awareness about the higher risk of both morbidity and mortality faced by people with co-morbidities like diabetes, obesity and fatty liver, chronic liver diseases. The Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres are tirelessly working for

screening of such conditions."

Highlighting the issue to creating mass awareness and community mobilisation, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Hepatitis has become a global health problem. Viral Hepatitis is a very common and serious disease in India, but is virtually unknown to health care providers and the general public. Individuals with viral B & C hepatitis are at increased risk for liver cancer and chronic liver disease, yet an estimated 80 percent of persons with chronic viral hepatitis do not know that they are infected. The mantra to educating people is "Talk Test & Treat" and I appeal to all participants especially from industries, NGOs and other fraternity to support ILBS in this campaign. I request all my colleagues present here to act as a Champion/Ambassador in spreading awareness about the silent epidemics of Hepatitis B & C and help remove the stigma attached to these diseases."

On the contribution of ILBS, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "ILBS is also a WHO collaborative centre. It helped in the development of the National Viral Hepatitis Program which was launched on July 28, 2018.

It is the largest program for Hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment in the world. We have made seminal progress in reaching out to the people and now every state has several model treatment units."

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also congratulated Dr. S. K. Sarin and Team ILBS for their tireless efforts towards the fight against ongoing COVID - 19 pandemic by testing SARS-Cov-2 samples since the last four months. "It's indeed been a matter of pride that the country's first Plasma Bank was made functional at ILBS. Plasma warriors have been selfless contributors helping in improving Recovery Rate in India."

At the end of the event, all participants took a pledge of "Healthy Liver - Healthy India" by committing to care for the liver even during the COVID-19 pandemic and spread the same message to at least ten people. The event concluded with a vote of thanks.

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal, Regional Director, SEARO (WHO), Sh. Vijay Kumar Dev, Chief Secretary of Delhi, Sh. Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI and other parliamentarians and audience also participated through digital platforms.

PUBG Mobile likely to get banned

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 28:

After banning 59 Chinese apps, the Indian government is in the process of scrutinizing nearly 275 apps and is likely to ban another over 200 Chinese apps for national security violations and users' privacy. The Government banned 59 Chinese apps including "TikTok" and "UC Browser" on charges that they were engaged in activities that were "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, the security of the state and public order last month. The new list includes PUBG which is backed by Tencent, Zili by Xiaomi and AliExpress, an online shopping portal by Alibaba group. Apps including Resso and ByteDance's Ulike could also be examined by the government for security violations. "Some of these apps have been red-flagged due to security reasons while others have been listed for violation of data sharing and



privacy concerns," a spokesperson from the union home ministry said. There are fourteen apps by Xiaomi and some lesser-known apps including Capcut, FaceU, Meitu, LBE Tech, Perfect Corp, Sina Corp, Netease Games and Yoozoo Global. The list also includes Helsinki-based Supercell, that have investments by Chinese tech companies. Tencent, which backs PUBG, bought a major stake in the gaming company. The government has initiated a process for such bans and the Union ministry of

electronics and information technology (MEITY) has been asked to frame rules for the constant examination of the apps in India. There is a process involved, there is a committee in place for such ban orders, an official said. When India banned the 59 Chinese apps, there were speculations that the popular gaming app, PUBG will also be banned, but it didn't happen at that time. The 59 Chinese apps were banned by the Union Ministry of Information Technology, invoking its power under section 69A of the

Information Technology Act. There are quite a lot of PUBG users in India and as per "Sensor Tower", PUBG has its largest user base with around 175 million downloads and 24% of share in India alone!! There are lots of other issues too with the PubG Mobile. Its addition and overuse is killing the youth. This might be sad news for those who call themselves a "PRO" by playing only the PUBG Mobile. In the meanwhile gamers are making memes to deal with the anticipated nightmare.

"Nirvani Akhara" sends legal notice to PMO about Ram temple trust

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, July:

While Bhoomi Poojan of Ram Temple in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh is slated to be held on 5 August, 2020, in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the "Nirvani Akhara" (Nirvani Cantonment) has sent a notice to PMO demanding its inclusion in the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, set up by the Government. Mahant Dharmadas of "Nirvani Akhara" has sent a legal notice to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) objecting to its omission from the Ram Temple Trust. It has claimed that the Nirvani Akhara has played an important role in the legal battle of the Ram Jannabhoomi dispute. Yet it was sidelined while forming the Trust. In the notice, Dharmadas has said that within 2 months, the Trust should decide about appointing him as a priest in the proposed new Ram temple. If his demand is not considered, then he will take further legal action. It is noteworthy that during the legal battle in the Supreme Court, representatives of "Nirvani Akhara" were also present.

The 15 member Trust has been set up to construct the Ram Temple, as per the verdict of the Supreme Court. The formation of the Trust was personally announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha on 5 February 2020.

The Trust has been registered with its registered office at R-20, Greater Kailash Part -1, New Delhi. It has its camp office at Ram Kachehri Charo Dham Mandir, Ramkot, Ayodhya. It has been given the 2.77 acre (previously disputed) land as well as the 67.703 acre land acquired under the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act1993. The trust is led by



Mahant Nriyagopal Das. Former Solicitor General of India and lawyer K Parasara is also a member of the trust. Initially, the trust was led by him. The 15 members are: 1. K. Parasara, Senior Supreme Court advocate, 2. Jagatguru Shankaracharya Jyotishpeethadishwar Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Maharaj, Prayagraj, 3. Jagatguru Madhwacharya Swami Vishva Prasannathir Maharaj, Pejavar Math, Udipi, 4. Yugapurusha Paramanand Maharaj, Haridwar, 5. Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, Pune, 6. Bimlendra Pratap Mishra, 7. Dr. Anil Mishra,

Homoeopathic Doctor, Ayodhya, 8. Kameshwar Chaupal, Patna (Scheduled Caste member), 9. A trustee nominated by the Board of Trustees, of Hindu faith and 10. Another trustee nominated by the Board of Trustees, and the person should be Hindu, 11. Mahant Dinendra Das (Nirmohi Akhara) (who shall be the trustee as per para 805 (4) of the Supreme Court judgement), 12. A representative nominated by the Central Government, who will be a Hindu and an IAS officer under the Central Government. This person shall not be below the rank of Joint Secretary. He/she will be

an ex-officio member, 13. A representative nominated by the Uttar Pradesh government, who will be of Hindu faith and an IAS officer under the UP government. This person shall not be below the rank of Secretary and will be an ex-officio member, 14. District Collector of Ayodhya, who will be of Hindu religion. If the current collector is not Hindu, then Additional Collector (of Hindu faith) of Ayodhya will be ex-officio member and 15. The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Chairman on matters relating to Ram Temple Development and Administration. He must be a Hindu.

Letter to the Editor

Degradation of Quality in Higher Education should Be Checked By Concerned Authorities

Sir,

Definitely, the academic standard or quality in higher education, for that matter education in general in the state, is degrading in the last few decades, if not in few years. The fact is that students from other neighbouring states are no coming as before for studies in our premier institutes, that our students are going in large number for studies outside the state, that no college or university is not within the 100 ranking institutes of the country for many years, and that number of educational institutes of varied disciplines are not centred in the state, among others.

It is a fact that in most of the government colleges, including those in the urban areas and district headquarters, only the Honours courses are opened without General/Pass courses in the 5th and 6th semesters of the Three Years Degree course under Manipur University. It means where General and Honours courses were running in Govt. Colleges, after the introduction of semester system of examination in 2010 by Manipur University, about 27 govt. colleges had discontinued General courses for reasons known to the concerned college authorities only. Many principals and senior teachers who are in favour of running Honours courses only in degree colleges reasoned for shortages of infrastructure and lack of faculty members to run both the Hons. and General classes in parallel in the concerned colleges. The argument is not justifiable since all these colleges had opted for Honours and General courses from the university authority, and for years together all these colleges were running these two parallel courses comfortably to the satisfaction of both the teachers and students. Frankly speaking this is a recent trend engineered by a handful of principals and teachers who work in close association and who work in unbecoming way of teachers.

A teacher in the UG courses is supposed to take classes for 14 to 16 hours in a week as per UGC norms. In the above circumstances, a department having a minimum of 4 to 5 teachers in Arts subject can run both the General and Honours courses in parallel without difficulties but with some difficulties in science subjects/departments. As per UGC norms, an undergraduate college is supposed to have 7-5 teachers in each department/subject, depending on whether the subject is having practical or not. Most colleges of the state have enough faculty strength now, except few. For room problems, it can be solved by extending one or two classes in the evening/ or morning for the sake of students, who are none but our children only.

The practice of offering Honours courses by dropping General courses in the 27 govt. colleges, including 4 newly converted ones, is not good at all, considering lack of quality in higher education in particular and education in general in Manipur. It is a common knowledge for general public that students having aptitude for higher studies, on one hand, and other students not having interest for higher studies, on the other, cannot study together to achieve their respective goals, as they are in incompatible combination. In an Honours class, the number of students should be within a manageable level of 20-40 for science subjects involving practicals and more than this number for arts subjects; if so, there is possibility of imparting quality education in the concerned colleges.

To the dismay of many parents who want their children to obtain higher academic degrees/ laurels from these elite or premier colleges of the state, it is a distant dream. The number of students in these colleges in science streams goes 30/40 to 80/90 in average and even 130/ 140 or more in some arts subjects/classes in some colleges. It is common understanding of students and parents that honours subjects are desirable in higher studies than those of the general subjects and accordingly, they ask their children to opt Honours instead of General course. Again, one should not believe in the rumours that General students are not eligible for higher studies leading to MA/MSc/ M.Com. In fact, General students have more advantages than Honours students as far as academic scopes/careers are concerned. To be brief, a graduate in General Course having the uniform knowledge of the three subjects, unlike

a Honours graduate, can avail the opportunity of obtaining master/Ph.D degree in any of the three subjects or all of the three one after another, if he or she desires to do so. Whereas, Honours graduates will get chance to do master degree only in one subject in which he or she is offering Hons. subject. But, to the worries of many innocent parents and students, college authorities are asking students to opt Honours courses in large number, in the present practice, irrespective of whether they are interested to do post graduation or not, whether the students get high marks or not, and the like. In a nutshell, the very academic exercise/ practice that is going on now in govt. colleges are unhealthy and unproductive one. To say the least, the continuing academic exercises, of giving only the Hons. degree without General/ Pass course degree being practised by college authorities, are just for creating unemployment problems and to produce unfit graduates in the highly competitive job markets of today. It is a great injustice done to students and society by authorities in govt colleges and the same must be stopped by the authorities in the concerned department of the state govt.

It is a common knowledge that general students who are not interested to go for higher studies but to end up studies by becoming graduates only are compelled to face uphill task of undergoing a comparatively bigger and tougher syllabus of Hons. course unnecessarily, and thereby making many of them failed or passed in lower divisions/grades in the 6th Semester Hons. examination and even by making them unfit for any higher studies or loss of academic careers, instead of getting high marks/ distinction in the 5th and 6th Semester General exam, which can make their life sublime even. Thus, General students by opting Honours course in their poor knowledge of the opportunity of learning three subjects in General course and passing easily is also derailed while Honours students on the other hand, by clubbing together with students having no charm /interest for higher studies have dampened their spirit and enthusiasm and degrade themselves as they are in constant association and touch with their incompatible partners in large number in the classes, labs, study tours, etc. for science students in particular and arts and commerce students as well.

In the light of the above facts, concerned authorities in the colleges, education department, Manipur University, DM University, etc. should contemplate seriously the consequences that lead to the withdrawal of General courses from the govt. colleges of the state, and clubbing of two incompatible groups of students in the name of Honours course in huge and unlimited numbers beyond manageable level than the normal intake capacity in Hons. course, in the larger interest of the varied students in our society, and should re-introduce the two parallel courses - Hons. and General in the govt. colleges where only the Hons. courses are in operation, beginning from the forthcoming academic session, 2020-2021. It may be noted that no college and university from the state can occupy a position in the 100 colleges and universities of the country except SK Women College, Nambol which ranked 188th of the colleges of the country in the Indian Ranking-2020 lists published by NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework), which was form for measuring the qualities of institutes in the country by MHRD. The re-introduction of General and Hons. courses in degree colleges of the state will bring quality in higher education and can catch up other universities in the North East, such as NEHU, GU, Dibrugarh varsity, Mizoram varsity, and Tejur varsity, which are ranked in comfortable positions among 100 ranking universities of the country, in the next few years. In the larger interest of the student community and the society in general and students in higher education in particular, all the intellectuals, public leaders, senior citizens, retired teachers etc who are in the society also should play their effective roles in right perspective in the present scenario, as I feel.

Sd/-

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