

3 killed 5 AR personnel injured in deadly ambush by rebel groups; MNPF, PLA and ULFA-I claims the attack

IT News
Imphal, July 30:

At least three personnel of the Assam Rifles were killed while 5 sustained critical injury after armed rebel group ambush a convoy of the 4th Assam Rifle near Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur's Chandel district yesterday evening.

A joint statement by Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF), Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and United Liberation Front of Asom – Independent (ULFA-I) has claimed responsibility of the attack.

Report reaching here said that a group of heavily armed rebel groups ambushed the convoy of 4th Assam Rifles when they were on routine duty at Sajik Tampak under Chakpikarong Police station at around 6 pm yesterday by blasting IED using remote control devices. Three IEDs were reportedly blasted killing 3 Assam Rifles personnel identified as Havildar Pranay



Kalita, Rifleman YM Konyak and Rifleman Ratan Salam. Source said that after the rebel blasted the IEDs several gun shots were fired upon them using automatic rifles and lethod gun. The AR convoy were reportedly returning to their base camp when the armed rebel group ambush them. 5 more AR personnel sustain critical injury after they were hit by the splinters of the blast as well as bullet fired upon them.

Those Assam Rifles personnel injured in the attack have been identified as Ngukhotil Haokip (54 yrs), Sikander Singh, Anish Kumar

Singh (27 yrs), Niyul Sarah (39 yrs) and Sandeep Kumar (35 yrs).

Meanwhile a joint statement of MNPF, RPF and ULFA(I) has stated that the attack was carried out As a course of independence struggle against Indian colonisation and expansionism.

The statement signed by Ruichumhao, Defence Secretary, MNPF, MM Ngouba, Chief of Army, PLA and Poreh Asom, Vice Chairman and Chief of Army Staff, ULFA (I) said that the Indian expansionism continues even as "the era of expansionism is over"

internationally.

"As the entire world has made up its mind against expansionism, the people of WeSEA are also countering against the expansionism of India. Therefore, the peoples of WeSEA are still fighting against colonial ruler India for our independence.", the statement said and added that as a course of independence struggle against Indian colonisation and expansionism, a combined force of Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF), Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and United Liberation

Front of Asom – Independent (ULFA-I) had conducted a joint military offensive against IOF (Indian Occupation Forces) on July 29, 2020 at Sajik Tampak area of Manipur. During this joint military offensive around 4 IOF personnel were killed in action and many more wounded.

The three rebel bodies statement also expressed regret to the fatalities injuring of the brother of WeSEA in the offensive action.

"We know that joining the Indian Occupation Force is not right because roguish India makes enmity among our brothers. Therefore, we would like to ask our brothers and sisters of WeSEA to please withdraw from the Indian forces and instead fight against the roguish India for our independence. We are also calling upon the people of WeSEA to stay away from the Indian Forces that they are the super spreader of infectious Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)", the statement said.

2 more COVID-19 patient died ; total fatal case reaches 3 in Manipur

IT News
Imphal, July 30:

Two more COVID-19 positive patients died today adding the number of fatalities due to COVID-19 pandemic to three. One among the two COVID-19 positive patients who died today was an in house patient while the other died at while providing treatment at RIMS emergency ward. His report of COVID-19 was known after being tested. However, the in house patient reportedly contracted the virus while undergoing treatment at RIMS.

Report said that the 48 years old deceased who died of COVID-19 early today morning at around 2.40 am had been undergoing treatment at the Nephrology department ward since June 8 after detecting Chronic Kidney and lung infections along with others. He hailed from Leimakhong . After an attendant of RIMS was found positive with the COVID-19,

mass testing has been conducting to almost all department that the infected attendant had contracted. On July 26 the patient was tested COVID-19 positive and since then he has been undergoing treatment at COVID-Care Center RIMS.

The other COVID-19 positive patient died at around 10.30 am today. He is around 47 years old and hailed from Langol area. After having complaint of respiratory problem the person was brought at RIMS Emergency ward yesterday evening. Report said that, the doctors at RIMS advice him to test COVID-19 and following the advice he reportedly tested at Babina Diagnostic center and return home. After his problem deteriorated he was reportedly rushed to RIMS emergency ward today morning where he succumbed. RIMS authority when checked found him COVID-19 positive the report added.

Cabinet Approves National Education Policy 2020

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the National Education Policy 2020 today, making way for large scale, transformational reforms in both school and higher education sectors. This is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student. (Details at page 2)

National Education Policy 2020 will bring transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country – HRD Minister

IT News from PIB
New Delhi, July 30:

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has said that National Education Policy 2020 will bring transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country. Speaking at media briefing in New Delhi today after Cabinet gave its approval to the New Education Policy 2020 earlier today, the HRD Minister said that the NEP was drawn up after the largest consultation and discussion process of its kind in the country. The Union Minister added that 2.25 lakh suggestions received after the draft was placed in public domain for consultations.

Expressing his gratitude to the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Cabinet for granting approval to the National Education Policy 2020, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said that with the implementation of this policy India, will emerge as a great knowledge centre and education destination in the world.

Shri Nishank said that this National Education Policy 2020

will play an important role in creating new India. The Union Minister congratulated all the students, teachers, parents and all stakeholders for the New Education Policy and called it a historic moment for the country. He further said that this policy will bring transformational reforms in both school and higher education sectors. He said that NEP2020 will ensure universal access to high-quality Early Childhood Care & Education across India. We will focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, ethics, teamwork & cooperation among children through a joyful pedagogy, he added.

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to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

MoS for HRD Ministry Shri Sanjay Dhotre said that the NEP 2020 is most comprehensive, radical and futuristic policy document in educational history of this country. It does not recognise any barrier in bringing quality and outcome-based education to each and everyone. It now includes children during their most foundational years, that is 3-5 years, for their care and education. Critical thinking, experiential and application-based learning, flexibility in learning, focus on life skills, multidisciplinary, and continuous review are some of the salient features of this policy. Bringing back 2 crore out-of-school and drop-out children and universalisation of school education from 3 years onwards reflect on our commitment to the philosophy of 'no one to be left behind'. Academic Bank of Credits, National Research Foundation, and National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy are some of the landmark policies, which will radically transform our educational ecosystem.

Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed 'NEP 2020'

IT News from PIB
New Delhi, July 30:

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has welcomed 'National Education Policy 2020'. Union Home Minister, in a tweet, said "Education is the foundation of any nation and for the last 34 years, India was in dire need of such a futuristic policy. I express my gratitude Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Union Minister of Education, Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on this landmark policy decision which will play an unprecedented role in building of a New India".

Amit Shah added that, it is truly a remarkable day in the history of Indian education system. Under the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi, Union Cabinet today approved 'National Education Policy 2020' for the 21st century; bringing in much needed historic reforms in both School & Higher Education.

Union Home Minister also mentioned in his tweet that "No nation in the world can excel by giving up its culture and values. The aim of Prime Minister Modi's National Education Policy 2020 is to create an education system which is deeply rooted in Indian ethos & can rebuild India as a global knowledge superpower, by providing high-quality education to all".

Union Home Minister also

asserted that 'National Education Policy 2020' will reach students of every section of the society and a special joint task force will be constituted to ensure the same. Amit Shah also said continuous and strategic steps will be taken to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education.

Union Home Minister added that "New Education Policy-2020 brings in various features like 5+3+3+4 system in school education, introduction of new 4-year courses, single point common regulatory system, fee fixation & common norms within board regulatory framework along with multiple entry and exit points in higher education".

The Union Home Minister pointed out that New Education Policy-2020 will also have the provision of academic credit bank, increased investment in education system, internationalism of education, special education zone for disadvantaged regions, upgradation of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya to 12 grade and an increased focus on Lok Vidya & the use of technology.

Amit Shah added that "The objective of National Education Policy 2020 is to bring in a huge transformational change in the Indian Education system through holistic and multidisciplinary approaches. Focus on different aspects will lead to the overall development of the children across the country."

Manipur government welcomes NEP 2020



IT News
Imphal, July 30:

The National Education Policy 2020 that was approved by the Union cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been welcome by the government of Manipur. In a press conference held today, Education Minister Th. Radheshyam said that the new policy will make large transformational reform in school and higher education in a large scale. "The newly reform policy is a welcome move. Our government appreciate the central leadership for bringing such a reform after 34 years

The reform NEP 2020 is making way for large scale, transformational reforms in both school and higher

education sectors. Education Minister Radheshyam said that this is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

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Important Highlights

School Education

Ensuring Universal Access at all levels of school education

NEP 2020 emphasizes on ensuring universal access to school education at all levels- pre school to secondary. Infrastructure support, innovative education centres to bring back dropouts into the mainstream, tracking of students and their learning levels, facilitating multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes, association of counselors or well-trained social workers with schools, open learning for classes 3,5 and 8 through NIOS and State Open Schools, secondary education programs equivalent to Grades 10 and 12, vocational courses, adult literacy and life-enrichment programs are some of the proposed ways for achieving this. About 2 crore out of school children will be brought back into main stream under NEP 2020.

Early Childhood Care & Education with new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure

With emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education, the 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively. This will bring the hitherto uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child. The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi pre schooling.

NCERT will develop a **National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFCEC)** for children up to the age of 8. ECCE will be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of institutions including Anganwadis and pre-schools that will have teachers and Anganwadi workers trained in the ECCE pedagogy and curriculum. The planning and implementation of ECCE will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs.

Attaining Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

Recognizing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy as an urgent and necessary prerequisite to learning, NEP 2020 calls for setting up of

a **National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** by MHRD. States will prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools for all learners by grade 3 by 2025. A **National Book Promotion Policy** is to be formulated.

Reforms in school curricula and pedagogy

The school curricula and pedagogy will aim for holistic development of learners by equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on experiential learning. Students will have increased flexibility and choice of subjects. There will be no rigid separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams.

Vocational education will start in schools from the 6th grade, and will include internships.

A new and comprehensive **National Curricular Framework for School Education**, NCFSE 2020-21, will be developed by the NCERT.

Multilingualism and the power of language

The policy has emphasized mother tongue/local language/regional language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond. Sanskrit to be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an option for students, including in the three-language formula. Other classical languages and literatures of India also to be available as options. No language will be imposed on any student. Students to participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative. Several foreign languages will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment.

Assessment Reforms

NEP 2020 envisages a shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment, which is more competency-based, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but redesigned with holistic development as the aim. A new **National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**, will be set up as a standard-setting body.

Equitable and Inclusive Education NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which include gender, socio-cultural, and geographical identities and disabilities. This includes setting up of **Gender Inclusion Fund** and

also **Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups. Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the foundational stage to higher education, with support of educators with cross disability training, resource centres, accommodations, assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and other support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs. Every state/district will be encouraged to establish "**Bal Bhavans**" as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. Free school infrastructure can be used as **Samajik Chetna Kendras** **Robust Teacher Recruitment and Career Path**

Teachers will be recruited through robust, transparent processes. Promotions will be merit-based, with a mechanism for multi-source periodic performance appraisals and available progression paths to become educational administrators or teacher educators. A common **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** will be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education by 2022, in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers and expert organizations from across levels and regions.

School Governance

Schools can be organized into complexes or clusters which will be the basic unit of governance and ensure availability of all resources including infrastructure, academic libraries and a strong professional teacher community.

Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education NEP 2020 envisages clear, separate systems for policy making, regulation, operations and academic matters. States/UTs will set up independent **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)**. Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability. The SCERT will develop a **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAACF)** through consultations with all stakeholders.

Higher Education

Increase GER to 50 % by 2035

NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. 3.5 Crore new seats will be added to Higher education institutions.

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

The policy envisages broad based, multi-disciplinary, holistic Under Graduate education with **flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification**. UG education can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification within this period. For example, Certificate after 1 year, Advanced Diploma after 2 years, Bachelor's Degree after 3 years and Bachelor's with Research after 4 years.

An **Academic Bank of Credit** is to be established for digitally storing academic credits earned from different HEIs so that these can be transferred and counted towards final degree earned.

Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in

the country.

The National Research Foundation will be created as an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.

Regulation

Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. HECI to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. HECI will function through faceless intervention through technology, & will have powers to penalise HEIs not conforming to norms and standards. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

Rationalised Institutional Architecture

Higher education institutions will be transformed into large, well resourced, vibrant multidisciplinary institutions providing high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of university will allow a spectrum of institutions that range from **Research-intensive Universities to Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges**. Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting **graded autonomy** to colleges. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty

NEP makes recommendations for motivating, energizing, and building capacity of faculty through clearly defined, independent, transparent recruitment, freedom to design curricula/pedagogy, incentivising excellence, movement into institutional leadership. Faculty not delivering on basic norms will be held accountable

Teacher Education

A new and comprehensive **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education**, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree. Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

Mentoring Mission

A National Mission for Mentoring will be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty - including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages - who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

Financial support for students

Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to support, foster, and track the progress of students receiving scholarships. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

New Policy aims for Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by 2030.

NEP 2020 will bring 2 crore out of school children back into the main stream

New 5+3+3+4 school curriculum with 12 years of schooling and 3 years of Anganwadi/ Pre-schooling

Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, no rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools ; Vocational Education to start from Class 6 with Internships

Teaching upto at least Grade 5 to be in mother tongue/ regional language

Assessment reforms with 360 degree Holistic Progress Card, tracking Student Progress for achieving Learning Outcomes

GER in higher education to be raised to 50 % by 2035 ; 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education

Higher Education curriculum to have Flexibility of Subjects- Multiple Entry / Exit to be allowed with appropriate certification

Academic Bank of Credits to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits

National Research Foundation to be established to foster a strong research culture

Light but Tight Regulation of Higher Education, single regulator with four separate verticals for different functions

Affiliation System to be phased out in 15 years with graded autonomy to colleges

NEP 2020 advocates increased use of technology with equity; National Educational Technology Forum to be created

NEP 2020 emphasizes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups

New Policy promotes Multilingualism in both schools and HEs; National Institute for Pali, Persian and Prakrit , Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation to be set up

Open and Distance Learning

This will be expanded to play a significant role in increasing GER. Measures such as online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc., will be taken to ensure it is at par with the highest quality in-class programmes.

Online Education and Digital Education

A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent to the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible, has been covered. A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the MHRD to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education.

Technology in education

An autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)**, will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education will be done to improve classroom processes, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streamline educational planning, administration and management

Promotion of Indian languages

To ensure the preservation, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages, NEP recommends setting an **Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)**, **National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit**, strengthening of Sanskrit and all language departments in HEIs, and use mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction in more HEI

programmes.

Internationalization of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.

Professional Education

All professional education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities etc will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.

Adult Education

Policy aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy.

Financing Education

The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

Unprecedented Consultations

NEP 2020 has been formulated after an unprecedented process of consultation that involved nearly over 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, 676 Districts. The MHRD initiated an unprecedented collaborative, inclusive, and highly participatory consultation process from January 2015. In May 2016, 'Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy' under the Chairmanship of Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, Former Cabinet Secretary, submitted its report. Based on this, the Ministry prepared 'Some Inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016'. In June 2017 a 'Committee for the Draft National Education Policy' was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist Padma Vibhushan, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, which submitted the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 to the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister on 31st May, 2019. The Draft National Education Policy 2019 was uploaded on MHRD's website and at 'MyGov Innovate' portal eliciting views/suggestions/ comments of stakeholders, including public.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact : 0385-3590330 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.

Kakching Khunou College prepares sanitizer bottles and distributes to frontline workers



News
Imphal, July 30:

In view of the ongoing total lockdown in Manipur following the serious cases of COVID 19 Community Transmission since the last a few days, the teachers of Kakching Khunou College, Umathel have prepared 200 bottles of the Isopropyl Alcohol, Hydrogen Peroxide and Glycerol based Hand Rub Solution (200 ml capacity each) and distributed to the front line workers who are

fighting COVID 19 in the Kakching District of Manipur. The hand sanitizers prepared by the college in the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended formulation has been distributed through the D.C. of Kakching District, S.P. of Kakching, Public Health Centre (PHC's), Police Outposts through OC Waikhong, CDPO Sugnu, OC Wangoo Lamkhai, Kakching Khunou Police Outpost, Medical Officer Kakching Khunou PHC etc.

Education Minister held meeting with representatives of the district administrations of Thoubal and kakching district;

IT News
Imphal, July 30:

Minister Education, Labour & Employment, Dr. Thokchom Radheshyam, also District in - Charge Thoubal and Kakching, held a meeting to assess the groundwork status and the preparedness for management of COVID - 19 pandemic in the districts. The meeting held at the Conference Hall, DC Office Thoubal was attended by MLA, Wangkhem Assembly Constituency, K. Meghachandra, MLA, Wangjing Tenthpa P. Brojen, District Nodal Officer, T. Ranjit Singh; Deputy Commissioner Smt. N. Bandana Devi, Superintendent of Police Dr. S. Ibomcha Singh; Chief Medical Officers Dr. N. Jayantakumar Singh and officials concerned. The Minister appreciated the dedication and efforts of the team of district administration. He sought for feasible suggestions and opinions to contain the rise in the cases in a better way and emphasised on the need to create mass awareness through all means to create awareness on COVID-19. He also suggested engaging local religious leaders/local popular leaders to give a message on social distancing, wearing face masks in public and personal hygiene among others to effectively create awareness among the local public. The ministerial team also visited Slopeland Public School, Khongjom to assess suitability for establishment of 200-300 bedded COVID Care Centre for better management of the COVID

pandemic in the Thoubal District. Briefing the media, the Minister said that it is very unfortunate that there have been newspaper reports regarding restrictions of the movement of people and patients of Thoubal district, and discriminating them because of the rise in the number of COVID positive cases in the district. He said that a letter has been written to the Hon'ble Minister of Health of the state highlighting the unfortunate incident. He said that such incidents should not be repeated not only to the people of Thoubal district, but also to the people from other parts of the state. Dr. Th. Radheshyam also appealed to the people to support and encourage the frontline workers, especially the health workers who are working hard to safeguard the people and not to dishearten them for carrying out their duty at this unprecedented time. Suggestions for the use of readily available disinfectants like bleaching powder or phenyl at containment zones in order to meet the requirement of the hour were expressed to the Minister. Later the Minister visited Kakching district and held a meeting with the Deputy Commissioners Valentina Arambam; Superintendents of Police, Victoria Yengkhom, Chief Medical Officer Dr. T. Manihar Singh, and officials concerned. The DC and the law enforcing agencies also expressed their opinions concerning the management and preparedness in the districts as base on the situation and requirements.

TSA condemns Th. Brinda terming her act as Wild full

IT News
Imphal, July 30:

The Thadou Students' Association, General Headquarters (TSA-GHQ) expressed strong condemnation to the act of Th Brinda, MPS, which they term it as wild full, for openly posting derogatory, defamatory and contemptuous post in her Facebook account against the Special Judge (ND&PS) and the Judiciary System on May 21, 2020. The High Court of Manipur has taken-up a Suo Moto criminal contempt case and summoned the then Additional Superintendent of Police (Addl. SP) of Narcotics and Affairs of Border (NAB) Th Brinda for launching expletives against the Court for granting three weeks bail to former ADC Chandel Chairman Sesei Zou in a 2018 drug smuggling case. A statement of the student body said that Sesei Zou was arrested in June 20, 2018 and charge sheeted for his complicity in the case whereas many major drug case in the state are yet to be charge sheeted. But it has come to

light that Th Brinda had demanded a staggering sum of money so as to not charge-sheet the accuse which was to be carried out within 6 months of the arrest as per the prevailing norms so that Zou could be released on statutory bail (automatic bail). Just a day before the expiration of 6 months (180 days) on the 17th day, she upped the ante, by doubling the amount which eventually led to the breakdown of the negotiation as the family were unable to cough up her demand. A charge sheet was promptly filed against Zou and therefore trials starts immediately. We appreciate state police department for submitting the charge sheet on time and the matter has been progressing with the trial conducted under way by the ND&PS Court. "We vehemently condemned the racial remarks of Th Brinda in her Facebook post on Saturday, July 25, 2020 at 10:36 AM to an IPS officer belonging to Schedule Tribe (ST) category stating "One IPS Quota Police threatened my extended family member with dire consequences. What

is the DGP saying on it? Shall we have complete show down?" Reservations are the constitutional rights of the tribals. We are against the remarks and judgement made by Th Brinda over the hills people of the state by treating people based on caste, creed and race. Such acts of racism at its highest level by a Police Officer are completely uncouth. She should apologize for hurting the sentiments of the hill people", the TSA statement said. As regards to the menace of drugs in the state, TSA supports all anti-drugs measures and steps taken by the churches, governments, NGOs, etc. The motto of "War on Drugs" was a mere slogan until Shri N. Biren, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Manipur took political risks and started educating by consulting and involving Church Leaders, Civil Societies, Police Department, District Administrations of the state through Seminar, Workshop, etc. This initiative and action of anti-drugs movement by Shri N. Biren Singh is laudable. We truly appreciate Shri N. Biren Singh

led Manipur government for adopting a bold step in the much needed drugs affected state by setting up a Fast Track Court for ND&PS cases in April, 2018, without which more than hundred cases will not be disposed of with conviction. The statement however added that Th Brinda also deserves to be given her due appreciation for her excellent performance in busting drugs cartels where she was deservedly awarded the "Gallantry Medal & Chief Minister's Commendation" in 2018 and "Best Performer Award" in 2019. But her disdain towards the judiciary, the executives, the police department and her interference in political matters that was seen in her Facebook post is untenable. There are instances where the then Addl SP(NAB) acts to be double standard wherein her sub-ordinates staffs were involved in drug mafia. The fact that Radhakishore, a Sub-Inspector (SI) at Narcotics and Affairs of Border (NAB) along with one (1) constable by name Sanjoy, three (3) VDF personnel and two(2) civilians

were arrested by Thoubal Police on the intervening night of 12th March, 2019 for being involved in drugs trafficking. Thereafter, on 12th March, 2019 morning, with the advice of Th Brinda, the then OC, NAB Rishikesh Sharma went to Dr. S. Ibomcha, SP, Thoubal and Shri K. Jayanta, IGP Zone-I for the release of Radhakishore and all. There was also an instance where seized drugs were lost in the custody of NAB PS during which Th. Brinda was the Addl SP(NAB). Two (2) of the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of NAB PS viz. Rishikesh Sharma & Chandrakumar are now put under suspension. All this sums up that during her posting as Addl. SP (NAB), her conduct on drugs appears to be doubtful. The TSA condemn the breach of conduct by Th Brinda, a police officer in public domain threatening decorum to a law and order enforcement agencies. It is unfortunate that in spite of her outstanding performance she is communal in her intent and indiscipline in her conduct which is unbecoming of a police officer, the statement added.

ATRPFM demands CBI Enquiry

IT News
Imphal, July 30:

The All Tribal Rights' Protection Forum Manipur (ATRPFM) has expressed strong resentment to see the increasing events of smuggling drugs and transportation of tobacco items. "We don't want to point out any particular incident of caught or arrest as not only those incidents are the true picture of the situation, there are numbers of cases which are not make known to the public but settled among the parties or the authorities have no knowledge about it", a statement said while demanding CBI enquiry to the

numerous drug smuggling case. The ATRPFM however appreciated the slogan of the Chief Minister's "Fight against Drugs", but said that the actual facts on the ground looks quite opposite which is a great disappointment for the general public. "There are allegations and counter-allegations among elected people representatives, CSOs and police officers. This is a clear indication that there is something wrong in the system and we are pretty sure that smuggling drugs and transportation of tobacco products and availability of such products in the retail

shops with much higher prices than the actual prices in spite of Covid-19 protocols, there are links between smugglers and transporters of such products and some public leaders," it added. The forum said that there are already series of incidents in connection with smuggling of drugs and transportation of tobacco items since for the last few years and in almost all major such incidents, there are allegations of involvements of elected representatives. Consumption of tobacco products are make an offense, however, ironically, transportation and availability of such products with much higher prices are

left unchecked which is a great financial burden for the ordinary people. In addition to already suffering of the common people due to long period of lockdown, prices of essential commodities and tobacco products carry hefty price tag. A situation where the rich becomes much richer and poor becomes much poorer has been created with unfair commercial activities. Thus, the actual intention of the State Government and law enforcing agencies becomes questionable. The ATRFM also recalled the case of Addl. SP, Thounaojam Brinda and said that the incident further created doubts about the

transparency, accountability, integrity and sincerity of the State government in fighting against drugs. As far as our knowledge is concerned, Th. Brinda is committed in the matter of drugs with sincerity and integrity in all respects in spite of all odds she has been facing to save the future generations of our people and the State Government is not expected to fight against such a committed police officer if the slogan "Fight against Drugs" is to be translated into action. The ATRPFM said demanding CBI enquiries in all major cases without distinction as to status, power or political affiliation for the ends of justice and in public interest.

Sushant Singh Rajput was murdered: Subramanian Swamy

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, July 30:

The death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput at his residence in Mumbai last month, has taken a different turn with BJP MP Subramanian Swamy coming out with a 26-point note questioning 'marks on the body' of the deceased to prove his stand in the case, alleging that he was murdered. Swamy in a tweet has claimed that there was a strangulation mark on his neck told a different story. Swamy's note which is being widely circulated has created a flutter. The list made by Swamy includes everything from the marks on Sushant's body to the shape of the strangulation mark on his neck and also includes questions like why no table-chair was found in his room, why his eyes didn't pop out or froth didn't come from the mouth. In one of the points, he also objects to the stoic silence of Sushant's friends, none of whom has come out to say that it wasn't a suicide. Even as a four member police

team from Bihar interrogated Sushant's ex-girlfriend actress Ankita Lokhande, on Wednesday, in the light of an FIR filed by Sushant's father with Bihar police, alleging that the actress Rhea Chakraborty, abetted the suicide of his son, Rhea filed a petition in the Supreme Court requesting that the case filed in Bihar be transferred to Mumbai, since the Mumbai police were already investigating the matter. The petition was filed by Senior lawyer Satish Maneshinde, on behalf of Rhea. During her interrogation by Bihar police, Ankita reportedly revealed the conversation she had with Sushant in 2019. During the chat, Sushant had told her that he wanted to end relationship with Rhea since she was harassing him. Sushant died by suicide at his Bandra flat in Mumbai on 14 June 2020. Subsequently his father KK Singh, lodged the FIR at the Rajiv Nagar police station in Patna against Rhea and her family including Indrajit Chakraborty, Sandhya Chakraborty and Shruti Modi,

Showik Chakraborty under Sections 341, 342, 380, 406, 420, 306 and 120 (B) of the IPC. The points raised by Singh in FIR are: Sushant, who wanted to leave work in films and shift base to Coorg in Karnataka, did not receive support from Rhea. When she was convinced that Sushant will not agree to stay in Mumbai, she took huge cash, jewellery, credit cards, important documents, laptop and medical records and left

his house on 8 June. She also blocked Sushant's number on her phone. In December 2019, Rhea forcibly made Sushant change his mobile number to stop him from talking to his family and also did not allow him to visit his family in Patna. In 2019, Sushant had Rs 17 crore in his account but within months Rs 15 crore was transferred to accounts not linked to him. Also Rhea had taken all

documents and had threatened to prove Sushant as a mentally disturbed person. He was not suffering from any mental disorder before he met Rhea in 2019. Besides, Rhea was insisting that Sushant can sign any film provided she was paired opposite him. Sushant's reliable staff was replaced by Rhea, with people known to her so that she can micro-manage him, his father alleged.

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COVID-19 Asymptomatic and Rapid Antigen Testing

By- Prof Lisam Shanjukumar Singh
Head of Department
Biotechnology Department
Manipur University

Till 29th July 2020, the total number of persons infected with the novel Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in the state is 2458. Out of them, 1653 persons have been recovered from the disease (COVID-19) while 805 persons are undergoing treatment. As per reports, a 56-year-old man succumbed to the disease at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS). It is the first report of COVID-19 death in Manipur. One more death related to COVID-19 at RIMS on 30th July has been reported on social media (subjected to correction). The number of COVID-19 infected persons continues to rise in Manipur adding to the number of localities/Leikai declared as containment area. At the same time, the number of deaths due to COVID-19 seems to increase. Among the people of Manipur, there is fear that community transmission in the state has begun. Manipur was in the category of green zone for a long period after the two infected persons with the SARS-CoV-2, who have returned from outside the state recovered. Many people including so called experts started explaining why Manipur is not affected much by COVID-19. In many TV discussion, experts explained that because of food habits or fermented foods or UV radiation, the people of Manipur are protected against COVID-19. A research can be done on the issue and scientific truth can be found out later. But it is not the time to convince the people that you are protected from COVID-19 because of food habits or fermented foods without scientific evidence. It was also said by experts on TV that people of Manipur should not be worried of the pandemic because no one has died because of COVID-19 in the state so far. The question is "How many COVID-19 related deaths would set an alarm for us to start worrying?"

Recently, a doctor mentioned on a TV discussion (Impact TV *Manung Huma*) that asymptomatic (not showing symptom of COVID-19) person infected with SARS-CoV-2 does not transmit the disease to other persons. However, the following selected recent case reports from around the world demonstrated that asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 transmit the disease to other persons. According to a case study (JAMA. 2020 Apr 14; 323(14): 1406-1407), an asymptomatic 20-year-old woman, lives in Wuhan and travelled to Anyang on January 10, 2020. As of February 11, she had no elevated temperature measured or self-reported fever and no gastrointestinal or respiratory symptoms, including cough and sore throat as reported or observed by doctors. RT-PCR results showed that she was negative on January 26, positive on January 28. She transmitted the disease to 4 persons whom she met on 10 and 13 January. None of the patients had visited Wuhan or been in contact with any other people who had travelled to Wuhan except the woman. One person out of 4, developed fever and sore throat on January 17 and went to the local clinic for treatment. The other 3 persons started developing fever and respiratory symptoms between January 23 and January 26 and were admitted to the hospital on the same day. All patients had RT-PCR test results positive for COVID-19 within 1 day. It has been reported that a 53-year-old UK patient with an asymptomatic COVID-19 infection may have caused 11 infections [Gulland A. *Could you be a coronavirus super-spreader?*. 2020 [EB/OL]. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/body/could-coronavirus-super-spreader/>].

Another report pointed out that one asymptomatic person who experienced 19 days from contact with the source of infection to RT-PCR confirmation may have infected 5 people [Bai Y, Yao L, Wei T, Tian F, Jin DY, Chen L, et al. *Presumed asymptomatic carrier transmission of COVID-19*. *Jama*. 2020;323(14):1406-7]. These asymptomatic cases may have played a role in the transmission and therefore pose a significant challenge to infection control [Gao Z et al. *A systematic review of asymptomatic infections with COVID-19*. *Journal of Microbiology, Immunology and Infection*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmii.2020.05.001>]. Similarly, one asymptomatic child (aged 10 years) who had a history of travel to Wuhan from Shenzhen was described in the report about a family cluster of COVID-19. The child was diagnosed as an asymptomatic carrier by screening after other family members developed symptoms [Chan JF, et al. *A familial cluster of pneumonia associated with the 2019 novel coronavirus indicating person-to-person transmission: a study of a family cluster*. *Lancet*. 2020;395:514-523]. On February 25, a case of COVID-19 transmission occurring in a prison in Rencheng district, Jining city, Shandong province was reported. On February 9, a man was released from prison and returned home. But he was informed to isolate himself because a prison officer was confirmed to have COVID-19 infection on February 14. In order to avoid isolation and observation, the man absconded from his home. Later, it was confirmed that this man was an asymptomatic carrier, and his brother who had close contact with him became infected with COVID-19. The above case reports are examples of asymptomatic transmission.

Studies have reported that the viral load that was detected in the asymptomatic patients was similar to that in the symptomatic patients, which also theoretically suggests the potential transmission of asymptomatic patients [Zou L, Ruan F, Huang M, et al. *SARS-CoV-2 viral load in upper respiratory specimens of infected patients*. *N Engl J Med*. 2020;382(12):1177-1179, and Chen Y, et al. *The epidemiological characteristics of infection in close contacts of COVID-19 in Ningbo city* [J/OL]. *Chin J Epidemiol* 2020;41]. If one conducts a thorough research on the COVID-19 infection in Manipur, there may be many good examples of asymptomatic transmission. Indeed, COVID-19 transmission through asymptomatic carriers is a challenge to containment [Xingxia Yu, and Rongrong Yang. *Influenza Other Respi Viruses*. 2020;14:474-475]. Researchers have hypothesised that salivary glands may function as potential reservoirs of SARS-CoV-2 in asymptomatic infected individuals [Xu J, Li Y, Gan F, Du Y, Yao Y. *Salivary Glands: Potential Reservoirs for COVID-19 Asymptomatic Infection*. *J Dent Res*. 2020;22034520918518]. ACE2 is an important receptor for COVID-19. Salivary gland epithelial cells express a high level of ACE2. The expression of ACE2 in minor salivary glands was higher than that in lungs which suggests salivary glands could be a potential target for COVID-19. In addition, SARS-CoV RNA can be detected in saliva before lung lesions appear. This may explain the presence of asymptomatic infections. This suggests that COVID-19 transmitted by asymptomatic infection may originate from infected saliva [J. Xu, et al. *Salivary Glands: Potential Reservoirs for COVID-19 Asymptomatic Infection*. *Journal of Dental Research*

2020, Vol. 99(8) 989]. From the facts mentioned above, a doctor (expert) claiming on TV discussion that asymptomatic persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 does not transmit the disease to other persons is wrong and that is very dangerous proposition in the present situation of Manipur, as disseminating false information would aggravate misconception among the public. The next important issue is the Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) which has been in strategic use recently in Manipur. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recommended the use of Standard Q COVID-19 Ag detection assay (antigen detection test) as a point of care diagnostic assay for testing under certain settings in combination with RT-PCR test. The RAT is to detect a protein present at the outer cover of the SARS-CoV-2 (here the protein is called as antigen). In the testing kit antibody against the protein (antigen) is present. Antigen and antibody binding is very specific like a lock and a key, and the binding reaction which is called as agglutination reactions is very fast. The agglutinated complex of antigen and antibody becomes insoluble and therefore can be detected easily by naked eyes if a dye is used. The testing can be done in 30 mins. If no virus is present in the sample, the agglutination complex will not be formed. Although it is very specific, sensitivity is low. A certain amount of antigen and antibody is required to form the agglutinated complex. Unlike RT-PCR, there is no amplification step for the molecules to be detected. Because protein can not be amplified, unlike RNA and DNA. Therefore, when amount of virus is low in the sample, no agglutination is formed or very little agglutination is formed which cannot be detected. Therefore, the false-negative result is high in the case of Rapid Antigen

Testing when the viral load of the patient is low. "ICMR has recommended that those found negative in the rapid antigen test should be definitely tested sequentially by RT-PCR to rule out infection, whereas a positive test should be considered as a true positive and does not need reconfirmation by RT-PCR test". It is also clearly written on top of the instructions provided by the manufacture of the rapid antigen testing kit (SD Biosensor) that "it is recommended to perform ANTIGEN TESTING WITHIN 6 DAYS after symptom onset, and ANTIBODY TEST FROM 7 DAYS after symptom onset". Dr Nivedita Gupta from ICMR also told the Delhi High Court in a court case against Delhi Government that ICMR never said asymptomatic rapid antigen test negative persons should not undergo RT/PCR testing, it only said the symptomatic rapid antigen test negative patients be given priority. Taking note of the ICMR stand, the court told the Delhi government that it has to "strictly" follow the guidelines on COVID-19 testing as issued by ICMR and not according to its own interpretation. The important point here is that

the rapid antigen testing is not for asymptomatic persons. Coming to the situation of Manipur, there are many questions to be answered. Whether the persons who found negative by the rapid antigen test are confirmed by RT-PCR? If not the case, Manipur is on the verge of explosive rise in COVID-19 cases. If a person is an asymptomatic carrier but the viral load is not detectable by the rapid antigen testing, the result of the rapid antigen testing will show negative result. When such persons are declared to be free from COVID-19 based only on the rapid antigen testing and set free without any care, what will be the situation in Manipur. A study can be done in the case of Manipur by conducting parallel testing of RT-PCR and RAT in a selected small population of Manipur so that the sensibility of the RAT may be determined. It is high time for the state to educate itself and act without delay based on facts and scientific evidences rather than acting for a temporary solution basis.

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Sports News

Former skipper of physically challenged India cricket team applies for peon's job

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 30:

Financial stringency has compelled former skipper of physically challenged India cricket team Dinesh Sain to apply for peon's job at the National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) located in New Delhi. Inflicted with polio since birth, Dinesh Sain played nine games for India's physically challenged team between 2015 and 2019, also captaining the side during this time. But now at the age of 35, he is looking for a steady income to support his family — wife and a one-year-old toddler. Dinesh Sain has worn the India blue on a cricket field and even led the national team for the physically challenged but the vagaries of life have now made him desperate for a peon's job at the NADA. "I am 35 and currently in first year of my graduation. After 12th standard, I only played cricket and represented India but I have no money now. There is one vacancy for a peon's post in NADA," Sain said. If he gets the job at NADA, it will help him remain attached to the game, mentoring young players. "I will not play cricket anymore but I need to feed my

family and I want to remain attached to the game," he said. Sain resides in Sonapat (Haryana). His elder brothers have looked after him and his family till now but he says that time is running out and that is why he is desperate to get the NADA job. "The age limit for normal people in this job (peon) is 25 and for the physically handicapped category, it is 35 years. So, this is my last chance to get a government job," Dinesh, who had earlier appeared for peon's interview at District court, said. His only regret these days is the fact that despite playing for the country, fame and money eluded him. "One of my legs has been affected by polio since birth. But my passion for cricket never made me realise I am disabled. In the 2015 edition of a five-nation tournament in Bangladesh, I was highest wicket-taker with 8 wickets from four games. They included two wickets against Pakistan, he recollected. In fact, Dinesh travelled to England in 2019 with the team as an official. The team emerged champion. He was included in the squad, not as player but to guide the new boys.

Unlock III-night curfew gone, gyms and yoga institutes to open from Aug.5 Schools to remain shut till 31 August; Lockdown to continue till 31 August in the containment zones

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 30:

As per guidelines for Unlock III issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), effective First August, a night curfew restricting the movement of people between 10 PM and 5 AM, will be done away with, while Yoga institutes and gymnasiums will be allowed to open from 5 August. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Yoga institutes and gymnasiums will be issued by the Union Ministry of Health & Family

Welfare (UMHFW) to ensure social distancing and contain the spread of COVID-19. There shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods and no separate permission/ approval/ permit will be required for such movements. International air travel of passengers has been already been permitted in a limited manner under the Vande Bharat mission. Further opening up will take place in a calibrated manner. The Independence Day functions will also be

allowed, but with social distancing and by following other health protocols like wearing masks. However schools, coaching institutes and colleges will remain shut till 31 August. Similarly Metro rail, cinema halls, swimming pools, theatres and bars will also continue to remain shut. Besides the schools and colleges will stay shut till 31 August. Similarly large congregations — whether social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious functions and others — will be

prohibited. Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the Containment Zones until 31 August. The home ministry also said that states and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may prohibit certain activities outside the Containment zones, or impose such restrictions as deemed necessary. Within the containment zones, strict perimeter control shall be maintained and only essential activities allowed. The Containment Zones will be notified on the websites of the respective District Collectors

and by the States/ Union Territories (UTs) and information will also be shared with the (UMHFW), the statement read. MHA said that MOHFW will monitor the proper delineation of Containment Zones and implementation of the containment measures. The new guidelines, issued on Wednesday are based on feedback received from states and UTs, and extensive consultations held with related central ministries and departments, the statement said.