

Chief Minister announces Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs ex-gratia for media persons who succumb while covering COVID-19 related report

IT News
Imphal, June 1:

Chief Minister N Biren Singh today announced rupees 5 to 10 lakhs ex-gratia for media persons who succumb to COVID 19 in line of their duties. The announcement came following a representation from both Editors' Guild Manipur (EGM) and All Manipur Working Journalist

(AMWJU) who called on him today to discuss the distresses media houses in Manipur were going through because of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The media team raised the issue of media employees who are at the risk of exposure to COVID 19 while covering news during the pandemic as well as the pressure on the media houses to keep the media houses operating. EGM and AMWJU drew the attention of the CM to various packages announced by other states for journalists and also closing or downsizing of many national media houses in India because of the pandemic.

"In Manipur we have kept the media running, albeit



with reduced page numbers, after understanding the need of an active media in combating the COVID-19 pandemic" the team told the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, after listening to the joint team assured an ex-gratia for any media person who succumb to COVID-19. He also said that similar scheme for other frontline workers like the police among others will be given after putting up in a Cabinet meeting. He also directed

the Chief Secretary Suresh Babu, who was also present at the meeting, to clear all pending advertising bills owed to various government departments to ease the financial stress on the media houses of Manipur.

Member of Editors' Guild Manipur and All Manipur Working Journalist's Union, thanked the Chief Minister for recognizing the contribution of the media in fighting the COVID 19 pandemic.

10 more tested positive with novel coronavirus; numbers climbs to 81, active cases stands at 70

IT News
Imphal, June 1:

Ten more persons were tested with novel coronavirus today in the state of Manipur making the number of positive cases to 81. Total active case is 70 and at least 11 people have been

recovered so far. There is no report of any casualty and those detected positive with the virus are all from among those who return to the state from outside the state.

According to a statement from the state Health department 7 (seven) samples tested at the VRDL of Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) were tested positive of novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours while the other three were tested positive at the VRDL of Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal on Sunday night. Of those confirmed

at JNIMS two are residents of Senapati district and were returnees from Chennai. The other two are from Bishnupur district and returnees from Uttar Pradesh. The other three tested positive at VRDL of JNIMS are from Chandel district.

The three persons confirmed at RIMS were two males of the ages 23 and 22 years and a 22 years old female from Thoubal district and returnees from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Hyderabad respectively. Their conditions are stable and they will be shifted to Covid Care Facilities at RIMS and JNIMS.

Several states announce relaxations

Agency
New Delhi, June 1:

The first phase of nationwide unlock starts today. Unlock 1 will allow a phased reopening of most activities across India. Centre on Saturday Unlock 1 guidelines limiting the lockdown only to the containment zones.

Government also allowed unfettered movement of goods and persons between states and within states. Several states have also released guidelines for the fifth phase of lockdown or Unlock 1.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged people to be more careful in their fight against Covid-19 as country prepares to Unlock. In his Mann Ki Baat programme, Mr Modi said becoming careless or lachadaisical cannot be an option. He said as economic activities have resumed, social distancing has become even more important now.

Distribution of rice in Imphal West for May completed

IT News
Imphal, June 1:

A release by the DIRPS, govt. Of Manipur said that a total of 17606.46 quintal of rice has been distributed to the beneficiaries of both AAY and PHH of the Assembly Constituencies of Thangmeiband, Uripok, Keishamthong, Yaikul, Singjamei, Mayang Imphal, Naoriya Pakhanglakpa, Langthabal and Lamshang in Imphal West district for the month of May.

It added that a total of 204.01 quintal of Dal was also lifted for Imphal West district while 403.03 quintal of Dal has been distributed in Uripok, Singjamei,

Keishamthong and Lamshang Assembly constituencies yesterday.

As for rice under NFSA, 2390 quintal of rice has been lifted for Andro Assembly Constituency in Imphal East district yesterday. For Khundrakpam, Thongju, Khurai, and Lamlai assembly constituencies lifting of rice for the month of June has been reported complete.

All the PDS items are being distributed by the State Government to ensure that none suffer on account of non-availability of foodgrains on the backdrop of the outbreak of COVID-19 and the ongoing lockdown in the State.

Railways to ferry over 1,45,000 passengers by 200 Special trains across country

New Delhi, June 1:

Two hundred special trains are running across the country from today. These services are in addition to Shramik Special trains and 30 Special AC trains. Railway Ministry said, more than one lakh 45 thousand passengers will travel on day one.

Hyderabad - New Delhi Telangana Express, Karnataka Express between Ahmedabad and Mumbai Central, Gombi express from Lucknow, Kota- Hazrat Nizamuddin Jan Shatabdi Express, Bengaluru- Hubli Jan Shatabdi Express, Patna Howrah Jan Shatabdi Express among others have started operation so far. Around 26 lakh passengers have booked their tickets for Advance Reservation Period 1st to 30th June. These trains are fully reserved trains having both AC and Non-AC classes. General coaches have reserved sitting accommodation.

Our Correspondent reports that there will be no unreserved coach in the train. The passengers will have to reach the station 90 minutes

in advance to facilitate thermal screening at the station. All passengers will be screened and only asymptomatic passengers will be allowed to board the train. Only passengers with confirmed and RAC tickets will be allowed to enter the Railway Station and board the train. All passengers will have to wear face masks and observe social distancing during travel. On arrival at their destination, the travelling passengers will adhere to such health protocols as are prescribed by the destination State and Union territories. No Linen, blankets and curtains will be provided inside the train. Use of Aarogya Setu App will be mandatory for all passengers. Online Booking of tickets for these trains is being done through IRCTC website or through Mobile App. Railways has also allowed booking of reservation tickets through the reservation counters, Common Service Centers and Ticketing agents. Booking of Tatkal ticket can be done from 29th June for journey date 30 June and onwards.

Face shield distributed

IT News

Tengnoupal, June 1:

Superintendent of Police, Tengnoupal, Th Vikramjit has distributed face shield to district police official today.

The face shield was donated by Bijen Ngangbam, General Secretary of BJP Manipur Pradesh, OBC Morcha. During the distribution of mask, SP, Vikramjit instructed the district police personnel to use protective kits while checking vehicle and interacting with people.

No Tobacco Day

IT News

Imphal, June 1:

Troops of Indian Army and Assam Rifle on the occasion of 'World No Tobacco Day' organised a campaign in Senapati, Tamenglong and Kangpokpi districts of Manipur on Sunday.

The campaign was conducted to spread awareness on the harmful effects of Tobacco use in the present COVID-19 environment. During the campaign, dangers of Tobacco use on health especially during COVID-19 scenario was highlighted through display of banners, posters and distribution of pamphlets. In Tamei, a vehicle based awareness campaign spread the message of harmful effects of Tobacco use and prevention from COVID 19. In Tamenglong and Senapati, awareness activities were conducted for youth in coordination with CSOs.

Tree plantation

IT News

Imphal, June 1

Langmeith youth Development Association (LYDA) in hands with the students today conducted social service at Langmeith village in Thoubal district. The association also planted saplings in the surroundings of Langmeith upper primary school.

E-Pharmacy tool dropped from Aarogya setu

IT News

Imphal, June 1

Manipur Chemists and Druggists Association (MSDA) today welcome the dropping of e-pharmaceutical companies from government-run Aarogya Setu mobile app. Chemists all over the country including the Punjab Chemists' Association affiliated to the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists had strongly opposed the promotion of private e-pharma firms on a mobile app promoted by the government.

It pleaded that a website www.aarogyasetu.in,

linked to the official mobile application Aarogya Setu in 'illegal, arbitrary and discriminatory' manner, promotes and act as a marketing tool for e-pharmacies only.

Chemists associations from all over the country had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that it was not mentioned on the website that these medicines could be procured from local chemists. This was misleading and gives an impression that medicines used in the treatment of Covid-19 in India were available only through e-pharmacies. They had alleged that several e-

pharmacies were operating illegally and in violation of provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. A number of petitions were pending in the court against operating of these pharmacies already.

Surinder Dugal, president, North India Chemists and Druggists Association, said the Central government had dropped e-pharmacies advertisements from the app and this was informed by the government late yesterday evening. He said that we appreciate the government decision following the concern raised by the chemists all over the country.

Despite pending inquiry, "Yes Bank" authorised to collect funds for PMCF

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, May 31:

While inquiries by the central agencies about financial mismanagement are still on and RBI's plan to reconstruct the bank yet to take proper shape, the Union Government has authorised "Yes Bank" to collect funds through the PM CARES Fund (PMCF).

The PMCF was created on 28 March, in view of the COVID-19 crisis as the prime minister as its chairperson and senior cabinet members serving as trustees. SBI Bank of Maharashtra and Axis Bank are the other banks authorised to collect donations for the PMCF.

"Yes Bank" receives donations in its account No 000394600001910, Chanakypuri branch, New Delhi. The donations are also accepted through digital banking channels. Net Banking and mobile banking via IMPS, RTGS or NEFT.

Soon after it was given responsibility to collect funds for PMCF, Yes Bank CEO and MD Prashant Kumar, on 7 April tweeted that "As we navigate the COVID-19 situation, we pledge to support fellow citizens. We've been given an opportunity to serve the nation through a mandate to collect donations for the @PMCF Fund. We urge you to join our pledge & donate to the cause; [@PMCFIndia](https://yesbank.in/donations-to-pm-cares-fund)."

On March 14, the bank had reported a record loss of Rs 18,564 crore for the quarter ending December 31, 2020, as against a profit of Rs 1,000 crore in the year-ago quarter. RBI had also imposed a moratorium on withdrawals from the bank. However it was lifted on 19 March, thereby enabling customers to access full banking services.

But the fact is that, the

inquiry by Enforcement Directorate and CBI about irregular investment of Rs 3,700 crore by "Yes Bank" in short-term debentures of the scam-hit Mumbai based Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL) is still on and Yes Banks' former CEO and co founder Rana Kapoor and DHFL promoters- Dheeraj Wadhawan and Kapil Wadhawan continue to be in ED's custody and have been denied bail by the Bombay High Court.

On 13 March, 2020 central cabinet approved the reconstruction plan of "Yes Bank", under which SBI is to invest Rs. 7,250 crore, HDFC and ICICI, will invest Rs.1000 crore each and Axis Bank will put in Rs.600 crore. SBI will have to retain a minimum 26% stake in "Yes Bank" for three years.

Vishwas Utagi, former General Secretary Maharashtra State Bank Employees Federation and

Vice President All India Bank Employees Association said that the plan of reconstruction of "Yes Bank" is yet to be completed. Most of the times such plans remain merely on paper. Besides the setting up of PMCF itself is erroneous, since we already have PM's national relief fund.

In the meanwhile in response to an RTI application filed on first April, 2020 by a Harsha Kandukuri, a law student at the Azim Premji University in Bengaluru (Karnataka), seeking information about PMCF's trust deed and government orders relating to its creation and operation of the fund, on 29 May, 2020 PMO replied that "PM CARES Fund is not a Public Authority under the ambit of Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005. However, relevant information in respect of PM CARES Fund may be seen on the Website pmcares.gov.in".

★ Editorial

Lockdown phobia

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the first lockdown in the entire nation on March 24 as a preventive measure to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus appreciations pours from all sections of people irrespective of the differences in political ideology. When the second and the third lockdown was announced, sensible people across the country considered it as a wise decision as lockdown is the only means left to counter the spread of the novel coronavirus. The step taken up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was appreciated by many socio-political observers from across the world. But when the fourth lockdown was announced people started questioning the chemistry behind the lockdown as the number of people tested with novel coronavirus increased like a flash flood.

When the 5th lockdown was announced it was coined as 'Unlock -1'. For three months live across the country has been put to a standstill. And unlocking of the lockdown perhaps is the need of the hour as people will die more not because of the virus but because of hunger if the lockdown continues. Even as there is no cure for the COVID-19 till today, people have to live and for that people should be now equipped with all knowledge, equipment, and practice to live with the virus.

What concerns this newspaper is the extension of the lockdown till June 30 by the government of Manipur. New Delhi which has a large number of people affected by the virus have now started unlocking almost all necessary sectors, Kerala, which once has the largest number affected people in the country now had formulated measures to make sure that life continues amidst the attack by the novel coronavirus and Maharashtra, which have the largest number of affected people to have decided to open up its factories. However the state of Manipur, even after knowing that those affected by the virus are from those which return from outside the state, cannot make any decision to open the lockdown to run the society. Moreover, some medical expert had already questioned the Manipur government on the kind of preventive measures that the government had taken up to counter the spread of the novel coronavirus during the prolong lockdown. The loppoles in the management of running the quarantine center has already been brought to the lime light even by an MLA of the ruling BJP. Today people are fed up and want to resume life as done in other part of the country. Already voices to open market had come up and more voice may likely come if the government takes no measures to unlock the lockdown.

We cannot run away from the virus, but have to live with it.

COVID- 19: untested homeopathic drug in great demand in Mumbai

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, June 1:

The homeopathic medicine "Arsenicum album 30", recommended by the Union AYUSH ministry, as a prophylactic medicine against infections, is in great demand as a preventive medicine against COVID-19 in Maharashtra, including Mumbai.

The demand for this medicine has grown after some patients in Malegaon stated to have got relief from infectious diseases and now the medicine is sold for heavy price. The bottle which used to cost Rs. 175 to Rs. 195 is now sold for Rs. 350 Rs.400.

The Ayush ministry had first recommended it on 29 January as a prophylactic against Covid-19. Its advisory had recommended one dose of "Arsenicum Album 30"(AA) for three days in a row on an empty stomach.

Following an advisory by the Ayush ministry, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) issued a circular stating that AA is a "preventive medication" for coronavirus, and allowed its use for high-risk contacts at quarantine facilities in BMC's certain wards. On May 8, BMC said it will distribute AA, commonly used for respiratory tract infections and flu, for free in the quarantine facilities.

As a result, some of the corporators and NGOs distributed

thousands of bottles of AA, free of cost to the people. One of the corporators Bharati Khursunge said that she had procured a bottle of AA at Rs.12 per bottle. Before such a mass distribution, we did our due diligence by talking to doctors. A local homeopath is making the medicine for us. Now the demand is so high that chemists are selling it an inflated price.

Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration Joint Commissioner D R Gahane said that there is no evidence on whether the medicine, which is given for a broad spectrum of respiratory illnesses, holds any preventive properties for COVID-19, yet its demand has skyrocketed. There are no side effects of this medicine, the efficacy of which as cure for COVID 19 is yet to be ascertained.

The State government has set up a new committee to exclusively look at AYUSH remedies. Dr. T.P. Lahane, who is a part of the committee, said that merits or demerits of the medicines are not known.

One bottle of AA has around 90 tiny pills, enough for a family for several months. The pills consist of the water memory of arsenic trioxide, otherwise a highly toxic substance, which is diluted to a point that only the nano particles remain in the solution and nullify the toxicity.

Technological Determinism: Privacy vs. Surveillance



By: Mr. Paojakhup Guite,
Sainenjang, C Cpur

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology is trying hard to prove its worth all the more like never before. It is seizing this bad time as an opportunity to showcase its deterministic property to humanity. Given the intensity and gravity of the pandemic, human beings are, like it or not, ought to accept this determinism of technology. Technology is evolving and correspondingly, so is the human civilization.

The term "technological determinism" was coined by Thorstein Veblen, an American sociologist and economist in 1920s. By the term, he believes that technology is the principal agent of social, economic or political change. Behavioural patterns and social interactions of human beings are determined by technology. In this globalisation era, technology is a major force that easily binds us together virtually (video-call) or physically (short journey time). Hyper-globalists or ultra-globalists are of the view that technology has made the world a 'global village'- that, the 30 per cent continental mass of the Earth looks like 3 per cent of itself, while the 70% oceans (water bodies) appear as if 7% of itself.

Technology Drives History

The wheel of history is lubricated by technology. In the beginning, human species (say, the ancestor of Homo sapiens) was gifted with neural networks, though its synapses were not functioning to a desired level and had no capacity to develop his thinking potential. It was kept at futility, while its utility began much later. Consequently, this Cognitive Revolution (CR) kick-started history and it's about 70,000 years ago. Simultaneously, a technological bent of mind began to develop in the brain of our ancestor.

As a result, in the last phase of ice age called Holocene, man began to think of agriculture. He began an institution of family as also a sedentary life. Nomadism became a thing of the past. Thus, Agricultural Revolution (AR) expedited CR about 12,000 years ago. And, not more than 500 years ago, AR rose to its higher level, called Scientific Revolution. Today, AR has been replaced by AI (Artificial Intelligence). The technological calibre of human beings has been so immense. Due to this tremendous influence of humankind on other species and environment and climate change, some historians propose that Holocene has ended and been replaced by a new epoch called Anthropocene. The Anthropocene Epoch begins from 1950. From 1950 onwards, we have witnessed many technological breakthroughs, both harmful and beneficial.

The new Epoch has witnessed global catastrophes unmetten times. This is partly or wholly due to human negligence. The two World Wars (nuclear bombs) were

primarily caused by a mad race for power, and culminated into its folly by technological advancements. Several lethal arms and weapons of mass destructions (WMD) have been manufactured. We have destroyed enough our cultures and civilizations. We rebuild them again with a higher level of technology that destroyed them. Albert Einstein once said, "You cannot solve intractable problems with the same thinking that produced the problem".

The ever worsening climate change, no doubt began since time immemorial. The present rate of the change is at a critical stage mainly due to anthropogenic activities. We have constructed insurmountable industrial plants. Man began to extract fossils to run industries. These manufacturing units produce poisonous Green House Gases (GHGs) which are released into the atmosphere, thereby expanding the Ozone Hole over Antarctica at an alarming rate. Worse, world leaders could not stand together in one accord to fight against this common threat of GHG emissions. The Paris Agreement (2015) remains a paper tiger. The agreement is being dragged into the domestic politics of the US. Mr. Trump's campaign of "First America Policy" or "Make America Great Again" has become a stumbling block against global climate initiatives.

Therefore, in history up till today we have learned that human cultures and civilizations have been shaped by technology. In this 21st century, we need not just a technology, but one which is innovative, scientific, effective, efficient and climate-benign.

A Critique

Opposite to technological determinism theory is "Social Determinism". According to social determinists, technology is rather an entity outside of human society. Man uses it and manipulates it in the way he desires.

In practical reality, politics is the Sugar Daddy of its kindred disciplines such as science (technology, for that matter), literature, social science and what not. In the eye of politics, technology is not deterministic, and the fact that something can be done does not mean it must be done. In other words, politics is as old as human species, and technology is a later phenomenon. This view is in congruence with Social Contract Theory which is put forth by political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. They each had different interpretations of social contracts, but the underlying idea was similar.

According to Hobbes, the state of nature was one in which there were no enforceable criteria of right and wrong. Life was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." The state of nature was therefore a state of war. This war could be ended only if individuals agreed (in a social contract) to give their liberty into the hands of a sovereign (State) who was thenceforward absolute, on the sole condition that their lives were safeguarded by sovereign power.

Lock differed from Hobbes insofar as he described the state of nature. He opined that the rights of life and property were generally recognized under natural law. He therefore argued that the obligation to obey civil government under the social contract was conditional upon the protection not only of the person but also of private property. Sovereigns who violated

these terms could be justifiably overthrown.

Rousseau held that in the state of nature humans were unwarlike and somewhat undeveloped in their reasoning powers and sense of morality and responsibility. When, however, people agreed for mutual protection to surrender individual freedom of action and establish laws and government, they then acquired a sense of moral and civic obligation. In order to retain its essentially moral character, government must thus rest on the consent of the governed ("general will").

In this critical period of Social Distancing triggered by COVID-19 outbreak, technology has sneaked into the privacy premises of the people. But, in modern democracy, citizens don't want to sacrifice their rights at the altar of technology. In other words, consciousness of political rights in their cognitive mind has refused to concede fully to Hobbes' Theory of Social Contract. So much so that they protect their rights to privacy and protest surveillance of any kind. Undeniably, as we are grappling with social distancing rules, technology has brought us many gifts of ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

From Aadhaar to Aarogya, the buzzword has been around data privacy of responsible citizens. A beneficiary of government undertakings (even private sector) has to compulsorily surrender his 12-digit Aadhaar number which bears not only one's demographic details, but most riskily, biometric informations. Most recently, the Civil Aviation Ministry, in its air passengers' guidelines made it compulsory to download Aarogya Setu App to book a flight ticket. Aarogya Setu App is a contact-tracing software application developed by India. Mr. Bill Gates, the Microsoft founder lauded Prime Minister Modi in this regard. However, it is being alleged that the App encroaches upon one's right to life, because it traces or snoops a person's living area. It ascertains as to where one is from which colour zones- Green, Orange, Red or Containment. It sounds discriminatory as a person's habitat area is stratified based on colour. Are we going back to Vedic Ages, when the Vedic society was archaic and divided into four castes based on Varna (skin colour) system? Are we switching on from Skin Colour to Habitat Colour? History repeats itself?

Zoom, a China-developed video-conference app is no less invasive against privacy of data than that of Aadhaar or Aarogya Setu App. Despite its easy handling to fight against the menace of Social Distancing, the App has attracted a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) from concerned citizens. The aggrieved plaintiffs moved the Supreme Court of India to look into the privacy concerns of the people of the country. The case is sub-

judice as the apex Court has directed the Centre to give its clarifications to the litigants.

A Necessary Evil

Is COVID-19 Outbreak a roll of the dice or an Allah-sent soldier? Technology says none. The outbreak is not the concern of Technology. Rather, it looks forward to adaptation or mitigation or annihilating it forever.

Technology not only drives history. It also determines our future. We cannot deny the fact that technology is the backbone of economy and development. We know that human development is a concern of all. According to economists, human development can be measured mostly on two parameters-'health' and 'education'. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has since 1990 released annually its Human Development Index (HDI) of the world. India ranked at the 129th position on 2019's HDI. Sri Lanka led the rank at 71 among its neighboring South Asian countries. India is also the lowest among BRICS (2017, 2018).

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, health has been affected seriously. Add to this, due the COVID-19-induced lockdown, education has equally been at its lowest ebb. While everything is at stake, the Centre and the State Governments deserve a pat on the back. Both the governments have taken up initiatives to bridge the likely gaps in all walks of life- health, education and economy- without compromising with their resolve to fight the dreaded virus. They have taken recourse on technology to provide virtual education, while Zoom App has enabled the governments to organize a video-conference meeting and make decisions. To take a minute care on health front, Aarogya Setu App was developed to trace a passenger or a person. That will give information related to zone classifications (green, orange, red or containment zones), travel history, etc. Based on this, a proactive action can be taken further.

It is plausible that the Government of India is inviting any constructive suggestions from citizens to improve the contact-tracing App. Hopefully, this will make the App more user-friendly. Regarding data management, the Centre should think twice. An independent body has to be appointed to look after data management, so that no leakage is found. This should include data related to blood samples collected for COVID-19 clinical test with their results.

In this way, Science & Technology should work hand in hand with politics, society and economy. That would raise the country's HDI rank in future.

(The views expressed are personal. The writer can be reached at: 6009962948/ guitepaojakhup9@gmail.com)

Letter to the editor

Restructure of delimitation committee.

The delimitation committee at present structure consisted of Meetei and Naga only ignoring the Kuki community presentation.

It will be the right step to roll back delimitation committee ignoring the Kukis and includes stake holders at the committee member for proper functioning as per guidelines norms.

The Kukis CSO may boycott delimitation in their jurisdiction if one of Kuki MLA or Minister is not included at delimitation committee as there was bias and elusive at present structure of delimitation committee.

Yours Sincerely,
L. Nehkhloien Haokip
Laizon Veng, Tulbong Churachandpur

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