

Disqualification case: HC reserves judgment, to pronounce on June 8

IT News
Imphal, June 5:

Manipur High Court has reserved the judgement hearing of the disqualification case filed against 7 (seven) MLAs who have defected from Congress Party and joined the BJP. The Congress party had filed another miscellaneous affidavit in connection with the disqualification case of the seven MLAs following the election notification of the Rajya Sabha election. In the earlier hearing for the case the High Court had scheduled the hearing on

June 10. However, the Congress Party filed another miscellaneous case day before yesterday urging the court to direct the Speaker's tribunal of the Manipur Legislative Assembly to dispose the pending case for disqualification of the seven defected MLAs or to prevent the MLAs from entering the state Assembly Premises. Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appeared for the petitioner.

It may be mentioned that the Congress party, is hopeful of winning the case as there has been already a ruling of the Supreme Court that favours the Congress MLAs, in the disqualification case of MLA Th. Shyamkumar of Andro Assembly Constituency. Shyamkumar was disqualified by the Speaker's tribunal on March 28, 2020 following the directives of the Supreme Court of India.

IBSD handed over COVID-19 testing equipments to Mizoram

IT News
Imphal, June 5:

Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Taklepat have handed over one Real Time-PCR (Quant Studio TM 5) to Government of Mizoram to facilitate the COVID-19 testing laboratory set up at the Zoram Medical College, Aizawl today. The equipment along with consumables was airlifted from the Imphal airport by a helicopter arranged by

Mizoram Government and the same was formally handed over to the authority of Department of Science and Technology. Govt. of Mizoram by the scientists and staff of Aizawl Centre of IBSD. RT-PCR is one of the most accurate laboratory method for detecting, tracking and studying the Coronavirus. The equipment along with consumable was sent on the request of govt. of Mizoram and Zoram Medical College.

State observes World Environment Day 2020 Humans need nature for survival and nature doesn't need us- N. Biren Singh

IT News
Imphal, June 5:

As World Environment Day 2020 is being observed across the State, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh led others in tree plantation at Samadhi of Maharaj Gambhir Singh, Bir Tikendrajit Park and Rani Gaidinliu Park today.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that the essence of celebrating World Environment Day is to save human lives by protecting and preserving the environment. He maintained that natural disasters, global warming, climate change etc. are the consequences of the destruction of nature. Humans need nature for survival and nature doesn't need us, he added. Stating the importance of preserving forest and wildlife, the Chief Minister stated that we must take necessary measures to save the earth. The Chief Minister said that the government has initiated Green Manipur Mission so as to conserve and preserve the forest area of the



State. Mass plantation drives are being taken up in various parts of the State, he added. He appealed to the people of the State to accomplish the mission. Mentioning about the pandemic COVID-19, Chief Minister cautioned the people that the disease could spread anywhere and infect anyone if we do not take precautionary measures and obey the advisories, guidelines and protocols issued by WHO, Health Ministry and

Medical Experts. Stating that more than 35,000 natives have returned to the State from different parts of the country, Chief Minister said the state government has been taken up all precautionary and preventive measures to control the spread of COVID-19. He appreciated the efforts of frontline workers, CSOs, local volunteers in the fight against COVID-19. With the co-operation and support of

the people, there has been no single case of community transmission in the State, he added.

The Chief Minister appealed the returnees to obey the SOPs and guidelines issued by the government. He affirmed that a collective responsibility and understanding can defeat the COVID-19. Minister for Forest and Environment i Awangbow Newmai, Minister for CAD&PD Karam Shyam, Deputy Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly K. Robindro, Chairman of LDA L. Susindro, Chairman of Manipur Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board H. Dingo, Advisor to CM K. Leishio, MLA Th. Satyabrata Singh, Addl. Chief Secretary (Forest) M.H. Khan and others attended the function.

The State Level World Environment Day 2020 is organized by Directorate of Environment and Climate Change under the theme 'Biodiversity'.

COVID-19: India may surpass Italy

IT News
Imphal, June 5:

India records new spike in COVID-19 with over 9,851 cases in a day and will surpass Italy in a day if similar spike continues.

India on Friday recorded 9851 new covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, the highest ever single-day spike. The total cases in India stands at 2,26,770. A total of 6,363 people have died and 109,462 people have recovered from the virus.

If this trend continues, then India will overtake Italy in terms of coronavirus cases in the next day. Italy's total current tally is at 2,34,013, if the same spike continues, then India would add 9800 cases in the next days, which would take the tally to 2,36,570.

Forest Minister Awangbow Newmai calls for conserving nature to protect human life & human race

IT News
Imphal, June 5:

On the occasion of World Environment Day, which is observed widely across the State, the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Shri Awangbow Newmai today released a 20 minute documentary film titled "Protected Areas of Manipur.....the Wilderness Unexplored" produced by the Forest Department, Manipur under the Nature Learning Centre, National Mission on Himalayan

Studies, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of India. Shri M.H. Khan, Additional Chief Secretary; Shri Kereilhouvi Angami, PCCF & HoFF; Dr. A.K. Joshi, Chief Wildlife Warden; Shri Anurag Bajpai, Additional PCCF and Ms. Waikhom Romabai, DCF/ Research, Silviculture & Training Division and other senior officers of Government of Manipur were also present during the release of the documentary film. Another feature film "Tangjapham

Upal" was also released during the function at the Forest Headquarter, Sanjenthong. Speaking on the occasion, the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister expressed his serious concerns on the protection and conservation of forests, environment and nature and highlighted ecological imbalances being created by human beings. He observed that natural calamities witnessed in the recent years is due to ecological imbalance caused due to destruction of the nature

over the years, without understanding the close link and various contributions made by the nature in human life. He also said the day is a reminder for each and every citizen of the State and the world to commit themselves to protect the human life and the nature. By protecting the nature, we will protect the human life and human race, he opined. The Minister expressing happiness stated that he is fortunate that the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh has given him charge

of the Forest Department and assured that he will work in close association with the department officials for the welfare of the State. Regarding the release of the documentary film "Protected Areas of Manipur.....the Wilderness Unexplored", he conveyed his happiness on the production of documentary and observed that the film will show the people how much blessed is Manipur by nature. He expressed his firm commitment to take such actions which are necessary to preserve the nature in the State. The documentary film

focussed on all the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries of Manipur which were notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for conservation and protection of the endemic and endangered wild flora and fauna of the State. The film will introduce the viewers about the presence of the pristine forest, serene nature and unexplored wilderness in the State and create mass awareness. The film also reflects on Eco-tourism potential in these wild areas of the State.

KEM hospital wants to "punish" infected resident doctors

By-Raju Vernekar
Imphal, June 5:

In a bizarre development, the administration of King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital located at Parel in Central Mumbai, has accused intern doctors of not following COVID-19 guidelines and thus getting infected and has warned them that they will have to repeat internship for the duration of the quarantine period.

A circular dated 04 June 2020 issued by Dr Gajanan D Velhal, Professor and Head of Department of Community Medicine in Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College (GSMC) and the KEM Hospital says that, "In view of increased

number of interns getting quarantined due to exposure, all interns are hereby directed to submit a written explanation about the nature of exposure and reason for it. If negligence in following COVID-19 discipline is found, the concerned person will be liable to repeat internship for the duration of the quarantine period".

The KEM Hospital, is one of the hospitals run by the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), having facilities for treatment for both COVID-19 and non-coronavirus patients. Both GSMC and KEM are mainly funded by the municipal corporation. The KEM has been bearing the major load of COVID-19 patients in which the interns are also

playing major role. Some time back, in an open letter to Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, the resident doctors had pointed out that "there are 35 patients in a ward managed only by resident doctors without any staff nurse or any class IV workers. Resultantly they are left with no means to perform basic activities like getting food, going to washrooms etc. This state is not only in one ward, but similar situation prevails in many other wards. We have tried to take the matter with the higher authorities but no avail, they had pointed out. All the medical duties which are generally distributed among healthcare workers and nurses are being

performed by overworked doctors. Besides, many healthcare workers are refusing to attend to Covid-19 patients. One of the resident doctors said that the situation has been grim since past many weeks and it is getting worse. If nothing is done now, then we will lose all hopes. The resident doctors had shared some of the critical issues faced by them and patients on twitter also. While every medical professional in COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 hospitals is struggling to get over the disease and give relief to the patients, this circular is the best example of the high-handedness and apathy of authorities towards interns. As per the data gathered by

the Indian Medical Association (IMA) nearly 500 doctors are infected with coronavirus, across Maharashtra. Similarly, according to the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (MARD), the resident doctors working in government hospitals are the most infected. In Mumbai, while Sion hospital has 70 infected resident doctors, KEM hospital has 40 and Nair hospital has 35. Although the resident doctors are being given a raw deal, BMC administration has been kind enough towards police and its own staff and has sent an order to Seven Hills Hospital, located at Andheri East in North West Mumbai, directing it to reserve 50

beds for its own staff and another 50 beds for the staff from police department needing COVID-19 treatment. The order No. AMC/WS/6538/VIP dated 28 May 2020 sent to the "Seven Hills Hospital" by Assistant Municipal Commissioner (WS) says, "You are requested to ensure that these 50 beds are always reserved for police staff and 50 beds for BMC staff and not to allot them to any person other than the police and BMC staff members. In the meanwhile, IMA has also stated that six doctors (5 from Mumbai and one from Mumbai) engaged in private practise recently succumbed to COVID-19. They included three practicing allopathic

doctors. Besides even the infected doctors are not getting bed in the hospitals. As such IMA has begun signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with private hospitals, to reserve beds for the doctors. Some of the hospitals have responded and have begun reserving beds for the doctors. They include many Christian missionary hospitals in Ahmednagar district in Western, Saint Luke's hospital in Shirampur tahuka (has reserved 20 beds for doctors, staffers and their family members), private hospitals in Nagpur and Nashik. In Nanded, eight hospitals are in dialogue with IMA to reserve two beds each in intensive care units for doctors.

★ Editorial

War on COVID-19:

Authority needs to review the quarantine management

With the rise in the number of persons tested with novel coronavirus, apprehension about the spread of the virus at the local level preoccupied with many of the people. Community workers, civil bodies and local leaders are taking the matter with extreme seriousness to the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many had argued on the government's suggestions for home quarantine to those people who return from outside the state. People and almost all community representatives are of the opinion that Institutional quarantine or Community quarantine for all returnee to the state should be made mandatory. Well, for the people of the state of Manipur, the idea of Institutional or Community quarantine for all returnees to the state is the best option to prevent the spread of the virus at the local level. There is no difference of opinion to the idea of mandatory quarantine for returnee given the living style of Manipuri family notwithstanding the fact that most people in the state are not able to keep separate rooms and toilets for each person. But while trying to protect the people from contracting the virus that has been transported from outside the state, the people have almost forgotten the condition of the returnee and their suffering at the quarantine centers. There are fear mongers among the returnee from getting infected by the virus due to various mismanagement that is being taken place while managing the quarantine centers.

While talking to various persons who are staying at various quarantine centers, the first thing that comes to the knowledge of this newspaper is that those who are not yet tested positive are worried about getting infection with the virus if any of the inmates were tested positive. This is being observed as those running the quarantine centers do not make any special arrangement in terms of providing food or accommodation for other inmates who were yet to be tested after one or two of them were tested positive. This may be because those volunteers who are assisting the quarantine centers have no professional knowledge of running the quarantine centers. The second thing is the consumption of longer time in getting the result. As per the reality, it has come to the notice that inmate often has to gather for food and other day-to-day activities inside the quarantine centers after their samples have been collected. It takes almost 5 days for a maximum of the people in getting their results. In between the five days, there is also the possibility of contracting with the virus from someone who tested positive midway. There is also a possibility that the person who is tested negative with the virus after 5 days may return to his home with the virus at which he contracted from his fellow inmate while waiting for the virus.

Earlier, too MLA L. Susindro of Khurai Assembly Constituency had expressed suspicion of the virus spreading among the returnees after reaching Imphal.



By: M. Asnikumar Singh

Today the 5th of June marks the world environment day. The simple meaning of environment comes up as, "the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates."

I grew up in humble and serene surroundings of a village called keibul lamjao with our state's gem, the Loktak Lake in the background. After two and a half decades of having lived in the hustle and bustle of Imphal city one can't help but admire the ingenuity and charm of the lake, whenever the chance arises. But this charm and ingenuity is on the brink of fading into oblivion due to some shortsighted decisions taken 47 years ago. Atoning for that is perhaps the biggest will we can leave behind for our children.

Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake of Manipur, is the lifebelt for the people of the state. But it has an emotional and spiritual connection with the fishermen community. This lake is their primary source of livelihood. But now it has become a fight for survival for the fishermen. Government policies announced to conserve the lake constitute huge threats to the fishermen as most of them lack alternative livelihood skills.

According to the jewel of India's folklore, Loktak was formed when gods sought the support of the valley's people. The lake has seen the very notion of Manipur take form. It was on its shores that the beloved Meitei folklore of princess

Thoibi and Khamba and their timeless romance came to life. Poubi Lai, a mythical creature integral to the Meitei belief system, is believed to inhabit the heart of the lake.

Encompassing an area of about 26,000 hectares, the Loktak lake is our state's largest fishery resource, accounting for more than 50% of the fish producing area. About 12% of the state's population depend on its resources. No wonder, it is referred to as 'Mother' by our fishing community.

Something which we often ignore while discussing our state's climate is that the lake serves as a generating base for bio energy of the region, particularly for our state. It synchronizes climatic conditions and stimulates different ethos, cultural fabrics in the area.

In a sense the Loktak lake itself is a generator of all kinds of cultural and ethnic endemicity for the people of Manipur, particularly the fishing community in and around the periphery of the lake. Of which it may be cited one of the best and remarkable points is the technique of 'Phum Namba' which is still in vogue for the livelihood of the region.

The term 'Phum Namba' is known in the region since the time immemorial. It may be described as follows:

The people of the region particularly fishing community and the community of the Thanga island and people of the peripheral area of the Loktak lake who practise this technique (basically the fishing community) cultivate water weed in the form of circular as well as semi-circular just at the water level of the lake.

This particular Phum Namba will be preserved for about a year. During this period the local indigenous fish species sanitate in and around the Phum.

The fishing community also feed a plethora of local nutrients to the area every day. These nutrients are mainly derived from rice husking powder and some other aquatic vegetables.

So, as in and around, the Phum will always concentrate inside the core of the planted Phum, all these Phums will be harvested during the lean season of the year, which commences from October and concludes in the month of March. This type of harvesting is known as Phum Namba. It is also reported that there are more than 1000 floating Phum hut dwellers. Their basis cultivation is the cultivation of Phum and to above, i.e Phum Namba for their livelihood.

There are other techniques of fishing other than Phum Namba techniques are namely:

1. Trapping by net (Lang Thakpa)
2. Bamboo Trap (Lu Thumba)
3. Pulling of Fishing Net (In Chingba)
4. Ancling and Longthinba

However, the removal of a large number of fish culture ponds from the core area of the lake has led to massive economic deracination.

In the 70s, the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) pitched an ambitious project to the then government of Manipur; a power station to harness the hydropower potential of the Loktak Lake. The 105 MW capacity power station would provide cheap electricity to Manipur and its neighbouring States. It would also provide lift irrigation for 23,000 hectares of land in the valley. The State government approved the project without making any effort to study its impact on the lake's ecosystem and on livelihoods dependent on the lake. In 1983, NHPC constructed a barrage at the conflux of the Manipur and Khuga rivers — two of the five major rivers that drain into Loktak Lake — near Ithai village. The Ithai Barrage was to act as a barrier and create an artificial reservoir with the water level maintained at 768.5 metres throughout the year, much higher than Loktak's water level.

The barrage became operational that year. First, Loktak's perimeter broke. Then thousands of hectares

of agricultural land around the lake was flooded and thousands of people lost their lands and homes overnight. Farmers became fishermen. And the fishermen now became too many.

Loktak and the 20 other wetlands became one water body for good; seasonal changes in the water level stopped and the ecosystem started crumbling.

From time to time, the fishing community are rendered unable to practice their traditional technique. Before the implementation of the Loktak National Hydro Electric Project and the commissioning of Ithai Barrage there were two different seasons of fishing to all the surrounding fishing areas; viz one on the arising of the Loktak level and another in the following of the Loktak water level and another in the following of the Loktak water level during the lean seasons.

Now, as a consequence of the loktak hydel project, the lake's water level remains high throughout the year. Hence, the two seasons of fishing in the region has already been spoiled in an unreplaceable condition: over and above most of endemic plants of Loktak has also been endangered seriously.

In all honesty, the lake is slowly but surely dying in all forms. There's a saying, "We realise the value of certain things once we lose it." Let us not be known as the generation that did nothing while perhaps our most precious resource perished slowly right in front of our eyes. This world environment day, let us all; the people of Sanaleibak, take a pledge to contribute in concrete, meaningful efforts to save this god given treasure, whose immense value we have often ignored.

(The writer is an Environmentalist, Secretary, Manipur Thinkers Forum and presently he is also the state Vice President of BJP Manipur state unit.)

Changing Environment during pandemic: view and analysis

By- Dr. Mohd Mustaque Ahmed
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Botany, United College, Chandul

Something positive imagination deeply occupies in the mind during the current pandemic and lockdown period. We need to understand the possibility and intricacy of sustainable farming and agricultural production for viable consumption of crops and cereals. This arouses our minds and there is a need for paradigm shift to bring far-sighted mechanisms in different spectrums. The present day mechanisms particularly about electronically delivering things are working out at its best possibilities. Day by day more and more apps are being added. Thus, the Aarogya setu app is one of them and it will keep the user alert regarding the issue of COVID-19. The avenues, finding for new developments and positive possibilities are also changing. Our people in the villages will not pursue to go to ATMs. Because there will be delivery of money at our doors. It is possible only after clicking some buttons by using smart phones. The intended beneficiary will require having smart phones. We should try to make it possible, let the economic development be settled with

suitable scores. This is the time we need to ponder over other issues like our dams, workability of agriculture and farming, entrepreneurship, economy, environment etc. Let the electronic dams or e-dams also come. We want to have proper functions of our dams. It should get enough water supplies into our agro-fields. We all know that the foremost purpose of dam is proper irrigation of agricultural fields and supply of drinking water. Agricultural lands are unfittingly located thereby proper irrigation from our rivers through the proper canals is required to make the lands productive. This should be possible by means of flawless modern dams. The dams are viewed as significant except fear for loosing water borne indigenous biodiversity of any region. Modern techniques for increasing in the rate of cereals production in a minimum area of land will be very suitable for a state like Manipur. An answer like increasing yield at a range from 3500 to 4500 kg per hectare will bring a turnaround scenario in our well-being depending on endless effort to bring sustainable bio-resources. This can be noted that

our country's cereal (rice and wheat) rate of production is below the world average (The Economic Times, India, dated 22 Nov., 2016). Taking the challenges, there are people struggling to make themselves self-employed in agro-farming technologies. We have heard of hard-working people produce Potato, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Radish, Carrot, Mustard, Tomato, Watermelon, Passion fruit, Apple, Orange, Yenam nakuppi, U-Morok, Mango, Flowers etc. Such innovative and encouraging story allied to such enterprise are not lacking in Manipur. People engaged in entrepreneurship and their mindset of seeing things are becoming the new normal. It may be mentioned that this sector was also hard hit this time. Changes need time to adjust things like I saw the long queue in front of railway ticketing counters in 1990s. In short the new normal will take time to settle. During this lockdown Public Grievances Cell (PGC) distributes essential commodities from house to house (Imphal Free Press, dated 29/03/20). In this system one can send prior information requesting to deliver the essential commodities at house doors. Then, the distributors by using mobile vehicles start dispensing commodities and purchase bill only to collect money at the time of delivery. Another new normal it has been seen this time is small markets at different village pockets. These are automatically sprung up.

Markets were wanted both by seller and buyers. There has been a situation where local products like perishable fish and vegetables needed to be sold out. The essential items earlier fetched have to be sold out.

Generally we have the products like Cabbage, Yenam Nakuppi and the different flowers in off season also. It means there is no limit for production of vegetables. Only the stumbling block is that we have closed the door for our efforts to make a workable environment. One can pursue to produce more and more Cabbage (Kobi phul), Yenam nakuppi and U-morok because their consumers will not be decreased throughout the year. In short we don't want to live without singubora. I believe the days are not far that we get the indigenous things like soibum (fermented bamboo shoot), hawajiar (fermented soybean) and singu-bora through e-bookings. Yenam Nakuppi and U-morok (King Chilli) cut their own niche in the cultural ethos of Manipuri Society. This can be noted that we have been depending on the outside supply of cabbage and potato. The production of passion fruit, orange and watermelon is encouraging but is still insufficient. Therefore, we need to train young minds through the introduction of relevant vocational courses into our institutions and colleges. We have to find out ways and means to train the young minds and budding entrepreneurs to inculcate the habit of seeing things in a possible

manner. The start-ups should be supported through the implementation of reaching loan amounts.

The general public felt and imagined the insufficiency of foods during this lockdown period due to new corona virus. It seems the opposite happens that there is everything. But we need to develop a proper practicable mechanism to control prices. Let's imagine the condition of a 2nd world war situation. I heard there was a time when Imphal region escalated to full war engagement. My grandmother used to tell us, "every now and then there were alert sounds like sirens. After the sirens there came the bombing in the valley region". People got to run up to safer places. Thus, it must have given a condition of fear of threat from injury and lack in supply of essential goods. Those days, it is learnt that the economy of Manipur used to be very high. Moreover, the imperial power of British had enough back up supply of things from its allied countries. Consequently some groups of people had been benefitted in a huge way. But during this pandemic period, thankfully, there has been free distribution of food stuffs by government to the general public.

We cannot live in a threatening world from global warming and air pollution. In our country the vehicles plying from one place to other has been at standstill for quite some time. Our various industries have been shut down. Various activities particularly in automobile

industries and various factories have been diminished. This time it has given an impression that the air is much cleaner comparing the days coming before COVID-19. The fish production from our rivers and lakes is likely to be increased due to absence of unwanted pollutants. It has indicated that the we have more oxygen in the water bodies. But then, are we able to return to our so called normal past that is pre-COVID-19? Since this pandemic is not over the answer remains in the dark.

By the time we fear to lose in many ways that there are changes in our economy and study environment in schools and colleges. The world is facing economical hardship. This hardship is for everyone. Satisfied or not, the new normal of our economy should only return post COVID-19. Definitely one thing can be mentioned about the changing scenario of education system. This has not been suppressed the efforts of intellectuals delivering education to students through information and communication tools (ICT). Some of the useful tools are emails, whatsapp, zoom, moodle, youtube, google class room, free to webinar, go to meeting etc. It should be accessible to such tools to find the study materials. Difficulty is that the technology is new and many supposed to be users both teachers and students are not well trained. Otherwise this new believed to be normal is a highly useful system. However, one should find to make oneself suitable in the new path.

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World Environment Day amid coronavirus Pandemic

By- Dr. Konthoujam Khelchandra Singh

There is lots of discussion on the immediate effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the environment. According to a recent study published in the Science of Total Environment (Vol-728, 2020) carried out by Manuel A. Zambrano-Monserrate *et al.*, highlighted the positive and negative indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment. Some of their interesting findings indicate a clear linkage between contingency measures undertaken to the improvement in the air quality, clean beaches and environmental noise reduction; however negative effects include increased amount of waste generation and decline in the recycling process, which will further cause contamination of land and water resources. They are of the opinion that as global economic activity gradually returns, the decreasing amount of Greenhouse gases concentration during the short period may not be sustainable means to clean up the environment. As reported by Bloomberg, COVID-19 pandemic has so far managed to reduce the global annual carbon emissions by a record 8%. Incidentally, this is in line with the suggestion of the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) for reduction in annual global carbon emission to 7.6%, if the global temperature has to be kept below 1.5 degrees centigrade by 2030 as part of the Paris Agreement, 2015. Nevertheless, we have to be very cautious in our approach so that minimum impact will be there to our environment.

World Environment Day (WED) is an annual event which is widely celebrated on 5th June as a global day for positive environmental action. The WED was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and has grown to become one of the main vehicles through which the United Nations (UN) stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention

and action. WED is designed to give a human face to environmental issues, empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development, promote an understanding that communities are central to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and people enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. WED is also a day for people from all walks of life to come under one common goal to ensure a cleaner, greener and brighter view for the present and future generation.

The theme for the WED is "Biodiversity". The Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres in his message on the occasion of WED that in order "To care for humanity, we must care for nature". According to him "Nature is sending a clear message; We are harming the Nature world-to our own detriment; habitat destruction and biodiversity loss are accelerating; climate disruption is getting worse; Fires, floods, droughts and superstorms are more frequent and damaging; Oceans are heating and acidifying, destroying the coral ecosystems; And now a new coronavirus is raging, undermining health and livelihood; so on this WED, It's Time For Nature". So, we need to take important measures for safeguarding our environment.

Biodiversity is the variability of life forms on the earth. The air you breathe, the water you drink and the food you eat all rely on biodiversity. Some of the major threats to biodiversity are (1) Human activities and loss of habitat: Biodiversity loss can result from a number of activities like habitat conversion and destruction, overexploitation of species; hunting and poaching, conversion of biodiversity rich areas for human settlement and industrial development, extension for agriculture, environmental pollution,

encroachments of wetlands, (2) Deforestation: Forest ecosystem are continuously cleared and degraded in many parts of the world leading to drastic loss in the biodiversity. (3) Desertification: Desertification and deforestation are the main cause of loss of biodiversity. Desertification process is the result of poor land management which are aggravated by climatic conditions; (4) Marine Environment: Rapid degradation in the coastal and marine environment leading to loss of biodiversity; (5) Increasing Wildlife Trade: Due to rapid increase in wildlife trade leads to drastic loss of biodiversity; (6) Climate change: If the global warming continues unabated in the current trajectory, it is predicted that almost a third of the global flora and fauna could become extinct. As estimated by experts, the current rapid extinction rate is 1,000 times higher than the natural background extinction rate. These rates are much higher than previously estimated and likely still underestimated. So, in future there is probability of further rise in the extinction rates.

In the existing perspective, the role of the Intergovernmental science policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES) is significantly relevant by performing timely assessment of knowledge on biodiversity on regular basis. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and five other biodiversity related conventions adoption of IPBES as the science policy interface is a strategic development. These assessments will surely further aid in monitoring the progress towards CBD's Aichi Targets of the Strategic plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. However, there are many constraints to the struggles for biodiversity conservation. For instance, low priority for conservation of living natural resources, exploitation of

natural resources for monetary benefits, inadequate evidence on the values and knowledge about the species and ecosystems, and unplanned urbanisation and uncontrolled industrialisation causes hindrance to the efforts directed towards biodiversity conservation.

We all should be aware of the numerous benefits provided by biodiversity to humanity. Some of these are (1) Ecosystem services: protection of water resources, soil formation and protection, nutrient cycling and storage, pollution breakdown and adsorption, contribution to climate stability, maintenance of ecosystems, recovery from unpredictable events etc. (2) Biological services: food, medicinal resources and pharmaceutical drugs, wood products, ornamental plants, diversity in genes, species and ecosystems. (3) Social services: research, education and training, recreation and tourism and cultural values.

There is need for undertaking immediate action-oriented steps targeted towards conservation of biodiversity and at the same time encourage and increase our support to policies that conserve our valuable natural resources. We should reinforce our efforts in creating more awareness to encourage people for observing WED at various levels through all possible means. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic online mode should be utilized to celebrate the WED. This will help in generating a positive impact for people to understand the importance of the sustainable use of biodiversity that will take care of livelihood security as well as ecological security.

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World Environment Day Special

Time For Nature

By - Dr. Ch. Indira Devi
Lecturer, Johnstone Hr. Sec. School, Manipur

Adorable love
Give and take
Friendship
Nature's shower to human,
Nature's lesson to human.
Destruction
Urbanisation
Greed
Human's response to nature,
Human's negativity to nature.
Pandemic
Cyclone
Earthquake
Wildfire
Insect invasion
Food scarcity
Nature's alternate gift to human,
Double reaction for action,
Nature, the best director,
Time for nature.

Ayush Ministry launches 'My Life, My Yoga' international video-blogging competition

Agency
New Delhi, June 5:

Ayush Ministry has launched the My Life, My Yoga international video-blogging competition today. Prime

Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' on last Sunday had informed that the competition would be open for everyone across the globe. He said, the world has shown keen interest in Yoga and Ayurveda amidst the Corona Pandemic.

To participate in the My Life, My Yoga initiative, participants have been asked to post their videos of up to three minutes on social media accounts by tagging the Ministry of Ayush. Participants should also hashtag My Life, My Yoga in the comment section of the social media platforms while sharing the video blogs. Winners will be rewarded a cash prize up to one lakh rupees. The Ministry of Ayush has informed that ahead of the International Day of Yoga on 21st of this month, a series of Yoga Discourses by renowned Yoga Gurus will be available on its social media platforms from 7.30 in the evening, which will also be broadcast by Doordarshan. This year, no mass gathering would be held on the International Yoga Day in view of the Corona virus disease outbreak. Government has urged people to practice yoga at their homes, with participation from the entire family.

Time for nature amidst COVID-19



By: T S Haokip

As people expressed their joy and thanked #NationalLockdown for the new state of, the clean Ganga, recovering of the ozone hole, the appearance of dolphins in Mumbai's Marine Drive, and the improvement in PPT in metropolitan cities, I for one am deeply concerned. Not because I am a pessimist. Rather, because I am an optimist and believe in the restoration of normal life post-COVID-19, which is when human activities will start functioning with all the stops out and we will be back to wiping the slate clean. The theme for World Environment Day

2020 is 'Biodiversity', which focuses on 'time for nature' and providing the essential infrastructure that supports life on Earth and human development. Nature has given us almost everything; are we willing to give anything in return?

Responsibility & Priority

The onus of shouldering environmental concerns lie with all of us. While some people believe that the world is presently reeling under a curse in the form of COVID-19 for its reckless attitude towards the flora and faunas, a few others believe Covid19 is a phenomenon where the world is resetting itself. Our action is surely responsible for many regretful eventualities, which should be avoided, but the belief that the world is cursed for it or resetting itself by default could give some people the wrong solace that we need not render any efforts to change the environment. Plastic usage is almost under controlled but emission is one factor we will have to tackle. Of all the lessons one could derive during this lockdown, putting the resetting and curse theories aside, is but the scientific phenomenon of the air getting cleaner with fewer

automobiles that need special attention and further research for its possible application in vouching for new ideas that rely on e-vehicles and e-everything. Global efforts to control climate change should continue; carbon emission and carbon credits should be the topics dominating the tables of powerful nations.

Development hiccups

Concerns for environmental issues, however motivating and justifying it might be, could be a fly in the ointment, in ushering development as was witnessed in Narmada, Nandigram, and the tribal belts of Chhattisgarh. Ensuring better packages of rehabilitation and rehabilitation coupled with sincere decisions based on expert findings of the environmental impacts should be taken so that our greed does not get the better of us. Striking a balance between preserving the environment as well as allowing the continuity of development activities should be the mantra. The benefit of the doubt, if any arise, should preferably be given to the environment.

Tribal Rights and Environmental

concerns

We will have to plant many more trees, for we cannot stop cutting trees altogether as we need them for fuel, furniture, etc. Also, we have to abide by commitments on #GlobalWarming, for words on climate change are real and we could feel it in our skins. It is however equally important to not just consider the concerns of people who care environment alone but also of people who could be affected by our love for the environment. Our thoughts therefore should rightfully include the poor rural inhabitants whose circumstances would force them to cut trees for fuel and hunt deer for food to feed their starving families no matter what message is delivered to them. Unless of course, they are compensated with an alternative source of livelihood.

Future Obligations

The US, China, Russia, and major countries like India, in great contrast to their present political engagements, will need to shoulder exemplary role dotted with significant initiatives, befitting of world leaders, on preserving biodiversity, protecting the world from adverse climate

change, and promoting awareness on environmental concerns by leading from the front. The United States, the second-largest emitter of carbon, should revisit its decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord for the larger interest of the global efforts and the sake of humanity.

On the individual level, our simple efforts of switching off appliances which are not in use, planting trees, avoiding plastic bags, and educating people around us, will go a long way in ensuring a clean and safe environment. We cannot depend entirely on pandemics and lockdowns for a clean environment always; we will have to give time to nature and its concerns when all our basic needs are given to us by nature. This endeavour is not our gift to the next generation but our obligation, as a present beneficiary, to ensure the prevalence of a livable environment and to not destroy the future of our children. Happy #WorldEnvironmentDay to all.

(The writer is a former development professional and is the author of the book HILLY DREAMS. More details at www.tshaokip.com)

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