

CM takes stock of Koirengei airfield being occupied by the army; Union defence Minister gives nod for vacating the airfield

IT News
Imphal, March 17

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh today said that the Union Defence Minister had given nod to vacate the Koirengei airfield that is being occupied by the Territorial Army and paramilitary troops in the interest of the people of the area.

"I have requested the Hon'ble Union Defence Minister. He is kind enough. He has ordered to have a meeting with the state officials and they have deliberated for shifting of the



military camp from the Old airfield at Koirengei with authorities of the military". N. Biren Singh said to reporters while inspecting the present condition of Old

Airfield located at Koirengei in Imphal East District today. The Chief Minister said that people have been demanding for quite a long time to shift the military camps currently

there at the Airfield as residential areas of Luwangshangbam, Khabam, Koirengei, Achanbigei etc. are located within the proximity to these camps.

"Discussions are still going on, and the State Government is ready to provide adequate and suitable land for early shifting of these camps", the Chief Minister said. N. Biren said that the purpose of his visit was to understand the current condition of the Airfield and adjoining areas. As he has now seen it, the Chief Minister said, he would again approach the Centre soon to shift the military camps.

Kom village authority supports Leishemba Sanajaoba's nomination as RS candidate

IT News
Imphal, March 17

While various civil society organizations of the state are taking strong exception to the nomination of titular King Leishemba Sanajaoba as BJP candidate of the lone Rajya Sabha seat of Manipur, The Khoirentak Khuman village Authority extend full support to the candidature of titular king Leishemba Sanajaoba, for the lone Rajya Sabha seat.

S Achon Kom Secretary of The Khoirentak Khuman village Authority said that they fully support the candidature of Maharaja Leishemba Sanajaoba the titular king of Manipur as the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for the MP seat of Rajya Sabha. He also appreciates Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, terming the nomination of Leishemba Sanajaoba for the RS seat as

the right decision for the welfare of the entire State as well as for maintaining unity and integrity of all the different communities of this state.

"The Kom community pray to the almighty for the successful election for maharaja Leishemba Sanajaoba as the MP of Rajya Sabha and expect great deeds from his good self for the development of this state", a statement said.

India reports 28 swine flu deaths in 2020

Agency
New Delhi, March 16

While the focus of the country is on the "epidemic" Covid-19, as many as 28 people have lost their lives in India due to swine flu this year up to March 1.

According to the Union Health Ministry data, there have been over 1,100 deaths due to swine flu in the country in 2019 and 2018. "A total of 2,270 deaths were reported in 2017 because of the swine flu," the Health Ministry data accessed by IANS showed.

The swine flu deaths in 2018 were 1,128 and that in 2019 were 1,218. "A total of 28 deaths have been reported in India because of the swine flu till March 1," the Health Minister data said. The number of cases

reported of the swine flu per year in the country is also high.

While the total cases in 2017 were 38,811, it came down to 15,266 in 2018. However, the country witnessed 28,798 cases of swine flu in 2019. Till March 1, there have been 1,469 swine flu cases in the country.

Swine flu or H1N1 or Seasonal Influenza is a seasonal infection which usually occurs every year with two peaks — January to March and July to September.

Preventive measures such as covering the nose and mouth with a tissue/ handkerchief while coughing or sneezing, washing hands often with soap and water is advisable to check the spread.

"Avoid crowded places; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; stay away from crowded places if you have cough/cold; drink plenty of water; sleep well. In case of any symptoms, the nearest public health facility may be contacted immediately," the Health Ministry advises.

India has declared H1N1 as an epidemic, while the WHO named it pandemic in 2009. Now, while the WHO has declared the coronavirus as a pandemic, India has called it an epidemic.

There have been 114 positive cases of the coronavirus (Covid-19) in the country while two deaths have been reported as of now.

"While Covid-19 is the main health crisis before the country, a close eye has been kept on other outbreak, including H1N1," a Health

Department official said. The situation of the H1N1 is regularly reviewed by the Joint Monitoring Group under the chairmanship of Director General of Health Service (DGHS).

"The last meeting of the JMG was held on January 8," the official said.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the official added, has provided guidelines on the categorization of patients, treatment protocol and guidelines on ventilatory management to the states and the UTs.

"State governments have also been advised for vaccination of health care workers dealing with H1N1 cases."

Health is a state subject in India and the states or the UTs are having the primary responsibility of the issues related to it.

"However, the Central closely monitors the Seasonal Influenza situation and have been in regular touch with other governments," the official added.

In the national capital, while zero deaths have been reported in H1N1 in 2020, 226 cases have been reported till February 23.

The deaths in Delhi in 2019 because of the swine flu were 31 when 3,627 cases were reported.

While two people died because of H1N1 in Delhi in 2018 and total reported cases were 205, the number of deaths were 16 in 2017 in Delhi and the total cases were 2,835.

Delhi has witnessed one death because of coronavirus in March.

State government to cancel issuing of ILP pass from today

IT News
Imphal, March 7

In view of the prevailing situation that arises due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus across the world, the state government will cancel the issuing of ILP pass from today. An order in the

connection shall be notified today afternoon, said Chief Minister N. Biren Singh while talking to reporting at Old Airfield Koirengei after inspecting the site.

"In view of the prevailing situation of the pandemic Coronavirus, the state government will issue order

today to cancel the ILP pass from today onwards at Manipur Bhavan, Guwahati, Delhi, Kolkata and at all counters". The Chief Minister said adding that the cancellation is being taken up to avoid the spread of coronavirus in the state.

MNPF condemn Chassad incident

IT News
Imphal, March 17

Rebel group Manipur Naga People's Front MNPF expressed strong condemnation to the Chassad incident of March 16. A press statement of the outfit said that they share the pains of those injured victims in the incident.

"MNPF sincerely share the pains and sorrow of the people whose houses and properties have been burnt", the statement signed by Thomas Numai, Secretary Publicity said.

The MNPF also appealed people of Kamjong area to restore normalcy in the region and not to repeat such act in the future.

Karnataka doctor who treated India's 1st patient to die of Covid-19 tests positive

Agency
New Delhi March 17

A doctor, who treated the 76-year-old man who died of the novel coronavirus in Karnataka's Kalburgi, has tested positive for the virus, news agency ANI reported on Tuesday. India had reported its first case of coronavirus death after the man from Kalburgi, who had returned

from Saudi Arabia, succumbed to the illness on March 12.

"He along with his family has been kept in quarantine at his home. He will be sent to isolation ward today," Sharat B, deputy commissioner of Kalburgi, was quoted as saying by Agency.

The 63-year-old doctor is among the two new cases of Covid-19 in the southern

state, which now has 10 people who have tested positive.

"We have got 2 more #COVID2019 cases in Karnataka taking the total number of confirmed cases to 10. 20 yr old female who travelled from UK is tested positive & another contact of P6 (Kalburgi deceased patient) is tested positive.

Centre rebuts challenge to CAA, says NRC necessary for every country

Agency
New Delhi March 17

The Centre on Tuesday disputed all the challenges against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA and presented a point-by-point rebuttal to the criticism in an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court.

In the 129-page preliminary affidavit, the Centre told the Supreme Court that the CAA does not violate any fundamental right and therefore, the question of violation of constitutional morality does not arise. The

Centre also submitted that CAA does not result in expulsion or deportation of any person who may be classified as illegal migrant, "as claimed by the petitioners who have moved Supreme Court against CAA".

It also said that CAA does not confer any arbitrary and unguided powers on the executive as the citizenship of persecuted minorities of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh would be granted in a manner as specified under the law governing grant of citizenship.

Kamakhya Temple temporarily suspends daily 'bhog'

Courtesy NOW NEWS
Guwahati, March 17

In the wake of rapid coronavirus outbreak, the Kamakhya Temple in Assam has decided to temporarily stop the distribution of daily bhog (food offering) among the devotees from Tuesday. Moreover, as a precautionary measure against coronavirus, the temple administration is providing hand sanitizers to the devotees at the entry and exit points of the temple premises.

The floors and railings of the temple premises are being regularly washed and disinfected by the temple staff. Health desks have also been set up for the convenience of devotees.

It may be mentioned that the Kamakhya Temple is one of the oldest of the 51 Shakti Pithas.

The shrine is dedicated to the ten Mahavidyas of Saktism — Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamalattika.

The current structural temple

was built and renovated many times the 8th and 17th century. The temple consists of four chambers — garbhagriha and three mandapas, locally called calanta, pancharatna and natamandira aligned from east to west.

The inner sanctum, the garbhagriha, is below ground level and consists of no image but a rock fissure in the shape of a yoni (female genital). The first epigraphic notice of Kamakhya is found in the 9th-

century Tezpur plates of Vanamalavarmadeva of the Mlechchha dynasty. Kamakhya is an important seat of Tantrikism. The Kalika Purana (10th century) was composed and Kamakhya soon became a renowned centre of Tantrik sacrifices, mysticism and sorcery. Even today, Tantra is basic to worship, in the precincts of this ancient temple of Goddess Kamakhya. It is one of four primary shakti peethas.

Coronavirus patient, 64, dies in Mumbai; third death in India

Agency
Mumbai March 17

A 64-year-old coronavirus patient died at Mumbai's Kasturba hospital on Tuesday, India's third reported death linked to Covid-19 infection. The patient was among the 36 confirmed coronavirus cases in Maharashtra, people familiar with the development said. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is expected to issue a formal statement on

the death soon.

This is Maharashtra's first coronavirus death. India's first confirmed coronavirus-linked death was reported on Tuesday last when a 76-year-old man from Karnataka's Kalburgi died while being transported from one hospital to another. That he had tested positive to Covid-19 was confirmed only two days later on Thursday.

Delhi reported its first death from novel coronavirus the next day when a 68-year-old

woman from Janakpuri, admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, succumbed to the virus.

She was the mother of a confirmed case of Covid-19. Maharashtra's first death to Covid-19 comes at a time when the state is moving toward a partial shutdown in an effort to fortify its defences. The state government has called the next 20 days "decisive" in determining the spread of the highly contagious infection that was detected

in Maharashtra only on March 9 and has infected 39 people.

Earlier in the day, a doctor - who treated the 76-year-old man who died of the novel coronavirus in Karnataka's Kalburgi - tested positive for the virus, news agency ANI reported on Tuesday.

The 63-year-old doctor is among the two new cases of Covid-19 in the southern state, which now has 10 people who have tested positive.

"We have got 2 more #COVID2019 cases in Karnataka taking the total number of confirmed cases to 10. 20 yr old female who travelled from UK is tested positive & another contact of P6 (Kalburgi deceased patient) is tested positive. Both are admitted in designated isolation hospital (sic)," B

Sriramulu, Karnataka's health and family welfare minister, tweeted early on Tuesday. In the country, the infection has moved to stage two where infections being reported had

essentially been transmitted from imported cases.

Authorities are on a war footing to contain the outbreak in stage three — community transmission — as is happening in Iran, Korea, United States of America (US) and many parts of Europe, with the last stage being an epidemic, which devastated China.

India has 125 cases of coronavirus and has reported three deaths so far. A total of 13 patients in the country have recovered successfully.

Editorial

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Coronavirus, H1N1 and the filth garbage in Imphal city

The Coronavirus pandemic has alerted almost all states in India with the number of COVID 19 positive cases reaching 124 (as per the report of the Hindustan Times) across the Country. Manipur being a border state with Myanmar is no exception in taking up various precautionary measures. As taken up at other state governments has suspended classes for schools, colleges, and other higher studies till March 31 and also issued a health advisory to avoid mass gathering beside spreading awareness campaign and appealing them to take up precautionary measures and not to panic. Fortunately, there is no confirmed case of COVID -19 in the state. Some of the suspects who were under quarantined have been tested negative and as of now, Manipur is free from the dreaded virus which killed 1,82,611 across the globe with maximum numbers in China.

As reported in some of the newspaper the death toll affected by coronavirus reached 3 in India. But most of the media report still miss reporting the number of recovered cases in India. Of the two Italian tourists who were reportedly admitted at a Hospital in Rajasthan, one had been reported recovered and another who was admitted in critical condition has also been reported improved.

The coronavirus pandemic occurred at a time when there was lots of political chaos among various political parties and civil society organizations over the government's policies like CAA among others. Differences between the ruling party at the center and those non-BJP state governments were in the headline few days before the coronavirus issues arrived.

What is fortunate for not only those in the ruling government at the center is that the hate politics seems to have suspended for some time with all political parties in all the states along the Central government are taking up precautionary measures to fight the spread of the virus cutting across party line. The way the people across the country joined hand to fight the pandemic a rare opportunity for the BJP led NDA government.

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi had appealed the people not to be panic while taking up all preventive measures to fight the spread of the dreaded virus.

The government of Manipur too, has been taking up all preventive measures to avoid spreading to the virus in the state.

Meanwhile, while the state government is rolling their heads to the issue of the coronavirus, a shocking report confirmed from the health department is that one person has been detected positive of the H1N1 virus which is popularly known as Swine flu.

While the focus of the country is on the "epidemic" Covid-19, as many as 28 people have lost their lives in India due to swine flu this year up to March 1.

According to the Union Health Ministry data, there have been over 1,100 deaths due to swine flu in the country in 2019 and 2018.

Interestingly, the Manipur government seems to have forgotten that equal measures should also be taken up to prevent the spread of H1N1. As there has been a confirmed case there is a possibility that the virus spread lifting another burden to the state government.

Whether it may be coronavirus or H1N1 virus which causes swine flu, keeping the environment clean particularly at the crowded place is a much. But it has been 12 days that the IMC authority had stopped picking up garbage from the crowded place as well as from localities. Now at almost all locality filth garbage started disturbing people. There is a possibility that a more serious virus which is even more dangerous than the Coronavirus may be born out of this filth garbage being piled up in residential areas of Imphal city.

In that case, who is to blame? Will the world target Manipur for giving birth to another deadly virus as it had done to China just because Wuhan is the epicenter of the disease. Time for the state government to be serious on health issues by taking up stringent measures to all department or authority to jointly work for prevention of any outbreak. For that, the government should immediately advise to clean up the mess to all concern departments.

Nagaland bans entry of tourists

Agency Kohima, March 17

Nagaland government on Monday announced a blanket ban on entry of tourists in the State from March 18 to prevent the outbreak of deadly novel coronavirus.

The decision was taken during a high-level meeting in presence of Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio in Kohima on Monday. In an office memorandum, the state Home department stated that the entry

of any foreign or domestic tourist shall remain barred in Nagaland from March 18 until further orders.

"Issue of new/fresh Inner Line Permits for tourists (domestic/foreigners) and all other categories shall remain suspended with immediate effect until further orders," the office memorandum stated. On the other hand, the State Government has also taken a decision to shut down all educational institutions and universities in the State from March 7 to April 12.

How a Resilient Public Health System Will Save Us from the Next Pandemic

By Dr Rajiv Kumar & Urvashi Prasad

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is now officially a pandemic according to the World Health Organisation. India currently has around 110 confirmed cases, 17 of whom are foreign nationals. The government has been quick to adopt a multipronged strategy, including issuance of clear guidelines to ministries for coordinated action, imposition of travel restrictions, suspension of visas, large-scale screening and contact tracing as well as regular dissemination of information to the public. Mounting a swift response involving all stakeholders in a country of India's scale and diversity is undoubtedly commendable. With these measures in place we can be confident that India will be able to successfully limit the spread of the disease. Moreover, in recognition of the fact that controlling a pandemic necessitates regional and global cooperation, the Prime Minister's leadership in bringing together SAARC countries for chalking out a strong common strategy against COVID-19 is laudable.

Having said that, COVID-19 is not the first pandemic we have seen and will most certainly not be the last either. In fact, in an increasingly globalised and rapidly urbanising world, the risk of such outbreaks spreading quickly to all parts of the world is only becoming higher. The need of the hour is to build a resilient public health system that can prevent diseases, promote good health and respond quickly to minimise loss of life when faced with

an outbreak of this magnitude. During the last few years, the Indian government has taken several steps to strengthen the public health system through the implementation of programmes like Mission Indradhanush and the National AYUSH Mission. Flagship schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan and Swachh Bharat Mission also impact human health as they help to prevent diseases and boost immunity. So, what else is needed to build a strong and adaptive public health system across India?

Firstly, we need to increase spending on public health. The Central Government is committed to enhancing funding for health to at least 2.5 per cent of GDP as stated in the National Health Policy (NHP), 2017. States too have a critical role to play in meeting the NHP target of increasing health expenditure to more than 8% of their budget by 2020. After all, as highlighted by National Health Accounts data for 2015-16, of total government health expenditure in India, the share of the Union government is 35.6% while that of state governments is 64.4%. Moreover, in addition to increasing overall public spending on health, we need to ensure that a large share of the funds goes towards preventative care.

Second, as outlined in NITI Aayog's 'Strategy for New India @ 75' a focal point for public health is required at the central level with state counterparts. Such an agency would be responsible for performing the functions of disease surveillance and response, monitoring health status, informing and educating the public as well as

providing evidence for public health action. In order to be effective, the agency would also need to be legally empowered for enforcing compliance from other public authorities and citizens. This is crucial because several factors require inter-sectoral action to achieve a measurable impact on population health. The legislation, possibly in the form of a Public Health Act, would clearly confer specific powers on the agency for taking action to promote public health, especially in situations of "public health nuisances". For instance, medical facilities that dispose potentially harmful waste inappropriately need to be held accountable as do residential colonies that allow water to stagnate, thus providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The impact of such actions, after all, is not just on one or two individuals, but in fact puts the health and lives of several individuals at risk.

Third, it is essential to institute a public health cadre in states, with officials trained in disciplines such as epidemiology, biostatistics, demography and social and behavioural sciences. To a great extent, such a cadre can be created by training existing personnel in the necessary skill sets, thus requiring only minimal additional staff. NITI Aayog has consulted a wide range of stakeholders for developing a model public health cadre that draws upon various best practices. The good news is that the 13th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHF) has resolved to establish a public health and management

cadre in states by 2022. CCHF is an apex advisory body which recommends broad lines of policy action in health-related areas.

Fourth, we need to train front-line workers like Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and Multi-Purpose Workers (MPWs) for promoting healthy behaviours among people and identifying early signs of a disease outbreak in communities. Given the inherent information asymmetry in health and the fact that we live in world where misinformation can spread rapidly, appropriate channels are necessary for ensuring that people are aware of diseases, their symptoms as well as mechanisms for prevention and treatment. The National Medical Commission Act, 2019 includes enabling provisions for creating a cadre of mid-level service providers who can also play a vital role in screening people for early signs of illness in rural areas.

Lastly, efforts must be made to reinforce disease surveillance and response. This requires the list of notifiable diseases to be expanded along with steps for integrating health facilities in the private sector in disease reporting as part of regular surveillance systems. Infrastructure for surveillance, including adequate numbers of suitably equipped laboratories for testing samples, also needs to be strengthened.

Dr Rajiv Kumar is Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. Urvashi Prasad is Public Policy Specialist, NITI Aayog. View expressed are personal.

Guest Column

Restoring Chassad- the village with no house

By: TS Haokip

"Chassad is burnt down," informed a friend. I quickly check the news channels; National, Regional and State. There was no news as such. I sighed a relief. Then I came across a state News Channel informing that a hut was burnt down due to forest fire as there was a misunderstanding between two communities. My happiness knew no bound in

knowing that Chassad is safe. Later, social media became flooded with video clips; some too heart-touching to even watch. A particular video clip that shows women and children wailing inconsolably as their houses were gutted in flames brought tears to my eyes. "O Lord our God, let not these cries and prayers of your people be in vain. I prayed in despair. Never have I imagined that my birthplace would one day be reduced

to a house-less village. My father, had he been alive today would still pray for the perpetrators - the Tangkhuls. That basically is our difference. While peace loving Kukis believed in loving their neighbours as they love themselves, their neighbours evidently follow different teachings. It was the year 1979 that my father, then Pastor of KBC, was given posting as Chassad Gambih Pastor (Area Pastor). He'd later served a record 10 years in the region, during which I was born. I have only few memories to recollect as a child but I have heard from my parents, the kindness of people from Chassad area despite the communication hardships which continue to prevail in the area till today. My father had not just good friends but best friend 'joi' from the Tangkhul community too. Even when communal tensions were high during the infamous Communal Conflicts of the 90s, my father was invited to Molvailup village, Chassad area for Christmas and New Year celebration. His submission would always be that "There are many Tangkhuls who are like us, peace loving. I have many friends in Kamjong too. It is the militants and not the public." I know for sure that my father would never lie. But thirty years down the line, I am to describe the nature of the people who turned my birthplace to ashes today. I will offcourse say 'I have a friend from Kamjong', like my father, but I will be in lost for good words to honestly describe them. Cowards and miscreants would be the least harsh words to describe people who made more than 100 families homeless.

A few months back, the Kuki Chiefs of Chassad area made a request to the Government for protection of Kuki villages in Chassad Area, Kamjong District. I was surprised because Chassad village has not just a Police Station but also an Assam Rifle post, both of which are located within a mile radius of the village. Then I remember the many villages like Molhuh, Aishi and Molvailup etc who could need security forces for their protection. Chassad village was the last in my mind that I thought, could be attacked, that too in broad daylight. My trust on security forces have now hit rock-bottom after Chassad's episode. Maybe it was my father to have such high hopes. While there are many people, including victims whose houses were burnt down, who strongly feel NSCN IM is behind the attack, I for one thought an organisation which has a motto 'Nagaland for Christ' cannot stop to that level of burning innocent people's home which will be directly against Christ's teaching of 'love your neighbour as you love yourself'. Many people laugh at me at how novice I am, in understanding the plight of the Kukis in Chassad area. I decided not to doubt the people who are on the ground.

As I think of how difficultly the families of the now homeless Chassad villagers will spend their night, my heart weeps not just because of their plight but for my helplessness in ensuring the prevalence of basic sense of humanity in my birthplace which is nothing but a town of ashes now. Herculean efforts of not just physical and economical but emotional and psychological await the villagers to restore their homestead. I gave my utmost respect to the people of Chassad for not retaliating the attacks, which is one of the highest level of provocation and a display of utmost disrespect towards the victims. The people of Chassad even when they were in the jungle, while their houses were gutted to flames, prayed and displayed true characters of believers, which the neighbours could surely learn. Apart from banning the internet, I hope the Government restores Chassad village at the earliest possible and ensure the situation doesn't get out of control. Or, will my hope on the establishment be failed once again? I do not want to know.

Centre orders closure of all schools, colleges, gyms, museums, swimming pools & theatre till March 31



Agency New Delhi March 17

The Centre has taken the decision to close all the educational institutions including school and colleges, gyms, museums, swimming pools, theaters till 31st of this month due to corona virus situation in the country. An advisory in this regard have been sent to the State governments for implementation. Students have also been advised to stay at home. Meanwhile, the total confirmed cases of corona virus in the country rose to 114 with four new cases from Kerala, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Briefing media in New Delhi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Lav Agarwal informed that committee of secretaries chaired by Cabinet

Secretary reviewed and discussed the preventive measures to control the spread of corona virus in the country. He said, based on the recommendations of the Committee, Group of Ministers in its 7th meeting has taken the decision to adopt the social distancing as a preventive measure. Mr Agarwal said, non-essential travel should be avoided and private employer must give their employee the work from home facility. The Health Ministry has issued a toll free number 1075 for the public for enquiry about corona virus. In the briefing, Rubina Ali, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Anil Malik, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Damnu Ravi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Raman R, Head Scientist, ICMR were also present.

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