

Normalcy partially resumes in Manipur as government announcement new guidelines for lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic

IT News
Imphal, May 4

Following the announcement of the new guideline for the ongoing lockdown by the Chief Secretary of Manipur J. Sureshbabu relaxing some of the sectors including shops in Paona Keithel and Thangal Keithel here in the state capital, normalcy partially returns with people coming out to procure day today requirement. The new guideline for the lockdown came in force today after the 2nd guideline expired yesterday. The three Khwaramband Ima Keithel including the temporary market sheds and dry fish vendors popularly known as Ngari galli at Kwairamband keithel remain shut as per the guidelines. Government offices too are all set to resume with the new guideline announcing 50% compulsory attendance below the rank of Under Secretary. All ranks of Undersecretary and above are to attend offices, which mean government is working out all measures to make the administration functional while breaking

the chain of the COVID-19 pandemic from spreading among the people. Schools, Colleges and other educational institutions remain close, private run Public transport of all kinds including passenger carrier vehicles, inter states and inter district buses stay off the road as per the guidelines. But Imphal city today witness huge vehicular movement during relaxing hour. Govt. announces lifting the ban on movement from 6am to 4pm. In Chirahcandpur district too, some vegetable vendors and grocery shops are allowed to open but the main market has not been open. In Thoubal district too, except for the Ima Market many shops were seen open with people thronging in buy their day today need.

As per an order issued by chief secretary Dr J Suresh Babu, all activities except for a few are permitted in the state subject to strict social distancing norms and national directive for COVID-19 management. The activities which will remain prohibited include all domestic and international air travel of passengers, except for medical services, air ambulance and for security purposes or for purposes as permitted by MHA; all passenger movement by trains, except for security purposes or for purposes as permitted by state home department; inter-state buses for public transport, except as permitted by state; inter-state movement of individuals except for medical reasons or for activities as permitted by

state. All schools, colleges, educational, training and coaching institutions will remain close. However, online/ distance learning shall be permitted. Other prohibited activities include hospitality services other than those used for housing health/police/government officials/healthcare workers, stranded persons including tourist, and those used for quarantine facilities and those catering home delivery of food; all cinema halls, shopping malls, gymnasiums, sports complexes, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars and auditoriums, assembly halls and similar places; all social/political/ sports/entertainment/academic/cultural/religious functions/ other gatherings.

Railway to organise special trains to evacuate migrant workers

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, May 4.

The Indian railway will be organising 20 special trains to evacuate nearly 10 lakh migrants stranded in different states, in coordination with respective states, before 17 May, the last day of the existing lock down. The railway will be running the trains with additional rakes, to accommodate 1050 passengers at a time. This is for the first time in its history, the railway will be organising so many special trains. Earlier the railway had organised special trains to carry water to drought hit areas in the country. According to railway officials, estimated 30 lakh people, who include tourists, student and others are stranded in the country. The maximum evacuees are from Bihar, followed by Uttar Pradesh.

Waive railway ticket fare of migrant workers: Maharashtra CM

The Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has urged the railway ministry to waive the ticket charges of migrant workers stranded due to lock down and now returning to their native places by special trains. Thackeray who addressed the

police officers through video conferencing on Sunday, said that he has urged the railway ministry not to charge train fare to the workers, who are returning after long spell of lock down facing difficulties. Most of them are surviving "hand to mouth" and may not have enough money to buy tickets.

(Contd. on Page 2)

Congress to bear the cost of rail travel of migrant workers

The AICC president Sonia Gandhi in a statement on Monday said state Congress units will bear the cost of rail travel of needy migrant workers and labourers stranded at their workplaces due to the coronavirus-induced

lockdown and seeking to return home. This would be the Congress' humble contribution in standing shoulder to shoulder with these workers, who are the backbone of the country's economy.

(Contd. on Page 2)

Manipur govt. challenges is deportation of the stranded Manipuris from outside the state

IT News
Imphal, May 4

Even as the graph of COVID-19 cases in India is on the rise reaching the total number of positive case to 42,533 (as reported at 3.30 pm today) and the number of death reaching 1375, many parts of the country has been mark as green zone

as no positive cases if the Coronavirus has been reported in the last many days. Manipur is one among the Indian state which is a COVID-19 free state after two of the reported cases have been recovered after tested negative. The problem and the challenges ahead of the state government of

Manipur is to deport the stranded Manipuris at different state of the country. 88 people have been transported from Guwahati yesterday and the government is planning to transport those stranded at other states. Luckily all the deported persons are reported to have tested COVID-19 negative. Report reaching here from Churanchandpur district says that the district administration in consultation with the MLAs of all the constituencies in the district has been working out to arrange quarantined center for those who are to be deported to the district.

Chief Minister himself while talking to a video sent out at Facebook stated that he and his team are working all ways to bring back the sons and daughters of this soil to their home.

Shocking scene in front of Bank: aged people force to stand outside bank in Imphal for withdrawal



IT News
Imphal, May 4

A Shocking scene witness today in front of State Bank of India (SBI) at MG Avenue here in Imphal was that many aged people stood in front of the bank without

maintaining physical distancing as the bank that they were waiting to withdraw their pension was had not allowed them to enter for reason best known to the authority. The aged people reportedly came to the bank as the government have

relaxed the lockdown for some sectors including them. But they were seen braving the sun's heat waiting for the banks to open. Imphal Times reporters when enquired to them said that they were waiting to withdraw their pension.

Civil bodies continue to extend help to needy

IT News
Imphal, May 4

Co-ordinating Body, Khurai continue to distribute essential food items to needy people who are facing difficulties during the lock down. The co-ordinating body has earlier distributed edible items to frontline warriors – the police and also served lunch pack to truck drivers. Yesterday, the Co-ordinating committee distributed 3 Kg of rice to each family and 5 kg to family which have more family members. On the other hand a team All Manipur United Club Organisation (AMUCO) led by its president Nando had provided essential items to the reporter of Kangla Pao – Birjit who had recently discharged from RIMS hospital after he suffered a mild stroke. Birjit's condition however is improved but doctor advice him to take rest for some more times.

MIC to resume proceeding through video conferencing

IT News
Imphal, May 4

The Manipur Information Commission is set to resume its normal proceeding of hearing second appeal and complaint case with effect from May 18, 2020, through audio and video conferencing. A notification issued by the Deputy Secretary of the MIC, G Shantikumar Kabui stated that hearings/proceedings of 2nd Appeal and Complaint cases will resume w.e.f. 18-15-2020 through audio video conferencing. The commission notification appealed the public authority and petitioners to submit their Whatsapp number on or before May 15, 2020 to the Commission's cell phone number +91-9862109280 or at its official e-mail address accmanipur2019@gmail.com. The notification further stated that 2nd Appeal/

Complaint application may be submitted or sent to the Commission's Whatsapp number or to the Office e-mail address in PDF format at least 10 pages or in hard copy that should be dropped to the Commission Drop Box.

IT News
New Delhi, May 4

During a highly motivating and encouraging online video interactive session with India's elite boxers, country's Sports Minister Kiren Rijju on Sunday acknowledged efforts by the athletes and said boxing will play a vital role in making India sporting powerhouse and Top-10 nation in the medals tally at Olympic Games. Rijju also heaped praises on the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and its President Ajay Singh for their efforts to keep the boxers engaged with

online coaching sessions despite COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The online video conference was attended by around 140 elite Indian pugilists along with coaches and officials. Indian boxers have already secured a record nine qualification quotas at Tokyo Olympics and will be fighting for four more places in the upcoming qualification tournaments. Rijju also informed that the government is planning to allow elite athletes to resume

their training at the earliest in order to keep them ready for future competitions. "I have discussions with my officers. We are planning out a way to start functioning as soon as possible. I thought first of all we should allow practice for the players who have qualified for the Olympics and who will be participating in the qualifiers or important championships. We can't open all the coaching centres, so we will allow only for elite athletes. Junior camps have to wait for some time as safety

will be priority," he concluded. The initiative, which was done for the first time, received a great response and also motivated boxers and the officials. "I would like to thank our Sports Minister for taking time out from his busy schedule to talk to the boxers. It was quite motivating and morale boosting for everyone. We are all one Team India and we are proud that you are captain of this team. You keep interacting with us like this, we will make you proud," BFI President

Ajay Singh said. The minister further interacted with the boxers to know their situation during the lockdown and training schedules. "Whatever we have achieved today, credit goes to the coaches, federation and the government. It's really impressive and motivating to interact with you sir (Rijju). If we keep getting support from the government, we will definitely win Olympic medals, World Championship medals, Asian Games gold medalist Vikas Krishnan said.

Boxing will play important role in making India Top-10 at Olympics: Kiren Rijju

★ Editorial

Helping a lame dog over a stile

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief when the two positive COVID-19 cases of Manipur were recovered. It is quite commendable on the efforts put up by everyone from our Chief Minister to the obscured frontline warriors. Slowly life is returning to normalcy in Manipur as there are no new positive cases in Manipur. And the focus of the state is now on the well being of the people out here in the state as well as outside the state.

The talk of the town now is the recent bringing back of stranded 87 Manipuris from Guwahati to Imphal and the Bus fare they were charged. Many are complaining that the fare was exorbitant and are questioning the rationale behind it. Also, people from other camps supporting the move by the government and the fare, is of the opinion, that the total bus seating capacity was reduced to half to maintain social distancing and as such, the fare was high. So what is worth pondering over here is can't the government something like a subsidy if not the total fare for the people who have suffered enough because of the lockdown. For Assam Rs.7000 was charged as bus fees for bringing back stranded students and guardians in Kota, Rajasthan. The distance between Kota and Assam is 2000 plus kilometres and the distance from Guwahati to Imphal is a mere 500kms approx and why this stark difference in the bus fare? It is worth questioning who fixed the fare for bringing back the stranded brethren from Assam, was it the Government or the private Bus operators? If it was the private Bus operators, why didn't the government intervene? Also, the government could have used the fund from the CM COVID fund which is being donated by the people every day, or is the CM COVID-19 running out of funds? If not used during this time, when will be the appropriate time to use the fund?

Also, one cannot miss the initiatives taken up by the MLAs of Bishnupur and Thangmeiband Assembly to bore the cost incurred in bringing back the people stranded from their respective constituency. Why can't our remaining MLAs follow the above two MLAs footsteps? If they can sponsor such a thing from their pocket or other funds, then other MLAs and leaders can do the same too, this is what comes to one's mind.

Whatsoever, doesn't mean that our CM is not doing enough during this COVID-19 pandemic. It is under his dynamic leadership that the state has remained free from the clutches of CoronaVirus. But as being the head of the state he needs to answer the needs and wants of the people and whatever he does good for the people, a single misstep like such can go down the drain and people will forget all the good things he had done so far in a flash.

Contd. from page 1

Waive railway ticket fare of migrant workers.....

Some of the voluntary organisations have come forward to bear their travel expenses. In such circumstances it is imperative that the railway allowed them free travel. In the last two days special trains were organised from Bhiwandi and Nashik and the movement of migrant workers is being monitored by the control room at Mantralaya in South Mumbai. In the coming days the special trains would be organised also from Mumbai, Thane and Pune. As such concerned collectors should prepare a list of the workers wanting to return to their native place. All precautions should be taken including medical examination of each and every worker, Thackeray said. There are over 5 lakh migrant workers from different states including West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh residing in Maharashtra. They are being given free meals for the last 40 days by the Maharashtra Government. This facility will continue till normally restores, Thackeray said and added that besides migrant workers, the groups of travellers are also stranded within Maharashtra. The respective collectors should ensure that their return is hassle free.

Congress to bear the cost

If the government can bear the expenses of air travel to evacuate Indians stranded abroad, why it cannot show the same gesture towards the migrant workers? she asked. She also accused the central government and the Railways of completely ignoring the demands made by the Congress for ensuring the safe and free travel of migrant workers and labourers to their homes. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also said in a tweet in Hindi, "On the one hand, the Railways is charging ticket fares from labourers stranded in other states, while on the other hand, the Railway Ministry is donating Rs 151 crore to the PM-Cares Fund. Just resolve this puzzle."

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

Who will send COVID-19 to the netherworld?

By- Raju Vernekar

Ever since the COVID-19 has overtaken the world, the "expert" opinions are pouring in from different quarters describing Coronavirus as nothing but common cold and infected person gets cured depending upon one's immunity.

"The Coronavirus is dead virus and becomes active only after it enters the body. There are over 2.5 lakh other viruses with which we live. It is a protein molecule and there is a layer of fatty acid on it, which gets diluted in soap water".

"The coronavirus does not enter our body through skin, but enters through moist substance and that is the reason the eyes should not be rubbed too often. If it enters through mouth, it reaches up to tonsils. Once it enters human body it goes directly to muscles

and gets stuck in Ribosomes. Although bacteria can be killed with antibiotics, the coronavirus cannot be killed with medicines".

"While the incubation period of swine flu is 2 days, the incubation period of COVID-19 is 2 to 14 days, which increases the possibility of its spread by 25 times. The generation of COVID-19 pathogen is an act of nature and trauma is more than available respiratory pathogen". This type of information is being circulated on different forms of media, including whatsapp, for the last few days.

A Faridabad (Haryana) based Dr. Biswaroop Roy Chowdhury has gone to the extent of describing COVID-19 as the conspiracy which began in China and will end in the USA. He has said that every year more deaths occur due to influenza-like viruses which are never reported with such hype. The Corona is part of the fear

business and media has been playing a negative role across the globe. He has also expressed concern that India follows WHO protocols and US advice. Instead of this, India can utilize its own resources especially the Indian medicine system promoted under the AYUSH ministry. He made these observations, in an interview to "Media Star World".

As per the WHO's recent report, over 70 researchers are involved in conducting trials for manufacturing vaccine as a faster remedy over coronavirus. But satisfactory solution is still not in sight.

In response to PM's appeal the people clapped to cheer COVID-19 warriors and lit earthen lamps and candles across the country to ward off the coronavirus. That time it was said that the earthen lamps would generate 125 crore kilocalories (Kcal) energy and the coronavirus will be eliminated in just 10

Kcal. But the "monster C" remains unaffected and its reign of terror is going on unabated. Also no one has been able to explain why the people are becoming victim to this virus in whole sale across the globe.

Under circumstances one remembers a legend from Indian mythology, when Lord Vishnu had pushed the uncontrollable king "Mahabali" to the netherworld, using his third step. Appearing in the form of the dwarf, "Yama", Lord Vishnu asked Mahabali for as much land as he could cross in three steps. After he agreed, Vishnu revealed his gigantic size, taking two steps to claim the earth and heaven. Then "Mahabali" offered his own head for the third step and then Vishnu pushed him down into "patala", the netherworld. Today we need someone like Lord Vishnu to push "COVID 19" to the netherworld.

Manipur Looks Flat- "Hingminnasi Eikhoi"



By: Mr. Paojakhup Guite

Geography says that the Earth is round in shape. Manipur is just a tiny dot in the globe, hence its geography obeys the law of Geodesy (scientific study of the shape of the Earth). Therefore, due to its curvature, people in the opposite sides are not able to see each other unless either by a visit to the place or via emotional attachment.

Psychology has, in the wake of COVID-19, intervened into the province of the subject called Geography. Emotional "Hingminnasi Eikhoi" is what Psychology says to the people of Manipur. Ergo, unfazed by its geographical brutalities (roundness, hills, valleys, etc), people of the State stand together on a war footing to fight the bruteness of the respiratory pathogen called SARS-CoV-2 or novel Coronavirus (nCoV). Emotionally, we share each other's difficulties in our hearts. Notwithstanding the roundness and geographical terrain of the state, we stay connected and endure the ordeals of the COVID-19-induced stringent lockdown. We will survive and thrive. We will beat hunger and other morbidities even during the next two weeks i.e., Lockdown 3.0 which lasts till 17th May. We shall overcome some day!

The Unity Chorus

Manipur's demographic composition is as diverse as a garden having multiple breeds of flowers that give soothing effects to the sight. Broadly, there are 33 recognised tribes in the State. These tribes have lived together over centuries, if not time immemorial. Historically, through thick and thin, they have overcome climate change, inclement weather, invasions and the like. They have many untold miseries, stories and unsung heroes. Even Cheitharol Kumbaba won't be sufficient to chronicle exhaustive insights into this long-standing bond in the annals of Manipur. Fortunately, thanks to the Chrous, "Hingminnasi Eikhoi".

The Chorus represents the microcosm of Manipur's integrity (Polity & Psychology). It was composed in the late 1990s (1997?) by W. Samsom and B. Jayantakumar. We owe them a standing ovation. Ever since its inception, the thirty three voices, amalgamated in 7 voices (in seven languages/dialects) have been performing the Chorus especially on big occasions like the Sangai Festival and in other important festivals or renditions. Its relevance is highly being felt all the more in everyone's heart in this backdrop of the COVID-19 Apocalypse. The song will further strengthen our bonding in the generations to come.

The Hill Arms and Alms

The hill communities are affectionate enough for their

COVID-19. This is resilience which forests can provide us in times of food crises. The geography of Manipur is constituted by over 90 per cent hill areas. Sadly, in India State of Forest Report 2019, Manipur is one of the states having a maximum loss of forest cover. The State Government should take steps for a recovery of such a loss.

The Jewel: Nature and Culture

The first Prime Minister of Independent India described Manipur as the Land of Jewels. Being a jewel means we have exotic natural landscapes, animal-plant species and many untapped potentials in us. We are blessed with scenic and resourceful mountains, hills, ranges, valleys, rivers, forest,

modern times, a lot more have been produced.

Polo is an international famed game. The local name of the game is Sagol Kangjei. This international game traces its provenance in Manipur.

We have some art forms such as Thang-ta, Ras Leela, Pung Cholom, etc. Sankirtana, a ritual singing, drumming and dancing art form, was included in the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. Most importantly, recently, the Manipur-produced Chak-Hao has bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. Chak-Hao is scented glutinous rice popularly known as Black Rice. All these are the jewels of Manipur that have been found and produced naturally and culturally so far. We still have rooms to produce more jewels in the days to come. This needs collective efforts involving all the communities.

Remunerations

Service and remuneration is not what we are looking for. Nevertheless, there are times we need to give back and that is not necessarily remuneration for the services rendered. This giving back is both push and pull factor based. For example, valley communities can work together for the distribution of masks, hand sanitizers, organising awareness campaigns, etc. These things are hard to get in rural areas. So, this constitutes a push factor.

The hill communities residing in rental houses in Capital Imphal and other hubs of business, education and the like should not be charged, at best. Or, a certain percentage of rent fees are waived. This is a pull factor. The other option could be to postpone the payment of rent. Such passionate considerations on both sides give way to emotional attachment. We feel like living on a flattened Earth where we can see each other's pain and grief, breaking geographical barriers. On this psychological surface, we might fall of the flat. But, we are always ready to take the risk and opportunity. Let's swim together and sink together.

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



valley brethren. They are not wild by heart. They feel even to cuddle and care their fellow valley people. Their voices sing psalms (say, the Chorus), while their stretched arms give alms to the valley communities to help them tide over this critical moment of health crisis.

The hill people are gifted with forests at their disposal. The so-called Minor Forest Products (MFPs) play a major role in supplying food materials. The MFPs include, *inter alia*, *laphu* (banana stem), *laphu tharo*, *yaipan*, *yenpum*, *yantang*, *sing* (ginger), *mukhrubi* and *perup* (spellings in Meiteilon, subject to correction). From different hill districts of the State, we can see trucks of these MFP varieties being imported into the valley. These are free of cost and purely out of goodwill gesture. The titular king of Manipur, Leishemba Sanajaoba himself is a beneficiary of this- not that he is short of his expenditure. The front liners in the fight against the Coronavirus are also gifted with these hill indigenous food varieties. This co-operation is a harbinger of victory against the odds like

plants, trees, among others. Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in NE India is in Manipur. To the south of the lake lies the Keibul Lamjao National Park. The park is home to the rare Sangai (brow-antlered deer). The animal is found only in the State of Manipur, India. It is also the State animal of Manipur. Taken a garden analogy, we are of diverse cultures. This mosaic of cultures shines together in different colours. We have excelled in different cultural fields like films, sports, science, and literature. Manipuri/Meitei Film Industry (Maniwood) has done tremendously great jobs. The industry has provided an umbilical cord between the hills and the plains. The hill people are great fans of Manipuri films. In the field of sports, we have produced both national and international laureates like Dingku Singh, Mary Kom, to name few. We have enough numbers of doctors, engineers and scientists. Manipur has fared exceptionally well in literature-having a thousand years written record to our credit such as Cheitharol Kumbaba, the Royal Chronicle of Manipur. In