

MCPCR dishonours RTI Act; refuses first appeal application

IT News
Imphal, May 5

The Manipur Protection of Child Rights (MCPCR) has dishonoured the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005, by not accepting the first appeal application seeking information in connection with fund released to the statutory body.

According to report the

staff of the MCPCR stated that the Chairperson of the commission had ordered them not to accept any RTI application. However, as per source with the Imphal Times no such order that violates the RTI Act can be issued and such non-acceptance of application seeking information through RTI is "a disrespect to the law of the land".

The said RTI was filed by K h u m a n t h e m

Dhanachandra, an RTI activist of Naoremthong Laishram Leirak to Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights(MCPCR) on 1st Jan 2020 seeking information about the amount released by NCPCR and Social Welfare Dept.

On 18th March, the activist went to the office of the MCPCR to file First Appeal application in connection with his RTI application in which the staff refused to

receive the application. As per the law, a Public Authority who does not respond to an RTI application within 30 days or not accepting an RTI application, can be fined a certain amount, if found guilty.

Speaking to Imphal Times, Dhanachandra said, "a complaint will be filed to the Manipur Information Commission against the MCPCR for not accepting the appeal".

No rail fare will be collected from migrant workers: BJP

IT News
Mumbai, May 5

Amid political battle over the rail fare of migrant workers, BJP on Monday stated that no fare will be collected from migrant workers returning home and the cost will be borne by the centre and state in the ratio of 85:15.

BJP leader Sambit Patra stated that for each 'Shramik Express' (special trains being run for migrants) about 1,200 tickets to the destination were handed by the railways to the state government concerned. Railways has subsidised 85% and state governments are required to pay 15%. The State governments can pay themselves for the tickets like BJP led Madhya Pradesh govt is paying. Ask Cong state governments to follow the suit, he tweeted. He enclosed the copy of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs notification dated 2 May

which stated that "No tickets being sold at any station".

"The railways are running Shramik special trains keeping berths empty in each coach to maintain social distancing. The trains are returning empty from destinations under lock and key. Free food and bottled water is being given to migrants by the railways. Nowhere in our Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), we have said that the fares be collected from travelling migrants", a senior railway official here claimed.

The states like Rajasthan, Telangana and Gujarat — from where Shramik Special trains have originated — are jailing on behalf of the migrant workers, while Jharkhand, which has only received such trains, has also paid for the travel of workers. The Gujarat government has roped in an NGO to pay part of the travel cost.

But government officials in Bengaluru (Karnataka)

confirmed that the workers were paying their own way home on the Shramik Special Trains and the state government had not paid the fare on behalf of the migrant labourers. Whereas Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan ruled out paying the fare for migrant workers, in a press meet on Monday. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has suggested that the centre should bear the entire cost of the rail fare.

However there seems to be mismanagement in distribution of tickets at the state's end. For example a ticket bearing No. Z 37369338 dated 3 May, 2020 for journey from Vasai Road (adjacent to Mumbai) to Gorakhpur with rail fare of Rs 740/- was found in Mumbai. Meaning it was one of the tickets given to Maharashtra Government in bulk or the passenger misplaced it before starting his journey (this possibility appeared remote).

Recovery rate of COVID-19 cases improves to 27.41 %

Agency
New Delhi, May 5

The number of COVID-19 cases in the country has climbed to 46, 433 while the death toll stands at 1568. Briefing media in New Delhi, Health Ministry official said, the number of active COVID-19 cases stood at 32,138.

As many as 12,726 people have been cured or discharged. The recovery rate is 27.41 per cent.

He said, in the last 24 hours there are 3,900 new cases, 195 deaths and 1,020 recoveries.

The Health Ministry official said, lockdown has yielded very positive results and doubling time has improved from 3.4 days before lockdown to 12 days now.

He said, at the same time, it is important that the momentum is sustained.

The Official said, the number of new cases and

deaths reported during the last 24 hours has been the highest so far, in any day. He said, timely reporting and management of cases is very crucial. He said, Government found gaps in some states and these have been addressed after due persuasion.

He said, some states had not been reporting COVID19 cases timely and after persuading them, they have reported such cases.

He said, it is the reason for the sudden spurt in the number of cases since Monday.

The Official said, as Government has relaxed the lockdown, every citizen should contribute to break the chain of transmission

as part of his or her social responsibility by following all precautionary measures. He said, Health Ministry has issued additional guidelines for rational use of PPE by health workers and other personnel, in non-COVID19 hospitals and non-COVID treatment areas in COVID hospitals. He said, it is important that each and every contact of positive patients need to be traced.

Conducting surveillance for SARI and ILI symptoms in facilities in containment zones and otherwise, yields very valuable data and guides further action.

Home Ministry official said, workplaces must ensure thermal screening and face

masks, sanitizers and handwash in ample quantity.

She said, work-shifts and lunch hours should be such that maximum social distancing is ensured. She added that workplaces and company transport must also ensure distancing.

The Official said, no organization is allowed to gather five or more people in one place, not more than 50 people can be allowed to gather in wedding-related functions and not more than 20 people permitted at funerals.

She added that social distancing needs to be followed on all these occasions.

152 Manipuris stranded at Kolkata left for Manipur

IT News
Imphal, May 5

152 stranded Manipuris at Kolkata due to the lockdown in connection with the containment of the COVID -19 have been departed today from Kolkata Bhavan in 26

vehicles including 2 buses. Those deported today were stranded at various places of Kolkata and after the government arranged for their travel the departed Kolkata at around 2.30 pm today. They are likely to reach Imphal day after tomorrow. Meanwhile state

government has been working out their safe passage by communicating to the Center, West Bengal Government, Assam Government and Nagaland Government. The state government is also making all arrangement for quarantine.

Thirteen policemen test positive in Mumbai, ASI dies in Pune

IT Correspondent
Mumbai/Pune, May 5

Thirteen police personnel, including a DCP and six sub-inspectors, of Mumbai's JJ Marg police station in South Central Mumbai tested positive and an assistant sub-inspector of the Pune Police died on Monday, to become the first COVID-19 victim in Pune's police force.

The ASI died at a private hospital in Pune. "The patient, in his mid-50s, was on ventilator support for more than 10 days and had co-morbidities like hypertension and obesity," said a senior official from the Bharati Hospital. Joint Commissioner of Police, Pune, Ravindra Shive, said 13 personnel from the Pune district police force have tested positive for COVID-19, so far.

In Mumbai, the eight out of the 13 police personnel are asymptomatic. 40 people who had come in contact with them have been quarantined as a precautionary measure. "The reports of 13 police personnel, received on Monday certified them as COVID -19 positive. They have been admitted in hospitals while 40 others who came in contact with them, have been quarantined, ACP Avinash Dharmadhikari said.

The JJ Marg police station shares a boundary wall with state-run JJ Hospital, one of the biggest medical facilities in Mumbai. The JJ Marg police station covers the crucial Bhandi Bazaar-Mohammed Ali Road belt, and almost the entire police staff is out on patrolling duty for ongoing Ramzan.

The DCP was posted in central Mumbai at a compound where several other personnel of various ranks are based. He became the 17th policeman from the compound to test positive. On Tuesday 22 jawans of the State Reserve Police from Hingoli tested positive. They had returned to their base at Hingoli after carrying out duties in Mumbai and Malegaon, the hotspots of coronavirus.

Besides, on Sunday, six personnel from the Pydhonie police station, three from Nagpada and two from Mahim police station in Mumbai were found infected with the virus. Till now three policemen-Constable Chandrakant Pendurkar (57)(Vakola police station), Head constable Sandip Surve (52) (protection and

security branch, Headquarters) and Head constable Shivaji Sonawane (56)(Kurla traffic police) have passed away due to COVID-19. As of today, of the 227 infected, 22 constables and 8 officers have recovered and 172 constables and 22 officers are undergoing treatment in Mumbai.

In the meanwhile the Mumbai Police has decided to ask its personnel above the age of 55 years to stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides the contact tracing is on and instructions are being repeatedly issued to others to stay safe and take precautions, a senior police officer said. Besides, Mumbai police is in the process of administering some 12,000 doses of Hydroxychloroquine to its personnel.

Agency
New Delhi, May 5

Government will operate 64 flights to repatriate stranded Indians abroad. Addressing a digital press conference in New Delhi today, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, the flights will be operated from Thursday till 13th of this month.

Mr Puri said, The 64 flights include, UAE 10 flights, Qatar - 2, Saudi Arabia - 5, UK - 7, Singapore - 5, United States - 7,

Philippines - 5, Bangladesh - 7, Bahrain - 2, Malaysia - 7, Kuwait - 5 and Oman 2 flights .

Out of the total, 15 flights will bring back people to Kerala followed by eleven flights to Tamil Nadu and Delhi.

Seven flights will be flying back people to Maharashtra and Telangana whereas five flights are slated for Gujarat.

Maximum number of flights in the first week of repatriation will bring back citizens from the Gulf countries.

Meanwhile, Navy has confirmed that 3 of its ship are on the mission to get back stranded citizens from Maldives and UAE. INS Jalashwa and INS Magar will get back Indians from the Maldives

while INS Shardul has been diverted to Dubai to get back the expatriates from the West Asian countries.

Government has prepared a detailed roadmap to repatriate over 14 thousand 800 stranded Indian citizens from abroad in light of the Corona Virus Pandemic. Government has clarified that only asymptomatic passengers would be allowed to travel and strict adherence to the Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for the complete process has to be followed by the carriers.

State Governments have been advised to make arrangements, including for testing, quarantine and onward movement of the citizens upon their return.

Armed forces distribute essential items to under privileged families

IT News
Imphal, May 5

The troops of Indian Army and Assam Rifles in association with Samaritan Group, Churachandpur and Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Imphal extended humanitarian assistance to over 800 families of Thingthab Sub Division in Churachandpur district of Manipur yesterday. In view of the extended COVID-19 lockdown, the under privileged families of

the region were facing acute hardships due to non-availability of essential items. The initiative of the armed forces involved provision of essential rations and vegetables at heavily discounted prices for the locals in these remote areas. A total of 800 families received the items while 60 families living below the poverty line were provided the items free of cost to help them tide over these difficult times.

Thieves arrested

IT News
Imphal, May 5

A police team Lilong PS led by Inspector O. Ajit Singh, OC/LIL PS assisted by SI Md. Isha Khan of Lilong PS arrested two accused persons namely Syed Rizwan (27) S/O (L) Md. Habibur Rahaman of Lilong Haoreibi Awang Leikai and Md. Feroj Khan @ Atollei (30) S/O (L) Md. Anwar Ali of Lilong Haoreibi Chegaipokpi from their respective houses today. The police team recovered 1) One Gas Cylinder 2) One Gas Stove 3) 50 pieces of Plates 4) One Pestle & Mortar 5) One Bucket 6) 07 nos of electric bulbs and 7) one ceiling fan from their possession. Same articles were stolen by them from Lilong Haoreibi Awang Leikai Tera Makhong Upper Primary School in the intervening night of 24/4/2020 and 25/4/2020. It refers to FIR no. 47(4)2020 LIL PS U/S 457/380 IPC.

★ Editorial

Embracing the new Normal

The biggest travesty of humans is arguably its delusions of invincibility. If anyone still has any lingering doubts about this unfortunate fact, one doesn't have to look no further than the public places across the country right now. Just a little over a month ago, the world withdrew into its shell as the Covid-19 pandemic started wreaking havoc and the most brilliant minds and all the technologies failed to bring out a definite cure. The much-talked about vaccine or cure is still eluding the scientists, researchers and laboratories. There has been growing instances of re-infection which poses a very grave risk in itself, and while even the most advanced and developed nations are grappling with the unfortunate fact of their helplessness against the ravages of a virus, our country has been fairly successful in containing the transmission of the disease to a manageable level as of now. Manipur has had it easy so far as only two infected persons have successfully been treated and cured, and no new case of infection of Covid-19 has been reported so far. And with the gradual lifting of the crippling lockdown imposed by the central government in the wake of the initial spread of Covid-19 a little over one and half months back, it is clearly evident that while we have started shedding the panic and fear we experienced at the outset, we have failed to learn our lessons, and that it is human nature to resist change if it is beyond our comfort zone. And despite the obvious fact that the new regulations regarding the social interactions, personal hygiene and resource utilization is the future, we still try and reclaim our old habits. We have failed to learn to embrace the new future in all aspects of our lives- social, personal, professional or financial. It would do well for the general public to be reminded about the Spanish Flu of 1918, considered the most severe pandemic in history which lasted for two years, in three waves with 500 million people infected and 50 million deaths. Most of the fatalities happened in the second and third waves. The people felt bad about the quarantine and social distancing measures imposed at that time and rejoiced when these restrictions were lifted after the first wave, and the rest is the unfortunate history we should not forget. It would be our greatest folly if we forget this present crisis also.

It would also be pertinent to mention, and perhaps, share the lessons learnt from 'Event 201' - a high-level simulation exercise conducted on October 18, 2019 for pandemic preparedness weeks before the Covid-19 outbreak in China, by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation along with John Hopkins Centre for Health Security and the World Economic Forum (WEF). The exercise revealed that governments, businesses and public health leaders were all woefully unprepared. Indeed, the new pandemic has revealed the need to devote resources for prevention of future pandemics as well as develop new models of implementation of shutdowns and other emergency measures that does not disrupt or excessively impact economies. Any and every policy should complement nature and not compete with it. Let us leave a better world than the one we inherit. We owe this to our children.

Contribution of Assam Rifles in Empowerment of women in Manipur

By: Nongmaithem Gopendrajit Singh

Assam Rifles being the oldest paramilitary force in India is deployed in some of the most remote and underdeveloped areas in the North East and is fondly called the 'Friends of North East People'. Being deployed in such areas, it has been undertaking several initiatives in achieving qualitative change in lives of people and bringing them to mainstream of national development. As part of such initiatives, the Force's contribution in empowering and enabling the womenfolk of Manipur and allowing them to be part of decision making process is noteworthy.

Manipur primarily being a matriarchal society, women have been playing a dominant role in all spheres, be it running Ima (women) markets or leading protests against anti-social issues, etc. Meira Paibis is one such example. Assam Rifles has been committed to a make difference in the lives of women by empowering and motivating them through initiating various schemes, projects and programs to provide them with requisite skill training and also necessary equipment so as to enable them to earn their livelihood. The Force has always been proactive in rendering necessary assistance and guidance to help them establish their businesses and provide them with an alternate source of income. This helps in creating a self sustained ecosystem for employment opportunities to women from the local areas. These initiatives certainly have the potential to expand in scope and size thereby providing a hope for a brighter future for the entire region.

Assam Rifles as part of various Military Civic Action Projects and through own resources have been providing assistance to various women organizations and committees. The equipments provided to such organisations are being utilised by the women in the area to learn new skills and subsequently embark upon

entrepreneurship roles to seek financial independence and employment opportunities. The products made by these women are of high quality and durability which has created demand from other parts of the country.

Furthering its social responsibility the Force has worked tirelessly towards upliftment of HIV positive women. It has associated itself with DORCAS, an NGO based in Imphal to partner it towards this cause. To instill the feeling of togetherness and that of developing society, it has been conducting various informative tours to spread awareness about HIV.

The Assam Rifles has also been at the forefront of helping young girls to earn their livelihood through skill based projects. As part of various projects a number of workshops on photography and computer training are being conducted for young girls in their schools and colleges. The workshops are conducted with utmost professionalism, and panache, with a view of enhance job prospects. After completion of the workshop, the successful candidates are provided with certificates and appreciation letters to assist them in finding suitable jobs. Information regarding Government schemes, projects, employment opportunities and scholarship are also provided, thereby facilitating their smoother induction into Govt/ private jobs.

With various measures, workshops and programs the Assam Rifles has been successful in making a deep and far reaching impact in the lives of women of Imphal. The women have now become financially sound, socially elevated, mentally strong and above all have become an important part of socio economic strata of the society. The Assam Rifles has been extremely successful in inspiring, motivating and enabling the women folks of Manipur in harnessing their potential and enriching their lives. We as a society need to remember their contribution as we continue in our journey towards progress and prosperity.

The Plundering of African Wealth

By - Chalamba Kshetri

"Do not talk to me of Gold.. it brings more dissension, misfortune and unexpected plagues in its trails then benefits"
- Paul Kruger

We know Africa is a vast Continent with its blessed resources. From this territory that the World famous "Coffee" or "Ghanian Coffee" shape it's the lineage from. The widely consumed "Coca-Cola" products were manufactured or traced from Cocoa-plant in the spot of the African landmass. There are 54 Countries in the African Peninsula. But all of the respective Countries did not have the luxury to utilize or enjoyed their own resources fully. This is due to the fact that Africans were not well informed or wise enough to safeguard their resources. The Westerner and other Powerful Nations took this advantage of their not so conscious essence which resulted in hunting their resources, exploration, utilization, meddling in political and economic activities.

Leaving behind all the developmental way, the Africans were the scapegoats of Conflicts, CivilWar, Poverty, Disease, and Political Chaos. As I see, the Westerner engineered this whole upbringing. They manufactured the turmoil and strife situation in Africa with the sole perspective of 'Prout'. This is looting! The looting of the Resources. It is against Human Rights and should be challenged to a wide extent. Let's discuss the vastness of African Resources to know the presence of the African Continent.

Realities & Description of African Resources -

As a matter of fact, Africa is the second largest Continent though vast in size, it contains only about 10 percent of the world's population and can be claimed to have underpopulated. Africa contains an enormous wealth of mineral resources, including some of the world's largest reserves of fossil fuels, metallic ores, and gems and precious metals. The richness is being catapulted by a great diversity of biological resources that includes equatorial rainforest, of Central Africa and World famous population of wildlife of the Eastern and Southern portions of the Continent. Africa's two most profitable mineral resources are gold and diamond.

It produces 22 percent of the world total production of gold. Africa also dominates the global diamond market. The Continent produces 55 percent of the world's diamonds. Botswana, South Africa, Angola, are some of Africa's largest producers of diamonds. Unfortunately, several African conflicts and civil wars have been caused and funded by the diamond industry. Diamonds that come from these regions are known as "Conflict Diamonds" or "Blood Diamonds"

Forestry is an important addition to African landmass. Forest products account for 6 per cent of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) more than any other Continent. This is a result of Africa's abundant forest size. The export of forest products like high-quality woods of Mahogany, Okoume, which brings significant revenue. These woods are found in the Congo Basin, Cameroon, Central Africa, Israel and the European Union. Africa's fishing industry also provides income to more than 10

million and has an annual export value of \$2.7 billion. The Great Lakes and the Nile Rivers hugely support freshwater fisheries. West Africa is one of the most economically imported fishing zones in the world, producing 4.5 million tons of fish every year.

Africa is home to select deposits of oil and natural gas, which are drilled for energy and fuel. The Continent produced 12.5 percent of the World's total oil production and 6.45 percent of the world's total natural gas production in 2017. Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt and Angola dominate Africa's oil industry. Oil and Natural Gas production have also been connected to civil conflict. In Nigeria, Guerrilla Groups have attacked oil infrastructure and stolen oil from pipelines since the early 1990s. These groups primarily ethnic minorities claimed that foreign oil companies have exploited their labour while keeping most of the wealth. They also charge that out-of-date equipment has severely polluted air, soil and water resources.

Will Africa ever benefit from its Natural Resources?

Whether Africa will ever benefit from its Natural Resources is a question that is more relevant now than ever, as new discoveries of coal, Oil, and Gas across East Africa look set to transform global energy markets. And African people hope that the exploration of resources would benefit them. Will their hope bore fruit? According to estimates by former World Bank Vice President for Africa, Obeng Ezekwesili, In Nigeria, the Continent's biggest oil produces at least \$400 billion of oil revenue has been stolen or illegally extorted since their Independence 1960. Ghana also started producing oil in 2010 and there is further exploration all along the African Coastline. Only five of Africa's 54 Countries are not either producing or looking for oil. From Algeria to Angola and from Petroleum to Platinum, Iron Ores to Oceans, the exploration for Africa's resources has often caused problems rather than created prosperity.

Meanwhile, much of profits from resource exploitation leave the Continent entirely in the hands of foreign-owned Companies which pay low rates of tax. Few African countries process their own raw materials rather, the value is added elsewhere to the benefit of others. Foreign-owned resources extraction companies are often criticised for providing little in the way of local employment and contribution to World economies. But on the other side, not all African Countries is Heinous. There lies also a stable and transparent economic country with the exception of diamond-rich Botswana which has been praised as a Country for doing things right. It has also managed to retain some of the profits from processing its raw materials, something most African countries have failed to do. But the voices of the African people, the resource-rich Continent lamented that - whether Gold, Ivory or the very bodies of its inhabitants served not to enrich its people but to impoverish and enslave them. My inner tendencies some how told me that, Africa is the most Unluckiest Continent on the Planet. No Wonder the World is full of Surprises!

Taking care of the migrant worker population during lockdown

In wake of global Corona pandemic, a nationwide lockdown was announced which resulted in lakhs of migrant workers getting stuck at their places of work, away from their homes. Financial and nutritio al support and organizing transport for them to enable them to reach In Manipur, thousands of migrant workers are stranded because of the lockdown. State government is meeting the challenge of providing a large quantity of food grains in every district of the state and to distribute it to the needy. The respective district administrations have already set up various relief measures under PMGKAY and other relief funds. Special efforts are being made by the State Government in lifting and distribution of PDS rice allocated for the month of

April, 2020 under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) scheme and Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) for all the districts of State.

The migrant workers were mostly engaged as daily wage earners. They come to Manipur with or without their families to make a living, are temporarily settled in every nook and corner of the state. The administration provided relief materials including rice, dal, salt and cooking oil to the migrant workers in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown.

The fact that the efforts of the government are bearing fruit is evident in the number of stories that we hear from the ground level. Sukhal Yadav a migrant worker, staying at Kakching, Manipur has got rice free of cost under PMGKY. Fellow migrant worker, Muna Thakur

from Bihar, working as a barber and staying at Kakching has also received 5 kgs of rice from Ann Yojana and other relief materials from district administration.

Ramji Ram a migrant worker from Bihar, staying at Kakching, Manipur got 10 kgs of rice. He is grateful to the Central and state government for the support they have given. Similarly, Arvin Kumar from Bihar works as a labourer and stays at Kakching, Manipur. He said he and his group of friends from Bihar have been stranded and were worried how they were going to cope with the lockdown. But he is grateful to the government for coming to their rescue by providing free food grains and other essential items. Jugindra Ram a migrant worker from Patna Bihar runs a small time business at Kakching and stays there. He has got rice, vegetables, dal and cooking oil.

Sushin is a migrant worker from Bihar and works as a labourer at Kakching bazaar and stays at Kakching,

Manipur. After the lockdown he is out of work and was facing great hardship. But the government and local MLA have been a great help to him. He received free rice, cooking oil, vegetables and daal. For this he has given his sincere gratitude to the government. Umesh also a migrant worker from Bihar living at Kakching says that he feels safe here and hasn't faced any hardship whatsoever. He would like to thank the government for their support and relief they have provided in form of food grains, dal and vegetables. Yasin Ali works as mason at Senapati district has got 5 kgs of free rice twice under PMGKY. Jagat Bista, a migrant worker residing in Senapati district, said he has also got 5kgs of free rice twice.

This fight against the virus disease is a responsibility for everyone no matter where we are. And the government has made it possible to be a soldier in the fight with its PMGKY package. The need of the hour is to keep our morale high and determination strong.

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