

State likely to face Covid vaccine shortage; Many are unlikely to get 2nd dose

IT News
Imphal, May 10:

Even as the state government has organized mass campaign for compulsory vaccination for all citizens who are above 18 years to prevent for contracting with the corona virus, it is likely that not even 1 lakh 30 thousand people are going to get vaccination in the couple of days. Those already get jab the first dose are also unlikely to get 2nd dose vaccine with the number of vaccines with the State health department.

A highly reliable source informed this newspaper that, at present, i.e. as per record available at around 9 am today, the stock of Covishield vaccines vials is only 13,000 in number. These will be able to vaccinate a total of 1 lakh 30 thousand people if there is no wastage. After the state authority had increased the number of people to be vaccinated at each center (government) to 150 per day total number of vials to be distributed at each center is 15.

As informed through whatsapp by the authority of the Health department there are 20 vaccination centers in Imphal West district, 19 at



Imphal East district, 4 vaccination center at Tamenglong district, 2 at Kangpokpi district, 5 at Tengnoupal district, 1 at Noney district, 1 at Chandel district, 2 at Kamjong district, 8 at Kakching district, 14 at Thoubal district, 9 at Bishupur district, 3 at Kamjong district, 1 at Jiribam district. All these centers however do not vaccinate daily and have to be cancelled due to non-availability of vaccines or due to non attendance by the people. If calculated total vaccination center is going on at over 40 center of the government and vaccination programme done at private hospitals has been put on halt due to non-availability of vaccines.

As of now as per record, a total of only 75,616 people have jab 2nd dose of the vaccine and a total of 26,6081 have got the first dose vaccine. That means those people who got the 1st dose still need the 2nd dose and for that around 26,000 vials of Covishield is required. Moreover, Manipur's total population is around 30 lakhs

(subject to correction on official verification) and as per medical experts at 20 lakhs people have to be vaccinated.

Now with just 13,000 vials left with the state, it is unlikely that the people who get 1st dose vaccine can get the 2nd dose vaccine on time. Certificates of those who got 1st dose vaccine also wrote partially vaccinated that means without getting the 2nd dose, it seems meaningless for vaccination of Covishield.

On the other hand, a highly reliable source said that official record from Jiribam stated that the center had vaccinated 55 people with 5 vials. That means some of the people definitely did not get the exact doses of the vaccine.

Meanwhile source said that it may takes weeks or perhaps months to get more covishield vaccine as the Serum India Private Ltd. too is facing problem due to threats from various powerful people. The CEO is in exile at UK due to the threats and is yet to return.

In view of the facts provided above, the vaccination drive is likely to have no significance as Manipur may be out of COVID vaccine in the coming 4 or 5 days or say a week.

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 10:

After five years of offering unlimited free photo backups at "high quality" Google Photos, as part of its policy changes effective June 01, 2021, the Google will start charging for storage once more than 15 gigs on the account have been used.

The decision comes with other Google Drive policy changes like counting Google Workspace documents and spreadsheets against the same cap. Google is also introducing a new policy of deleting data from inactive accounts that haven't been logged in for at least two years.

All photos and documents uploaded before June 1st will NOT count against the 15GB cap, as such users will have plenty of time to decide whether to continue using Google Photos or switching to another cloud storage provider. Only photos uploaded after June 1st will

begin counting against the cap.

Google has pointed that it offers more free storage than others — the user gets 15GB instead of the paltry 5GB that Apple's iCloud offers. Besides 80 percent of Google Photos users won't hit that 15GB cap for at least three years.

The company will send alerts and warnings when the user begin to approach that cap. Google is also putting new storage management tools into Google Photos, including a tool that makes it easier to find and delete photos the user may not, like blurry images or screenshots.

Google pricing starts at \$1.99 /month for 100GB and has tiers going through 200GB (\$2.99 / month), 2TB (\$9.99 / month), and all the way up to 30TB (\$149.99 / month).

The pixel owners will still be able to upload high-quality (not original) photos for free after June 1st without those images counting against their cap. It's not as good as the Pixel's original deal of getting unlimited original quality, but it's a small bonus for the few people who buy Google's devices.

Google already counts "original quality" photo uploads against a storage cap in Google Photos. However, taking away unlimited backup for "high quality" photos and video (which are automatically compressed for more efficient storage also takes away one of the service's biggest selling points.

Today, over 4 trillion photos are stored in Google Photos, and every week 28 billion new photos and videos are uploaded. Many users rely on Google Photos to store their memories, it's important that it's not just a great product, but also continues to meet the users needs over the long haul. In order to welcome even more of users memories and build Google Photos for the future, we are changing our unlimited High quality storage policy, the statement added.

Himanta Biswa Sarma sworn-in as Assam CM, 13 MLAs also take oath

Agency
Guwahati, May 10:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Himanta Biswa Sarma was on Monday sworn-in as the new chief minister of Assam, a day after he was elected "unanimously" as the leader of the BJP's legislature party in the state. Sarma, who was administered oath of office by Assam governor Jagdish Mukhi in Guwahati, is the 15th chief minister of the northeastern state. The oath of office was also administered to 13 newly-elected MLAs of the BJP and its alliance partners, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People Party Liberal (UPPL).

BJP president JP Nadda was

present at the swearing-in ceremony of Sarma, who is only the second BJP chief minister of Assam, succeeding party colleague Sarbananda Sonowal, who completed a successful five-year-term after being handed the state's top job post the BJP-led alliance's victory in the assembly elections here in 2016.

Besides Nadda, former CM Sonowal also attended the ceremony. BJP chief ministers from Assam's neighbouring northeastern states of Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland were present as well, news agency ANI reported. The new Assam chief minister is also the convener of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

Earlier in the day, then CM-elect

Sarma visited the iconic Kamakhya and Doul Gubinda temples in Guwahati.

A former leader of the Congress who joined the BJP in 2015, Sarma played an instrumental role in the BJP-led alliance winning the recently-held assembly elections in Assam. While the BJP won 60 of the 93 seats it contested on, according to the Election Commission of India (ECI) website, together the alliance won 75 seats, thus crossing the majority mark of 64 in the 126-member assembly.

The polling for the Assam assembly elections took place on March 27, April 1 and April 6. The counting of votes for all 126 constituencies took place on May 2.

No notification issued for cancellation of exam and promotion of class XI and XII – Secy. CoHSEM

IT News
Imphal, May 10:

In connection with the circulation of a Notification issued in name of the COHSEM dated 9/5/2021 stating about the cancellation of class XI and XII examination and promotion vis versa, which went viral on social media, Secretary of the Council of Higher secondary education Manipur, Ch Biren

today clarified that no such notification has been notified and that the circulated notice through social media is a fake one.

In a statement the secretary of the council had clarified that that the said notification bearing No 2/45/98-HSC (Vol IV) dated the 9 may 2021 is a fake and fabrication document and the same has not been issued by the council of higher Secondary Education

Manipur. The matter has been reported to the concerned police authorities for registration of FIR and necessary investigation.

Biren stated that the class XI and XII examination 2021 are being postponed for the time being in view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation and any decision for cancellation of the examination or otherwise are yet to be taken.

The council further condemns such irresponsible actions affection the lives of all students and parents involved including their mental health and well being during covid-19 situation. The statement said that any official notification or information by the council shall be uploaded in the official website — www.cohsem.nic.in and also circulated in the daily newspaper.

India's COVID-19 emergency

Courtesy – Lancet journals

The scenes of suffering in India are hard to comprehend. As of May 4, more than 20.2 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported, with a rolling average of 378000 cases a day, together with more than 222000 deaths, which experts believe are likely to be substantial underestimates. Hospitals are overwhelmed, and health workers are exhausted and becoming infected. Social media is full of desperate people (doctors and the public) seeking medical oxygen, hospital beds, and other necessities. Yet before the second wave of cases of COVID-19 began to mount in early March, Indian Minister of Health Harsh Vardhan declared that India was in the "endgame" of the epidemic. The impression from

the government was that India had beaten COVID-19 after several months of low case counts, despite repeated warnings of the dangers of a second wave and the emergence of new strains. Modelling suggested falsely that India had reached herd immunity, encouraging complacency and insufficient preparation, but a serosurvey by the Indian Council of Medical Research in January suggested that only 21% of the population had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. At times, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government has seemed more intent on removing criticism on Twitter than trying to control the pandemic.

Despite warnings about the risks of super spreader events, the government allowed religious festivals to

go ahead, drawing millions of people from around the country, along with huge political rallies—conspicuous for their lack of COVID-19 mitigation measures. The message that COVID-19 was essentially over also slowed the start of India's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, which has vaccinated less than 2% of the population. At the federal level, India's vaccination plan soon fell apart. The government abruptly shifted course without discussing the change in policy with states, expanding vaccination to everyone older than 18 years, draining supplies, and creating mass confusion and a market for vaccine doses in which states and hospital systems competed.

The crisis has not been equally distributed, with states

such as Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra unprepared for the sudden spike in cases, quickly running out of medical oxygen, hospital space, and overwhelming the capacity of cremation sites, and with some state governments threatening those asking for oxygen or a hospital bed with national security laws. Others, such as Kerala and Odisha, were better prepared, and have been able to produce enough medical oxygen in this second wave to export it to other states.

India must now pursue a two pronged strategy. First, the botched vaccination campaign must be rationalised and implemented with all due speed. There are two immediate bottlenecks to overcome: increasing vaccine supply (some of which should come from abroad) and setting

up a distribution campaign that can cover not just urban but also rural and poorer citizens, who constitute more than 65% of the population (over 800 million people) but face a desperate scarcity of public health and primary care facilities. The government must work with local and primary health-care centres that know their communities and create an equitable distribution system for the vaccine.

Second, India must reduce SAKS CoV-2 transmission as much as possible while the vaccine is rolled out. As cases continue to mount, the government must publish accurate data in a timely manner, and forthrightly explain to the public what is happening and what is needed to bend the epidemic curve, including the

possibility of a new federal lockdown.

Genome sequencing needs to be expanded to better track, understand, and control emerging and more transmissible SARS-CoV-2 variants. Local governments have begun taking disease-containment measures, but the federal government has an essential role in explaining to the public the necessity of masking, social distancing, halting mass gatherings, voluntary quarantine, and testing. Modi's actions in attempting to stifle criticism and open discussion during the crisis are inexcusable.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimates that India will see a staggering 1 million deaths from COVID-19 by Aug 1. If that outcome were to happen, Modi's Government would be

responsible for presiding over a self-inflicted national catastrophe.

India squandered its early successes in controlling COVID-19. Until April, the government's COVID-19 taskforce had not met in months. The consequences of that decision are clear before us, and India must now restructure its response while the crisis rages. The success of that effort will depend on the government owning up to its mistakes, providing responsible leadership and transparency, and implementing a public health response that has science at its heart.

(****This write up is the editorial of the Lancet journal, which is one of the oldest medical journal in the world)

Relationships between culture and social media



By - Vijay Garg

The special life test created by the Punjabi community is culture. These include the living conditions, occupations, customs, relationships, dress, adornment, beliefs, prices, means of entertainment, language and folklore. Culture is a complex phenomenon in itself.

Social media is a medium of communication. Which helps people to share information. This

increases the interaction of people sitting in distant lands. They share any information with each other. There are many types of social media.

- Relationships between culture and social media
- Influence on the culture of social media

Positive effect

Every initiative in society has two effects, good and bad. Similarly, social media is an aspect that proves to be both beneficial and destructive to the people of the society. Videos presented on social media highlight various relationships. For many, these lessons are also a way to learn. Social media plays an important role in reviving many blurred and extinct cultural forms. Content disseminated by intelligent people on social media also plays an important role in making people aware of many social evils and superstitions such as feticide, drug addiction and dowry. Social media also provides a new direction by taking society out of the ritual. Social media connects with dates and festivals celebrated across the country. Introduces history related to them. Social media also connects with ancient history and cultural heritage. It is not possible for everyone to go everywhere but social media allows you to learn about the ancient heritage and its history from the comfort of your own home. Social media can sometimes be a quick solution to common questions. Videos and pictures shared on social media are all about the human mind. Social media represents the public mind by presenting cultural and heritage scenes of heritage fairs, wells, folk dances of young girls, children's games, tingan etc. Pictures, ideas, videos, stories, etc., which are lagging behind in presenting scholarly or print media, are also exposed on social media. Contributes significantly to shipbuilding. Social media also makes people aware of the hidden personalities that are needed to guide society. The advent of such personalities on social media helps in alerting the misguided new generation and inculcating moral values in them.

Negative effects

Where social media has had a positive impact on the culture. Similarly, social media has a lot of disadvantages. Videos uploaded on social media which have a direct effect on the human psyche and the human being gets entangled in it. Many videos on social media are related to religion which propagate the religion and play a game with the human psyche. There are a lot of videos that are presented on social media that embarrass us. Too much is too much for a human being. Social media has created loneliness in human beings. The social media user becomes so engrossed in it that he has no idea what is happening around him. While social media enhances people's knowledge, it is also dangerous not to hollow out the new generation from within. Children nowadays forget about physical games and play with phones for hours. There are so many things that are shared on social media that one wonders how inferior the person who shares them would be because there are so many things to keep behind the scenes in society. Such propaganda on social media sometimes affects the human psyche, both the unconscious and the conscious mind. Excessive publicity on social media also causes mental stress.

The importance of culture and social media

In fact, the main project of the media is to create a human being who possesses the characteristics of a material human being rather than a cultural human being. In the case of a Punjabi, this intention proves that he is breaking away from his land and his linguistic heritage. To this end, through the media, a life test is introduced into it which is focusing on bullying, disorientation, shame, sex, alcohol instead of rights, hard work and patience. Nowadays media is also our need and habit. V. The media can play an important role in understanding, preserving and passing on our culture from generation to generation. There is a social media that connects us to international issues and events globally for the progress of the country. There are a few shortcomings that can be overcome to make social media an important part of Punjabi culture.

The Moreh effect on policy: Recovering from lockdown, Myanmar coup deals a fresh blow to Moreh traders

By Sanjoo Thangjam

On February 1, 2021 with the proposed start of cross-border trade Myanmar's military seized power for that very day, in a coup against the democratically elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. In early morning raids, Suu Kyi was detained along with other leaders of her party. The international border gates at Moreh that were scheduled to open on that day remained closed.

The extended border closures have resulted in the loss of business for the approximately 200 shops tightly packed around the integrated check post on the Indian side. After the Indian government lifted several public health restrictions last year, business had just started getting back on its feet. Then, the coup in Myanmar brought everything to a screeching halt.

The extended border closures at Moreh, near the India-Myanmar border in Manipur have resulted in the loss of business for the approximately 200 shops tightly packed around the integrated check post on the Indian side although official trade routes were closed following the coronavirus outbreak in March last year, unregulated and illegal trade on a smaller scale continued between Moreh and Tamu, the first border town in Myanmar's territory, till the coup occurred.

In the region, Myanmar is an important trade partner and it is also the only ASEAN country with which India shares both a land and a maritime boundary. Although seasonal agriculture provides income for some residents, it is the international trade, a significant part of which is illegal, that sustains

"Mostly only illegal trade happens along the India-Myanmar border. The official trade is negligible in comparison," says a source familiar

with the operations. Requesting anonymity.

Moreh is commonly known as "Smugglers' Village", a boom town with a parallel township called Prem Nagar that has grown up alongside it over the past four decades. It is the "frontline post" for a massive two-way smuggling process and Intelligence sources believe the main bases for these operations are Imphal, 150 km away on the Indian side, and Tamu, 10 km across the border in Myanmar. The populace of Moreh comprises carriers and small-time promoters who work on small commissions. A town of outsiders, its populace includes 6,000 people are from South India (mainly Kerala), 4,000 are Mizos and other tribals, 3,000 are Manipuris (including a large number of Pangals, or Muslim Manipuris), while the rest are a mixture of Nepalis, Biharis, Sikhs and Marwaris. "And almost 90 per cent of them are smugglers or promoters," said an Intelligence officer who has been working in this area for the past three years.

The Centre is aware that the North-east can develop, prosper and eventually overcome its troubles by engaging its eastern foreign neighbours. Especially with the recent agreement on the Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar economic corridor blueprint, India can access markets in China's west and southwest through the North-eastern borders. Yunnan province in China is the network hub for trade and connectivity with the rest of the country. Equally important for North-east India is regional connectivity under the sub regional and regional cooperation such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Greater Mekong Sub-region cooperation. That said, a word of caution is appropriate to

understand the ugly behemoth of narcotics trafficking intertwined with ethnic insurgency in the neighbouring Golden Triangle.

There is no doubt that India is working on plans of building economic corridors in its North-east neighbourhood to boost foreign trade and give the economy the much-needed leap forward.

The use of Yaba or WY — a tablet containing a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine — is increasing by the day, particularly among Manipuri youth. Precursors like pseudoephedrine and ephedrine are smuggled into the state, as are huge amounts of WY tablets that are brightly coloured in red, orange or lime green and carry logos like "R" or "WY". These are small, round and roughly six millimetres in diameter.

A user who consumes five to 20 WY tablets a day is capable of running, jumping and doing any tiresome work without feeling the least tiredness for two-three days, and that too without even a nap. This narcotic increases the strength and confidence of its users and there is no gainsaying its effect on the rate of crime, which would be hard to control. Moreover, these tablets have the wherewithal of creating ecstasy in its users, so a rise in incidents of rape cannot be overlooked.

It is said that the immediate feeling after consuming a tablet is one of light-headedness (and potential dizziness), followed by euphoria, increased physical activity, heightened alertness and increased wakefulness as a result of the central nervous system being affected. After several hours, the user experiences a comedown that results in decreased appetite and increased respiration and hypothermia that lead to irritability, insomnia, confusion, tremors, convulsions, anxiety, paranoia and aggressiveness. Other reported

symptoms include lower back pain, possibly from damage to the liver or kidneys. While many countries have banned the sale of this tablet and its kind, Manipur is facing the menace for the first time.

Huge quantities of illicit narcotics can easily ride the new access routes of greater connectivity and blow up already existing issues of secured human health and wellbeing of society. It is believed that Myanmar is the largest producer of methamphetamine in the world, with the majority of Yaba found in Thailand being produced in Myanmar, particularly in the Golden Triangle and northeastern Shan state that borders Thailand, Laos and China.

Yaba is called bhubhuliya in India and is typically prepared in pill form, which means these can be packed inside a plastic soda straw for easy transportation or in reusable "mint" containers.

WY or Yaba is commonly known among users as "World is yours". These tablets contain 25-35 mg of methamphetamine, a very addictive stimulant, along with 45-65 mg of caffeine. At comparable doses, the effects of methamphetamine are far more potent, longer lasting and more harmful than amphetamine to the cardiovascular and central nervous system. WY can be ingested, snorted, smoked or injected.

Myanmar is the highest illegal production centre of WY and supplies the maximum amount of easily available precursors like ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. Manipur, with access to the international border through Moreh town and thereby to Myanmar, is now becoming the targeted smuggling centre for WY, which should be a major cause for concern.

To be contd. Tomorrow

By - Kaustov Kashyap

The American writer and poet, Mark Van Doren once famously said, "The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery." This is an adage that has gone largely ignored in India if one looks at most of our colleges and universities. The lack of focus on critical thinking and creative problem-solving within India's institutions of higher learning has led to a situation that has stifled innovation and also resulted in the low ranking of Indian institutions in international gradings. But it was not always like this.

Along with Greece, India was one of the fountainheads of learning in the ancient world. Universities such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramashila, Pushpagiri, Valabhi, Somapura and Odantapuri dominated as centres of learning for almost two thousand years from about sixth century BC, and emerged as global beacons to scholars and travellers. Nalanda, for example, was devoted to Buddhist studies but also trained students in fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics and the art of war. It had a nine-storied library where monks meticulously copied books and documents so that individual scholars could have their own collections. Nalanda attracted scholars from all over the world.

Today, the situation in India has flipped the other way. The country's best flock moves to universities abroad to complete their education. Incidentally, most of India's Nobel Laureates have foreign degrees. In fact, since 1930, no scholar from an Indian university (without a foreign education) has won the Nobel Prize. That's simply because Indian

universities do not offer adequate research infrastructure or provide the ecosystem needed to make ground-breaking discoveries to its young scholars.

Not a single Indian university features in the Reuters ranking of the world's 100 most innovative universities; whereas 20 Asian universities including those from Israel, Japan, Korea and Singapore featured in this list. The methodology for this ranking employed 10 different metrics, and the criteria focused on academic papers which indicate basic research performed at a university, and patent filings which point to an institution's interest in protecting and commercializing its discoveries. This empirical ranking may not be relevant for all, but there are some interesting pointers. The results show that big breakthroughs—even just one highly influential paper or patent—can help drive a university's ranking up the list. However, when that discovery fades into the past, so does its ranking. Consistency in research output, as always, is the key for featuring among the global best.

The problem with higher education in India is two-fold. The system rewards implementation, not original thinking and comes steeped in a colonial mindset that is focused on creating clones instead of original thinkers. There is an over-emphasis on mastering the fundamentals and 'being safe', and a lesser emphasis on exploration-driven learning and picking up from failures. The other issue is that of access to quality resources. With the world's second largest post-secondary student population of around 20 million, India has over 722 universities and university-level

institutions along with 37,000 colleges. Yet the country's gross enrolment ratio (GER) is low with only 20 per hundred accessing higher education. India is lagging far behind as the average for developed countries is 45 per hundred. The Government of India has set a GER target of 30 percent by 2020, and for that to be achieved; the number of universities and colleges will have to be increased manifold while enhancing the quality of existing institutions.

A lot has already been said in the context of what Clayton Christensen from Harvard University calls 'disruptive innovation'. In societies that have been the primary drivers of innovation, disruptive or otherwise, the educational institutions are the catalysts for enabling an environment that nurtures out-of-the-box thinking. To ensure that our universities become such catalysts will require a change of mindset.

To begin with, our institutions need to overhaul the teaching-learning process to ensure quality delivery. A major component of the mission of any university has to be the creation of knowledge by researching. The learners, even at the undergraduate level, should be active participants in research-led learning. The university system needs to spark and nurture imagination and creativity, and enable the process of innovation. This requires attracting the best possible research-enabled faculty and also empowering them with the necessary infrastructural, networking, and other support.

When students and faculty begin addressing real-world problems, it will catalyze an ecosystem that is strongly integrated with and

capable of driving both public and private enterprises. A case in point is the NitiAayog enabled 'Atal Innovation Mission' that is setting up 'Atal Incubation Centres' across higher educational institutes and R&D institutions, and 'Atal Tinkering Laboratories' in schools to foster innovative thinking, creativity and scientific temperament among students. The government has already identified and shortlisted institutes with a strong research focus. Universities will now be encouraged to integrate into the local startup ecosystem, to fund and to work with entrepreneurs on the next big or small find. Could this be a game changer? I hope so. When it comes to solving some of the world's most pressing problems—whether economic or social—creative new ways of approaching problems are replacing old-school prescriptive remedies. The world is moving from interventions to innovations. Disruptive innovations require you to confront and challenge the status quo. An education that promotes working in an isolated bubble, without creating the necessary ecosystem for collaboration and partnerships externally, across sectors, disciplines and geographic boundaries, has no real value at all.

In the words of Steven Johnson, an American popular science author and media theorist, "if you look at history, innovation doesn't come just from giving people incentives; it comes from creating environments where their ideas can connect." It's time our universities realized this. The age of stand-alone institutions needs to give way to the era of ecosystems.

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