

CM inaugurates Block Health Mela & Telemedicine at Mayang Imphal

Lauds Covid warriors for their dedicated services



IT News
Imphal, April 15:

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh today inaugurated Block Health Mela & Telemedicine at Ayushman Bharat - HWC as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav under the 100 Days Action Plan at N. Tomchou Public Ground Mayang Imphal, Imphal West district.

Speaking on the occasion, The Chief Minister lauded and congratulated the COVID War-

riors of the Health department officials, doctors, nurses, ASHA Health Workers, etc. for their tireless and fearless dedication to their service.

We have lost countless lives during the pandemic, and we still have to be careful against COVID, he said, appealing to all those eligible to take the COVID Vaccination.

Highlighting low vaccination percentage in some areas in the State, especially in the hills, the Chief Minister said that tribal officers of the State should convince people to take the vaccine to increase vaccination percentage.

Stressing on the task lying ahead of the new State Government, N. Biren Singh said that it is only the beginning and added that we are in the initial stage of shaping Manipur. He continued that once the government completes the task under the 100 days Action Plan, it will declare the works to be taken up on a yearly basis.

The Chief Minister also expressed happiness that dialysis facilities are now available in almost all district hospitals and both the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences and the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences, which are the major hospitals of the State.

He further showed concern over increasing Kidney ailment and cancer patients in the State and stressed on the need for a proper study to probe whether our food habits is the main

cause. He also expressed concern over tobacco consumption among the people of the State.

N. Biren Singh also spoke on the Chief Minister's Health for All Scheme and explained that under the scheme, door-to-door health screening is conducted for 10 non-communicable diseases, and free medicine provided across the State.

Highlighting that health is wealth and that the government is working towards upliftment of the poor and to provide health benefits to them, the Chief Minister pointed out to the concerned officials the need to re-verify the beneficiaries lists of the CMHT and cancel names of beneficiaries who are found to be government employees during the re-verification process at the earliest.

Regarding poppy plantations in the hills, Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh expressed unhappiness about the same and added that during a recent meeting with chiefs and leaders of some villages, mass use of chemical fertilizer to ensure good poppy harvest was highlighted. This is alarming because these chemical fertilizers are drained or washed into the rivers and lakes during the rain which are eventually consumed by the people, he added.

Stating that there are so many alternatives and that the government will provide any alternative livelihoods to poppy planters, the Chief Minister urged all not to provide the ex-

cuse of poppy plantation as the only source of livelihood.

N. Biren Singh also appealed to all illegal encroachers on Loktak Lake to vacate their encroachments before the government takes up actions, and save the lake because without Loktak Lake it will be hard for people to reside in the State. Further stating that the government will take up various development works for the people, he sought support of all and urged against creating disturbances to any kind of developmental work.

Meanwhile, as part of the inauguration function, Chief Minister's Health for All Award, Imphal West KAYAKALP Award, Best Primary Health Centre Award, Best Health & Wellness Centre Award were also distributed.

The inaugural function was also attended by Mayang Imphal MLA K. Robindro as president, Konhoujam MLADr. Sapam Ranjan, Khurai MLA L. Sushindro, Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar and Addl CS (Health) Vumlung Vualham as guests of honour among others.

The Chief Minister along with the other dignitaries also visited the stalls opened as part of the Mela and interacted with the officials. The function was organised by the District Administration Imphal West along with CMO, Imphal West.

Different department opened stalls including for CMHA and NCD, CMHT & PMJAY, Food Safety Stall, Maternal Health & Family Planning, Skin OPD, Medicine OPD, Paediatric OPD, Dental OPD, Gynaec OPD, AYUSH & Yoga, ENT OPD, RBSK, TB, Leprosy, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra, ICDS, KRYNALAB, Social Welfare, Youth Affairs and Sports, Education, BDO, COVID Vaccination, Blindness Control, Tobacco control programme, Iodine Deficiency Stall, Child Health, Ultrasonography stall, telemedicine, Palliative Care, Dialysis, Immunisation, Viral hepatitis.

Thunder storm destroys houses, uprooted trees



IT News
Imphal, April 15:

A fierce thunderstorm destroyed several houses at many places of the state. According to report as many as 20 houses at Pangantabi area of Kakching district under Sugum assembly constituency had been destroyed yesterday night. Besides, destroying some major

construction roofing GI sheets of many houses were blown away the thunderstorm. Similar destructions were also reported from other districts of the state.

On the other hand Landslides and mudslides were occurred in many places in the state. Trees were uprooted and branches were blown out by the storms. Electric lines were cut

off. Telecommunications system were disrupted.

Meanwhile, many vehicles were stranded near Khongshang along (NH-37) Imphal-Jiri Road and in between Tamenglong and Dailong along IT Road due to landslides and mudslides. The Construction companies using excavators/machineries is being engaged for the clearance of the debris.

State observes 78th Anniversary of Flag Hoisting Day

IT News
Imphal, April 14:

The 78th Anniversary of Flag Hoisting Day was observed yesterday at INA Martyr's Memorial Complex, Moirang with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh gracing the function as Chief Guest. The Function was organised by the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Manipur.

It was on 14th April, 1944 that the Tricolor Flag of Free India was first hoisted at Moirang.

Soon after his arrival at the INA Martyr's Memorial Complex, N. Biren Singh led the other dignitaries in paying floral tribute to the Statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and also unfurled the Indian Tricolor Flag installed inside the complex.

Speaking on the occasion, N. Biren Singh expressed that he felt honoured taking part in Moirang Utsav being observed in connection with the 78th Flag Hoisting Day. He termed the

day (14th April) as a historic day for people of the Country adding that on 14th April, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Shaikat Ali of Indian National Army (INA) hoisted the Tricolor Flag of Free India for the first time on Indian Soil.

The Chief Minister continued that in early April of 1944, the Subash Brigade of INA along with 33 Division, Japanese Army crossed the Indo-Burmese Boundary to form Imphal Front. On 14th April, 2022, the combined force after capturing Moirang, reached the house of Hemam Nilamani of Moirang Konjengbam Leikai and set up the first Headquarters of INA in India.

He recalled that 96 Manipuris took part in the efforts of INA to capture Moirang from the British Army and hoist the Tricolor Flag. He informed that the State Government had already acquired land for the construction of new INA Memorial Hall and construction work for the same had been started. Regarding the expansion of INA

Headquarter Complex, he stated that the existing area was 0.46 acres along with the house which was used to be the INA Headquarter and added that the Government is in process to acquire 2.12 acres of adjoining areas to develop it into a World Class INA Memorial Park.

He continued that a 165 feet tall Indian National Flag, highest in Northeast, would be installed at the INA Headquarter Complex for which the pole had already been erected. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah will visit the State and unfurl the Indian National Flag as a part of the 100 Days Action Plans, he added.

MLA, Moirang AC Thongam Shanti and President, Akhil Bhartiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad Lt. Gen. V.K Chaturvedi were Guests of Honour of today's programme. Water Resources Minister Shri Awangbow Newmai, Members of Legislative Assembly, Chief Secretary and other officials also attended the 78th Flag Hoisting Day observation.

KCP observes 42nd Foundation day

'Lack of proper policy for food production makes the people dependent on others' – H. Ibomcha

IT News
Imphal, April 15:

Kangleipak Communist Party, (KCP), an armed rebel group operating in the region waging war against the government of India yesterday observed its 42nd Foundation Day.

As per a statement by one S. Mangal, Secretary-in-charge, Information and Publicity of KCP, the main observance was held at the premises of the 131 battalion of the KCP/ (Meeyamgi Feenagang Lanmee) MFL, with top leaders of the outfit as well as invitees from the KYKL and its army wing Meeyamgi yawol lanmee (MFL). Among those present as

presidium members are - L. Ingba, Deputy Finance Secretary KYKL/MYL, H. Ibomcha, Chief of the Army Staff, KCP/MYL, N. Mani G-2 of KCP/MFL, S. Dhana, CO 1st Battalion of KYKL/MYL and M. Robin, G-3 of KCP-MFL. The observance begins with the lighting of lamps and by hoisting the party flag and latter by paying tributes to the departed revolutionary who had laid down for the cause of the revolutionary of WESEA region.

In his speech, H. Ibomcha, Chief of the Army Staff, KCP/MYL said that due to lack of proper policy of the government all the rich cultivation lands both at hill and valley region have been wasted making



ing the people dependent to other Indian states for rice, dal, maize and other vegetables, a statement said. It added that the colonialists have invaded

to the stomach of the common people from a long time.

"To free ourselves from the colonialist who are making us dependent for food, we the

people need to produce more food", Ibomcha was quoted as saying.

The statement of the KCP signed by S. Mangal of KCP

said that L. Ingba, Deputy Finance Secretary KYKL/MYL, stressed on the strategy of the war waging against the government of India. He was quoted as saying that human being are not immortal, their life span is limited and within this short lifespan what revolutionary fighters have to complete their task within a speculated time.

N. Mani of KCP/MFL was quoted in appealing the revolutionary fighters on the need for the youths to understand the cause of the movement. He was quoted as saying that the struggle is for the future generation.

"Today's leaders of the revolutionary group will get

older and it is the younger generation that has to replace the leadership", Mani was quoted as saying.

On the other hand, S. Dhana of the KYKL said that the revolutionary movement can never be successful without the participation of the people. "This war should be the people war", he was quoted as saying.

Other leaders also talk about the movement and recalled how many cadres have struggled hard for the restoration of the freedom of the nation.

The 42nd Foundation Day of the KCP was also held at the central head Quarter, general Head Quarter, Training centre and other units of the KCP, the statement added.

Never underestimate the power of yellow or blue

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



As soon as the juicy yellow *nimbu* became a bit expensive, thieves turned greedily to have a few lemons in their kitty. Two police reports confirmed the theft of 100 kg

lemons from rural markets in Shahjahanpur and Bareilly districts of Uttar Pradesh. On the other hand, Elon Musk, the world's richest businessman, is eyeing the blue Twitter bird to bring under his umbrella. Musk, the owner of the magical Tesla car company, first bought a 9.2 percent stake in Twitter, and now he is showing his keenness to buy the entire microblogging company. Musk has bid \$43 billion to buy Twitter. He feels that Twitter has a lot of potential and the current management is not able to harness the full capabilities of this blue bird. Musk says that he has an idea as to how to harness the power of Twitter. While lemons are rich in vitamin C and taste sour, just as Twitter is a powerful microblogging tool which often creates an uproar.

Who understands the power of Twitter better than Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who hasn't addressed a single press conference in his two terms. After all, he owns one of the most powerful Twitter accounts in the world to convey his wishes and messages. He is the first leader in the country to make it mandatory for all his ministers, MPs, government officials and departments to use Twitter actively. Due to this change, all the states also started using Twitter and made it mandatory for everyone in office. Now newspapers and TV news channels also get breaking news from Twitter only. As soon as a prominent personality comes into limelight, journalists start checking his or her Twitter handle. When former US President Donald Trump tried to create unrest in his own country after losing power, the Twitter management banned Trump's account permanently. Poor Trump is now very upset and keeps threatening to launch his own social media platform, which is not that easy.

Last year, under the guise of agricultural laws, some elements created a ruckus in and around the Capital city of Delhi and their notorious well wishers sitting in Canada managed to flash a few anti-India tweets by paying millions of rupees to some famous foreign personalities. Obviously this mischief made the Indian government angry. The government even threatened to boycott Twitter at large scale and turned to the yellow birdie of a desi microblogging platform named Koo. It is another matter that the yellow bird has not yet learned to fly properly till date. Taking down a well established social media platform is not a joke. After all, millions of important people in the world are on Twitter. Most of the Twitter users are educated, rich and influential in every sphere. On the other hand, the Koo is having common people on its list, most of whom are supporters of a certain ideology or a political party. You get a little buzz only when you write Har-Har Mahadev or Jai Shri Ram on Koo, otherwise nobody cares what you are saying. Koo has no global connect, which shows that Koo will take many years to even make a mark as a social media tool.

Breaking colour line



By: Vijay GarG

The judiciary is taking the first steps towards removing the stigma of people suffering from colour blindness. The Supreme Court this week directed India's premier creative fine arts body, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), to give admission to colour blind applicants to courses hitherto banned for them. Film and television works are the product of creative minds and they cannot be stifled because of any limitation that can be overcome by external help, the court said. The court gave its reasoning that deficiency

ignoring the institute's reasoning that deficiency can hamper technical work. The ruling is progressive and inclusive. The operative part of the judgment is where it says external assistance can help a colour blind person overcome the deficiency. This is in keeping with the higher judiciary's attempts to encourage people with deficiencies and disabilities to take up challenging work. Pranjal Patil of Maharashtra is India's first visually impaired IAS officer. The courts have intervened to provide the help of scribes to help the visually impaired or those suffering from writer's cramps to sit for competitive examinations. The latest court ruling draws our attention to the issue of colour blindness that has so far adversely affected the career choices of thousands of people who suffer from colour vision deficiency. Colour blindness is not a disability. It is not included in the various legislations related to disability. Those affected are disqualified from maritime or flying activities, railways, mining, forest services, policing and advanced scientific operations.

It is only now that the world of fine arts has opened up for them, thanks to the Supreme Court directive to FTII. This is only the first step in what is a long fight. Several fine arts subjects that require precision colour identification — aesthetic, portrait painting, environmental education, composition painting, graphic printmaking, graphic designing, ceramic and moulds, illustrations, poster designing, press advertisements — need to be accessible to the colour blind with the help of external assistance. Colour blindness is the inability to perceive differences between some colours. Largely a genetic disorder, damage to the eyes, nerves or brain can also cause it. India needs a national campaign to undertake testing in schools to detect colour blindness at an early age. Otherwise, children do not realise their problem until they grow up and the deficiency is revealed in a medical examination conducted as a pre-condition for admission to professional and colour-sensitive courses. Many students face the indignity of being called slow learners when they are actually colour blind. Often, such students avoid activities involving colour, including lab experiments, painting, drawing, or field trips. Parents and teachers need to be sensitised about the issue. All schools should have learning materials available to give colour blind students a level playing field. The affliction cannot be cured but only corrected to an extent, a latest research says. Some companies are testing colour correction glasses or rejuvenating the cone cells in the eyes responsible for colour perception.

Why Bangladesh A Different Story Than Sri Lanka And Pakistan?

By: John Rozario

According to World Bank's latest report, Bangladesh (South Asian country) has a strong track record of development and prosperity. Over the last decade, it has been one of the world's fastest growing economies, owing to a demographic dividend, robust ready-made garment (RMG) exports, remittances, and stable macroeconomic conditions. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the country experienced a rapid economic recovery.

Bangladesh tells the world a remarkable story of poverty reduction and development. From being one of the poorest nations at birth in 1971, Bangladesh reached lower-middle income status in 2015. It is on track to graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 2026. Poverty declined from 43.5 percent in 1991 to 14.3 percent in 2016, based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day (using 2011 Purchasing Power Parity exchange rate). Moreover, human development outcomes improved along many dimensions.

On the other hand, the South Asian Island nation of Sri Lanka is currently going through an extreme economic crisis. Foreign exchange reserves have fallen so low that school examinations have been closed indefinitely due to a lack of imported paper. In addition to cooking gas, there has been a shortage of kerosene or petrol. Blackout has started due to a lack of electricity.

The situation is so dire that due to inflation, high unemployment, and shortages of almost all necessities, many Sri Lankans are fleeing their country in the hope of a better life abroad. Countless Sri Lankans are now being forced to do something other than their main occupation as

not everyone can afford to leave the country. Or living an inhuman life. The suffering of the people of that country is coming up in the world media.

The country has never been in such a bad situation since independence in 1947. To cope with the situation, the Sri Lankan government has asked for a new loan of 1.5 billion US dollars from neighboring India. When Sri Lanka faced problems, Bangladesh provided 250 million in currency assistance for the first time. This was the first loan from Bangladesh for any country. They again asked for a loan from Bangladesh. Besides, they have been repaying loans of different countries through the exchange of goods.

Sri Lanka was quite capable of human resources and internal prosperity. Then why their situation? In this regard, economic analysts have brought forward various factors, from which different countries can learn lessons in their current and future plans.

Sri Lanka has undertaken several mega projects in their country for more than a century. These include seaports, airports, roads, and other projects that are currently considered unnecessary and redundant. Different governments of Sri Lanka have taken loans from different sources at home and abroad. As a result, their foreign exchange reserves gradually run out. According to the country's economists, there has been little foreign direct investment in Sri Lanka in the last 15 years. Instead of foreign investment, various governments have focused on borrowing.

The country's government has

issued sovereign bonds since 2007 to raise money. This type of sovereign bond is sold when the expenditure is more than the income of a country. Such bonds are sold in the international capital market to raise money. That is what Sri Lanka has done. But he did not give much thought to how the money would be paid. At present, Sri Lanka has a debt of 12.5 billion for that bond alone. Besides, the government has also borrowed from domestic sources.

The once-self-sufficient country is also in dire straits due to tax cuts, reduced income from tourism remittances, and unplanned decisions in agriculture. Different countries including Bangladesh have to learn from this situation. The world economic situation has begun to change rapidly since the Russia-Ukraine war, at which time any country could fall into a new crisis. Although our foreign exchange reserves are in a good position so far, the situation in Sri Lanka can be kept in mind in future state plans. At the same time, we are hopeful that friendly Sri Lanka will soon be able to return to normalcy with the help of various countries and organizations around the world.

On the other hand, the economy of these 220 million countries (Pakistan) is in political and economic turmoil. Pakistan is in debt, amounting to 130 billion USD. At the same time, inflation seems to have picked up speed (12 percent). Over the past three years, Pakistan's progress has stalled.

The recent political instability has created a crisis in Pakistan. The recent political unrest has shaken the business and industrial sectors. The country's economy is already fragile

due to the depreciation of the rupee, declining reserves, rising commodity prices, and revenue shortfalls.

Not only has the currency depreciated, but the wheel of Pakistan's economy has slowed down over the past three years. The recent political unrest has shaken the business and industrial sectors. The instability in Pakistan's politics is showing no signs of abating anytime soon. A few days before the fall of the government, it affected the economy. The Pakistani rupee is depreciating. The rupee depreciated against the dollar on Thursday, hitting a new record. 188 Pakistani rupees are available for one dollar. Never in the history of Pakistan has the rupee depreciated so much.

The biggest challenge for Imran Khan's government was the economic crisis and he claimed that he would change the country's economy. He won't go to the IMF, reduce debt, and bring down inflation.

During his tenure, there has been an increase in the amount of debt, ranging from inflation, to a record fall in the value of the Pakistani currency, with the finance minister changing it three times. According to Prime Minister Imran Khan, despite the improvement in the economic situation, the Corona epidemic broke out and global inflation soared.

On the other hand, the small size of Bangladesh is currently a wonder of development. The implementation of big projects is now just a matter of time. City facilities have also been ensured in the villages. Visible flyovers on most of the roads in the capital. Metrorail will be launched in a few days.

contd. on page 3

PMFBY – Every cloud has a silver lining

By: Koli N Rao

Governments can use crop insurance to stabilize farm income over time, assist farmers when agriculture production is adversely impacted by a catastrophe, and improve farmers' creditworthiness. In addition, government-subsidized crop insurance programmes smooth government budgets across years by subsidizing premiums up front, leaving claims to insurers.

Natural disasters such as droughts and floods pose a great threat to agriculture in India, and financial arrangements (such as crop insurance) can play a key role in relieving fiscal pressure on government and farmers. Catastrophic events cause distress to many farmers. Without crop insurance, such distressful events could easily lead to income loss, inability to repay loans, and in the most extreme of cases, farmer suicide.

Crop insurance in India has evolved to become more comprehensive and widespread since the 1970s, when it covered only select areas and crops. In consultation with stakeholders, government decides how to design the most comprehensive and effective program, addressing issues along the way.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) replaced existing claim subsidy-based models in 2016. PMFBY is one of a number of government initiatives that provide farmers with some level of security when faced with risky and uncertain situations.

Despite billions in premium subsidies every year globally, stakeholders are still unhappy. There is no perfect crop insurance scheme, and PMFBY is no exception. The criticism is true to some extent, but not everything. There is an important point to note, the government is taking feedback regularly and making changes

as needed in key areas of dissatisfaction. It's a continuous process. Although some states and insurers have pulled out of the scheme, still, its success is far from ordinary.

Here are some salient features and achievements that will help readers understand success:

Protection value: In the pre-PMFBY era, the average sum insured per hectare was Rs 16,388, which increased to Rs 44,829 by 2020-21, providing adequate insurance coverage.

National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP): a centralized IT platform is developed linking the Central Government with all States and UTs, all participating Insurance Companies, 170,000 bank branches, and a network of 44,000 Common Service Centers (CSC) to ensure ease of enrolment of non-loanee farmers, better administration and coordination amongst all stakeholders. As compared to the pre-PMFBY period, when farmers had to line up at bank branches to enrol, often requiring multiple visits, this is a huge convenience.

Crop yield estimation utilizes technology both to audit the results of crop cutting experiments (CCEs) with CCEApp, and to reduce the number of CCEs by using smart sampling techniques.

Farmer's Credit: PMFBY remits claims directly to farmer's bank accounts. On average over 1/3rd of all insured farmers receive compensation, a large operation managed effectively, allowing farmers to receive compensation quickly. This also eliminates malpractice.

Overall Claim Ratio: The claim ratio for the period 2016-17 to 2019-20 was 88.6%, by no means a modest figure. Including the additional cost of insurers and reinsurers, the

industry has almost a 100% combined ratio. Gross claim ratio of 88.6% translates to 540% on farmers' share of premium.

Compensation for Key events: Since 2016, the weather has adversely affected nearly every state at least once, and farmers received decent compensation during these events. The scheme's ability to protect farmers from extremely adverse weather events in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, etc. shows its worth.

Timely payment for losses: The key takeaway of insurance is timely payment. PMFBY included guidelines for the timely processing and settlement of claims (subject to subsidy) through penalties for delays. Although not perfect, it improved timeliness.

Index 'plus' Insurance: PMFBY combines yield index and indemnity insurance. Yield index captures widespread calamities, while individual farm loss assessments cover localized calamities. PMFBY has captured and handled losses due to sporadic events over the past few years. Maharashtra, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh are testimonials to the localized losses recovered through PMFBY.

It doesn't mean all is well with PMFBY. In spite of the Government of India taking feedback and implementing changes as necessary, some states remain concerned about (i) high premium rates for certain crops and (ii) a premium subsidy cap on the Central Government's share that adds to the financial burden of the state. Perception of high premiums has led some states to demand a portion of premium refund during normal crop years.

There may be a solution to the above concerns by (i) changing the

threshold yield calculation method (ii) giving greater weight to technology-based yields and (iii) establishing a mechanism for a fair profit sharing arrangement between states and insurers.

Threshold yield calculation is based on average yield, which is currently based on the last seven years after eliminating two of the lowest yields. A more balanced calculation can be achieved by excluding one highest yield and one lowest yield (Olympic average). According to this calculation applied to major Kharif crops in Gujarat, premium rates are dropping by about 20 percent.

The final yield is determined currently only by manual crop cutting experiments. It's time to factor in technology-derived yields when calculating final yields - starting with a lower weightage (e.g., 20%), and gradually increasing as experience grows.

The USA and South Korea provide examples that illustrate how profits/losses are shared across a range of loss ratios. Using this template, we can maintain state and insurer ownership over a wider range of loss ratios. For example, if the loss ratio is below 50%, the surplus could be split between the state and insurer with a larger share going to the state, which gradually shifts to the insurer as the loss ratio rises reducing the margin. The state may take on more losses when losses are high (for example, > 150%), while insurers can take on more losses when the loss ratio drops.

PMFBY has demonstrated some promising results, and with a few more improvements, it could become an important tool for managing crop failures and climate risks.

(The author is a Senior Advisor, IRICBS)

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.

Naga political issue: Cannot be part of NNPGs solution, says NSCN-IM

Courtesy: NE Now
Kohima, April 15:

The NSCN-IM has stated that it "cannot be a part of the NNPGs solution" on the Naga political issue.

NSCN-IM said that the Agreed Position signed by the NNPGs with the government of India is "betrayal to the Naga people's mandate of the 1929 Simon Commission Memorandum, 1947 Naga Independence Declaration and 1951 Plebiscite."

However, the NSCN-IM said that if the NNPGs are "so keen to go for a Naga solution as per its Agreed Position, we wish them to go ahead and let the Naga people witness what they could achieve for the Naga people."

"We are never going to surrender our rights so tamely. History will judge and we simply cannot betray the sacrifices of the thousands of



martyrs," the NSCN-IM said in a statement.

The NSCN-IM further alleged that "Nagas who are working as Indian mercenaries" are "going through sleepless nights to wreck the Naga issue and destroy the Naga national identity which the Nagas have shed blood, tears and sweat for over six

decades".

"We fought single-handedly against the mighty Indian security forces and also against the misguided Nagas (mercenaries) that were given shelter and made to operate from the Indian Army camps," the outfit said.

The NSCN-IM further accused the Indian government

creating a "third force/party" to defend its interests "against" the right of the Nagas.

It asserted that "any solution based on collaborators will only pave the way for a bigger disaster," claiming that forces are working "hand in glove to engineer reedited 16 Points Agreement."

Manipuri Diaspora in Pune celebrates "Sajibu Cheiraoba"

IT News
Pune, April 15:

The AMAND Ladies' Club (ALC), a women's wing of the Association of Manipuri Diaspora (AMAND) Pune, organized the unique traditional festival Sajibu Cheiraoba, 2022 with its firm objective to preserve and promote the rich socio cultural heritage of our state Manipur on Sunday, 10th April 2022 at the Don Bosco Youth Centre, Koregaon Park, Pune.

The program not only helped in preserving and promoting our rich cultural heritage but also in fostering the spirit of unity and coexistence amongst the Manipuri diasporas in the Pune city—a home far away from home. The Sunday celebration that marked the parting of the old year and the welcoming of the new year was attended by about 200 people from many Manipuri families and individuals in and around Pune, including Mumbai, Talegaon, and

Ranjana.

The celebration of the aged-old tradition was graced by the presence of women, men, and children with elegant Manipuri traditional attire. Since the reign of King Koi, Sajibu Cheiraoba has been in the heart of every Manipuri which holds a close connection with our lives and activities. Though the festival is celebrated within a household with a family prayer and worship of the Manipuri deities to bring peace, harmony, prosperity, and safety for their respective family members, the ALC organized this year — a community Sajibu Cheiraoba, 2022 — for the families and individuals of the Manipuri diasporas in the city.

The attendees of the gathering were welcomed with an opening speech by the ALC President, Mrs. Tarunibala Khumanthem, which was followed with a speech by the AMAND President, Mr. Giridhar Naorem. Each of the sponsors of the program — 3C IT Solutions & Telecoms India Pvt. Ltd., Pune; Keithel Organic Outlet, Pune; S Salon, Pune; Emung Pvt. Ltd., Imphal; and Lucky Entertainment Group, Pune — was acknowledged with an eco-friendly sapling as a token of appreciation by Mrs.

Tarunibala Khumanthem (ALC President). The main attraction of the event was the presentation of the khudol pot (gifts) to all the brothers and male attendees by the ALC members and the seeking of blessings on the auspicious Sajibu Cheiraoba occasion.

The other part of this event was the fun-filled entertainment program such as Bumper Housie along with the availability of various stalls for indigenous fresh vegetables (yongchak, ngari, maroi, etc.), packaged food items, and traditional handicraft products. All the attendees of the program enjoyed the delicious authentic Manipuri cuisine such as nga thongba, makokmaru ngouba, ooti, yongchak eromba, singui, heithongba, kheer, etc., prepared by dedicated kitchen volunteers led by Dr. Narendra Huidrom. The attendees appreciated the organizing team and reaffirmed to celebrate and attend the occasion every year with the same spirit and vigour. The program of the day was concluded with a note of sincere thanks and profound appreciation by Mrs. Vijaya Namram to all the generous donors, sponsors, and attendees. The program was conducted by Ms. Anju Arambam.

Ambedkar Memorial in Mumbai to be Ready Only in 2024

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 15:

While the 131st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. B R Ambedkar was celebrated across the country on Thursday, the work on the Grand Ambedkar Memorial slated to come up in Dadar in central Mumbai has been delayed, and now it is expected to be completed only in March 2024.

The memorial is coming up on sprawling 12-acre land at the erstwhile Indu Mill premises.

Its main attraction will be a 25,000 sq ft stupa around a pond. The initial estimated cost of the project was Rs 425 crore. However, now it is shot to over Rs 1000 crore. The design involves 2.5 lakh square feet of construction work.

In response to a query by RTI activist Anil Galgali, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) stated that the work on the memorial has been extended and will be completed by March 2024. The expected cost of the memorial was Rs 763.05 crore as per the original concept. But now as per the

revised concept, it will be Rs 1089.95.

Rs. 209.53 crore have been spent till November 23, 2021. The amount includes a mobilization advance of Rs. 31.65 crore and a project consultant fee of Rs. 12.68 crore. M/s Shapoorji Palonji are the contractors, while M/s Shashi Prabhu Associates and Design Associates INC are the Project Consultants. The contractor and other agencies have been able to complete 49% work on the buildings and 6% of the work on the footpaths.

The MMRDA was appointed as a Special Planning Authority by the Maharashtra Government for the development of the memorial in 2013. Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a plaque to mark the laying of the foundation stone on October 11, 2015.

However, there was a delay in transferring the land from the National Textile Corporation (under the union textile ministry) to the Maharashtra Government. The state government officials received the transfer of development rights of the 12.5



acres of land from the union textile ministry for Rs1,413 crore only in March 2017.

The work order was issued on February 9, 2018, and the work was expected to be completed in 36 months. But there was a delay in executing the project due to the contractors, Galgali said. However, it's a fact that the work proceeded at a snail's pace during the prolonged Covid-induced lockdown.

The MMRDA is executing the project as per the responsibilities laid down by the

Government for the development of the Memorial. A 350 feet high bronze statue of Ambedkar placed on a pedestal of 100 feet height (total height of 450 feet), accessed by a spiral ramp is the main feature of the Memorial. The pedestal houses a dome in Buddhist Architectural style. 1000 capacity Auditorium, Exhibition Halls, Research Centre, Lecture Halls, Library, Conference Halls, Meditation Centre, Parikrama Path, Souvenir Shops, Waiting Room, Canteen, Administrative Of-

fice, Toilets, Landscaped area, Gardens, Parking, etc. form part of the Memorial, the MMRDA spokesman said.

The MMRDA now needs to take appropriate action to complete the project in an extended period. RTI activist Anil Galgali in the letters to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde, and MMRDA Commissioner has suggested that the work be expedited so that the memorial is ready by the fresh deadline.

India records 949 new Covid cases, single-digit deaths for 2nd straight day

Agency
New Delhi, April 15:

Amid worries over Covid surge in Delhi and Mumbai, India on Friday recorded 949 new cases, 58 fewer as compared to Thursday. According to the union health ministry data, six deaths due to the virus have been recorded in the past 24-hours, taking the total death toll to 5,21,743. This is the second straight day when India recorded less than 10 deaths. On Thursday, the country had registered one death — the lowest figure since April 2020.

The country's active caseload currently stands at 11,191 with the total cases accounting for 0.03 per cent. The

health ministry recorded 810 recoveries in the past 24-hours, taking the total number of recovered patients to 4,25,07,038. The recovery rate in the country stands at 98.76 per cent.

The daily positivity rate in India stands at 0.26 percent, while the weekly positivity rate is at 0.25 percent.

A total of 83.11 crore samples have been tested so far for the coronavirus - out of which 3,67,213 tests have been conducted in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, India's cumulative vaccination coverage has crossed the 186.30 crore - mark under the nationwide vaccination drive, reported the health ministry.

Contd. from Page 2

Why Bangladesh A Different Story.....

The long Padma bridge is not a dream now, it is real. Economists speculate that the GDP growth rate could rise to one percent for the bridge. This bridge has given new hope to the people of the south. The implementation of such a project with the government's own funding was at one time unimaginable. The country is moving forward with a sound plan.

The present government in Bangladesh has shown great prudence and foresight in the progress of Bangladesh. For this reason, there is nothing to be afraid of seeing the situation of any country as a nightmare. For example, the mega project Padma Bridge and Metrorail utility and how much is already known to everyone. 100 economic zones are being formed. Investment is coming from different countries. Foreign exchange reserves are

adequate (45 billion USD, January 2022), and remittances are satisfactory. It can be said that every economic foundation of Bangladesh is still in a strong position.

During the Sri Lankan corona, the tourism industry was almost destroyed by giving more importance to the health sector. Unnecessary development projects have been done with loans, the return of which has not come the organic agriculture sector has come to a standstill and the tax on public welfare has been greatly reduced but the economy of Bangladesh was also active in Covid emphasis has been laid on revenue collection and the agricultural sector of Bangladesh is very strong.

According to him, Bangladesh is in a positive position in terms of foreign exchange reserves, remittances, and export earnings.

Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves now stand at more than 45 billion, despite rising import costs. With which we will be able to meet the import cost of six months. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, is less than two billion dollars. It is not possible to meet the cost of one week's import. So, Bangladesh cannot be compared with Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, Bangladesh's growth rate was way above Pakistan, even before the pandemic; in 2018-19 it was 7.8% compared to Pakistan's 5.8%. Various international organizations, including the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, and the Economic Intelligence Unit, have identified Bangladesh's economic development as a "wonderful puzzle". While the current economy of Bangladesh is 410 billion, the size of Pakistan's economy is about 260 billion.

Bangladesh has improved its quality of life, economic strength, prosperity, education, and research in every field. Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, Bangladesh's growth has slowed down. But where the growth of all the developed countries of the world was negative in these years, the achievement of Bangladesh was also noticeable.

Successful statesman Sheikh Hasina has achieved full potential to move from a least developed country to a developing country. It has been possible because of People's hardworking, strong leadership. Political stability, the flow of FDI, empowerment of women, unique poverty alleviation model, inclusivity of economy, etc. That is the story of South Asian countries: 'Bangladesh' is a 'miracle story' while Sri Lanka and Pakistan are disaster tales.

GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Imphal, the 6th March, 2022

No. EE/WRD/NHP/1-1/2022-23: The Executive Engineer, Water Resources Department on behalf of the governor of Manipur invites a tender/bid through e-tendering for the bid document No. WRD/NHP/1-50/2021-22

Name of the Work	Period of Completion	Availability of bidding document from website	Date of online submission of bid through electronic mode	Last date of online submission of bid through electronic mode	Date, time and venue of opening of bid
Installation of DWLR of 10 Nos. with Telemetry	9 months from the date of signing of contract	6/04/2022 – 15.00 hours (IST)	29/04/2022 – 16.00 hours (IST)	11/05/2022 – 14.00 hours (IST)	11/05/2022 – 15.00 hours (IST), Office of the Superintending Engineer, IC-1, Water Resources Department, Khuyathong, Imphal-795001, Manipur

Details of the document can be downloaded and is to be submitted online through e-procurement/e-tender portal <https://manipurtenders.gov.in>. All correspondence/communication shall be made to the Executive Engineer, Irrigation Investigation Division, Water Resources Department, Lamphel, Imphal-795004, Manipur, India, telephone & Fax No. 03852955821, e-mail ID: nhpmanipur@gmail.com.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Irrigation Investigation Division
Water Resources Department, Manipur
SPMU, NHP

After 25 years, MLA of Singhat AC visits the Constituency

'Together we shall chalk out a sustainable means of livelihood': MLA Chinlunthang

IT Correspondent
Lamka, April 15:

After long neglected and sidelined, if not forgotten at least during election, by successive MLAs of the constituency, Tonglona area, situated within 60-Singhat AC of Churachandpur District, is visited today by the current MLA Chinlunthang, after no MLA from the constituency had set a foot for 25 years. It is noteworthy in the annals of 60-Singhat AC, that Tonglona area (comprising of 15 villages) was twice visited by Ex-Minister (Late) Thangkhanlal, the father of the present MLA Chinlunthang of Singhat AC, after which there was no record on any visit paid by the constituency's MLAs for 25 long years.

As requested by the village chiefs of the area, Chinlunthang inspected the ongoing 8-km long PMGSY-road construction and came to learn that low-grade materials (rocks) have been stored for use in the construction works. He informed the contractors and the concerned officials of the department to immediately discard the sub-standard materials and use good quality ones. In this inspection, the Singhat MLA has been assisted by Kamlianhang, an SO in PMGSY Office, Imphal.

This village road construction project was initiated under PMGSY Order 2018-2020 whereas the work began in 2021. The project is sub-divided under two packages: first package runs from Singhat to Chahnou, 10.180km, covering



four villages such as Mumpi, Simbuk, Buhsau and S. Mollen, and the second package Chahnou-Tonglon(T), 6.96 km, comprising of another four villages including Hiangmual.

The Singhat MLA also inspected the construction of a bailey bridge over Tuila stream. The construction of this bridge began in 2019, under PMGSY, and was slated to complete in 2021. However, only the base pillars have been erected so far.

Chinlunthang recalled that Tonglona area was well-known for successful orange cultivation in the past. In this, he exchanged and shared views with the area chiefs to revive the orange cultivation as a feasible means of livelihood. He urged the people and all concerned individuals to

work sincerely on every development projects coming from the Government, and requested the area people to co-operate with him in his effort to chalk out sustainable means of livelihood in this area.

At Tonglon (P) the Singhat MLA was received by Suanchinpau, an Ex-MDC, along with the area chiefs who apprised the MLA of various issues faced by the villagers ranging from electricity to water and road connectivity. At Hiangmual village, the chief Kapkhanthang himself reported that the only water tank provided in his village was made of sub-standard materials so much so that the water is incessantly leaking, and some of the connecting pipes are also damaged.

MLA Chinlunthang's

maiden visit to Tonglona area of Singhat AC was greeted by the presence of all the village chiefs and personalities such as Ngulgholun, chief of Chahnou, David Lianzaw, chief of Buhsau, Letkhohang, chief of S. Mollen, Thangkhanmung, chief of Tonglon(T), G. Suanchinpau, chief of Tonglon(P), Kapkhanthang, chief of Hiangmual, and others. They appreciated him for personally setting his foot in the area, after no MLA from their constituency had cared to show their faces up for 25 long years. The villagers are more than excited to have a glance of an MLA ever with their own eyes. At Tonglon (T) and (P), students of primary and mission schools greeted him with melodious songs and wreaths.

15-Day long Festival of Cinemas of Manipur begins

IT News
Imphal, April 15:

Festival of Cinemas of Manipur kicked off yesterday at the Palace auditorium of MSFDS. The 15-day multi-lingual festival is the concluding event of the on-going yearlong Golden Jubilee Celebration of Manipuri Cinema to come to an end on 29th April 2022. The rare festival, screening films from the celluloid, VHS and digital eras was opened by Bobo Khuraijam's 'Ima Sabitri' as the opening non-feature section and Ojitbabu Ningthojam's 'Larei Lathup', the film that was adjudged the Best Popular feature film at the 14 Manipur State Film Festival 2022 as the opening feature film section.

Eminent filmmaker and

Padmashri recipient, Aribam Syam Sharma; MSFDS Lifetime Achievement awardees and senior actors, Kangabam Tomba and Yengkhom Roma respectively graced the opening of the festival as Chief Guest, Guest of Honour and President.

As many as 32 feature films, 12 documentaries and 9 short films encompassing several local dialects spoken in Manipur will be screened during the festival. Among those to be screened during the festival include landmark films like, 'Brojendro gi Luhongba, 'Jahera, 'Khonthang', 'Mantri Dolansana', 'Phijigi Mani', AFSPA 1958, Pebet etc. Besides, 3 dialect films each of Tangkhul, Zeliangrong and Thadou Kuki will also be

screened making the festival inclusive in all its aspects. Full length animation feature film, based on the folk tale 'Keibu Keioiba', will also feature in the festival. Children film, 'Paari' directed by renowned filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma will be special attraction especially for the children. The 15-day event also features a series of interactive talks by Aribam Syam Sharma on aspects of film direction, music direction and on directing the Actors, besides a 5-day Documentary Project Development Workshop called, 'Documentor'.

MSFDS Secretary, Sunzu Bachaspatimayum appeals to the people to attend the festival and grab the golden opportunity to watch timeless Manipuri films.

Remembering Dr B R Ambedkar on His Birthday on April 14

By: D Raja
New Delhi, April 15:

Dr. B R Ambedkar's apprehensions that minorities would be tyrannised have come true. His remedy that Hindus should come forward to solve it needs urgent attention in our times. "Minority communities may be crushed. If not crushed they may be tyrannised and oppressed. They are sure to be discriminated against and denied equality before law and equal opportunity in public life." These prescient lines were written by Dr B R Ambedkar in the chapter "Majorities and Minorities" in his book "Thoughts on Linguistic States". He authored those lines in the context of elections and observed voting taking place on communal lines and in the process candidates of the majority community usually getting elected.

Tragically, minorities of our country are witnessing denial of equality before law and equal opportunities in public life. This is being trumpeted before the majority community for the purpose of winning elections by polarising the electorate. Use of polarising narratives by BJP leaders including the Prime Minister in the recently held election in UP and the brazen manner in which UP Chief Minister appealed to majority sentiment by using disparaging narratives against minority communities are crystal clear testimonies to what Dr Ambedkar prophetically wrote.

The alarming scenario we are seeing in BJP-ruled states was apprehended by Ambedkar with respect to the condition of minorities in the independent India. The manner in which girls in educational institutions in some parts of Karnataka were denied their fundamental right to access education just because they put on Hijab painfully brought out the discrimination heaped on them on the grounds of their faith. Now Muslim traders are banned from participating in fairs organized in Karnataka on the occasion of Hindu religious festivals clearly testify to their economic boycott solely on the basis of their faith. This is against the fundamental right of every citizen to pursue trade and commerce. Modi regime and other BJP-ruled states are trampling on

the fundamental rights of citizens just because they profess some other religion, which is different from the religion of the majority community and not in conformity with Hindutva project of Hindu-Rashtra.

This is nothing but majoritarianism in full display mocking the provisions made in the Constitution of India guaranteeing the fundamental rights to all citizens regardless of faiths. This politics flowing from obsessive concerns of the ruling party with Hindutva and making it the central plank of its public policies has reduced politics, in the words of Ambedkar, to "theology in action." Development in India now are not politics in its usual sense but as an integral aspect of an exclusionary theology that has nothing to do with constitution and constitutional morality. When Modi assumed office of the Prime Minister and took oath on the same Constitution, he proudly proclaimed that his regime would be rooted in "Minimum Government and Maximum Governance." Government and governance are now pushed to the margins by polarised narratives and divisive politics with a view to reap electoral dividends.

This toxic majoritarianism being practiced in new India conjured up by the RSS is a by-product of V.D. Savarkar's philosophy and vision of Hindus and Muslims having unbridgeable differences. Savarkar sowed the seeds of division by furthering the notion that those born in India only would consider it as their father land and those whose places of pilgrimage are outside India could not consider it as their holy land. In doing so he was effectively excluding Muslims and other minorities, whose places of pilgrimage remained outside India, from the scope of equal citizenship. Ambedkar wrote that V.D. Savarkar visualized a constitution in which the "Hindu nation will be enabled to occupy a predominant position that is due to it and the Muslim nation made to live in the position of subordinate co-operation with the Hindu nation." Ambedkar then warned that "Mr. Savarkar in advocating his scheme is really creating a most dangerous situa-

tion for the safety and security of India". Similarly, the head-priest of the RSS, M.S. Golwalkar advocated second-class citizenship for Muslims. Unfortunately, the Modi regime and BJP ruled states are now implementing this vision of Hindus and Muslims constituting watertight sections.

This separation between the majority and minority is enabling the Hindutva vanguard to deny minorities the right to equality before law and dignity. The way Muslims and other minorities are being treated with contempt by Modi regime and degraded to a status far below that of citizens enshrined in the Constitution clearly prove the point that rabid communalism is getting precedence over the vision of the freedom fighters and the Constitution of India. Thus, as Ambedkar foretold, we are now face-to-face to the most dangerous situation for the safety and security of India.

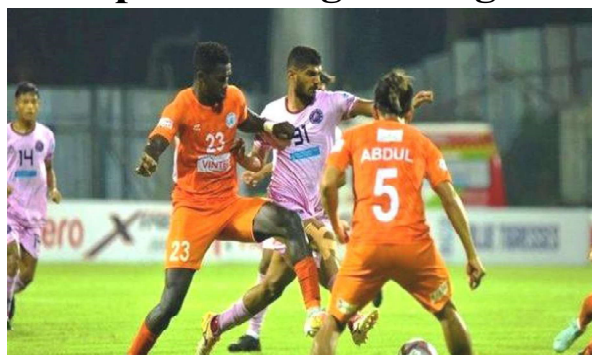
Economic boycott of Muslims on any considerable scale was never witnessed in the history of the country. Such perverse steps are being encouraged by BJP leaders and taken forward. Such policies combined with the manufactured narratives like love Jihad are dividing India on communal basis and creating conditions conducive to animosity and hate. It is tragic and unfortunate that neither the Prime Minister nor any other top leader of the Union government uttered a single word condemning the open calls by so called holy men for genocide of Muslims, instead BJP came to their protection.

Never ever in its history, India witnessed elected leaders responsible for the functioning of the state apparatus indulging in activities that are causing a wide gulf among people based on faith. Under the tutelage of the Manuvadi RSS, attacks and discrimination with Dalits, tribals and women are taking place and the perpetrators are going scot-free. An RSS pracharak sitting on the PM's chair has emboldened such elements. This has to be fought tooth and nail and that too based on ideology celebrating pluralism and constitutional values. (IPA Service)

(The writer is General Secretary, Communist Party of India (CPI))

Sports

NEROCA, Rajasthan United share spoils after gruelling encounter



Agency
Kalyani, April 15:

NEROCA FC and Rajasthan United settled for a point each as they met in the penultimate round of fixtures in Phase 1 of the Hero I-League in Kalyani on Thursday. Khaiminhang gave NEROCA the early lead in the first half, but his effort was cancelled out by a finish from close range by Rajasthan United striker Sardor Jakhonov in the second half.

In this battle between the teams occupying the 6th and the 7th spot in the Hero I-League table as things stood at kickoff, NEROCA made all

the offensive running in the first period. The team from Imphal created good scoring chances right from the offing as they made a fast start to proceedings.

In the 2nd minute, a wayward clearance from the Rajasthan United backline landed at the feet of NEROCA winger Khaiminhang. He showed quick thinking and impressive control to bring the ball under his spell, create half a yard and get a low and hard shot away across goalkeeper Bhaskar Roy, who got a hand to the shot but failed to parry the strike away.

NEROCA FC continually

threatened to extend their advantage on a number of occasions throughout the first half, but eventually fell short of converting their chances at the crucial juncture.

Sergio Mendigutxia came the closest for the Orange Brigade as he struck the woodwork from a close range free kick in the 21st minute. Soon after, a slick passing move led to NEROCA finding an opening inside the opposition's penalty area. As the ball was fed to Mendigutxia, the striker set his sights on goal from over 12 yards, but his shot was aimed right at Bhaskar Roy, making it easy for the goalkeeper to make

the crucial save.

The slew of chances continued into the second half for NEROCA. In the 53rd minute, Jiteshwor Singh flighted in a bending cross from a corner kick which was met by Mendigutxia on the edge of the 6-yard box. The Spanish striker, who has 9 goals to his name this season, was the favourite to convert the chance, but he missed the target from point blank range and the chance went begging yet again for NEROCA.

Five minutes later, Davis Kamanga came onto a second ball to take on a shot from range, as NEROCA continued to apply the pressure. Kamanga's effort, although taken well, lacked the necessary power to trouble Bhaskar Roy in the Rajasthan United goal as he beat the ball away in acrobatic fashion.

Davis Kamanga was sent off late on as at the end of the contest, both teams finished where they began in the table as they settled for a 1-1 draw. While Rajasthan United controlled ball possession and the tempo of the game, NEROCA were on the end of the better goal scoring chances. Both teams will keenly look towards rivals Real Kashmir's results now, who remain their closest challengers for a top 7 finish.