

## Man dies of electrocution in village paddy field

IT Correspondent  
Jiribam, April 26:

**A man of aged about 45 yrs died of electrocution at Kashimpur village of Jiribam District today. The deceased was identified as Akil Chhiddin (45yrs) S/o: (L). Toimus Ali of Kashimpur village. As per report from the locality, the live electric wire was laying on the paddy field, while the man went to the field with his cattle at around 8am today, he came in contact with live electric wire and were dead on the spot by bad electric shock. The electric wire which passed through the paddy field had collapsed and tangled due to damages of poles by the rainfall and storms of few days before. The deceased while passing through the electric wire thought to be disconnected wire and touch the wire to pass through it. But the wire was in live condition and electrocuted. Later, the body was rushed to the hospital by the locals which declared to be brought dead by the doctors. The family members of the deceased file a case to Jiribam police station regarding the incident as they claimed that it occurred due to negligence of electric department.**

## CM's angers to encroachers at Waithou and Ushoipokpi area : What about the Haj house where he laid foundation stone at the site?

IT News  
Imphal, April 26:

The adage – 'when you point finger to someone, the remaining three fingers points at you' seems quite relevant with what had happened on April 23, at Ushoipokpi and Waithou area. Almost every citizen of the state applauded Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and his cabinet colleagues for showing their anger on seeing encroachers constructing structure at the forest land at Waithou Reserved Forest Area in Thoubal district after the government had widened the road (NH-1). On the day the Chief Minister had ordered the police to arrest all those engaging the construction of illegal structure stating that strict measures should be taken up against all encroachers at Protected forest area as well as at Reserved Forest area. However, when one remembers, it was the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh himself that laid foundation stone for construction of Haj House at the same spot which he gave order to drive out all construction in



Laying of foundation stone for haj house at the site on Jan. 1, 2022

between Ushoipokpi to Waithou area on January 1, 2022 in the Presence of RS MP Leishemba Sanajaoba and other leaders. MLA Md. Abdul Nashir was among those present in the foundation stone laying ceremony. Soon after the CM poured his anger, the district administration conducted spot enquiry the following day and started verification of the so called patta holders occupying the land which literally belongs to the government as well as which is under the protection by

forest acts. The question now is that, will the Haj House, which the Chief Minister had laid foundation be sideline. Will the site for construction of the Haj house be shifted to somewhere else? Or will the government allowed it as the Haj house is mean for religious purpose? So many questions are being asked. Saying so it is well and good that the Chief Minister this time showed some seriousness to protect the forest land. But why only this time, after there have been multiple reports of

encroaching the forest land particularly at this site in Thoubal district.

As per a source, the Manipur Forest Department had tried time and again to stop the illegal collection of earth from the Reserved Forest area including the Waithou hill range. "Every time as the Forest department captured any JCB drivers or any persons responsible in this illegal matter, there were phone calls to release them as they were backing by the Manipur MLA or Minister", the source from the Forest department said.

He further added that there were reports of cutting of pine trees at Chanam Sandrok hill area. The staffs of Thoubal Forest went to stop it but they were attack with gunshots. Even sit in protest was staged on that matter by the staffs of Thoubal and Kakching Forest Department.

The Government neither taken any action to the responsible culprits but the Government made transfer the DFO of the Forest Department, added the anonymous forest officer.

## Is sacrifice for the nation a challenge to other nation?

- R.K Meghen



IT News  
Imphal, April 2022:

Former chairman of the rebel group UNLF today questions to people whether love for our motherland and sacrifice for the cause of the motherland – a challenge to other nation.

The former rebel leader RK Meghen told this while speaking during a patriotic recitation programme organized by APUNBA KHORIROLGEE MALEMAGEE LUP in connection with the Khongjom Day observance. The poem recitation programme was organized to

pay tribute to the martyrs of Anglo-Manipur War, 1891.

R.K Meghen said that – "As a son of Manipur we believed in patriotism and as a resulted we love our Motherland and we can sacrificed for our motherland, is this act a threat to the other country?"

He further added, "It's a good traditions of today's generation to remember the martyrs of Anglo-Manipur War, 1891 with the self-written poems".

As later in the release the observation was attend by many organizations and many poets.

## The Heroin Seized from a Pakistani Boat Off Gujarat Coast

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, April 26

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Gujarat Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) apprehended the Pakistani Boat "Al-Haj" with a 09 crew, on the Indian side of the Arabian sea carrying heroin worth approx Rs 280 crore in an operation on Sunday, the ICG stated on Monday.

The boat was impounded, the contraband seized and the

crew was taken into custody on Monday. The boat being heavier, "ICGS Ankit" in the vicinity was diverted for towing assistance. It was brought to Jakhau Port located in Kutch district of Gujarat on Monday afternoon.

"In a joint Ops with ATS #Gujarat, IndiaCoast Guard Ships apprehended Pak Boat Al-Haj with 09 crew in the Indian side of the Arabian sea carrying heroin worth approx 280 cr. Boat being brought

to #Jakhau for further investigation" ICS twitted.

The ICG officials said that based on intelligence inputs, the Coast Guard and ATS intercepted the boat 'Al Haj' which had ventured into Indian waters. The boat attempted to return to Pakistan after throwing away several packets of narcotics into the sea.

The packets were recovered and the ICG boat began a hot pursuit of the Pakistani vessel.

The Pakistani boat failed to comply with all warnings. As such the warning shots were fired across the hull in an attempt to stop the fleeing boat. It was finally stopped. One crew member of the boat was injured, while two others sustained minor bruises.

According to ICG sources, the heroin seized was from Afghanistan and the help of the Narcotics Control Bureau is being sought for the further perusal of the case. The

detainees have been brought to the Gujarat ATS office for further investigation. One smuggler has been identified as Mustafa from Karachi.

This is not the first time that a Pakistani boat has been apprehended for sailing illegally in Indian waters as smugglers from Pakistan keep trying to use the Gujarat coast as a transit route to transport narcotics to their destination, in the last few years.

The Pakistani boats

straying into Indian waters are involved either in poaching or smuggling. It may be recalled that on January 08, in an overnight operation, the ICG had apprehended 10 Pakistani nationals aboard the Pakistani boat "Yasin" sailing 6-7 miles inside Indian waters, from the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast. Two tonnes of fish and 600 liters of fuel was recovered from the deck of the vessel.

## Congress is facing a do or die battle in coming Gujarat assembly elections

By Harihar Swarup  
New Delhi, April 26:

Elections in Gujarat have traditionally been direct fights between the BJP and the Congress. However, the 2022 Assembly polls expected to be held in November-December, are set to be different after Aam Aadmi Party announced it would contest all 182 seats.

The ruling BJP is attempting to win an absolute majority for seventh consecutive time. It is also aiming to win 150 seats to beat the record 149 seats that the Congress got under the leadership of former Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki in 1985.

In 2017, the Congress won a respectable 77 seats. But that has fallen to 65 after 12 MLAs deserted it. As things stand, the Congress is leaderless and clueless in

Gujarat, has nothing to lose; even an improvement of one seat in its tally would be a face saver for the party.

It seems to be pinning its hope on the possibility of Nareshbhai Patel, an influential Padidar leader from Saurashtra, joining it. Patel, a Leuva Patidar, heads the Shree Khodaldham Trust that manages the temple of Khodal Mata, the main deity of his sub-caste. Around two months ago, he announced his inclination to join politics. Ever since, there has been speculation about him joining the Congress or Aam Aadmi Party. The importance of Patel, 56, can be gauged from the fact that no political party has said anything negative about him.

Gujarat BJP President C R Patil has expressed hope that Patel, an ardent devotee of Shiva, would join the BJP. Hitesh Patel, member, BJP media cell, Gujarat, said that

any person who accepts the party's ideology and the local and central leadership is most welcome. The Congress's Sukhrum Rathva, the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, has said that any party that Patel joins would get the benefit.

Patel, an industrialist, heads Patel Brass Works Pvt Ltd, which was founded in 1948 as small foundry. Today, it has a joint venture with Federal-Mogul Power-train—a leading Global supplier of engine components. Patel Brass Works also exports bearing for high speed engines, compressor and earth movers to markets including the US, Canada, Latin America and Europe.

One reason Patel did not take the political plunge earlier could be his family. Sources who know the family said they had been against him joining politics. But his wife, Shalini,

recently said that if he wanted to enter politics, they had no issues with it. It is learnt that Patel recently had a meeting with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and election strategist Prashant Kishor. The Grape-vine has it that if Patel were to join Congress, one of the pre-conditions would be that he be made chief minister if the party comes to power.

Patidars hold sway in around 50 seats in Gujarat, the majority of which are in the Saurashtra region. The two major sub-castes — Leuva and Kedva Patidars — constitute around 15 per cent of state's electorate. Neither the BJP nor the Congress has held back in projecting their commitment towards the Patidars. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel is a Kedva Patidar. So is the Congress's firebrand leader and working President Hardik Patel.

Recently, the Congress named a Leuva Patidar—Jenny, daughter of MLA Virji Thummar—the president of women's wing.

In case of Naresh Patel, while his caste will help him politically, the work he has done is also vital. "Patel's strong point is that more than him, his work speaks", said Yashpal Baxi, who has written a book on him. "He heads many trusts and set up one of the first banks in Rajkot. He would be in office till three pm and then listen to grievances of the people".

The Khodal Mata temple at Kagvad, near Rajkot, has been visited by political leaders cutting across party lines, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Politicians have often boasted about their closeness to Patel, but sources close to him said that he has never been close to any politicians. However, in 2017,

he did support his close friends who were candidates of various parties.

He has been holding arbitration forums, which have resolved issues before they reach the court. A person close to Patel reportedly said that a day before he visits any village a messenger would go and inform the villagers about the planned visit. The next day, the atmosphere would be similar to that of an import ceremony. He also mediated withdrawal of cases against Patidar (resulting from the Patidar agitation).

Patel clearly commands huge respect and can certainly be a game changer for the party he joins. Gujarat Congress spokesman Manish Dosi said the announcement is likely to happen soon. It is rumoured that Patel is most likely to join the Congress (his father, Rajiv Bhai, leaned toward congress ideology); it

is believed that people close to him have advised that him that joining the APP would also benefit BJP by spitting votes. However, in the current Scenario in Gujarat, Patel may not be able to ignore the BJP completely, his office said he would not comment on the issue as a survey was underway to get opinion of his community on which party he should join. It would be difficult for any political party to pressure him.

As a political parties wait for Patel to announce his decision, there has been another development that carries weight politically — Patel was recently seen in a meeting with leaders from the Kol community (classified as OBC in Gujarat). Analysts feel that if Patels and Kolis unite, it can be a deadly combination, especially in Saurashtra.

(IPA Service)

# India towards self-reliance in electronics sector

## Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



New India is self-reliant in many ways and it is estimated that India will start producing electronics products also worth Rs 30,000 crore rupees by 2026. The demand for such products is increasing day by day in the country. To install chips in these products, the country will need semiconductors worth at least Rs 6 lakh crore. Preparations are underway to make the semiconductor indigenously. Currently India imports semiconductors from other countries. While addressing at SEMICON, the Semiconductor Conference held in Bengaluru recently, Rajiv Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Information Technology and Electronics, said that the government has received proposals from many companies for electronic chip production. These include Vedanta Foxconn Joint Venture, IGSS Ventures and ISMC. Meanwhile, semiconductor production has decreased due to the revival of Covid pandemic and lockdown in China. Integrated circuit production in China declined by 4.2 percent in the first quarter of this year. Semiconductor chip production declined 5.1 percent in March. Chinese electronics makers are fearful of supply chain disruptions. This can also have an impact on India, as India imports a lot of components from China.

India imports 100 per cent of semiconductors, of which half material is imported from China alone. Apart from the chip, many types of electronic, auto and mobile phone parts are also imported from the Dragon. There is such a shortage of chips in the world at this time that chip makers are working by extracting semiconductors from old washing machines bought from junk dealers. The chip shortage doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon. The Russo-Ukraine war has disrupted supply lines, causing intermittent or halting supply of goods. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, one of the largest chip makers in South East Asia, fears a reduction in chip production due to a shortage of manpower and parts. More than 169 industries, including electronics, have been affected due to chip shortage. In the last two years, people started working from home during the lockdown, due to which the demand for electronic products like computers, laptops, gaming consoles etc. increased. Chip makers, on the other hand, had reduced production.

A modern car uses 1,500 to 3,000 chips. During the pandemic, cinema halls were closed to contain the spread of the virus, forcing many people to turn to home entertainment during periods of self-isolation, fueling demand for video game consoles. The properties of semiconductors or chips are in between that of conductors and insulators. Chips typically made from silicon are used to supply power to a wide variety of devices such as cars, laptops, smartphones, home appliances and gaming consoles. The chip performs many functions, such as power display and data transfer, etc. Hence, the supply crunch is bound to have an impact on the sales of cars, fridges, laptops, TVs and other electronic equipment. Taiwan is the world leader in semiconductor manufacturing. Last year there was a severe drought, which caused problems for the chip makers. A large amount of pure water is needed to manufacture semiconductors. Chip production cannot be increased on short notice, because it is a complex process that takes months. It usually takes more than three months to make a chip. In such a situation, the problem is expected to persist till 2023.

# Intense Rising in temperatures has serious for climate change



By- Vijay GarG

The intense heatwave that has gripped large parts of India so early this summer is proof that this is the age of climate change and it can have severe implications for water security, the Centre for Science and Environment

Speaking on the occasion of World Water Day, CSE Director General Sarita Narain said climate mitigation has to be about water and its management.

"What does this intense heat wave that has hit large parts of India so early this summer really mean? It means, especially today, as we mark the World Water Day, that this is the age of climate change. It also means that how we deal with our water in the coming days will determine whether we would survive such extreme climatic conditions.

"We all know that climate change impacts are about increased heat and scorching temperatures, and about variable and extreme rain. Both have a direct correlation with the water cycle. Therefore, climate change mitigation has to be about water and its management," Narain said.

India is witnessing a repeat of 2021 conditions, when temperatures touched 40 degrees Celsius as early as February in some parts of the country, said Avantika Goswami, deputy programme manager, climate change, CSE.

"This was when 2021 was the year of the La Nia, the Pacific water currents that are known to bring cooler temperatures globally. Indian weather scientists have informed that global warming has offset this cooling effect of La Nia," Goswami said.

CSE researchers pointed out that rising heat has severe implications for water security and to begin with, it would mean greater evaporation from water bodies.

"It means that we need to work not just on storing water in millions of structures, but also plan for reducing losses due to evaporation. It's not that evaporation losses did not happen in the past, but the rate of evaporation will now increase with the soaring temperatures," CSE said.

According to researchers, India's irrigation planners and bureaucracies have largely depended on canals and other surface water systems they should not discount the management of groundwater systems.

Increased heat can also lead to drying up of moisture in soils, the CSE said, adding that it will make the land dusty and will increase the need for irrigation.

In a country like India where the bulk of food is still grown in rain-fed regions, it will intensify land degradation and dust bowl formations. This means water management must go hand in hand with vegetation planning to improve the ability of soils to hold water, even in times of intense and prolonged heat, it said.

The organisation cautioned that heat will drive up the use of water, from drinking and irrigation to fighting fires in forests or buildings.

"We have already seen devastating forest fires rage in many parts of the world, and in the forests of India. This will only increase as temperatures go up. The demand for water will increase with climate change, making it even more imperative that we do not waste — either water or wastewater," it said.

CSE also said climate change is already showing up in terms of the increasing number of extreme rain events.

"This means that we can expect rain to come as a flood, making the cycle of floods followed by droughts even more intense. India already has fewer rainy days in a year — it is said that it rains for just 100 hours on average in a year. Now the number of rainy days will further go down, but extreme rainy days will increase," it said.

"We needed to be obsessive about water and its management yesterday because water is the basis of health and wealth. But now we need to be more than obsessive. We need to be determined and deliberate. On this World Water Day in the age of climate change we need to know that the water agenda is the real make or break of our future"

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# Gender Balanced Workforce

By-Kaustov Kashyap

Why do you think gender-diversity is important in a workplace? How can gender-balanced teams help boost productivity? How can HR managers work towards addressing the misconceptions held strongly about women in certain technically-skilled job roles? What should you do about it? How can you create gender-diverse teams? How can you propagate the need for gender-balanced teams in every organization? This piece has some interesting trivia for you in store.

You will agree to the fact that certain fields have long been viewed as male-dominated industries such as IT, mining, mechanics, and surgeon to be represented by men in the workforce at large, leaving no opportunities for women to seek a breakthrough and prove their mettle. However, a recent study contradicts the past trends and showcases that the gap between men and women participation in technically skilled job roles will be closing soon.

As organizations take small steps towards building gender-diverse teams syncing with the pace of change, recruiting more women into certain job roles should no longer be taboo or seen as a mere formality to fulfill the clauses of employment law; on the contrary it should be seen as a challenge to find the next great talents.

Talking about gender balanced recruitment in workplaces means to offer equal opportunity for every individual

regardless of their gender background to contribute towards company's development goals.

From entry level staffs to those in the managerial cadre strongly rely on decision-making capabilities of talent, and hence gender-diverse teams have a lot to offer in terms of advantages to the company. They help:

## 1. Boost performance

Gender diversity encourages employees with different perspectives to engage proactively, such that they can see a particular thing as a whole, rather than viewing it partially. Bringing together different perspectives, helps in better decision making towards particular issues and perform great efforts as well. A good cooperation between men and women could certainly make for a killer squad.

## 2. Increase profits

Once the performance of an employee shows significant improvements, the company's profits will also increase with time. Gender balance will provide the team with diverse set of skills, such that the company can perform better. A study shows that by shifting from all-male or all-female office to balanced one, can actually increase the company's revenue up by 41 percent.

## 3. Improve reputation

In an era where image and reputation plays a crucial role, gender balanced workforce could be a great strategy to drive the business. According to a recent study,

women tend to seek careers in companies that demonstrate significant gender diversity rather than those with none. Thus, having reputation as a gender-friendly business will bring in more positives than the opposite for your future talent pool.

## 4. Widen talent scope

Gender cannot be used to define one's excellence. Even for highly-stereotyped jobs dominated by males such as IT workers, women can do a better job than men if given a chance to perform because of their keen eye for details. Men and women both have different traits and personalities. However, instead of viewing the differences in a negative light and as an unfavourable condition, they should be viewed and recognized as powerful asset for your company. Without including more women in the workforce, the company will likely end up eliminating half of the available strong talent in the market, while losing out on the unique qualities they can bring.

## 5. Support retention

Allowing many workers to quit within short period of time is not good news for any company. Not only are you required to spend more money for hiring new talents, the company's project schedule will be disrupted as well.

Nobody wants to stay long in a rigid workplace that does not allow flexibility. Thus, gender diversity in a workplace that allows for flexible working arrangements between men and women is a key to talent retention in the long run.

# Overcoming the stigma of mental illness for a better society



By Rhea Haobam  
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There was a lot of debate about mental health. We are often asked what this means and what to watch out for. Mental health is affected by emotional, psychological and social factors. When one of them gets confused, we lose the balance maintained between these sectors of our existence. People with mental illness find it difficult to express themselves because of the stigma associated with mental illness. If you've ever suffered with a mental health issue, you know that it can be just as damaging as physical diseases. However, it is commonly dismissed as being entirely in one's head.

In reality, mental and physical health are typically intertwined. Not only can mental health disorders have physical symptoms, but they also increase the probability of developing physical health issues.

## Analyzing mental health

Mental health becomes really important in today's generation. It shapes how we see the world, including our emotions, and how we respond to it. It influences our eating and sleeping habits, as well as pretty much everything else we do. Every year, mental diseases impact 19% of the adult population, 46% of teens, and 13% of children. We meet a lot of folks who we have no idea have a mental health problem. Because it's not visible like other things, it's in the brain.

In less-developed nations, the treatment gap, defined as the absolute difference between the prevalence of mental diseases and the treated proportion, has been shown to be between 76 and 85 percent. A lack of resources is one of the key reasons of such large discrepancies in therapy. In India, both infrastructural and human resources are in short supply. Despite significant improvements in important health indicators, India contributes disproportionately to the global disease burden. In comparison to other middle-income nations and India's regional neighbours, our health indices are poor.

According to the WHO, over 20% of Indians would be affected by mental disorders by 2020. We have less than 4,000 mental health professionals to treat

this population.

## The stigmatization of mental health is a revolving cycle

Public stigma associated with mental illness has a stronger negative impact on young people seeking treatment than it does on adults. Young people who suffer from mental illnesses are more prone to be socially separated from the rest of society. Furthermore, when compared to adults, young people are less likely to seek help for mental health issues due to concerns about confidentiality, peer pressure, a desire to be self-sufficient, a lack of knowledge about mental health problems, or a lack of awareness about mental-health-related services. Adolescents, rather than young adults, found it more challenging to reveal their mental health difficulties in research.

Stigmas can include things like saying that someone should be hospitalized for their mental illness, that it is caused by a lack of self-control and willpower, that people with mental illnesses should not be given any responsibilities, not wanting to live next to them, being afraid of them and believing they are harmful to the environment, labelling them as attention seekers and overthinking and overreacting in simple matters, and so on.

## To honor our mental health and combat stigmas

Mental disease has no particular appearance; it is unconcerned about your gender, social class, race, or financial situation. When two persons are involved in a scenario, one with an evident mental health disease and the other without one or with a less visible condition, the person with the less obvious ailment frequently exploits the mental illness of the other person to acquire power and control over them. As a result, the individual suffering from the condition seems "crazy," and their symptoms intensify. This is what the rest of the world overlooks, and it exacerbates the stigma connected with mental illness.

Small changes in a person's feelings, ideas, and behavior might signal the start of a mental health problem. Changes that are consistent and severe may suggest



that they have or are developing a mental health problem. It's crucial to start a conversation about obtaining help if anything doesn't feel quite right. Let them know how much you appreciate them and how much you care about them. Showing support, listening to their narrative, and validating their feelings are all things that may be done. Inquire about the best way you can help them, and pay attentively to what they have to say. Consider how difficult it may be for them to open up to you. Other things, on the other hand, are far more difficult for them to articulate.

Those struggling with mental health concerns should understand that their difficulties do not lessen their strength, and their mistakes do not contradict their progress. Never compare your abilities to those of others because strength, difficulty, and endurance are all relative. Things happen in life that are beyond explanation at times. Despite the fact that you have no control over what life throws at you, you can heal and rise again. From the outside, it's frequently impossible to discern what you might need from someone else. As a result, it is critical to prioritize one's own mental health and have the courage to seek help. People who care about you will be there to support you, but when it comes to your mental health, you must take the lead. This is the first and foremost step to combat the stigmas on mental health!



# S.N. Chand: The Father of Manipuri Cinema

By - Meghachandra Kongbam

"He sold his own saleable properties and even mortgaged his homestead property. He left the Government job. If the *Brojendragi Luhongba* was made in a studio, it could be completed early and marked as the first Manipuri film. But S. N. Chand didn't like the studio made film. He strongly believed in the realistic approach of the New Indian Cinema movement while making his first film".

MAKING A FILM in Manipur was then considered a distant dream owing to the poor economy, the meagre population and the limited audience. It needed huge investment, manpower and all the resources, besides engaging crew members and equipment from outside the state. Finding its market was beyond imagination. Bollywood movies had also flooded all the cinema halls numbering less than 15 in the state and the Manipuri audience were already engrossed by the Bollywood movies- its story stars and songs.

During the later part of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s - when the Indian film industry flourished to its zenith, and the New Indian Cinema also emerged- there was a strong feeling and urge among the people of Manipur who were in the field of theatre and allied arts to have their own films.

There was a strong film movement in Manipur created by the Film Society of Manipur established in 1966 and registered in 1969, the lone organization in the state and the third film society in North East India after Shillong Film Society and Guwahati Cine Club in Assam. And among the eminent personalities of theatre and allied arts, Sapam Nadiachand (1935-1989) aka S.N. Chand belonged to that era.

A multifaceted personality, S.N. Chand was the first Manipuri film director in Manipuri cinema when he completed his feature film *Brojendragi Luhongba* (Brojendra's Marriage) in the year 1972. Armed with the knowledge of Italian neo-realism and the 'New Wave' of Indian Cinema, he picked up the short story penned by Dr. Lamabam Kamal (1899-1935), the yesteryear's great poet of Manipur to make the film. And he sowed the seed of the 'New Indian Cinema' in Manipur.

Like Dhundiraj Govind Phalke in making the first Indian film *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913 and Jyoti Prasad Agrawala in making the first Assamese film *Jyoti* in 1935, S.N. Chand was also a one-man army shouldering various important responsibilities of producer, director, screenplay writer, dialogue writer, lyricist, playback singer, music director and the leading actor when there were no basic amenities available to make a film.

## Early Life

Born on August 8, 1935 at Singamei Mayengbam Leikai in Imphal, to Sapam Marei and Sapam Ibemcha, S.N. Chand inherited an abiding interest in music and performing arts from his parents who were in their own right, patrons of Manipuri traditional culture. But music was his first love. He studied classical music at Bhatkhande Sangeet Vidyapeeth, Lucknow from where he passed Sangeet Visharad and Sangeet Nipun. His interest in the performing arts led him into association with premiere Manipuri theatre groups like Rupmahal Theatre, Manipur Dramatic Union and Leimayol Arts Centre.

He served as a Hindi Translator

at the Imphal Station of the All India Radio in 1965. He wrote lyrics, sang modern songs and composed music for several classical and modern songs, anchored many programmes and rendered background dialogues for AIR, Imphal. He was established as a good anchor in 'Fauji' programme, a musical programme format where songs are played only from the request received from military personnel in Hindi of the All India Radio, Imphal. He was a man of many faces and a real artist.

## Venturing Into Film

Though engaged in other art forms and involved in the promotion of Manipuri culture, his only dream was to make films. An active member of the Film Society of Manipur founded by Hijam Romani in 1966, S.N. Chand learned filmmaking from great movies, books and visited film studios in Kolkata and Mumbai. While he was serving at AIR, Imphal, he went to Bombay to do cosmetic surgery on his face to suit the leading man in the film.

Screenplay writing is not an easy task. Apart from having a thorough knowledge of film craft, he or she has to know the intricacies to develop characters, create plots, and come up with dialogues and actions. S.N. Chand took on the challenging task and made an amazing screenplay of *Brojendragi Luhongba* adapted from the 800-word short story. He added two main characters of maternal uncle and father of the bride in his screenplay, which was not found in the original text of the short story. He developed an important scene of Churachandpur, the place of posting of Brojendra. He established the contemporary situations in his screenplay to suit the audience.

He sold his own saleable properties and even mortgaged his homestead property. He left the Government job. Hijam Romani, President of Film Society of Manipur opposed his decision to quit the permanent post of AIR, Imphal. But, he always dreamt of making a Manipuri film. And his only dream was accomplished in 1970 when he launched his film production house - Sajatiya Pictures Private Limited - at his home Singamei Mayengbam Leikai in Imphal. He engaged technicians and hired film equipment from Calcutta for the production.

In the summer of 1971, he along with his crew members took shots for three important sequences of his film at the historic Ningthem Pukhri, the big royal pond dug out during the reign of King Pamheiba (1709-1748). During the whole day shooting, the crews took the panoramic shot of the pond where lotuses were blooming for credit titles. The shot continued with Brojendra's maternal uncle coming towards Brojendra's house after meeting an astrologer to fix the suitable date of the marriage ceremony. This was the opening scene of the film. The other sequence was Brojendra's arrival at his home after getting posted in Churachandpur. There were two shots - a long shot of a lighted jeep coming towards Brojendra's house and a mid-shot of Brojendra getting down from the jeep. The last sequence at the location was Brojendra's Point of View shot at a double storied house illuminated at night, which revealed the place where 'Bashok' (a popular form of Nata Sankirtana) performance took place. The last two sequences were captured during the night. People from distant places and nearby areas thronged the place to have a glimpse of the outdoor shooting of the Manipuri film. This writer was also in the audience. "The shooting of the film was of the first Manipuri

feature film" and 'the nose of the hero of the film had a cosmetic surgery' were the talks of the audience during the shooting.

With great difficulties and against all odds, he continued with the process of making the film. However, he could not complete his film within the scheduled time due to financial problems. Some of the prominent locations he featured in his film include Churachandpur to depict the hill station and the tribal lifestyle, the old palace of Chanchipur, the residence of the Khaidem Family at Uripok and other sites of historical significance and cultural importance.

Meanwhile, Karam Monomohan, an exhibitor who owned his theatre house at Moreh and also a timber merchant running the business in Indo-Myanmar border and a jungle contractor dealt in dalchini and spices produced his Manipuri feature film- *Matangi Manipur* engaging Deb Kumar Bose, son of noted filmmaker Devaki Bose from Calcutta as director, shooting the whole film at Movietone Studio in Calcutta with a few shots in Imphal in a short period and released the film in three cinema houses namely Usha Cinema, Friends Talkies in Kakching on April 9, 1972, which was marked as the birth of the Manipuri cinema.

With his tireless efforts, S.N. Chand completed his film- *Brojendragi Luhongba* during the calendar year 1972 and the Censor Board passed his film on December 30, 1972. If the film was made in a studio, it could be completed early and marked as the first Manipuri film. But S. N. Chand didn't like the studio made film. He strongly believed in the realistic approach of the New Indian Cinema movement while making his first film. S.N. Chand scheduled the release of the film on Friday, January 26, 1973. And it was released simultaneously at Usha Cinema, Friends Talkies in Imphal and Thoubal Cinema at Thoubal. The then Chief Minister of Manipur Md Alimuddin was the Chief Guest for the release of the film at Usha Cinema.

During the premiere show, S.N. Chand submitted, "It is not a successful business if we treat the filmmaking in Manipur as a business. However, being a devotee of arts and artistic skills, and with a thought that the rich Manipuri culture would shine in the world through this medium, I have taken the whole responsibility of making this film sacrificing all I have possessed."

With few shots in Calcutta showing the protagonist as an MBBS student, the film was set at the backdrop of unique historical places, enchanting landscape of plain and hill areas, beautiful tribal dance and typical traditional performing arts- *Pena* (A traditional stringed instrument used in the narration of the Epic of Khamba Thoibi legend) and *Bashok* of Manipur. It was a true Manipuri film made by the first son of the soil.

Based on the short story with the same title of Dr. Kamal's work, which appeared in a monthly journal 'Lalita Manjuri Patrika' in 1933, the 122-minute feature film depicts among other things the religious and cultural life of people dwelling in the hills and plains of Manipur. The thematic concept of this social story seeks to establish that honesty of purpose shall be maintained in every sphere of life to achieve success and honour of life. The film also revolves around a conflict between modernism and traditional values and reveals that traditional values are worthy of one's identity.

Brojendra (S.N. Chand) returns home with a medical degree from Calcutta Medical College. When he reaches home, he learns that his marriage has already been scheduled. It was a bolt from the blue to a young man with a modern outlook like Brojendra. He thinks that marriage should not be treated so lightly, at least he shall see eye to eye before they are wedded. So, he argues with his mother (Ibemhal). His mother replies that she gets married to his father as arranged by her parents. Brojendra's maternal uncle (Oinam Birmangol) also tries to convince him to fulfil the decision of the elders.

Brojendra dislikes the idea. Being an obedient boy of his parents and of good nature, he obeys. But he decides not to even look at the face of his would-be wife (Romola). He does not spend the wedding night in the bride's room. He gets a government job with a posting at Churachandpur, a hill station and leaves home before *Mangani Chakkouba* (Marriage feast on the fifth day after marriage). Days pass by, the agony of the innocent girl increases day by day.

Later on, Brojendra realizes his fault after experiencing a few incidents. In the meantime, his boss calls him at Imphal for some important assignment. He reaches home but cannot enter his house. He takes a turn and visits a *Bashok*, a Manipuri Nata music concert in a nearby Mandap. The singer is performing the Birha song of Radha - "Vindaban-gi amuba thadu amuk thoklamkhini" (The black moon of Vrindaban would have appeared). This Sringara Rasa has submitted to Brojendra's heart. When he glances towards the audience, he catches sight of a very beautiful woman. She is so lovely that Brojendra is fully attracted to her.

His conscience pricks him as he rejects his innocent wife. He makes up his mind to go straight to his wife and apologize for his mistake. But to his great surprise, he finds at his home the very beautiful woman whom he sees at the Mandap. He stands speechless. At this moment, his wife falls at his feet sobbing and beseeching his love. Brojendra takes her in his arm and embraces her with love.

Anil Gupta was the Cinematographer and Rasbehari Sinha was the Editor of the film. Songs were recorded at Technicians Studio, Calcutta. In the film, renowned Bengali playback singer Aarti Mukherjee who later shot to fame in Hindi films such as *Geet Gata Chal* (1975), *Tapasya* (1976) and *Musoom* (1983) sang a Manipuri song- *Nil Khonglaba Nonggi Mapei Mapei* (Noisy Thunder of Black Clouds) in semi-classical style.

S.N. Chand's multifaceted talents flowered in his production. The film bagged the Best Screenplay Award in the First Manipuri State Film Festival, 1984 organised by the Government of Manipur. But the film missed the National Award of the 20th Edition of National Film Festival 1972 because the film scored the same marks as Deb Kumar Bose's *Matangi Manipur* (Present Day Manipur). The President's Silver Medal for the Best Feature Film in Manipuri was given to *Matangi Manipur* being the first-ever Manipuri Feature Film. This was revealed by eminent writer and critic Elangbam Nilakanta who was associated with the jury as an invitee. However, Elangbam Nilakanta praised the film- *Brojendragi Luhongba* for its reflection of the vivid identity of Manipur, capturing the beautiful ways of lives of the people at the real spots. It was not a studio-made

film. M.K. Binodini, an eminent writer who was also on the Jury as an invitee, opted out from the Jury for being associated with *Matangi Manipur* as a lyricist. The Regional Jury, Calcutta was headed by Sombhu Mitra.

If we study S.N. Chand's *Brojendragi Luhongba*, it may not be an exaggeration to say that the film emerged as a product of the New Indian Cinema wave, which was prevalent from the later part of the 1960s to the 1980s. S.N. Chand himself was an active member of the Film Society of Manipur. The film was a complete departure from the mainstream cinema and made



with a realistic approach dissecting the then trends of Manipuri society which was about to be blown away by an alien culture. It was a wake-up call for the masses for identification and realization of one's ethos.

It was during the emergence of the new Indian Cinema, many regional films from different parts of the country also found a new premise with striking glory and achievement. Under the initiatives taken up by the Government of India, such landmark films were produced. The period heralded a shift from mainstream cinema to a new direction where films were based on social issues with a realistic approach. The films generated a new wave of thinking and discussions amongst the masses.

Funded by the Film Finance Corporation of the Government of India, films like *Bhuvan Some of Miral* Sen (1969), *Uski Roti* of Mani Kaul (1969), *Sara Akash* of Basu Chatterjee (1969) were considered as the birth of the movement of the New Indian Cinema.

It was preceded by films considered as Parallel Cinema like *Pathar Panchali* of Satyajit Ray (1955), *Ajantrik* of Ritwik Ghatak (1958). The films were based on realistic humanism. The New Indian Cinema also focused on socio-political consciousness. The establishment of the Film Institute of India at Pune in 1960, the National Film Archives of India in 1964, and the Film Finance Corporation in 1960 helped financially and logistically in the production of a new genre of films. Other films of the New Indian Cinema wave were Kumar Sahani's *Maya Darpan* (1972), Shyam Benegal's *Ankur* (1973), M.S. Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* (1973), Jabbar Patel's *Sanna* (1974), Saad Akhtar Mirza's *Arvind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastaan* (1978), Muzafar Ali's *Gaman* (1978), Govind Nihalani's *Aakrosh* (1980), Ketan Mehta's *Bhavani Bhavi* (1980), Nirad Mahapatra's *Maya Mirga* (1983).

John Abraham's *Vidarthakale* *Thile* *Thile* (1972), Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Swayambaram* (1972) and G. Arabindan's *Uttarayanam* (1974) were the Malayalam films emerging out of the New Indian Cinema wave. Pattabhi Rama Reddy's *Samskara* (1970), B.V. Karanth and Girish

Karnad's *Vansha Vriksha* (1971) and Girish Kasaravalli's *Ghatashradha* (1977) were Kannada new wave films. Gautam Ghosh, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Aparna Sen spearheaded the movement in Bengal. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Jahnu Barua also emerged in Assam. After S.N. Chand, Anilam Syam Sharma, M. A. Singh and K. Ibihal Sharma came forth to make new wave films in Manipur.

S.N. Chand wrote the script and directed yet another Manipuri film- *Ngak-e-Ko Nangse* (What a wonder you are) produced by Wangkhem Basantakumar under the banner of Poonam Pictures. It was



the fourth Manipuri film made in 1974. The film depicts the impact of a growing alien culture in the Manipuri society, its crisis and the realization of one's identity after getting into trouble.

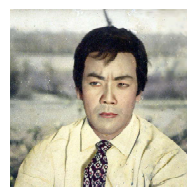
The film opens and ends with a traveller (from Nabakanta) driving a jeep on the serpentine road in the hills of Manipur. He describes the uncertainty of life through a song- *Pungi! Ngak-e-Ko Nangse Khangedko Nangse Karamba Nangi Lipunna Chena Pullibano Taibang Meeba Haiyu, Eikhoise Nangi Sannapolla...*

(Oh life! You are amazing Jeep on the serpentine road! Which thread of yours binds us? We human beings, so tight. Tell us, are we your toys...)

The film has seven songs- two romantic songs, a ballroom song, a sad song, a traveller's song, a lullaby and a devotional song. All songs are penned by noted writer and lyricist B. Jayantakumar Sharma and composed by legendary singer Nongmaithem Pahari who himself sang four songs. The film is a trendsetter, which depicts the social turmoil in an elite Manipuri family.

In a story of joy and tears, the eldest son Binoy (Manish Ningthouja) who is a Forest Officer of a rich family meets a vulnerable girl Shanti (Rajani Yumnam) accidentally and saves her. A traveler (from Nabakanta) picks them up and provides shelter at his place. They fall in love and get married in a temple. The social fallout of the relationship between the two is intense as she is not accepted by her mother-in-law (Binokumari). But her father-in-law (Laishram Netraji) who is dominated by his wife accepts the simplicity and devotion of Shanti. The film is "A fresh and stimulating family drama of modern family" depicting the story of two girls who dream of a "happy life and romance".

The mother-in-law however encourages her daughter Anita (Bobby Bhattacharjee) to be involved with a rich Casanova Ravi (Basantakumar) who later exploits both of them. A man breaks in and attempts to molest Shanti and taking it as an opportunity, the mother-in-law sends her off. Her husband is shocked when his mother tells him that his wife has gone on her own after her illicit relationship has been discovered. The husband and wife search for each other and Shanti finds solace in the hills and



S.N. Chand:

gives birth to a child.

Meanwhile, Anita who gets pregnant fails to convince her boyfriend to marry him and rather than accepting her, he turns her away. The traveller an old gentleman unexpectedly finds Shanti who disguises as a tribal woman in a hill village and helps Shanti and her husband Binoy in reuniting.

Binoy searches for Ravi and brings him to unite with his sister. His mother also realizes her past misdeeds and arrogant nature. The traveller hands over Shanti, her husband and their little child to their family. And he moves away singing the traveller's song. The film closes with a positive note. The film was made with S.N. Chand's previous team- Anil Gupta as Cinematographer and Rasbehari Sinha as Editor. The film was released on 20th September 1974 at Usha Cinema, Imphal.

Without any credit, S.N. Chand extensively helped GC. Tongbra, a distinguished dramatist, in making his directorial debut film- *Khatungh Lamjel* (1979). He also acted in R.K. Krupa's *Inglelei* (1990). He expired on December 12, 1989.

## On Film Promotion

S.N. Chand was actively associated with the Film Society of Manipur established in 1966 for the promotion of a good film movement in Manipur. As a resource person, he presented research papers on 'Recent Trends in Contemporary Cinema' in the Seminar on Trends in Contemporary Cinema jointly organized by the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, the Film Society of Manipur and the Manipur Film Development Council at JN Manipur Dance Academy in Imphal on April 24, 1982. In his paper, he elaborated the trends of silent and talkie films and the emergence of the Italian neo-realism wave which had influenced Indian filmmakers like Satyajit Ray. He indicated that the regional filmmakers should have adequate knowledge of the film medium and the social significance while making films.

In another Seminar held on August 23, 1983 at JN Manipur Dance Academy, Imphal organized by the Manipur Film Development Council in connection with the Eastern Indian Film Festival, S.N. Chand presented a paper on 'Problems in Making Manipuri films' which highlighted the revolution of regional cinema in 1955-65 in India, the importance of Manipuri cinema in the small State of Manipur, lack of facilities in the production, distribution and exhibition sectors of Manipuri cinema, film policies of Assam, Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab and its positive impacts in the promotion of regional film industry, and the need of a Film Policy in Manipur.

S.N. Chand was a member of the Governing Council of the Manipur Film Development Council from September 1981 to April 1987 and one of the Directors of the Board of the newly converted Manipuri Film Development Corporation Ltd. from May 1987 to 1988-89.

The Manipur Film Development Corporation Ltd. and the Cine Artists and Technicians Association, Manipur paid rich tributes to S.N. Chand, the true patriot of Manipuri Cinema by organizing functions every year.

# French far right has lost in presidential polls but it has emerged stronger

By C.J. Atkins

For the third time in 20 years, the anti-immigrant far right has been blocked from winning the French presidency at the last minute, leaving many breathing a sigh of relief. But with Marine Le Pen scoring the highest total ever for the extreme right—41.5% against incumbent President Emmanuel Macron's 58.5%—the French Communist Party is warning that "the noose is tightening" on democracy in the country.

The run-off vote this weekend followed the first-round election of April 10 and saw massive—by French standards—voter abstention. Turnout was pegged at just below 72%, the lowest participation rate in a run-off in more than 50 years. Le Pen's anti-immigrant hatred and Macron's anti-worker economic policies combined to create widespread dissatisfaction, according to opinion polls in the run up to the vote.

In the first round, Macron came in just ahead of Le Pen, 27.9% to 23.2%. Left and environmental movement candidates—Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the party La France Insoumise, Communist Fabien Roussel, Green Yannick Jadot, and Socialist Anne Hidalgo—carried the largest total, some 30% when added together as a bloc. Their divided votes, however, left the opening for Le Pen to move ahead and challenge Macron in the final round.

It was the eventual consolidation of the left vote against Le Pen which propelled Macron to victory—a fact which the re-elected president openly acknowledged. He admitted that "numerous" voters cast a ballot for him only because they were motivated to block Le Pen. Macron pledged to carry out his policies "with force," but said he was "aware" that many who voted for him were not supporters but rather felt "obliged" to mark his name on the ballot.

Stephanie David, a transport worker who voted for the Communist candidate in the first round, went with Macron, but not with any excitement. "It was the least worst choice," David told the Associated Press. Retiree Jean-Pierre Roux, who also voted for the Communists, was repelled by both Macron and Le Pen. He dropped an empty envelope into the ballot box, saying, "I cannot stand the person," referring to Macron and his arrogance. Marian Arbre, a 29-year-old Parisian, didn't care for Macron, either, but he had no qualms about how to vote.

"There's a real risk," Arbre said; he believed France had "to avoid a government that finds itself with fascists and racists."

Going into the election, Macron was accused of being "the candidate of the 1%." He bragged that "job creation" and "labor market reform" were among the key accomplishments of his first term and proved he was best suited to get France through its current economic troubles. The "reforms" he championed, however, were new regulations making it easier for employers to fire and hire people. Rather than create jobs, many economists say the changes have resulted in lower wages and greater job precarity. Macron's economic growth plan centered on €7.5 billion (over \$8 billion) of tax cuts for businesses and increased cuts to social and welfare budgets. His plans for further military spending—already up by €7 billion (about \$7.5 billion) since he took office—also left many unconvinced.

Such policies prompted an increasing number of voters and political analysts to conclude that the "centrist" Macron was moving further right, leaving less and less space between himself and the right wing on many issues. As for Le Pen, despite losing again, she celebrated the accomplishments of her National Rally party, previously known as the National Front—and with good reason. By taking almost half the vote in a presidential election, the far right has cemented its place in French politics; it can no longer be dismissed as a fringe group. "In this defeat, I can't help but feel a form of hope," Le Pen said in Paris. "This is a shining victory."

Over the last two decades, the right has steadily gained traction. Going head-to-head against Macron in 2017's run-off, Le Pen garnered 34%. Twenty years ago, in 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen—father of the current candidate, founder of the racist National Front, and Holocaust denier—scored 18%. For the 2022 campaign, many of the party's traditional anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies were still on the platform—such as banning Muslim women from wearing a headscarf in public and limiting immigration to France—but economics drove many to support Le Pen for the first time.

She pressed Macron hard on cost-of-living issues, inflation, pensions, and taxes. Though in reality, she is even more pro-corporate than Macron, taking populist positions on a

few burning issues allowed Le Pen to present herself as connected to the struggles of working people.

She pledged to keep the retirement age at 62, compared to Macron's plan to raise it to 65. Le Pen also promised to lower taxes on fuel and set up a fund to help the poor afford food and other essential items. Such promises, empty as they may have been, helped Le Pen make further inroads among voters in rural communities and former industrial areas which, in the past, were solid supporters of the Communist and Socialist Parties. "The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer—a group I now belong to," Margarit Mondabrie, a Le Pen voter in the provincial town of Béziers, told the media.

The war in Ukraine also figured prominently in the French election, especially given Le Pen's prior close association with Russian President Vladimir Putin and her party's reliance on campaign loans from Russian banks. However, in contrast to U.S. media coverage that presented the vote as a referendum on the "anti-NATO, pro-Russia Ms. Le Pen," the contest was much more centered on domestic matters. In a pre-election IPSOS poll, only a third of voters said the war would have an impact on their choice. Attention in France now shifts to legislative elections in June. For the left, that means building a third pole in opposition to both Macron's neoliberal economic policies and Le Pen's racist offensive. The French Communist Party (PCF) is engaged in what it calls "discussions to find common ground."

The party's national secretary and presidential candidate, Fabien Roussel, said, "By uniting the left vote in the first round of the legislative elections, we can beat the far-right bloc and the liberal bloc." The PCF and its allies in the labor movement are now organizing for a massive turnout at May Day protests as a kick-off for a united left election effort.

Roussel pleaded for unity, saying that Macron's victory cannot be interpreted as support for his policies and that Le Pen's loss is not the end of the right-wing threat. He said the Communists would "give ourselves to the effort to build a coalition of the alternative majority" and pointed to a survey that shows 66% of the French people want a legislature that will put a check on Macron—one controlled by neither the president nor the right wing.

Courtesy: People's World

# Flippant Laws make life full of risks for common citizens

By K Raveendran  
New Delhi, April 26:

We have so many laws to be followed that it is virtually impossible to live for a moment without breaking one. It is a different matter that some of these laws had ceased to have any relevance ages ago, but these continue to fill the statute books for no rhyme or reason. In this context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to civil servants the other day to help eliminate archaic laws that belonged to some other age and have only nuisance value made sense, but at the same time provided clues to the low priority that the issue receives at the administrative level. Leaving it to bureaucrats, who are known to have a genetic aversion to any kind of change, would mean that the status would continue for at least another century.

Modi told his audience of civil servants that some 1,500 obsolete laws had been removed during his first tenure, but the list of such laws remaining in the statute book continues to be long. Modi had promised to repeal 10 laws for every new law enacted, but that has not altered things much. He cited a law that provided for jail for failure to white-wash toilets in factories every six months. Well-kept toilets are not just for aesthetic appeal; so there may be at least some merit in the law, but there are laws that

make no sense whatsoever but for their origin in the colonial setting.

The Centre for Civil Society has drawn up a list of 10 laws that it feels must be repealed forthwith. These include the treasure trove Act of 1878, the Bangalore marriage validating Act of 1934, the Indian post office Act, which gives the central government exclusive right to carry messages from one place to another, whether in the form of a letter or other means. The law continues to be valid although the post offices are now doing anything but that.

The mindless laws are not just at the conceptual level, like the post office as the carrier of messages. There is also mindless application of law even when it may be relevant as a deterrent. For instance, the punishment for food adulteration at a minimum of Rs 1,000 was fixed in 1860. Former Supreme Court judge Justice R V Raveendran once pointed out that the Rs 1,000 fixed 150 years ago may be worth at least Rs 15 lakh today, but offenders under the law get away officially on payment of such paltry sum.

On another occasion, the same judge had pointed out how people were afraid of courts because of anomalies in the practice and application of laws. "The common man is often bewildered why he loses a case with identical facts, when another litigant gets relief," he said while

delivering a memorial lecture.

There is dichotomy in the approach of the authorities in the application of archaic laws. For instance, the police highhandedness against black flag demonstration has no legal basis, but the practice continues unabated day in and day out. There have been instances when hundreds of protesters were arrested and slapped non-bailable offences for staging black flag demonstrations.

It caused consternation over a couple of years ago when 11 Lucknow University students, two of them girls, were sent to 14-day judicial custody for breaching security and showing black flags to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. In the FIR, the police also pressed Section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which made the process of obtaining bail difficult, jeopardizing the future of the students.

Waving of black flags should have been the most democratic way of expressing dissent because it is only a symbolic gesture that brings no harm to the target, but our law considers it a criminal offence, thanks to the colonial mentality left behind by the British.

Strange as it may sound, the Indian law allows much worse forms of insulting public figures, such as burning of effigies, use of garlands made of chappals, spraying of black

paint and oil. More creative protesters press into service coffins and wreaths, funeral prayers and pyres. The police can't do anything about it because the courts have held that there is no provision in the Indian Penal Code that makes the burning of effigies a punishable offence. The police can, at best, charge protesters with rash and negligent handling of fire or combustible matter.

The British never liked the idea of being shown black flags in India when they were ruling the subcontinent. When the Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928 to study constitutional reforms in its biggest colony, it was greeted with black flags under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai, who got grievously hurt in the police action against the demonstration and died a fortnight later.

However, waving of black flags was never frowned upon in Great Britain as it was considered a most civilised way of registering protest. Their bias against black flags in India was passed on to the new rulers, who happily lapped up some of these unreasonable rules without giving them a thought. We still have several laws from the Victorian-era that we inherited from the British. While Britain has changed many of these as they corresponded to the morality of a bygone era, India is still persisting with them. (IPA Service)

## Sports

# Team Whoops seal Asian games berth by defeating Team Avengers in the DOTA2 grand finals at ESFI's National Esports Championships

New Delhi, April 26:

The Esports Federation of India (ESFI) has announced a strong 18-member Indian contingent for the upcoming 2022 Asian Games where Esports will be making a debut as a medal sport.

Following eight days of high-voltage competition and nail-biting action in the ESFI's National Esports Championship 2022 (NESC '22), the winners have been selected to represent the country at the prestigious continental tournament, scheduled in Hangzhou, China from September 10-25. The NESC '22 saw more than 200 esports athletes from across the country battling it out virtually in the five popular Esports titles—DOTA2, Hearthstone, FIFA22, Street Fighter V and League of Legends. The runners-up of single player titles—FIFA22, Street Fighter V and Hearthstone—will also be part of the Indian contingent.

"We are delighted with the energy of the national qualifiers. All the esports athletes gave everything to earn themselves a chance to represent the country. It's great to see high-quality competition for each position. I congratulate all the athletes and wish them good luck for their preparations for the upcoming Asian Games," said

Mr. Lokesh Suji, Director ESFI & VP-Asian Esports Federation.

"We conducted NESC '22 in a double elimination format in order to provide equal opportunity to each player or team. And we are thrilled to pick a strong Indian squad. I believe each of them will make the most of this opportunity and make India proud by bringing laurels to the country," Suji added.

On the final day of the championships, Team Whoops emerged champions in DOTA2 and made the cut into the Indian contingent for the Asian Games. A team, comprising veteran athletes like MoinEjaz (Captain), Krish, Abhishek, Ketan, Darshan and Shubham, notched up a comprehensive 3-0 win against Team Avengers in the best-of-five final.

"I have been playing DOTA since my childhood days and now it's a great honour for me to lead the Indian team in its maiden appearance at the Asian Games in this game. I would like to thank the federation [ESFI], who has been very supportive & professional. We will give our best to bring glory for the country in the Asian Games," said Moin, skipper of Team Whoops.

The national champions and the runners-up, who will be



part of the Indian contingent at the Asian Games 2022, are:

1. **FIFA22 - Charanjot Singh and Karman Singh Tikka**
2. **Street Fighter V - Mayank Prajapati and Ayan Biswas**
3. **Hearthstone - Shikhar Choudhary and Karthik Varma**
4. **League of Legends - Team Temple of kings (captain Akshaj Shenoy, Samarath Arvind Trivedi, Mithir Ranjan, Aditya Selvaraj, Aakash Shandilya and Sanindhya Malik)**

5. **DOTA 2 - Team Whoops (captain MoinEjaz, Krish, Abhishek, Ketan, Darshan and Shubham)**

The Indian contingent will now participate in the AESF's Road to Asian Games-Regional Qualifiers (June-July, 2022), which will be conducted to decide seeding for the main event in China. ESFI continued its partnership with Artsmith-Concepts & Visions which has extended its support as the communication partner.

## Smart Card Lost

I, the undersigned, have lost the Smart Card (RC Book) of my Santro Car vehicle, bearing Registration No. MN 5A 5974, on the way between Thoubal to Singamei on March 15, 2022.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Yambrem Debananda Singh  
Singamei Wangma Kshtri Leikai

# India call for historic status quo at holy places of Jerusalem to be upheld

New Delhi, April 26

India has called for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem to be upheld. Speaking in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) open debate on the West Asia, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, R. Ravindra expressed

grave concern over recent acts of terror and incidents of violence in the West Bank. The statement comes amid rising tensions over clashes between Israeli police and Palestinian worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem. Mr. Ravindra strongly condemned such acts which

have resulted in an escalation in violence. Extending India's full support to the steps leading to the cessation of violence, Mr. Ravindra said that ongoing incidents underscore the need for resumption of talks between Israel and Palestine. He added that there is no alternative to a negotiated two-state solution.