

PM inaugurates Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of High Courts

“Our vision in Amrit Kaal should be of such a judicial system in which there is easy justice, speedy justice, and justice for all”: PM

PIB
New Delhi, April 30:

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the inaugural session of the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of High Courts at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi today. He also addressed the gathering on the occasion. Chief Justice of India Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice UU Lalit of Supreme Court, Union Ministers Kiren Rijiju and Prof S.P. Singh Baghel, Supreme Court Judges, Chief Justices of High Courts, Chief Ministers and LGs of States and Union Territories were among those present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said “in our country, while the role of the judiciary is that of the guardian of the constitution, the leg-

islature represents the aspirations of the citizens. I believe that this confluence and balance of these two branches of the Constitution will prepare the roadmap for an effective and time bound judicial system in the country.” He said that 75 years of independence have continuously clarified the roles and responsibilities of both the judiciary and the executive. Wherever it is necessary, this relation has evolved continuously to give direction to the country, he said. Calling the Conference a vibrant manifestation of the beauty of the Constitution, the Prime Minister said that he has been coming to the conference for a very long time, first as Chief Minister and now as Prime Minister.

Setting the tone for the conference, the Prime Minister said “In 2047, when the country will complete 100 years of

its independence, then what kind of judicial system would we like to see in the country? How do we make our judicial system so capable that it can fulfil the aspirations of India of 2047, these questions should be our priority today”. “Our vision in Amrit Kaal should be of such a judicial system in which there is easy justice, speedy justice, and justice for all”, he added.

The Prime Minister emphasized that government is working hard to reduce delay in justice delivery and efforts are on for increasing judicial strength and improving judicial infrastructure. He said ICT has been deployed for case management and efforts to fill the vacancies at various levels of judiciary are underway.

The Prime Minister reiterated his vision of use of technology in governance in the

context of judicial work. He said that the Government of India considers the possibilities of technology in the judicial system as an essential part of the Digital India mission. He appealed to the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts to take this forward. The e-courts project is being implemented today in mission mode, he said. He gave example of success of digital transactions as these becoming common in small towns and even in villages. Out of all the digital transactions that took place in the world last year, 40 percent of the digital transactions took place in India, the Prime Minister informed. Proceeding further on the theme of use of technology, the Prime Minister said that nowadays, subjects like block-chains, electronic discovery, cyber security, robotics, AI and bioethics are being

taught in law universities in many countries. “It is our responsibility that in our country also legal education should be according to these international standards”, he said.

The Prime Minister said it is important to promote local languages in the courts so that people of the country feel connected with the judicial process and their faith in the same increases. He said that people right to judicial process will strengthen by this. He also said that local languages are being promoted in technical education also.

Prime Minister insisted that judicial reform is not merely a policy matter. Human sensitivities are involved and they should be kept in the centre of all the deliberations. Today, there are about 3.5 lakh prisoners in the country who are under-trial and are in jail.

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Two officers from Manipur promoted to full Commandant Rank in Indian Coast Guard



IT News
Imphal, April 30:

Commandant (JG) S Kholing Lawrence and Commandant (JG) Ngamlien Touthang of Indian Coast Guard have been promoted to full Commandant Rank (Selection Grade) in their first year of reaching eligibility years of 15 years service.

Commandant S Kholing Lawrence, son of Late S Somi hails from Kasom Khullen Village, Kamjong. He joined Indian Navy as Short Service Commission Officer in 2006. The officer was in Submarine in Indian Navy, specialized in Signal Communication and Electronic Warfare. Post completion of his engagement in Indian Navy, he was absorbed in Indian Coast Guard in 2018 in the rank of Commandant (Junior Grade). The officer is a qualified Dynamic Positioning operator and has served onboard Pollution Control Vessel ICGS Samudra Prahar. He is married to Mrs Rinchula Horam and the couple is blessed with a boy and a girl.

Commandant Ngamlien Touthang, son of Lunkholet Touthang hails from Molkon Village, Saikul, Kangpokpi District. The officer joined Indian Coast Guard as Assistant Commandant (Direct Entry) in 2006. The officer is recipient of Tatrakshak Medal (Gallantry), ABP News Bravery Award,

DGICG Commendation for his outstanding performance in various appointments in the past. He was also recipient of DGICG Trophy for best under trainee Assistant Commandant during his training days. He is married to Boinu Hoinethem and the couple is blessed with three boys.

The two officers are presently holding key appointments as Staff Officer to important Flag Officers on ICG. On promotion to full Commandant, the officers will be appointed in different capital ships as Executive Officers.

The promotion of the officers under highly competitive environment in the premier maritime service of the country is a matter of great pride for the entire state and a source of inspiration for youth who aspire to join Defence Services.

Established in 1977, the youngest Defence Service is also the fastest growing Coast Guards in the world. ICG fleet comprising of 160 ships and 80 aircraft are undertaking 24x7 surveillance across the vast Indian Maritime Zone of 2.3 Million Sq Km, rendering all kinds of humanitarian assistance to mariners in distress and apprehending all criminals engaged in unlawful activities at sea. Career in Indian Coast Guard is highly rewarding and satisfying for people with positive attitude.

Indian Army Red Shield Division signs MoU with SBIF and NEIDO

Youths are the building blocks of a Nation: Governor

IT News
Imphal, April 30:

Governor of Manipur La. Ganesan has said that youths are the building blocks of a nation and their role in nation building is equally important as of other stakeholders. Speaking at the ‘Manipur Super 50’ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony held today at the auditorium of Red Shield Division, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi district, Governor said, youths should be motivated to understand their role towards nation building and their contributions should be acknowledged by all.

La. Ganesan while motivating the students and cadets present in the ceremony said all should follow the works of our great leaders who had contributed a lot for our freedom. He said, youths of today should follow the footsteps of our ideal leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji



Subhas Chandra Bose etc. who had contributed tremendously for the nation.

Appreciating the team for conceptualizing ‘Red Shield Centre of Wellness and Excellence’ to transform the lives of students from humble background Governor said, no cause is nobler than to bring sunshine in the lives of the children who have not been able to optimize their caliber and talent due to economic

conditions as well as lack of access to high quality education facilities. He further said, the inadequacy of quality education mentoring infrastructure is a major disadvantage for students in the state especially from semirural and rural provinces while aspiring for higher educational qualifications at the national level. This initiative will be able to create a feeling of mental and social well-being amongst

parents and their children by providing quality education thus catering for a better life and evolving responsible citizens for our country, he added.

The Tripartite MoU was signed as a continuous initiative to secure a better future for the youth of Manipur by the Indian Army, Red Shield Division under the aegis of Spear Corps between State Bank of India Foundation (SBIF) and training partner National Integrity and Educational Development Organization (NIEDO) to establish “Red Shield Centre for Excellence and Wellness” which will be located at Bishnupur Dist of Manipur.

The project is expected to be fully functional for first batch of Fifty students by first week of Jul 2022.

The MoU signing ceremony was held at Leimakhong between Indian Army, SBIF Foundation and NIEDO. The event was graced

by Manipur Governor La Ganesan, GOC Red Shield Division, DG Manipur Police amongst other host of senior veterans, Military and Civil dignitaries. The event was also witnessed by more than 100 students from various schools.

General Officer Commanding, 57 Mountain Division, Major General Navin Sachdeva said, 50 students will be selected under the programme and they will be provided quality coaching and education for IIT/JEE, NEET etc. He said, the centre which will be opened in Bishnupur Battalion will remain instrumental for bringing a progressive and inclusive society. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) K. Himalay and Lt. Gen. (Retd.) L. Nishikanta attended among others in the ceremony. The MoU was signed by Brigadier Ved Beniwal, Dr. Rohit Srivastava, Managing Trustee and CEO, NIEDO and a representative of SBIF.

CorCom greets proletariats on occasion of May Day; appeals to unit all working class people

IT News
Imphal, April 30:

Joint body of rebel groups operating in the region – CorCom today greets the people of the region in general and particularly the working class community on occasion of May Day, which is celebrated across the globe as International Workers’ Day on May 1.

A statement of the armed group, while recalling the roots of the May Day appealed to all the working class people to remain united. It said that day is being celebrated to

commemorate the May 1, 1886 uprising by workers against the capitalist in Chicago. The uprising was the first at which the working class people demanded reduce of working time to 8 hours and also to pay salary that can afford the existence of the working class people. The CorCom statement said that the movement was against the inhuman utilization of the workers by the capitalists for making more profit.

The CorCom said that while commemorating the May Day, people are once more reminded on how the

capitalist class of people suppressed the rights of the proletariats by forcing them to work without giving proper salary. The day reminds the courage of the working class people who have stood against the crime committed by clique of business class people to the human kinds as well as those proletariats who cannot voice against the capitalist class at various part of the world.

The CorCom said that May Day is not for cutting of working hours or increasing of the wages but it is also about the protection of the Rights of the

working class people. Improvement of the quality life of working class people and breaking the chain that put the working class people from business class capitalist people is also the cause for commemoration of the May Day.

The CorCom statement further said that Manipur (Kangleipak) has been colonized by the British for around 100 years and later the WESEA region is being colonized by India, that means the region has been experiencing colonial rule twice. As the people in the region are

under colonial rule, today except the rise some middle class people, no people can grow their livelihood except the rise of some working class people and farmers as well as some traders in the captive market.

The CorCom also mentioned the increase in the number of roadside street vendors which have been facing atrocities from the government authority. The inability to afford families by farmers and other working-class people are never seriously taken by the ruling regime said the statement.

Quiz competition on Legal Aid Clinic held

IT News
Thoubal, April 30:

District Legal Services Authority, Thoubal in collaboration with Manipur state Legal Services Authority organised an Inter- Legal Aid Clinic Quiz Competition on basic knowledge and procedures of Law at the Conference hall, District & Sessions Court Complex, Thoubal at Khangabok.

The Quiz competition was participated by the six legal aid clinics under the aegis of DLSA, Thoubal namely Legal Aid Clinic, Sugnu, Hiyanglam, Kakching, Samaram, Heirok and Kiyam Leitapok. Legal Aid Clinic,

Kakching, Kiyam Leitapok and Heirok secured the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Positions respectively in the quiz competition.

Further the prizes to the competition was also given out by Binny Ngangom, Chairperson, DLSA, Thoubal and Km. Bineshwori Maibam, Secretary, DLSA, Thoubal at the event itself.

In her speech, Binny Ngangom expressed happiness and willingness of the PLVs of the Legal Aid Clinics to renew their knowledge on attending such competitions.

The event was also attended by Ojesh Mutum, Member Secretary, MASLSA and S. Sadananda, Addl. Member Secretary, MASLSA

Human activities are behind 75% of forest fires

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



In the similar hot days of summer three years ago, I decided to spend a couple of days in the cool mountains of Himachal Pradesh. After crossing Kalka and Parwanoo, I

witnessed clouds of smoke emerging out from among the dense trees on the hills. Tree trunks were burning and suffocating smoke was mixing in the air. The dreamy picture of green hills which I had in my mind vanished soon and I felt sorry for the state of affairs. It was sad to see that there was fire in the forests all over the way. As the mercury rises in the summer, there are regular reports of forest fires. This time again, forests are burning in many places on the Himachal hills. Forests of Kumaon and Garhwal divisions of Uttarakhand are also on fire. Fire incidents have been reported at 124 places in the state. Earlier, fires have broken out around Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, Simlipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Orissa, Ladkui Forest in Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh and Kodaikanal Hills area in Tamil Nadu.

There have been a total of 1216 incidents of forest fires this year so far causing an estimated loss of over Rs 30 lakh forest property and wildlife. About 22 per cent of India's forest cover is highly vulnerable to fire. Experts say that a forest fire needs only two things, one is fuel and the other is ignition. If fuel is available, the fire continues for many days. The sharp leaves of pine act as fuel in the fire. Therefore, the pine forests are more dangerous. Dry leaves and twigs lying on the ground also act as fuel. If we talk about ignition, then human activities are said to be responsible for 75 per cent of the fire incidents. More work should be done to prevent forest fires and measures should be taken to reduce them. Climate change has the greatest impact on the weather. This is affecting lives and economies around the world.

The United Nations report on climate change says that the coming few years will prove to be troublesome for the world. Every year 560 natural disasters are expected in the world, compared to 400 annually till 2015. If we look at earlier figures, between 1970 and 2000, there were only about 100 disasters on an average every year. In the coming times, there will be more disasters like forest fires and floods. Apart from these there will also be pandemics and chemical accidents. Like the forest fire, thoughts flash in our mind. A report by Queens University of Canada states that 6,000 thoughts come to a person's mind every day, of which 80 per cent are negative thoughts. These have an adverse effect on the daily routine of the person and cause mental stress. If meditation is done for four-five minutes every day, then the damage can be reduced. Cleaning and managing thoughts that come to mind is as important as we do with the household items. You can get rid of useless memories by writing them down on a diary or paper. This can calm your mind. After getting rid of negative thoughts, the activity of the mind increases and creative thoughts get pouring.

Scorching Heat



By: Vijay GarG

Millions of Indians are experiencing a brutal heatwave that is throwing lives and livelihoods out of gear - and there is no relief in sight.

Severe heat conditions have been consistently reported over large parts of India since the beginning of the summer season in March this year. Maximum temperatures in west Rajasthan and Vidarbha in Maharashtra have remained between 40 degrees and 45 degrees Celsius throughout the last two months. Although March marks the seasonal transition from winter to summer, this year the month saw two spells of heatwaves.

And technically, summer season has not even started. There have been at least 26 heatwave days since the beginning of March, and as many as four spells of heatwaves in a little over a month and a half. The last of these heatwaves remains ongoing.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declares a heatwave for a region when the maximum temperature reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius in the plains, at least 37 degrees Celsius along the coast, and at least 30 degrees Celsius in hilly regions. Alternatively, a heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature rises by between 4.5 degrees Celsius and 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal. A severe heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature departs from normal is more than 6.4 degrees Celsius. A third condition for a heatwave arises when an area records a maximum temperature of more than 45 degrees Celsius and up to 47 degrees Celsius on any given day.

Summers have always been gruelling in many parts of India - especially in the northern and central regions. Even before air-conditioners and water coolers started selling in the millions, people had devised their own ways of coping with the heat - from keeping water cool in earthen jugs to rubbing raw mangoes on their bodies to ward off heat strokes.

But many experts say India is now recording more intense, frequent heatwaves that are also longer in duration.

The effects are visible. Farmers say the unexpected temperature spikes have affected their wheat harvest, a development that could potentially have global consequences given supply disruptions due to the Ukraine war. The heat has also triggered an increase in power demand, leading to outages in many states and fears of a coal shortage. Prime Minister Modi also flagged the increased risk of fires due to rising temperatures.

Apart from climate change, factors such as increasing population and the resultant strain on resources are adding fuel to the fire. This, in turn, leads to factors that worsen the situation, such as deforestation and increasing use of transport. And the cost of such extreme weather events is disproportionately borne by the poor.

Since 2015, both the central and state governments have issued a number of measures to mitigate the effects of heatwaves, such as banning working outside during the hottest hours and issuing timely advisories. But these can only be completely effective if accompanied by big-picture changes such as an overhaul of environmental protection laws and greening cities.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times'

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These summer skin care tips will leave you with a natural glow!

color at home:

Add a few strands of saffron (Kesar) to warm milk and let it stand for a couple of hours. Then apply it to the skin, using cotton wool. It is said to lighten skin color over a period of time.

Add a pinch of turmeric (Haldi) to curd and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes. You can also mix dried and powdered lemon peel with it. Mix lemon juice and cucumber juice in equal quantities and apply daily for 20 minutes. Wash off with plain water.

Mix cucumber and ripe papaya pulp with curd. Lemon juice can also be added. Apply on face and neck, twice a week and wash it off after half an hour. If you want it to be like a face pack, add oatmeal.

For oily skin, mix Multani mitti with rose water and lemon juice into a paste, and apply on the face. Wash it off when



By: Shahnaz Husain

it is dry.

Mix ground almonds with curd and a pinch of turmeric. Apply on the face. After 20 minutes, rub gently on the skin and wash it off with water.

Aloe Vera can be added to face masks to nourish the skin.

Take one tablespoon gram flour (besan), two teaspoons yogurt, and one tablespoon aloe vera gel. Mix together and apply on the skin, washing off after 30 minutes.

Add a little turmeric (Haldi) to gram flour (besan) and aloe vera into a paste and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes.

Three teaspoons Aloe Vera gel or juice can be mixed with three teaspoons powdered milk. Put the ingredients in a blender, for a smooth paste. Apply on face and neck and rinse off with water after half an hour. This suits normal to dry skin.

For normal to oily skin, mix one tea-

spoon of each cucumber juice, ripe papaya pulp, and aloe vera gel with two teaspoons oats. Lemon juice can also be added. Apply on face and neck, twice a week. Wash it off after half an hour.

Mix together two teaspoons aloe vera gel, a little milk, and rose water, with dried and powdered lemon peels into a paste. Apply two or three times a week on the face and neck. Wash it off after 20 minutes.

Keep Hydrated

Hydration is always important for our skin. Your water intake in summer should be a minimum of 2-3 liters a day. Coconut water, watermelons, and fresh juices are a good way to stay hydrated. Include salads and vegetables like cucumber and lettuce in your food - these help the body stay cool from within. Seasonal fruits like watermelons, muskmelons; citrus fruits, and juices also help keep the skin healthy. Hydration can also help skin recover after a sunburn and will help wash out a lot of toxins.

Exfoliate Regularly for Smoother Skin

The ground rule of basic skincare is to exfoliate your skin. Exfoliation is the key to brighter and smoother skin. Use a face scrub at least twice a week to remove excess dirt and oil from the skin. Exfoliate with a natural home remedy, like coffee grounds mixed with oil and sea salt.

Grab a body scrub and hit the shower. Gently rub your exfoliator in circular movements on your entire body from the shoulders down and rinse clean. Continue to do this 2-3 times a week for year-round beautiful skin. Always keep in mind that exfoliation is required for your entire body and not just your face. You should, however, make sure to be gentle while exfoliating your skin.

(The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)



Congress is Desperate to Become Atmanirbhar

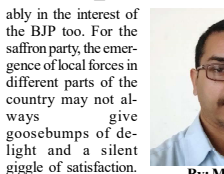
It is no secret for anybody with a little sense of politics to understand that the Congress party is in deep trouble slipping through the slippery slopes of prospects in a country that it ruled for more than five decades. Compelled to go beyond its 'high command' culture, many leaders in the party began to feel suffocated under a family which perhaps lost credibility. Modi's entry into national politics has almost toppled the hopes of survival of many in the grand old party, forcing them to turn a mirror on its own unquestionable high command. The G-23 grouping has not only been an accumulation of the downhearted old-timers but it sensibly wanted to lift the capsize party from a total disappearance. The Prashant Kishor Plan, as what at least some in the party inner circle feel, is expected to work as a redemption formula that the party formally, though hesitant, would like to hold on as the last reed of hope. Why is the Congress hesitant to pull the chain for the strategist is because it has a natural tendency to comfortably snuggle into the memories of its past glory and the impact of the unquestionable influence of the Gandhi family on it - the impetus that the party cherished for ages with great pride, servitude and ecstatic satisfaction. The Kishor Magic that many leaders across party lines think, would work wonders, if given a chance. The beneficiaries of the celebrated political strategist of India, agree to what they call an invincible magic wand, that Prashant Kishor could swing for the Congress too, if not giving it a complete success suddenly, but capable to lift the ailing party from its thickening insignificance.

Every such move of revival made by the Congress should be presum-

ably in the interest of the BJP too. For the saffron party, the emergence of local forces in different parts of the country may not always give goosebumps of delight and a silent giggle of satisfaction. The leaders in the BJP and the RSS are undoubtedly aware of the fact that there is a danger in such small regional parties emerging with numerous self-interests and regional aspirations, which indeed should be disputed. On the ground, the reports on the welfare schemes executed so far evidently prove the fact that the government at the center could bring its projects to the last man on the queue without much mishmash. The Congress, when it was in power, mostly failed to implement welfare schemes impartially and its welfarism for the selected few was largely countered by the BJP's welfare plans for all. The schemes implemented in the last eight years were unquestionably impartial, according to agencies. The Congress's extreme obsession for a redeemer, a rescuer is signaling to its utter desperation and an urge to come out of an illusory world that it imprisoned itself. The harshest reality that the Congress would stumble on is the sycophancy that it reared and trained its leaders through, and the redemption plan offered by Kishor is triggering to break this menace.

Presenting his meticulously crafted roadmap for the revival to its high command, Prashant Kishor waited for the Congress to respond but the party, though impressive on what the strategist viewed on its plight, offered him nothing special but a position in the Empowered Committee which it set up for the party's preparations for 2024 general elections. Kishor's views were almost in line with what the dissenting G 23 had viewed and the high command's decision to lean on and lend an ear to what the veterans flagged long back is a positive sign. Meanwhile the Congress was irritated and skeptical of the intentions of Kishor and his team for striking a deal with the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) for the next year's assembly elections. The TRS and the Congress are face to face in the state of Telangana. Kishor, on the other hand, is with a definite plan to de-throne Modi in 2024 and all set to bring the regional bulls to one yoke with Congress taking an important role in the plough. The strategist, seemingly with humility, denied the offer the Congress made, possibly dissatisfied with the trifling weight that the party threw on him. What seems to be mounting on Sonia Gandhi is the magnitude of the threat of existence and the fear of being discarded by the cadre. This must be the reason that the dynasty is still perplexed and hesitant to do the course correction. The Congress party needs to know its traditional voters who, for generations, voted for the party unwavering on any political storm that could sweep seats to power giving it defeats multiple times. Disappointing the grassroots cadre and its voters for long would be more hazardous. The present context is that the party is insecure to strengthen the base, the grassroots, as the leadership itself is clueless on what the party would look like as a system minus the Gandhis. Of course, this is a huge crisis that the party knows is not possible for any outsider with parachuted ideas to easily solve.

(The author is a Freelance Journalist/Social Worker)



By: M.R. Lalu

India reports 3,688 Covid cases, 50 fatalities in last 24 hours

Agency
New Delhi, April 30:

India saw a single day rise of 3,688 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,30,75,864, while the active cases increased to 18,684, the government said on Saturday. According to the Union Health Ministry data updated at 8 am, the death toll rose to 5,23,803 with 50 more fatalities. The active cases constituted 0.04 per cent of the total infections, while the national recovery rate was recorded at 98.74 per cent, the health ministry said.

An increase of 883 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of



last 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.74 per cent and weekly positivity rate at 0.66 per cent, the data said.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease has increased to 4,25,33,377, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.22 per cent. The

number of doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 188.89 crore. India's COVID-19 tally crossed the two crore-mark on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year. Out of 50 fatalities, 45 were reported from Kerala,

two each from Delhi and Maharashtra, and one from Uttar Pradesh.

Of total deaths so far, 1,47,842 have been reported from Maharashtra, 69,011 from Kerala, 40,099 from Karnataka, 38,025 from Tamil Nadu, 26,174 from Delhi, 23,507 from Uttar Pradesh, and 21,201 from West Bengal, among other states. The health ministry has stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification.

Lieutenant General Baggavalli Somashekar Raju to take over as Vice Chief of the Army Staff on May 1

IT News
Imphal, April 30:

Lieutenant General Baggavalli Somashekar Raju will take over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff on May 1, 2022.

An alumnus of Sainik School Bijapur and National Defence Academy, he was commissioned in the JAT Regiment on 15th December 1984.

He commanded his Battalion during OP PARAKRAM in the Western Theatre and in Jammu & Kashmir. He also holds the distinction of commanding the Uri brigade along the Line of Control, a Counter Insurgency Force and the Chinar Corps in the Kashmir Valley. The General Officer also served as the Commandant, Indian Military Training Team in Bhutan.

During his illustrious ca-



reer spanning 38 years, he has tenanted many important regimental, staff and instructional appointments in the Army Head Quarters and in field formations to include, Colonel Military Secretary Legal in Military Secretary branch, Brigadier General Staff of the operationally active White Knight Corps, Deputy Director General Military Operations & Director General Staff Duties.

Prior to taking over as the

Vice Chief of the Army Staff, the General Officer was tenanted the appointment of Director General Military Operations during the standoff on the LAC.

The General officer is a qualified helicopter pilot having carried out operational flying in Somalia, as part of UNOSOM II. He is also the Colonel of the JAT Regiment.

LT Gen Raju has attended all important career courses in India and has had the privilege of doing his NDC at Royal College of Defence Studies, United Kingdom. He also holds a distinguished Master's programme degree in Counter Terrorism at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, United States.

For his illustrious contribution to the service, he has been awarded Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and Yudh Seva Medal.

SC seeks reply on de-reservation of in-service quota seats

New Delhi, April 30:

A two judges bench of the Supreme Court presided by Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli issued notices to the State of MP in a special leave petition preferred by a number of government doctors and medical officers from the state who have challenged the de-reservation of 30 per cent seats earmarked for them in PG medical courses in the state.

The SLPs were filed against the judgment of the

division bench of Madhya Pradesh High Court, which had affirmed the de-reservation of 30 per cent quota seats after the conclusion of the second round of counselling, holding the same to be in tune with existing rules 4 and 14 of the Medical Admission Rules 2018. The SC however declined to grant interim relief for the current year, but agreed to examine the constitutional question of law for the ensuing academic year 2022-23, in view of the gravity of the problems pointed out by the appel-

lant doctors.

The appellant Dr Shaline Agrawal & Ors. were represented through advocates Siddharth R Gupta, Abhikalp P Singh, and Shivam Baghel, wherein the state has been directed to respond in 4 weeks. Petitioners are all in-service doctors who had served in the remote, rural, tribal, and interior villages of the state for the prescribed period of 3 years and above and were claiming the benefit of a 30 per cent reserved quota in the PG medical courses provided by the

state for such doctors. The state in the counselling and admission process conducted for the academic year 2021-22 had de-reserved all these in-service quota seats and allotted them to open/direct category candidates, which was assailed by all of them before the High Court on the primary ground that there is no such provision in the parent rules for de-reservation/conversion of seats from in-service quota to non-service quota.

Courtesy - Free Press Journal

Healthcare Services Covered Under Consumer Protection Law: Supreme Court

Agency
New Delhi, April 30:

The Supreme Court Friday said that doctors and healthcare services are not excluded from the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 and termed the PIL concerning it as a "motivated PIL". A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli affirmed the Bombay High Court verdict which held that doctors and healthcare service providers are covered under the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act.

Appearing for the petitioner an NGO "Medicos Le-

gal Action Group", senior advocate Siddharth Luthra said that in the 1986 legislation there was no mention of healthcare in the definition of services and despite there being a proposal to include it under the new Act, it was actually not included.

The bench said that the statute says "services of any description" and added the definition of service is wide enough and had the Parliament wanted to exclude it, then it would have said expressly. Justice Chandrachud said, "Actually your client committed a selfgoal. Some consumer

negligence case against the doctor and they have prompted it to file a PIL. This is a motivated PIL". The bench added that the reason why healthcare was deleted was that the definition itself of "services" is wide enough and the Minister's speech in the house cannot restrict what is expressly stated in the statute. Justice Chandrachud referred to a recent verdict passed by him and said that similar was the case of Telecom services which was not there in 1986 legislation but the court said that it implied that it was covered under the "services of any

description". The bench said, "The speech of the minister which you are referring to is very guarded. We will affirm the judgement of the High Court and you shall pay the fine within four weeks".

The Bombay High Court verdict of last year while dismissing the PIL had said that there was not much difference between the definition of "services" under the 1986 and 2019 legislations as healthcare services were not expressly mentioned in the 1986 Act also. The High Court had imposed a cost of 50 thousand on the NGO.

Assam Rifles Foils Cross Border Narcotics Smuggling



IT News
Imphal, April 30:

In two separate operations, Tengenoupal and Khuga Battalions under the aegis of IGAR (South) foiled cross border narcotics smuggling in Tengenoupal and CCPur districts on April 29 and April 28 respectively.

During routine checking of vehicles at Permanent Ve-

hicle Check Post, Khudengtabi, troops of Assam Rifles intercepted a van. On thorough search of the van, 109 grams of brown sugar in nine soap cases concealed in dashboard were recovered. The seized narcotics were assessed to be worth Rs 21.8 lakhs.

In another intelligence based operation troops of Assam Rifles along with

Manipur Police apprehended a drug peddler at border village Songdai and recovered 1.76 Kgs of heroin in 43 soap cases. The seized narcotics were assessed to be worth Rs 7.04 Cr.

The recovered items along with the drug peddlers were handed over to Moreh and Singhat Police Station for further action.

AAP winning a seat in Guwahati Municipal Polls as a jolt to Trinamool Congress

By: Ashis Biswas
Guwahati, April 30:

For the Delhi-based Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), winning a seat in the 2022 Guwahati Municipal elections was not exactly a major victory, but it certainly helped in consolidating its position as the undisputed front runner among regional parties in India, currently ahead of the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

The political significance of the AAP's victory, as the party contested these elections for the first time, went well beyond the number of seats won. Ms Masooma Begum, the party's candidate contesting the minority-dominated ward 42, won convincingly. Along with the local Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) party also winning one seat,

the AAP could claim to have resisted the massive victory sweep of the ruling NDA (BJP/AGP) coalition which ended up bagging 58 out of the 60 wards. The BJP won in 52 wards as against the AGP's victory in 6.

Most state-based observers said the outcome was not surprising given current political trends in Assam. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP President Mr. J.P. Nadda and state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma thanked the people of Guwahati for their support. So did Mr Arvind Kejriwal, AAP leader and Chief Minister of Delhi, as he congratulated Ms Begum.

The Indian National Congress the biggest opposition party, ended up not for the first time, as the worst losers, failing to win a single ward. Most post poll analyses indicated

that pro-Congress voters especially Muslims, had voted for the AAP in many areas, ditching the grand old party.

In part the sad story of the Assam Congress is that of its other state units wherever it is in the opposition — a major failure of the top leaders to help/inspire local candidates and workers, lack of any effective programme or rallying slogan, inadequate resources and the usual infighting at local levels.

Nor was the Congress's defeat restricted to Guwahati only. Senior Congress leaders made their usual pre-poll claims about doing well in these elections according to Guwahati-based media reports. Altogether civic elections were held in 80 urban/semi-urban areas. The NDA won in 73 but the Congress could not win a

single civic body.

BJP leaders accused both the AAP and the AJP of resorting to communal propaganda in their pre-poll campaign. As stated before, Muslims and other sections not supporting the NDA seemed to have voted en masse for the AAP. A sure sign that minority and other votes had shifted to the AAP in a major way was the fact that candidates of the newly contesting party came second in over 20 wards, in contrast to the poor performance on part of Congress candidates. They mostly claimed third or lower positions.

The outcome should provide much food for thought, mostly negative, for leaders of both the Congress as well as the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) led by Mr Badruddin Ajmal MP in the

days ahead.

In West Bengal too the results were followed closely by analysts. The fact is ruling TMC circles in Bengal, determined to make their mark prior to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as the strongest and most determined political challengers of the ruling BJP, have every reasons to be as unhappy as Congressmen over the GMC poll results.

Ever since the recent Goa Assembly elections, where the TMC and the AAP had both contested, relations between the parties had been strained. Abandoning their earlier respect for each other AAP leader Mr Kejriwal had questioned the seriousness, even the objective, of the TMC's poll campaign in Goa conducted by the Bengal leaders.

The fact that the AAP later

won two seats in the 40-strong house contesting for the first time, did not endear Mr Kejriwal or his party to the TMC, as the latter failed to win any seat. This despite its expensive, high-octane campaign led by MP Abhishek Banerjee, political heir apparent to Mamata Banerjee.

Now the TMC has been outflanked by the AAP's foray in the East, after its debacle at Goa. True, veteran Congress leaders in Assam such as Mr Ripun Bora and others have recently joined the TMC. This followed some hectic efforts made by Ms Sushmita Dev who herself crossed over from India's grand old party to the TMC some time ago, to revive her present party's fortunes in Assam.

Earlier efforts made by TMC leaders to strike roots in

Assam especially among Barak valley-based Bengalis did not succeed.

But Ms Dev also faces major problems. Even as she attends to problems in Assam the Tripura unit of the TMC, set up with much fanfare only months ago by Mr. Banerjee and other heavyweights has shot its bolt. The lone winning TMC candidate in the recently concluded Tripura civic polls recently resigned to join the BJP which has won 330 out of 335 seats.

Bottom line: With the AAP upstaging the TMC both in the East and the West and about to launch a fully functional unit in Bengal next, the TMC's ambitions to emerge as the leading regional party to challenge the BJP all over India may not be easy to achieve.

(IPA Service)

Gen Manoj Pande takes charge as Army chief

Agency
New Delhi, April 30:

Gen Manoj Pande took charge as the 29th Chief of the Army Staff on Saturday after incumbent Gen MM Naravane retired from service.

Gen Pande, who was serving as the vice chief, became the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to helm the force.

Before taking charge as vice chief of the Army on February 1, Gen Pande was heading the Eastern Army Command, tasked with guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh sectors.

Gen Pande took charge of the Army at a time India is facing myriad security challenges, including along the borders with China and Pakistan.

As the Army chief, he will



General Manoj Pande (L) took over as Army Chief from General MM Naravane.

also have to coordinate with the Navy and the Indian Air Force on the government's plan to roll out theatre commands.

The theatisation plan was being implemented by India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat who died in a helicopter crash in December last. The government is yet to appoint Gen

Rawat's successor.

In his distinguished career, Gen Pande also served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN), which is India's only tri-services command.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he was commissioned in the Corps of

Engineers (The Bombay Sappers) in December 1982.

Gen Pande has held several prestigious command and staff assignments in conventional as well as counter-insurgency operations in all types of terrain.

He commanded an engineer regiment along the Line of Control during the Operation Parakram in Jammu and Kashmir, an engineer brigade in the western sector, an infantry brigade along LoC and a mountain division in high-altitude area of western Ladakh and a corps in the Northeast.

His staff exposures include Brigade Major of a Mountain Brigade in the Northeast, Assistant Military Secretary (AMS) in the Military Secretary's Branch and Brigadier General Staff (Operations) at the Eastern Command headquarters.

ISBD Imphal organises scientific discourse commemorating its Foundation Day

IT News
Imphal, April 30:

Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India organised a programme on "Bioeconomy of Bioresources with special reference to NER" to commemorate its Foundation Day Celebration on April 29, 2022.

The programme was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Devesh Deval (IAS), Commissioner and secretary, Science & Technology, Govt. of Manipur. He appreciated the various research activities and outreach programmes of IBSD for the development of bioresources under the leadership of Prof. Pulok

K. Mukherjee, Director, IBSD, Imphal. During the event, the Director, IBSD highlighted various activities of IBSD performed under different research verticals for the development of bioeconomy from bioresources of the North Eastern Region in collaboration with twenty-one International and National Institutions, Universities and Industry partners. He mentioned that IBSD is working on exploring traditional knowledge and natural resources for the socio-economic development.

Towards this, a MoU was signed between IBSD and the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of Manipur. The programme was also attended virtually by Dr Anamika Gambhir, Scientist G, DBT, Govt. of India who emphasised on

various support programs funded by DBT, Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India. The programme was also attended by renowned speakers including Prof. Chandrabhas Narayana, Director, RGC, Kerala, Prof. A. Mukherjee, Director, IASST, Guwahati, Prof. S. Chattopadhyay, NIT, Durgapur, West Bengal, Prof. Krishnan Baskar, Director, IIT Senapati, Manipur, Homila Hongre, Director, Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of Manipur, Prof. L. Shanujukumar Singh, Head, Department of Biotechnology, Manipur University, Imphal and S.N. Narain, Deputy Secretary, Vigilance, DBT, Govt. of India. All the scientists, students and staff of IBSD attended the programme.

The uncertainty looms large in labour arena on International Workers' Day

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, April 30:

Even as we are celebrating the International Workers' Day on First May, with drastic changes in labour laws to ensure the "Ease of Business", the uncertainty looms large in labour arena across the country.

While presenting the budget 2022, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the next target of the government is to create 60 lakh jobs with "PM Gati Shakti" which will pull forward the economy and will lead to more jobs and opportunities for the youth.

The Mumbai-based Centre for Monitoring India Economy (CMIE) in its recent report has stated that the overall unemployment rate in the country has dropped to 7.5 per cent with urban unemployment rate at 8.5 per cent and rural at 7.1 per cent in April this year.

But the situation varies in different parts of the country. As per the data, Haryana has the highest unemployment rate at 26.7 per cent, followed by Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir at 25 per cent each. Bihar is at 14.4 per cent, Tripura at 14.1 per cent and West Bengal at 5.6 per cent.

The permanent jobs are

waning out and the contract system is the order of the day. Surprisingly over 100 casual employees continue to work on the contract basis, in the Union Government-controlled media-Mumbai Door Darshan, for the last over 5 years. Even some of the departments of the Maharashtra Government, have been employing people on contract basis with minimum salary.

As against this, those in organised sector continue to fight for more remuneration. It is common knowledge that the successive Pay Commissions are being set up to fulfill the demands of the Government employees by the Union Government. Also the dearness allowance based on inflation is revised time to time.

Several jobs were lost and the economy was thrown out of gear due to Covid pandemic in the last two years. The number of gainfully employed people which was 44 crore in 2021, came down to 38 crore in 2021. This meant that 6 crore people went out of jobs. Although the Union Government claims to be generating jobs every year, no jobs are available says CPM Polit Bureau member Dr Ashok Dhawale. In Maharashtra alone nearly 4 lakh people are unemployed. Over 90 per cent people work

in the unorganised sector across the country. We had organised a nationwide agitation in March this year and now we will have to organise the agitation on a massive scale once again, Dr Dhawale stated.

According to Comrade Prakash Reddy (CPI, Maharashtra), with growing unemployment, the social security leaves much to be desired. The Provident Fund interest rate has been brought down to 8.1 per cent which was 8.5 and more earlier. The norms related to payment of minimum wages, bonus and gratuity have undergone a sea change. An eight hour shift is gradually turning into 12 hour shift in most of the establishments. Besides, the firms up to 300 workers can hire and fire without government nod.

The Union Government has consolidated nearly 29 central labour laws into four major labour codes, namely: The Code on Industrial Relations, 2020 (CIR), The Code on Wages 2019 (COW), the Code on Social Security, 2020 (CSS) and The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020 (OSH). The objective behind this initiative is "to generate employment and to facilitate ease of doing business". But these

codes focus on macroeconomic growth rather than workers' growth.

While the COW was passed in 2019, the remaining three labour codes were passed during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament in 2020, amidst a boycott by the Opposition over the contentious farm laws. These labour codes are yet to be notified, and rules under them are being finalised. But a provision to sack workers by the firms employing the workforce up to 300 workers serves as a handy weapon, other changes are also detrimental.

The country has over 40 million internal migrant workers.

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 (ISMA), has been subsumed under the OSH Code, which encompasses the Factories Act, 1948, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Contract Labour (Abolition

and Regulation) Act, 1970 ("CLA").

Whereas earlier the ISMA was applicable to the establishments that employed 5 or more workers, now the ISMA would be applicable to establishments that employ 10 or more workers. Due to this increased threshold, the majority of establishments will be left outside the scope of regulation.

Similarly, while the CLA applied to establishments that hired 20 or more contract workers earlier, now the Chapter on Contract Labour applies only to establishments hiring 50 or more workers. As a consequence, a large proportion of workers will be left without legal protection and will be vulnerable to exploitation without remedy.

Under the ISMA, an interstate migrant worker was defined as a person "recruited by or through a contractor in one state for employment in any other state. Now the OSH Code includes the workers directly employed by the employer in the destination state

and the "contractor" has been dropped. Besides the Code has introduced income as a criterion by excluding those who earn more than Rs 18,000 per month, from the scope of its protection.

Besides under the OSH, the contractor is not liable to pay a displacement allowance to the inter-state migrant workers. The code also does not give protection to intra-state migrant workers. Basically a majority of the migrants are the migrants within state boundaries.

Migrant workers

In the meanwhile most of the states have begun registering the construction workers and the licenses are given to contractor employing migrant workers under ISMA. However the lack of documents, and requirement of more than 90 days work in a year hinders the registration. Besides such online registrations give wide scope to agents carrying out such registration work.

The lock downs in the first and second Covid wave ex-

posed the lack of preparedness of most states although subsequently some compensation was given to the construction workers. In Maharashtra a sum of Rs 1500 per worker was given during the first and second waves benefitting over 12 lakh construction workers.

ONORC

Also the Union Government has claimed successful implementation of the 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) scheme which facilitates buying subsidised ration from any fair price shop in the country. There are 77 crore beneficiaries in 34 states and Union territories and Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and Gujarat are the top destination states which have recorded the maximum number of inward transactions, according to the Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry.

Labour laws, are expected to correct power relations between employers and workers. They should not be used as a weapon against the working class.

Contd. from Page 1

PM inaugurates Joint Conference...

Most of these people are from poor or ordinary families, he pointed out. In every district there is a committee headed by the District Judge, so that these cases can be reviewed and wherever possible, such prisoners may be released on bail. "I would appeal to all Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts to give priority to these matters on the basis of humanitarian sensibility and law", he added.

The Prime Minister said mediation is also an important tool for settlement of pending cases in the courts especially at the local level. There is a thousand of years old tradition of settlement of disputes through mediation in our society. Mutual consent and mutual participation, in its own way, is a distinct human concept of justice, he said. With this thinking, said the Prime Minister, the government has introduced the Mediation Bill in the Parliament as an umbrella legislation. "With our rich legal expertise, we can become a global leader in the field of solution by mediation. We can present a model to the whole world", he said.

Addressing the conference

of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices, Chief Justice of India Justice N.V. Ramana said this is an opportunity for us to learn from your rich experience, knowledge, and wisdom that you have acquired in public life. You are the live link with the people. In your own way, each one of you is a great opinion builder. The Constitution provides for the separation of powers between the three organs - clearly outlining their sphere of functioning, delineating their powers and responsibilities. It is the harmonious and co-ordinated functioning among the three organs of the State that has preserved and strengthened the democratic foundations of this great nation over the last seven decades, he said.

Justice N.V. Ramana said "This conference is an occasion for us to introspect and contemplate solutions. I have been a strong proponent of "Indianization of the Justice Delivery System". By Indianisation, I mean increasing accessibility by moulding the system to suit the needs and sensibilities of the Indian population. It is a multidimensional concept. It calls for inclusivity,

providing access to justice, removal of language barriers, reforms in practice and procedure, development of infrastructure, filling up of vacancies, augmenting the strength of the judiciary and so on".

"The concept of 'Access to Justice' in India is much broader than simply providing lawyers for representation before Courts. I am proud to state that, India has one of the best free legal aid services in the entire world", added the CJI.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju said that this Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of High Courts is aimed to deliberate on ways to deliver timely, affordable and quality justice to the citizens of this country. The Minister highlighted that the august gathering is reflective of our collective commitment towards the guiding principles of this government - Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas. This is a unique opportunity for an honest and constructive dialogue between the government and judiciary on finding concrete solutions for efficient delivery of justice, the

minister emphasized.

Rijiju informed that the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has been extended till 2025-26 with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 9,000 crores including the central share of Rs. 5,307 crores.

Under the e-court Integrated Mission Mode Project 18,735 courts, across the country have been computerized to keep justice system accessible to common man through e-filing of cases and hearing through video conferencing, the minister said. The Supreme Court has emerged as a global leader with over 2 lakh virtual hearing. The High Courts and District courts together have conducted nearly 1.84 crore virtual hearings, he added.

Another significant contribution under the e-court project is National Judicial data grid (NJDG) through which lawyers and litigants can access case status information of over 20.3 crore cases and 17.22 crore orders/judgements pertaining to these courts. The data is uploaded on a real time basis by the connected courts, the minister said.

Sports

Santosh Trophy 2022: West Bengal beat Manipur, Face Kerala in Final

Agency
Mallapuram, April 30:

Football powerhouse Bengal outplayed a lacklustre Manipur 3-0 to lock into the Santosh Trophy final for the 46th time in Mallapuram, Kerala on Friday.

Before the Manipuri outfit could blink, the record 32-time champions slammed in two goals via Sujit Singh (2'), Mohammed Fardin Ali Molla (7') to give them a 2-0 lead at the break.

Dilip Orawn (74') completed the tally for Bengal with a peach of a strike to set up a summit clash against hosts Kerala here on May 2.

The last time Bengal advanced into the final was in the

2017-19 season when they lost to Kerala on penalties at their home venue of Salt Lake Stadium.

The Monotosh Chakladar-led outfit could not have asked for a better start as the young Manipuri Sujit took a first-time effort from outside the area.

In the space of five minutes, Molla made the most of a loose ball spilled by keeper Chingkhiei Meitei.

Molla then took a step to the left and then back to the right before unleashing a powerful shot from just inside the box to make it 2-0 as early in the seventh minute, that also brought up his fifth goal of the competition.

Bengal slowed down the pace thereafter and could have

conceded a goal in the 32nd minute but their goalkeeper Priyank Kumar Singh made two excellent double saves to deny Manipur's Luminlin Haokip and Romen Singh.

In the 66th minute, a superb move from the midfield saw Somishon Shirak get a clean through on goal with just the keeper to beat but he fluffed his shot.

Bengal virtually sealed it in the 74th minute when Orawn put in a high looping cross at the far post, but it was just too perfect and the ball nestled its way right into the top corner, dipping just at the right time.

Manipur made some array of attacks afterwards but Priyank stood tall under the bar to ensure a clean sheet for them.