

Losii Dikho inaugurates Temporary Mao Market

IT News
Imphal, April 8:

Losii Dikho, MLA today inaugurated Mao-Imphal market (Temporary Shed) at Kaho Leikai Nongchup, Imphal West.

Speaking at the inaugural function L. Dikho, MLA said that our state Manipur is a beautiful place where different colour and section of people are living in it peacefully by the grace of God, so even this Mao-Imphal market will not just be for business centre, rather it will built up a good relationship among the people living within the state. He also said that with the blessing from God the soil of Mao is quite fertile, we harvest lots of vegetables, flower, fruits etc. As we all know that Mao is not a big area yet it contribute a lot for



our state and even gave contribution to our neighboring area like Kohima and Dimapur. Products are in much

demand as the agriculture products are organic.

L. Dikho further said that instead of always asking for

supporting the inputs of very small activity of the agriculture/horticulture sector which is very important for promoting the economy of the state as the people themselves are bringing production and it is a very positive turn for the state's economic development.

He further said that if we love our state, instead of always demanding something to our MLAs or the state government, we need to contribute something in the society as a community otherwise we will not be a meaningful citizen.

The Inauguration function was attended by K. Robindro, MLA, Th. Kiran, Deputy Commissioner Imphal West, Ksh. Shivakanta Singh SP Imphal West, Mao Business Women Union and CSOs.

Agri Director clarifies; says department arranging for Buffer Stocking of Kharif 2022

IT News
Imphal, April 8:

In connection with various news report regarding allegation to the Department of Agriculture, Director of Agriculture N. Gojendro today clarified that Distribution of Urea Fertilizers through this Department has been temporarily kept on hold since 20.03.2022 for the arrangement of Buffer Stocking for Kharif 2022.

In a telephonic conversation with Imphal Times N. Gojendro said that in connection with the news item published in Kangleipakki Meira local daily on 07.04.2022 under the heading "Agriculture Loishangna Urea Har Chingshilakpagl Thabak Paikhatpa Houringeidlo Black Ta Urea Har Bag Amada Lupo 1300 Yourey" the Agriculture clarified that, due to the sincere and dedicated effort of the Department under the

guidance of Minister (Agriculture), Manipur, the Department is arranging to bring sufficient quantity of Urea fertilizer in the State for the ensuing Kharif 2022.

N. Gojendro further said that no person shall sell, offer for sale or carry on the business of selling fertilizer at any place as wholesale dealers or retail dealer except registered Certificate/License Holder as per clause of the Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985.

"If any individual is found to be sold or selling Urea Fertilizer at a rate higher than the maximum retail price (V66.80/- per 45 kg. bag), necessary action shall be initiated without any further notice as per Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985. Any such case may promptly be reported to the concerned District Agriculture Officer or to the Assistant Fertilizer Officer (Email: afchoingmeisrj2@gmail.com)",

N. Gojendro told Imphal Times.

In connection with the news item published in Sangai Express (English) local daily dated 08.04.2022 under the heading "Farmer Body Urges", the Agriculture Director said that instruction has been given to all the District Agriculture Officers for distribution of Urea Fertilizer based on Soil Health Card was issued with an objective for judicious and balanced use of fertilizers to avoid hazardous effects of chemicals to human/animals/environment as well as to hand over a living soil to the future generations.

"The instruction as a whole may be treated as an initiative for mass testing of soil. Moreover, sale of Urea Fertilizer by the Department is made through National DBT Portal, wherein report on Soil Health Card is an option", Gojen said.

District Administration Thoubal conducts social service for upcoming Khongjom Day Celebration



IT News
Imphal, April 8:

For the upcoming Khongjom Day Observation, a social service was conducted today at Khongjom War Memorial Complex atop Khebaching, Thoubal, areas around Khongjom River and the surrounding areas around the complex.

The social service was organised by District Administration Thoubal and staffs of various departments of SP Thoubal; SDO Thoubal; EE (PWD); EE (WR); EE (PHED); AE (MI); Forest department;

Thoubal and Wanging Lamding Municipal Council; Thoubal Fire service and Staffs of DC office Thoubal took part wholeheartedly.

It may be mentioned that the Khongjom Day Observation was restricted due to COVID-19 Pandemic for the last two years. This year the District Administration is expecting large number of public attendance. The Khongjom Day Observation is observed every year on April 23rd to honour the gallant Manipuri warriors including Major Paona Brajabashi who paid supreme sacrifice in the battle of Khongjom during the 1891 Anglo-Manipuri war.

The Editorial:

The perfect timing to make CM's anti corruption dream comes true

The people of Manipur have one very good reason to believe that the state BJP's Nongthombam Biren Singh led Manipur government for the second tie will surely deliver justice to each and every citizen of the state. Before elaborating on why it is expected, one should laud the wisdom of the new chief minister over his understanding regarding the administration of a democratic form of government.

His assurance to the people to complete the incomplete structures of various central sponsored schemes is worth praising and his stand to root out corruption is what has been expecting.

We the people of the state believed that the new Chief Minister will keep his promise to eradicate corruption.

The other thing that makes Imphal Times feel the new government will streamline governance is that, the team includes almost all professionals from every field. Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren was one of the most celebrated Editors of a newspaper published here in Imphal before he entered politics. The young and energetic BJP MLA Th. Biswajit is known for his skills and rendering his duty. He already has good rapport in dealing with any situation.

The only thing that Imphal Times would like to suggest is a transparent and efficient mechanism to prevent and/or weed out corrupt practices of the elected leaders as also the bureaucrats. For that the need of the hour is introduction of "Lok Ayukta" in the state. Many states have introduced it and there is no reason why such a powerful and relevant system should not be implemented in Manipur without further delay. After all, the vision document of the BJP had clearly mentioned of wiping out corruption from the state in line with the vision projected by the charismatic leader and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Well and good the Lokayukta acts today, and some of the top officials of some government department are now trapped. This should not be interfere by the present government under Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

Mr. Chief Minister, there is not a shred of doubt that the people of the state will have more faith, goodwill and support in your government if corruption is checked properly than do the needful and please don't interfere to the statutory bodies checking corruption.

It may be mention that just a couple of days back, the Social Welfare Department, Government of Manipur have conducted recruitment test for appointing Supervisors, Inspectors, Garde IV post. There are rumours spreading around about some rich family having close relationship with the Government authority bribing huge amount of money. There are also rumours that the Minister in charge as well as the Commissioner and the Director of the Social Welfare department had already prepared a list even before conducting the recruitment test. These are rumours, but there is a saying that - "the leaves of the tree don't move without a breeze". Let's hope those are rumours and let us also pray that such thing don't happen this time as IT IS A MATTER OF PRESTIGE for Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

Supreme Court has to take an early decision on Electoral Bonds

There has been too much delay in ensuring transparency in political funding

By Nitya Chakraborty
New Delhi, April 8:

It is good that the Chief Justice of India N V Ramana has agreed to take up for hearing a pending petition challenging the Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018. The 20th tranche of electoral bonds opened on April 1 this year and it will continue till April 10. It would have been better if the Supreme Court would have heard the plea before this in the interests of ensuring a level playing field in political funding and establishing transparency, but this has not been given that priority yet. It will now be in the best interests of the democracy if the petition is heard as early as

possible. After the current sale of bonds, no further issue should be allowed.

Earlier on March 24 last year, the Supreme Court in its hearing on electoral bonds petition expressed right concerns about the misuse of electoral bonds but dismissed Association of Democratic Rights prayer to stay fresh sale of the electoral bonds. As a result, the bonds sale continued from April 1 to 10 in 2021 and the same is in force this month also. But an earlier petition challenging the bonds sale is still pending and now the CJI N V Ramana has agreed to hear this pending plea.

The important point which the learned judges, especially

the then CJI S A Bobde missed in 2021 hearing was that this electoral bond issue is just a small part of the BJP government's systematic efforts since its coming to power in 2014 to steamroll the opposition parties through financial muscle power and thereby ensure its governance through funding by the big corporates. In the process an unique system of quid pro quo has been institutionalised in the Indian business world which was never in existence in this country's history since Indian independence.

The functioning of democracy in the states in India as also at centre is under threat due to this money power. The level playing field has been lost

for the non-BJP parties and all these have been possible due to the huge resources mobilised by the BJP through corporate donations, active support of the big traders and the big funds supply by the overseas Indians close to BJP as also the VHP dominated overseas religious bodies.

There is nothing wrong for the BJP in collecting funds from its supporters. It is entitled to do so as any other political party. But the problem is when it tweaks the laws in its favour in a partisan way through its hold over the government and makes use of the central agencies in hounding the moneyed people who, in some way fund the opposition parties. The use of the central

agencies like ED, CBI and the IT department has been so blatant that no corporate takes any risk to be involved with the Congress Party which is still the main opposition in the country. As a result, the coffers of the Congress have reached an all time low and in many states which went for assembly polls, the state Congress units desperately clamouring for more funds as they were outmatched by the fund rich BJP.

The electoral bonds can be purchased by the corporates but the names will be known to only issuer meaning State Bank of India and not the Election Commission. This means the names will be known to the centre and as the

present government is known, the few people who dared to donate some funds to some opposition parties, will be blacklisted. The big houses are generally dominated by businessmen with Hindu faith, they have general sympathy for the BJP and that has grown in the last two decades, but many of them also sense democratic values and they are interested in giving some donations to other non-BJP parties. Even they are scared.

In 19 tranches since 2018, bonds worth Rs.9208.23 crore were sold. Political parties encashed bonds worth Rs.9187.55 crore. Nearly eighty per cent were received by the BJP. This amount collected by the BJP, is only a fraction of

the total funds for elections spent by the ruling party during poll campaigns. There is a fear among the industry people that any support to its rival Congress Party in terms of donations, will be frowned upon. As a result, the main national rival, the Congress is starved of funds and is ill equipped to match the muscle power of the BJP in elections.

Anyone of the business world in India will talk in confidence that they can not run business by ignoring any request from the ruling party. Those who are very close to the BJP, are prospering and this gives a signal to the others which path to follow. It is a precarious situation now.

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Hospitality, tourism industry happy all the way

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



As soon as the Covid pandemic disappeared, the tourism and hotel industry returned to its previous glory. After suffering losses for two years, now not only are hotel

occupancy is blooming, advance booking is also on the positive side. In Kashmir Valley, 40 thousand hotel rooms are up to 90 percent full and tourists who are reaching the valley without advance booking have to run from pillar to post to find a room for a night. In the last two years, 70 thousand workers of the hotel industry had to lose employment in the valley alone, but now a lot of new recruitments are being done. The Kashmir Valley has been buzzing with tourists for the past three months. More than three lakh tourists landed in Srinagar during the first three months of this year, which is a record. Hotel tariff has doubled not only in Srinagar, but also in Shimla. The hotel room which used to cost 2 thousand rupees in normal days is now costing 4 to 5 thousand rupees. A large number of tourists are also reaching Shimla due to the Navratri. As the temperature is rising, hotels in hilly areas are getting occupied by tourists.

As discussed earlier in this column, during the Covid period, millions of youth lost the opportunity to join the Indian Army and many became over-age. Army recruitment remained suspended for two whole years. Due to this reason, 10 thousand youth were deprived of recruitment in Haryana alone, while more than two lakh youth got overaged. If you consider all the states combined, the number of such youth will swell to several lakhs. Due to non-recruitment for two years, 1.25 lakh posts of soldiers are lying vacant in the Army. To fill these posts, the government is going to implement the Agnipath Recruitment Scheme. Under this, youth willing to work in the army will be recruited for three years. They will be called Agnivirs and some of these capable Agnivirs can also get permanent postings in the future. These appointments are to be made for the three services, i.e. Navy, Army and Air Force. After training, they will be deployed in J&K and Northeast states. These will also include IT and other professionals. After three years of service, they will easily get employment in private institutions.

Due to the epidemic, inflation increased in about 150 countries of the world. Shortage of raw materials, disruption in supply chain, reduced production of spare parts and seasonal changes affecting agricultural production made everything from food items to daily use costlier. Due to the outbreak of Omicron, the situation is expected to remain the same this month. Even after this, it may take nine months to a year to fully control inflation. Variety of electric vehicles will come into the market. Many changes will be seen in this field. Many options will appear. Companies will also have to reduce the prices of their e-vehicles. Gradually people will start getting disillusioned with petrol and diesel powered vehicles and the number of electric vehicles will increase on the roads. Due to the shortage of chips or semiconductors, it had a huge impact on the automobile and electronics industry.

Climate crisis and health



By: Vijay GarG

Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.

Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

The direct damage costs to health (i.e. excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation), is estimated to be between USD 2-4 billion/year

by 2030.

Areas with weak health infrastructure – mostly in developing countries – will be the least able to cope without assistance to prepare and respond.

Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transport, food and energy-use choices can result in improved health, particularly through reduced air pollution.

Climate change - the biggest health threat facing humanity

Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity, and health professionals worldwide are already responding to the health harms caused by this unfolding crisis.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that to avert catastrophic health impacts and prevent millions of climate change-related deaths, the world must limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. Past emissions have already made a certain level of global temperature rise and other changes to the climate inevitable. Global heating of even 1.5°C is not considered safe, however; every additional tenth of a degree of warming will take a serious toll on people's lives and health.

While no one is safe from these risks, the people whose health is being harmed first and worst by the climate crisis are the people who contribute least to its causes, and who are least able to protect themselves and their families against it - people in low-income and disadvantaged countries and communities.

The climate crisis threatens to undo the last fifty years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction, and to further widen existing health inequalities between and within populations. It severely jeopardizes the realization of universal health coverage (UHC) in various ways – including by compounding the existing burden of disease and by exacerbating existing barriers to accessing health services, often at the times when they are most needed. Over 930 million people - around 12% of the world's population - spend at least 10% of their household budget to pay for health care. With the poorest people largely uninsured, health shocks and stresses already currently push around 100 million people into poverty every year, with the impacts of climate change worsening this trend.

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The Modi-God Dialogues: A book that seizes our inner quest



By: M.R. Lalu

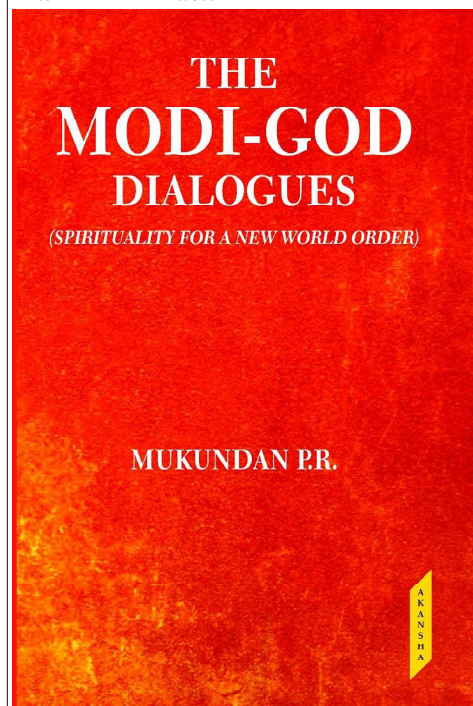
Reading a book means capturing a world of knowledge. Books on spiritual thoughts are often chosen by people with spiritual pursuits. I couldn't fit into the category of a spiritual seeker. But to know more about what the area of spirituality envisions about the complexities of life was part of my personal curiosity. Probably this curiosity landed me to choose one of the most interesting books in the form of a dialogue that I ever came across. The Modi-God Dialogues by Mukundan. P.R., who authored many books on matters of scientific spiritual temper, is a unique work. The dialogue between Saint Modi and God reveals the facts that normal spiritual seekers wish to understand with no complexities pouring in. Mahatma Modi is a spiritual seeker in the caves of the Himalayas who happened to be blessed with the appearance of God and the duo goes on discussing matters associated with human life. The saint Modi in the book has nothing to do with the Modi of India. The Modi in the book represents the genuine inquisitiveness that any common man possesses and therefore, he represents the common mind of any spiritual seeker who strives to find a solution for all the problems that the human mind faces. Giving a different spiritual outlook, the book, through its interactions between Modi and the God elaborates the possibility that spirituality is capable of, if genu-

inely followed without any hypocrisy and the world of commotions and bloodshed would find solutions for everything that it considers the most complex.

The book speaks of a new world order that goes beyond the settings of religious symbols and mere gimmicks of unreliable and misleading spiritual practices. Though the book narrates stories from various religious texts, the writer doesn't take them for granted and, throughout the book, the thought is seen to be going beyond the common perceptions that normal people get entangled in. The reader is drawn to a new world of understanding, that the writer is honestly creating in the book with an intellectual depth. The book also gives ample examples to accentuate the scientific background of a spiritual discourse that India promoted for ages and also criticizes the intellectual manipulation that the philosophical ambience of India came across. Throughout the book the writer intelligently bridges the gap between the traditional and modern spiritual and worldly parameters with comprehensible verbal illustrations. He doesn't hesitate to question the spiritual bankruptcy with which people approach the theme of spirituality and advocates the need of the revival of ever-inclusive spiritual ethos of India in line with the requirement of a neoliberal world.

In his message, Professor S.R. Bhatt, Chairman, Indian Philosophy Congress appreciates the author for his being eloquent about a virtuous society in this turbulent world. Nikola AnandamaliRistic the author of 'Spirituality for the Global and Digital Age' recommends this book for its genuine elaboration of individual, collective and cosmic aspects of spiritual evolution. Carlos Guzman Breton, President of Nanma AC, Mexico

Name of the Book – THE MODI-GOD DIALOGUES (SPIRITUALITY FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER)
Author – MUKUNDAN. P.R.
Publisher – Akansha Publishing House
Price – Rs. 500



emphasizes on the credible validity of the book which goes beyond the mere common spiritual principles. According to him, the book represents and discusses the values that the world should lean on and the dialogue between Mahatma Modi and God is an excavation of such values that come out

unravelling the complexities that the world is in. It is an intellectual dialogue that takes the reader to a new realm of wisdom. The book published by the Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi is available on Amazon and Flipkart.

(The author is a Freelance Journalist/ Social Worker)

India, Australia – Joint winners in trade

By: Shri Piyush Goyal

The India Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) heralds another new chapter in India's exciting rise in the global trading arena.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the country is regularly scaling new heights in the fiercely competitive global market. Just last month, India achieved and exceeded the ambitious export target of \$400 billion for 2021-22, as Indian exporters, including small enterprises, amplified their existing operations, penetrated new markets and shipped out new products, accelerating economic growth and creating jobs at a time the global economy was rattled by the pandemic. A month before that, India signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with the United Arab Emirates, creating new avenues for wealth and jobs for its people.

The IndAus ECTA, which symbolises *ekta*, or unity, between India and Australia, is a major milestone. It will propel bilateral trade from the existing \$27.5 billion to \$45-50 billion in five years, bringing huge benefits to both countries. This is the first trade agreement with a developed economy after more than a decade, and has been achieved after widespread consultations with exporters, traders, small enterprises and professionals.

The trade deals and the laudable performance of Indian exporters is a testimony to New India's

new energy, dedication, determination and the hunger to succeed as the country observes the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the inspiring 75-week countdown to the 75th anniversary of Indian independence. Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly said that the world is very rapidly moving towards a new world order after the Corona period. "This is such a turning point that we as India should not miss this opportunity. India's voice should also remain vociferous on the main table. India should not underestimate itself for a leadership role," he said.

It is in this context that the entire spectrum of India's export machinery, from the humble weavers and workers, to world-beating entrepreneurs, engineers and software professionals are hoisting India to a prominent position in the global market, and the world is recognizing India as an emerging superpower.

India and Australia have a complementary economic relationship. India exports mainly finished products to Australia and imports primarily minerals, raw material and intermediate goods. India will have duty-free access in Australia for all its products, removing the disadvantage India faced against major rivals who already have trade deals with Australia. India will also enjoy greater market access for its products, while the easing of regulatory processes for pharmaceutical products will open up the attractive \$12 billion Australian market

in the sector.

Similarly, textiles exports are expected to triple \$1.1 billion in three years, creating 40,000 new jobs every year with new units likely to come up in small towns and rural areas. Exports of engineering products is likely to jump from \$1.2 billion in 2020-21 to \$2.7 billion in five years.

Trade agreements with Australia and UAE are estimated to generate 1 million jobs each in the next five to seven years. They will also increase investor interest and boost India's position in global supply chains, adding a strategic dimension to the pact. India has already entered into the trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) arrangement with Australia and Japan.

The agreement reduces the cost of raw material, minerals and intermediate goods for Indian companies, which will help consumers and increase exports. The government has taken care of its farmers and kept many sectors out of the agreement. These include dairy products, chickpeas, walnut, pistachio nut, wheat, rice, bajra, apple, sunflower seed oil, sugar, oil cake, gold, silver, platinum, jewellery, iron ore and most medical devices.

Students are major beneficiaries. They will be able to get post-study visa for up to four years, which will give them vital international job exposure and give Australia the benefit of the talented, hardworking pool of young professionals who have made their mark globally and risen to the top of ma-

jor Western companies.

Further, Indians will get a liberal visa regime, which will allow temporary stay up to four years for intra-corporate transferees, executives and contractual service providers. There are also commitments for entry, stay and work rights for family members.

Indian chefs and yoga teachers will also be able to make their mark in Australia with concessions in the visa regime that will allow them to stay for up to four years if they meet eligibility criteria. This will enhance India's cultural influence and help Australians get the benefits of yoga.

The two countries are also united by their love for cricket, and Indians have admired Australian cricket legends like Don Bradman, Steve Waugh, Brett Lee, and Shane Warne. While each team strives hard to beat the other in intense cricket contests, in the trade arena there is no loser — it's a win-win situation for both countries.

And there is more excitement on the horizon. India is negotiating trade deals with major Western trading partners such as the European Union, Canada and UK. The agreements with UAE and Australia have demonstrated India's earnest desire, and industry's confidence, to enter into trade deals where both countries gain, and given a solid basis for more trade pacts.

(The author is a Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles)

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India logs 1,109 new COVID-19 cases, 43 deaths; active cases dip to 11,492

Agency
New Delhi, April 8:

India logged 1,109 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,30,33,067, while the active cases dipped to 11,492, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The death toll climbed to 5,21,573 with 43 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. The active cases comprise 0.03 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate remained at 98.76 per cent, the ministry said.

A reduction of 147 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded as 0.24 per cent and the weekly positivity rate as 0.23 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,25,00,002, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.21 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 185.38 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on October 29, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore mark on December 19. The country crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year.

The 43 new fatalities include 36 from Kerala.

A total of 5,21,573 deaths have been reported so far in

the country including 1,47,806 from Maharashtra, 68,264 from Kerala, 40,056 from Karnataka, 38,025 from Tamil Nadu, 26,155 from Delhi, 23,498 from Uttar Pradesh and 21,200 from West Bengal.

The ministry 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 and reconciliation.

Raksha Mantri announces third list comprising major equipment/platforms

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 7:

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh released the third positive indigenisation list of 101 items, comprising major equipment/platforms, in New Delhi on 07 April 2022. The list, notified by Department of Military Affairs, Ministry of Defence (MoD), lays special focus on equipment/systems, which are being developed and likely to translate into firm orders in next five years. These weapons and platforms are planned to be indigenised progressively with effect from December 2022 to December 2027. These 101 items will, henceforth, be procured from local sources as per provisions of Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020.

Today's development follows issue of first list (101) and second list (108) that were promulgated on 21 August 2020 and 31 May 2021 respectively. Import substitution of ammunition which is an recurring requirement has been given special emphasis. The spirit behind issuing these three lists comprising 310 defence equipment, slated to be manufactured locally, reflects the growing confidence of the Government in the capabilities of domestic industry that they can supply equipment of international standards to meet the demand of the Armed Forces. It is likely to stimulate the potential of indigenous Research & Development (R&D) by attracting fresh investment into technology and manufacturing capabilities. It will provide ample opportuni-

ties to the domestic industry for understanding the trends and future needs of the Armed Forces.

The third list comprises highly complex Systems, Sensors, Weapons and Ammunitions like Light Weight Tanks, Mounted Artillery Gun Systems (155mmX 52Cal), Guided Extended Range (GER) Rocket for PINAKA MLRS, Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH), Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV), MF STAR (Radar For Ships), Medium Range Anti-Ship Missile (Naval Variant), Advance Light Weight Torpedo (Ship Launch), High Endurance Autonomous Underwater Vehicle, Medium Altitude Long Endurance Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (MALE UAV), Anti-Radiation Missiles, Loitering Munitions. Their details are available on the MoD website.

Addressing the audience on the occasion, the RakshaMantri described the third list as a symbol of 360-degree efforts being made by the Government to achieve Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. He exuded confidence that this new list will prove to be crucial in the development of the domestic industry and take research & development and manufacturing capacity of the country to a higher level.

This third positive indigenisation list has been prepared after in-depth consultations with all stakeholders, such as Defence Research & Development Organisation

(DRDO), Department of Defence Production (DDP), Service Headquarters (SHQs) and the private industry. ShriRajnath Singh assured that, similar to the previous two lists, the time limit given in the third list will also be adhered to. He said, Ministry of Defence and the Service headquarters will take all necessary steps, including handholding of the industry, reiterating the Government's endeavour to create an ecosystem that ensures self-reliance in defence manufacturing and encourages exports.

The DRDO, too, pitched in to strengthen local manufacturing by signing 30 Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreements with 25 industries. RakshaMantri handed over the agreements pertaining to 21 technologies developed by 16 DRDO laboratories spread across the country. These technologies concern Quantum Random Number Generator (QRNG), developed by a DRDO Young Scientist Lab (DYSL-QT, Pune), Counter Drone System, Laser Directed Energy Weapon System, Missile Warhead, High Explosive Materials, High Grade Steel, Specialised Materials, Propellants, Surveillance & Reconnaissance, Radar Warning Receivers, CBRN UGVs, Mine Barriers, Fire Fighting Suits, Boots for Anti Mine, etc. So far, DRDO has entered into more than 1,430 ToT agreements with Indian industries, out of which, a record number of around 450 ToT agreements have been signed in last two years.

Congratulating DRDO and

the Industry, Rajnath Singh said, the handing over of 30 ToT agreements to the Industry shows the increasing trust of Indian industries in DRDO-developed indigenous technologies. This will further strengthen the manufacturing eco-system in defence systems and platforms, he said, expressing hope that the private sector will make full use of the opportunities being given to them by the Government in order to make India a global defence manufacturing hub.

Listing out the measures taken by the Government to maximise the participation of the domestic industry, the RakshaMantri said, 68 per cent of capital procurement budget has been earmarked for domestic procurement to promote self-reliance & reduce import dependency. The other measures include earmarking of 25 per cent of defence R&D budget for the industry, start-ups and academia and corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board.

ShriRajnath Singh pointed out that despite hurdles, India has always performed exceptionally well, on its own, in areas such as nuclear technology and space technology, due to the grit and determination of its scientists & researchers. With the same resolve, India will soon transform into a global manufacturing hub that caters to the domestic requirements, besides being a dominant force in international market, he added. He described the three lists as a self-imposed vow which can pave the way for a strong and self-reliant 'New India'. He underscored the importance of self-reliance in defence production and promotion in exports, terming it as a crucial aspect which strengthens the economy as well as national security, besides improving the socio-economic condition of the country.

tribute an increase in morbidity and mortality to human-induced warming, and more accurately determine the risks and scale of these health threats.

In the short- to medium-term, the health impacts of climate change will be determined mainly by the vulnerability of populations, their resilience to the current rate of climate change and the extent and pace of adaptation. In the longer-term, the effects will increasingly depend on the extent to which transformational action is taken now to reduce emissions and avoid the breaching of dangerous temperature thresholds and potential irreversible tipping points.

Observance of "World Health Day 2022" by IMA, Manipur State Branch



IT News
Imphal, April 8:

Indian Medical Association (IMA), Manipur State Branch observed the "World Health Day" on the 7th April 2022 at 4pm in a solemn function at IMA House, Lamphelpat, Manipur.

As "Climate Change" has become a threat for our future generations' survival, The World Health Organization (WHO) has chosen the theme, "Our Planet, Our Health" for this year's World Health Day observance.

Dr. Tourangbam Brajakumar, Joint Director, Department of En-

vironment and Climate Change, Government of Manipur deliberated a concise and enlightening talk on the theme for this year - "Our Planet, Our Health".

Dr. MohenYanglem, IMA Past President and Dr. N. Jiten Singh, Dr. RK Lenin Singh, Senior IMA members graced as Chairpersons of the program.

The function was attended by Senior IMA Members, Doctors (from RIMS, JNIMS and Shija Academy of Health Sciences (SAHS)), Medical Students (of SAHS, JNIMS and RIMS) and CoHIM volunteers who played a very important role

during second wave of COVID - 19 in our State.

"Doctor on Pedals (DOP), the Cycling Wing of IMA-MSB" also organized a Cycle Rally (CYCLOTHON) today morning in and around Imphal City where more than 40 cyclists including Doctors, Medical Students and members of MAAMBA (Manipur adventure and Mountain Biking Association) took part and spread the message of "Protecting and Saving our Environment and Planet Earth as a whole for a Healthy and Sustainable Future" for all life on earth.

Assam Rifles foils cross border smuggling of Narcotics

IT News
Imphal, April 8:

Moreh Battalion of under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a joint operation with Moreh Police foiled cross border smuggling of narcotics in

Moreh on April 6.

Based on specific input, a joint team of Assam Rifles and Moreh Police intercepted a Tata Sumo at Police Check Post.

On thorough search of the vehicle 684 grams of narcotics

in 60 soap cases were recovered. The seized narcotics were assessed to be worth Rs 1.44 crore.

The recovered items along with the drug peddlers were handed over to Moreh Police for further investigation.

African Swine Fever Outbreak: Mizoram, Sikkim, and Assam restrict import of Pigs

Agency
Guwahati, April 8:

Three northeastern states, namely Mizoram, Sikkim, and Assam, are witnessing an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) cases — a highly contagious viral disease emanating from pigs.

In a bid to contain the spread of the virus, the Mizoram government has already announced its decision to ban the import of pigs and pork products in the wake of new ASF cases.

"There will be a complete ban on the import of live pigs,

fresh pork, and all other pork products, including frozen pork, from other states and other countries until further orders," an official order read from the Mizoram government read.

The virus has also managed to sneak into Sikkim as several cases were detected in the state's four districts namely Gangtok, Mangan, Pakyong, and Namchi.

Since the cases are going up north; the Sikkim department of animal husbandry has also decided to put curbs in place so as to monitor the spread of this deadly virus in the state.

Reportedly, Sikkim has reported a total of 115 pig deaths, which account for suspected ASF cases.

According to a report by The Print, Assam has reported two pig deaths due to ASF in January and March this year, following which restrictions have also been imposed in and around the epicenter of the outbreak.

In the last two years, outbreaks were also seen in Assam (where 38,700 pigs died over 18 months), Meghalaya (where 300 pigs died), and across districts of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Tripura.

Contd. from Page 2 Climate crisis and....

Climate-sensitive health risks

Climate change is already impacting health in a myriad of ways, including by leading to death and illness from increasingly frequent extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, storms and floods, the disruption of food systems, increases in zoonoses and food-, water- and vector-borne diseases, and mental health issues. Furthermore, climate change is undermining many of the social determinants for good health, such as livelihoods, equality and access to health care and social support structures. These climate-sensitive health risks are disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including

women, children, ethnic minorities, poor communities, migrants or displaced persons, older populations, and those with underlying health conditions.

Figure: An overview of climate-sensitive health risks, their exposure pathways and vulnerability factors. Climate change impacts health both directly and indirectly, and is strongly mediated by environmental, social and public health determinants.

Although it is unequivocal that climate change affects human health, it remains challenging to accurately estimate the scale and impact of many climate-sensitive health risks. However, scientific advances progressively allow us to at-

Contd. from Page 1 Supreme Court has to take an.....

Many of the young scions, alumni of Harvard or Yale who have ideals and who care for real democracy to thrive in India, are becoming unhappy at the present trend, but they love their business, they look for expansion and they have to fall in line. Who can take a big risk of annoying ruling dispensation at this time of pandemic when every corporate is struggling to survive and sustain.

The Attorney General K K Venugopal in last year's hearing presented a confused picture in reply to the CJI query when he said that the bonds have ensured white money, not black money through cash. The issue is really not that, the issue is transparency. Why the Government and through that the ruling party will know who has bought the bonds and in whose favour? Further, this

bond can be repurchased which opens up the possibility of dubious transactions. It is a double benefit for the ruling party. These days, nobody will take the risk of doing such transactions in favour of any opposition party. If it is done for the BJP, the concerned corporate will be safe. There will be no raid.

The CJI must assess what is the percentage of the electoral bonds benefiting the

BJP till now and how disproportionate this is. The 20th tranche of bonds is on till April 10. The CJI N V Ramana will be doing a great service to Indian democracy and the Constitution if he stays the next issuance of electoral bonds. That will be our CJI's best contribution to the cause of Indian democracy before his retirement in August this year.

(IPAService)

New Coronavirus Variant reminds impending threats

India cannot afford unpreparedness and carelessness

By Dr. Gyan Pathak
New Delhi, April 8:

Within few days of lifting all COVID-19 related curbs from April 2, including mandatory wearing of masks and maintaining physical distancing, Maharashtra reported India's first case of Coronavirus variant XE on April 6 in Mumbai, though within hours Union Health Ministry disagreed saying the present evidence does not suggest that it is XE variant. Since it is only a preliminary assessment of one variant, and there may emerge others, India needs utmost care and preparedness for any eventuality. The fact is that this new variant has been detected in Britain and it will need a few days for this to infect people in India.

The official media release by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has not only reported the first case of Coronavirus variant XE but also one case of Kappa variant. The patients with the new variants of the virus, however, did not have any severe symptoms so far. Obviously, it should not be a matter of panic, because it does not present serious threat to health, both in terms of number of infections or in virulence, however it certainly reminds the impending threats from more infectious and virulent variants to be evolved in the future. Only the last week the World Health Organisation (WHO) had said that the new XE mutant may be more transmissible than any strain of coronavirus, therefore we should not reach at hasty conclusions.

An official from the Union

Health Ministry has been quoted saying "FASTQ files in respect of the sample, which is being said to be XE variant, were analysed in detail by genomic experts of INSACOG who have inferred that the genomic constitution of this variant does not correlate with genomic picture of XE variant." Even additional commissioner of BMC has been quoted saying, "As per the guidelines of the WHO, the BA.2 and XE is at par so far the spreadability is concerned. As of now there is nothing to worry about."

Both the statements may be true but only partially, since these statements are focused on only "infection" and "virulence". However, when we consider these statements on larger perspective of health and related crises, these presents a totally false picture of the situation creating dangerous level of complacency both among the people and authorities dealing with the crises.

BMC has said about 230 samples were sent for genome sequencing, out of which 228 were found infected by Omicron BA.2 variant, one had Kappa and one infected with XE. The patient found with XE infection had foreign travel history and had returned from South Africa in February. The new strain was detected in the UK at the start of the New Year and by April 3, 637 cases were already reported.

On identification of lower number of new cases and new variants, WHO experts have repeatedly said that it is due to considerably lower number of tests carried out and incapacity of our testing systems

to fast identify the new variants. Therefore, the "fewer numbers" logic does not present the real picture. Even undetected cases may only be unreported cases. Therefore, it should not be made the ground for complacency.

India also needs to be more vigilant and careful about even on XE variant, since it is a "recombinant" mutation of BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron strains. One should note that a recombinant mutation emerge when a patient is infected by multiple variants, that mix up their genetic material during replication and form a new mutation. This new mutation, according to WHO, appears to be 10 per cent more transmissible than BA.2 sub-variant. Therefore, we need to watch the development carefully, not for this one, but other more infections and virulent mutations too.

Though the officials and experts are telling the people not to be worried, we should not become complacent for numerous other reasons. One of these is very high level of the rate of hospitalization. BMC has said in the release that out of the total 230 patients whose samples were sent for genome sequencing, 21 were to be hospitalized though note of them needed oxygen or intensive care. India has a population of about 1.4 billion and if 21 out of 230 patient need hospitalization it would be too much to be managed. Our scarce hospital facilities might be overwhelmed soon. Additionally, nobody knows how ferocious the situation might turn into in future with known and unknown variants. It must also be taken into

consideration because 12 of the hospitalised patients were unvaccinated while nine had taken both doses. It means the new variants are bypassing the immunity induced by vaccines or the disease itself, which reminds us that the decisions of withdrawing all curbs were premature, and we need more investment in research and development of new effective vaccines and drugs.

Moreover, India and all its state should always keep in mind that the country not only have scarce medical facilities but also have on about 13 lakh allopathic doctors registered with state medical councils and National Medical Commission as of November 2021 for all sorts of diseases. Thus we have one allopathic doctor on about 1076 people. If 2,89,000 dentists and 5,65,000 Ayurvedic, Unani, Siddha and homeopathic doctors are included, and if assumed that 80 per cent of them will be available, India's doctor-population ratio would be 1:834. On April 5, 2022, the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Manaviya had told Rajya Sabha that there were only 13 lakh allied and healthcare professionals in the country. Number of registered nursing personnel according to India Nursing Councils records are 33 lakh which includes about 23 lakh registered nurses and midwives and 10 lakh nurse associates. Thus we have only 1.96 nurses per 1,000 populations. It is clear that we don't have even manpower to handle large scale hospitalization with or without need of Oxygen or ICU.

(IPAService)

BJP celebrates 42nd foundation Day



IT News
Imphal, April 8:

Bharatiya Janata Party, Jiribam District Celebrated the 42nd foundation day of Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday.

As a part of the celebration, BJP Manipur Pradesh General Secretary K. Sharat

Kumar along with the members of the BJP planted trees and distributed essential oil, rice etc to various Children Homes at several places.

The BJP Jiribam Mandal planted many trees in and around the Jirhat High School located near Lamlong Keithel, Jiribam. Later, essential items including oil, rice, etc were distributed to the patients at Jiribam hospital and also to children Home in Chingdong Leikai.

The event was attended by the Jiribam BJP Mandal President-O. Brajamani, Jiribam BJP Mandal Mahila Morcha President-A. Aruna Devi and along with the numbers of BJP karyakats. As per the release.

Petrol, Diesel Prices Remain Unchanged For Second Straight Day

Agency
New Delhi, April 8:

Fuel prices were unchanged for the second consecutive day on Friday across metro cities after being hiked 14 times in 17 days.

Fuel prices were unchanged for the second consecutive day on Friday across metro cities after being hiked 14 times in 17 days. In Delhi, a litre of petrol costs ₹ 105.41, while diesel is sold at ₹ 96.67 per litre.

In Mumbai, petrol is retailed at ₹ 120.51 per litre, while diesel is sold at ₹ 104.77 per

litre. Fuel prices are the highest in Mumbai among all four metro cities. The prices vary across the states due to value-added tax (VAT).

Fuel rates were held steady for over four months despite the spike in crude oil prices. The rate revision had ended on March 22. In all, petrol and diesel prices have gone up by ₹ 10 per litre, respectively, after 14 rate revisions.

Moody's Investors Services has stated that state retailers together lost around \$2.25 billion (₹ 19,000 crore) in revenue for keeping petrol and diesel

prices on hold during the election period.

The rates were kept on hold amid the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur.

State-run oil refiners such as Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum revise the fuel rates on a daily basis, by taking into account the crude oil prices in the international markets, and the rupee-dollar exchange rates. Any changes in petrol and diesel prices are implemented with effect from 6 am every day.

Sports

Korea Open: Kidambi Srikanth, PV Sindhu enter semifinals



Agency
Suncheon, April 8:

Top Indian shuttlers P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the semifinals of the Korea Open Super 500 badminton tournament with contrasting wins at Suncheon on Friday.

Third seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, notched up her 17th win over familiar foe Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan 21-10 21-16 in the women's singles quarterfinals.

She will face either Japan's Saena Kawakami or second-seeded Korean An Seyoung

next.

In a battle between two former world number ones, it was World Championships silver medalist Srikanth, who rode on his power and precision to outwit local hope Son Wan Ho 21-12 18-21 21-12 in a men's singles quarterfinal match that lasted just over an hour.

Srikanth had a 4-7 record against the Korean, having lost to him on last three occasions.

However, the Indian played better badminton on Friday to come up trumps against an opponent, who is coming back to international

badminton after a two-year hiatus.

The Indian, seeded fifth, will next face the winner of the match between Thailand's eighth seed, Kunlavut Vitidsarn and third seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia.

In women's singles, Sindhu had no issues in disposing off Busanan, whom she had beaten at Swiss Open final last month. The Thai lead 5-2 in the opening game but after that it was a Sindhu show as she kept the match under her tight grip.

Leading 11-7, Sindhu produced an eight-point burst to pull away from the Thai and

grab the lead in the match.

Things were similar after the change of sides as Sindhu held a 8-2 lead and kept moving ahead as the Thai crumbled.

In men's singles, Srikanth showed better control as he dominated the short rallies to move to a comfortable 11-6 lead at the first interval and though Son Wan Ho made it 12-14, the Indian soon changed gears to walk away with the first game.

The Korean came back strongly in the second game, opening up a 10-7 lead but Srikanth moved ahead to 13-11. An alert Son Wan Ho didn't let the game slip away and soon charged ahead to take it to the decider.

Srikanth made a rollicking 4-0 start in the decider but unforced errors allowed the Korean to make it 4-6. The Indian changed the pace with some quick attacking returns and his precision earned him returns. Srikanth managed a 11-7 lead at the interval.

A barrage of attacking shots kept Srikanth in the hunt as he extended his lead to 16-10. A precision return eventually got him to eight match points and he sealed it when Son Wan Ho hit the net.

IPL 2022: Lucknow Super Giants beat Delhi Capitals by six wickets



Agency
Mumbai, April 8:

A disciplined bowling performance followed by a solid knock by Quinton de Kock helped Lucknow Super Giants beat Delhi Capitals by six wickets in an IPL 2022 match at the D.Y. Patil Stadium, here on Thursday.

After winning the toss and opting to bowl first, Lucknow Super Giants produced a clinical bowling performance to restrict Delhi Capitals to 149/3 in 20 overs.

Opener Prithvi Shaw (61 off 34) gave Delhi a flying start, taking them to 52-0 in the powerplay. However, once he got out, Delhi lost the wickets of Warner (4) and Rovman

Powell (3) in quick succession and were in a spot of bother. But, skipper Rishabh Pant (39 not out off 36) and Sarfraz Khan (36 not out off 28) then batted till the end, rescued Delhi and helped them post a modest total of 149/3 in 20 overs.

Ravi Bishnoi (2/22) was the most successful bowler for Lucknow while Krishnappa Gowtham (1/23) also picked one wicket.

In reply, K.L Rahul and Quinton de Kock gave Delhi a solid start. Rahul (24) got out after the powerplay but De Kock smashed a fine fifty to keep his team in the game. Just when it seemed that de Kock was on course for a century, the South African opener fell for 80 with LSG needing 28 off 25 balls. The

Delhi bowlers then bowled a few disciplined overs and brought the equation to 19 runs off 12 balls.

However, Krunal Pandya (19 not out off 14) and Ayush Badoni (10 not out off 3) held their nerves, remained unbeaten and took Lucknow over the victory line, with six wickets in hand and two balls to spare.

Kuldeep Yadav (2/31), Shardul Thakur (1/29) and Lalit Yadav (1/21) were the wicket-takers for Delhi.

Brief scores: Delhi Capitals 149-3 in 20 overs (Prithvi Shaw 61, Rishabh Pant 39 not out; Ravi Bishnoi 2/22) lost to Lucknow Super Giants 155-4 in 19.4 overs (Quinton de Kock 80, K.L. Rahul 24; Kuldeep Yadav 2/31) by 6 wickets.