

## Notification for first phase Manipur Election issued

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 1:

The notifications of elections for First Phase in respect of 38 Assembly Constituencies of 5(five) districts—Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Churachandpur and Kangpokpi will be issued by the concerned Returning Officers on 1st February, 2022. Subsequently, nomination shall start from 1st February, 2022 onwards till 8th February, 2022. The scrutiny of nomination papers shall be taken up on 9th February, 2022 while the last date for withdrawal of candidature will be 11th February, 2022. Poll for First Phase will take place on 27th February, 2022.

In view of COVID, the

Election Commission of India provides the facilities of online nominations too through Suvidha portal. An intending candidate may submit application online and its print may be taken for submitting before the Returning Officer. The candidate may also deposit security money through online mode. However, a candidate will continue to have the option of deposit in cash to the Returning Officer. A candidate can also seek permission for meeting, door to door campaign in online mode. Besides, the number of persons to accompany a candidate for submission of nomination paper is restricted to two. Also, the maximum number of vehicles for the purpose of

nomination is restricted to two. Adequate arrangements have been made at the offices of Returning Officers. Candidates and their companions shall abide by the norms specified by Election Commission and State Disaster Management Authority. A training on online nomination has been provided to all the Returning Officers today through video conferencing.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of India, in its press note issued today, has decided to allow physical public meetings of political parties or contesting candidates in designated open spaces with a maximum of 1000 persons (instead of existing 500 persons) or 50% of

the capacity of the ground or the prescribed limit set by SDMA, whichever number is lesser, from February 1, 2022 for all phases. The Commission has also enhanced the limit for door to door campaigns upto 20 persons, excluding security personnel. The Commission has now granted relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of a maximum of 500 persons (instead of existing 300 persons) or 50% of the capacity of the hall or the prescribed limit set by SDMA is allowed. However, the Commission has continued to impose restrictions on road shows, Pad-yatras, cycle/bike/vehicle rallies and processions till February 11, 2022.

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 1:

Union Budget 2022 is coming just days before the first phase of assembly elections in five states Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa is held on February 7. The Union Budget is likely to address some of the core political issues, particularly relating to big states such as Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

The reason is simple: these five states together elect 690 MLAs and 145 MPs (102 to the Lok Sabha and 43 to the Rajya Sabha). Additionally, one of the biggest reforms pushed undertaken by the Narendra Modi government found the strongest pushback from Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The year-long farmers' protest that saw the involvement of a large number of youths forced the government to retreat on its farm reforms path in November 2021.

There is a strong anticipation that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget on Tuesday would focus on farmers, youth and women, besides spelling out a financial plan to strengthen health infrastructure in poorer states such as Uttar Pradesh. The focus on health flows directly from the Covid-19 situation that Uttar Pradesh and the rest of the country have witnessed over the two years of pandemic.

### FARMERS

The Narendra Modi government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have looked defensive on the issues relating to farmers, who have organised themselves to oppose all moves to bring market-oriented reforms



in the agriculture sector. Besides the three farm reforms laws, the farmers' unions pushed the government to shelve the electricity reforms bill in its existing form. Farmers are a dominant cross-caste community in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur too have farmers as influential voters. But in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, farmers are considered election-sensitive.

The farmers' agitation saw several MLAs and MPs being heckled in their constituencies. Reports quoted some of the BJP leaders and rival Samajwadi Party members as saying that their party MLAs and MPs were chased away from their constituencies in western Uttar Pradesh.

Recently, when Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the BJP's top election strategist, toured western Uttar Pradesh, he told audiences in his rallies that as promised by the BJP ahead of the 2017 assembly election, the "Yogi government waived off Rs 36,000 crore of farm loans within a week of coming to power."

Amit Shah said western Uttar Pradesh "is a belt of sugarcane. The Yogi government

paid sugarcane farmers about Rs 1,48,000 crore."

In 2017, the Union Budget allocated Rs 10 lakh crore as credit to farmers with 60 days of interest waiver. Back then, Akhilesh Yadav, who was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, described the budget disappointing for Uttar Pradesh and wrote an op-ed article in reaction.

However, that evoked a response from the Niti Aayog which blamed the Samajwadi Party government for not utilising the fund given by the Modi government for development work. This exchange helped the BJP push the double-engine government narrative in the Uttar Pradesh polls.

### YOUTH

The 2017 UP polls were held in the shadow of demonetisation, which drew flak for the Modi government but it found positive resonance among the youth. The Modi wave was still strong. The combination helped the BJP secure a record victory in the UP election. Job creation was another factor among the young voters that pulled them to the BJP.

contd. on page 4

## Eikhoigee Club Condolences



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 1:

Eikhoigee Club (EC) of Singamei Oinam Thingel has condoled the untimely demise of Late Leimapokkam Godhar Singh, age 79 years who passed on Sunday, January 30. He took a major role for the club in the field of football for the youths. The executive committee and members observed a two-minute silence and also prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and shared the grief of the bereaved family and loved ones.

## EEVAM and HRI condole the demise of CJM Y. Somorjit; expressed suspicion over the cause of the accident

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 1:

Extrajudicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVAM) and Human Rights Alert (HRI) has condoled the untimely demise of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Imphal West, Manipur Yengkhom Somorjit Singh son of Y. Kunjababu Singh of Kakching Mayai Leikai in a road accident near Uningkhong, Thoubai District on Sunday 30 January 2022, members of Extrajudicial Execution Victim Families Association, Manipur (EEVAM) and Human Rights Alert (HRA) stood for two-minute silences and shared the pain and sorrow of his bereaved family including his wife and three minor children.

Y. Somorjit was a bold and

fearless judge who upheld the rule of law without fear or favor. During his tenure as OM Imphal West, he passed some remarkable orders pertaining to the ongoing prosecution of security forces by the CBI/SIT in pursuance EEVAM v/s Union of India, SC WP (Crl) 129 of 2012. Notably, the ongoing reference case seeking clarification from the High Court of Manipur "if the OM has the power to take cognizance of extra-judicial executions even if the Union Government denies prosecution sanction in the Armed Forces Special Power's Act", is a bold step providing a glimmer of hope to the families of the victim of extrajudicial execution, who have been denied justice all through.

EEVAM and HRA sincerely hope that the death is a genuine accident and that there is no foul play by vested interests whose interests are affected by his bold judgment.

EEVAM and HRA strongly demand an independent and impartial inquiry be constituted to find out the whole truth behind the "accident". The inquiry should also probe if the necessary precautions and protocols were observed by the road repairing/construction agency to prevent such unfortunate incidents. The inquiry report should be made public so that the doubts in the mind of the public are cleared concerning the untimely death of a judicial officer presiding on some of the most sensitive issues.

## 12 journalists killed in one month, PEC demands justice to bereaved families

IT Correspondent  
Geneva, Feb 1:

Expressing shock over the murder of a record number of 12 journalists in the first month of 2022, the global media safety and rights body Press Emblem Campaign demands justice and adequate compensation to the bereaved families.

PEC laments that another journalist has been cowardly assassinated in Mexico. The slain journalist is Roberto Toledo, of 55 years of age, gunned down on Monday, January 31st, 2022, in the municipality of Zitacuaro, Michoacan. He worked for the Monitor Michoacan news outlet. Toledo is the 4th journalist killed in less than a month in Mexico. If the current continues, we could be having one journalist per week being killed in the country.

It also condemns the murder of second Pakistani jour-



Roberto Toledo



Ghulam Murtaza Shar

nalist within a week and urges Prime Minister Imran Khan to punish the perpetrators under the law. Mentionable is that Ghulam Murtaza Shar (32), who was associated with private Urdu news channel Ummat, faced bullets from two armed men riding a two-wheeler at Jhol town of Sindh province in western Pakistan on 30 January. Shar sustained multiple injuries in the attack and later succumbed on his way to the hospital. The local authority claimed that Shar was killed because of marriage disputes.

Earlier, Lahore-based journalist Hasnain Shah (45) was

killed on 24 January by two bike-riders outside the local press club in Simla Pahari point. The murder of Shah, who was a prominent crime reporter working for a local news channel, witnessed massive outrages by the journalists across the south Asian nation and many of them demonstrated their anger on the streets.

"The first month of 2022 has brought depressing news as twelve media workers had lost their lives to assassins. Mexico witnessed the murder of four scribes (namely Jose Luis Gamboa, Margarito Martinez, Lourdes

Maldonado and Roberto Toledo), followed by Pakistan (Hasnain Shah & Murtaza Shar), Haiti (Amady John Wesley & Wilgus Louissaint), Kazakhstan (Muratkhan Bazarbayev), Myanmar (Pu Tui Dim), Honduras (Pablo Isabel Hernandez Rivera) and Philippines (Jaynard Angeles)," said Blaise Lempen, PEC secretary-general.

In 2021, 79 journalists were killed in 29 countries. Afghanistan emerged as the most dangerous country with 12 casualties, followed by Mexico (10 dead), Pakistan (7), India (6), the Philippines (4), etc revealed PEC's south Asia representative Nava Thakurina, adding that Pakistan lost media enthusiasts namely Ajam Laalwani, Waseem Alam, Abdul Wahid Raisani, Kashif Hussain, Shahid Zehri, Nazim Samwal Jokhio and Muhammad Zada to assassins last year.

IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, Feb 1:

Lt Gen Manoj Pande, took over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff on Tuesday from Lt Gen CP Mohanty who superannuated on January 31, after completing four decades of illustrious career in the Army, on Monday.

An alumnus of National Defence Academy, Lt Gen Manoj Pande was commissioned in December 1982 to the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers). The General Officer commanded an Engineer Regiment during Operation Parakram in the sensitive Pallaanwala Sector along the Line of Control of Jammu and Kashmir. He is a graduate of Staff College, Camberley (United Kingdom) and attended the Higher Command (HC) and National Defence College (NDC) Courses.

In his 39 years of distinguished military career, he has tenanted important and challenging command and staff appointments in different operational environments which include command of an Engi-



neer Brigade of Strike Corps in the Western Theatre, Infantry Brigade along Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, Mountain Division in the High Altitude Area of Western Ladakh, a Corps in the North East, Commander-in-Chief Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command.

His staff exposures include Brigade Major of a Mountain Brigade in the North East, Assistant Military Secretary (AMS) in Military Secretary's Branch, Colonel Q of a Mountain Division in High Altitude Area and Brigade General Staff (Operations) at Headquarters Eastern Command. The General Officer also

served as Chief Engineer in the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. He tenanted the appointments of Additional Director General (ADGMO-B) in the Military Operations Directorate at Army Headquarters, Chief of Staff at Headquarters Southern Command and Director General Discipline Ceremonial & Welfare at the Army Headquarters.

He has been conferred with the award of Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, the Chief of Army Staff Commendation and GOC-in-C Commendation twice.

In another development, the NCC group from Maharashtra, which was part of the state's Republic Day Camp and contingent in January 2022 in New Delhi and who won the PM Banner & Trophy at Republic Day Camp 2022 on behalf of the NCC Maharashtra Directorate called on the Maharashtra Sports Minister Sunil Kedar on Monday. He complimented them for winning the PM banner.

# Lack of opportunities push millions of youth in despair

## Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



When the country was passing through a period of major economic changes, the pandemic struck. Together these two conditions disturbed the employment scene and caused a dearth of opportunities. If this situation is not handled properly, it will further create more problems. Due to the continuous closure of schools and colleges, studies have been disrupted for past two years. Job opportunities are not in sight in government departments and in private institutions. This disruption has not gone well with the youth. The situation must change as soon as possible. According to the latest data from the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), between September and December 2021, the number of unemployed in the country was 31.8 million, most of whom were below 29 years of age. Let me tell you that at the time of lockdown in the year 2020, around 29.3 million youth were unemployed. These figures include those youths who kept applying in various offices and organisations. There are about 12.4 million unemployed youth who have become frustrated and disappointed due to lack of work and do not apply anywhere. By including these too, the figure of unemployed youth reaches above 42.7 million.

Statistics show that Rajasthan has the highest number of unemployed in India, where there are 6.5 million unemployed, including about 2.1 million graduates. Bihar is at number two, where about 3.9 million youth are unemployed. Uttar Pradesh is at number three in this list with 2.84 million unemployed youth. With the onset of the third wave of Covid 19, the unemployment rate in India started increasing once again. The unemployment rate in the country stood at 7.9 per cent in December 2021, while it was 7 per cent in November 2021. In December 2021, the unemployment rate in urban areas reached 9.3 per cent. According to a report by the Ministry of Statistics, Govt of India, there has been a decrease in organized sector jobs in this financial year. If compared with the financial year 2019 - 2020, there has been a decrease of 2.5 million jobs i.e. 22.6 per cent in the employment in the current financial year.

In a report titled Employment Status 2021, it was said that the people whose employment was affected the most during the Covid pandemic were below 35 years of age. Due to unforeseen circumstances, 2.2 million people had to be away from employment. Data from September 2017 to September 2021 have been included in this report. During the second wave of Covid, there was a shortage of jobs in the month of May last year, then the situation got better in July 2021. Looking from the perspective of the year 2022, new-minded businesses give some hope, especially technical business. Keeping pace with the changing times, many companies are increasing their technical capabilities. This shows that the way companies work is changing and the use of technology is increasing. In the coming times, the demand for youth with technical education and understanding will increase. Salary is increasing by 40-50 per cent in tech based jobs. Obviously, the situation is slightly better for those taking technical education. It is expected that there will be some improvement in the employment situation in the coming months.

# Wetlands Action for People and Nature

"As soon as they get water and light, they just spring to lives, the frogs and toads and newts, all the insects like mayflies, dragonflies, damselflies," says Nick Anema, a farmer in Dereham who has restored ponds on his property. Really the Wetlands are the cradle for Biodiversity.

The 2nd February is the World Wetlands Day marking the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem, the wetlands.

"Wetlands Action for People and Nature" is the theme for World Wetlands Day, 2022. This theme is selected to demonstrate the vital role of wetlands for the humanity and nature specifically their relevance towards survival for the living beings.

Livelihoods from cultivation, fishing, farming, travel, tourism, and water provision all depend on wetlands. They are the ecotones, providing a transition between dry land and water bodies and provide the wildlife habitats for the aquatic animals and the migratory birds. Wetlands are highly productive and bio-diverse ecosystems that support a home to about one third of all threatened and endangered species.

Wetlands cover about 6% of the earth's surface and they provide an important contribution to the economy of the country and the livelihoods of rural communities. Unfortunately, wetlands are often viewed as wasteland. In reality, wetlands play a critical role in maintaining many natural cycles. Thus the wetlands are called the biological

supermarkets for their excessive food chains and rich biodiversity they support.

The value of world's wetlands are increasingly receiving due attention as they contribute to a healthy environment in many ways. They retain water during dry periods and recharge when the surrounding water table is low and as a discharge zone when it is too high. During periods of flooding, they mitigate flood and trap suspended solids and attached nutrients.

Wetlands are aquatic islands in terrestrial sea harbouring a limited array of species populations that arrange themselves in a number of configurations (Pomeroy, 1991). In addition, wetlands are important feeding and breeding areas for many wildlife, migratory birds and waterfowl (Prasad et al., 2002). Not only stabilization of the local climatic conditions, wetlands are important in supporting species diversity of the biosphere being the habitat of 15 to 20% of all living organisms representing all taxonomic groups on the earth. (Mitsch and Gosselink, 1986).



By: N. Munal Meitei

Almost 90% of the world's wetlands disappeared over the past three centuries, according to the Ramsar Convention. This rapid decline means that access to fresh water is worsening for almost two billion people worldwide, while flood control, disaster risk

reduction, carbon storage and traditional wetland livelihoods are all suffering and our futures with them.

These are the home to more than 100,000 known freshwater species but the richness of wildlife and our biodiversity - has also been affected declining by 76% in the last forty years, according to WWF's Living Planet Index.

Wetlands ensure fresh water for us and wetland sediments are porous allowing water to filter down through the soil and overlying rock into aquifers which are the source of 95% of the world's drinking water. Wetlands purify and filter harmful wastes from pesticides, industry and mining, including heavy metals and toxins. Wetlands guarantee our food supply. Rice and fish from wetlands, are the staple food for nearly three

wetlands. According to the Remote Sensing Application Centre, the state has 155 lakes and 20 x-bow lakes occupying 2.37% of the geographical areas as Wetlands. About 134 water-logged marshy and swampy wetlands are also found in different districts. But more than 64% of our wetlands have disappeared during the last eight decades.

Highest numbers of water logged areas are recorded in Imphal valley (69) followed by Kakching (30) and Bishnupur districts (21). The numbers of wetland flora so far identified are 86 species in which 13 are clear water and 73 are semi aquatic. The state has 110 species of amphibians and reptile amongst 580 species so far found in the country. We also have counted 120 species of fishes while the country owned 1700 fish species. Such a faunal richness of our wetland represents 10.80% of the whole country though we have only 0.7% of the geographical area.

It has been observed that about 78% and 72% respectively of the wetlands in the state are found infested with a number of weeds and aquatic vegetation during the pre-monsoon and post-monsoon season. The lakes in the state are comparatively old with their own distinct characteristic life-span, topographic,

physiographic as well as hydrologic features. These features have been closely related to the evolving geo-physical features of the state.

Loktak Lake with an area of 287 sq. km, is the largest fresh water lake in North-East. Around 12 towns and 52 settlements with over 14% of state's population depend directly or indirectly upon Loktak



# Teens in possession of the Internet

The need for Internet de-addiction centers in the country was felt only to reduce this addiction of Internet and social media in children and adolescents. About two years ago, the first center was opened in Bangalore, which got a very good response. Recently, Cyber Addict Clinic has also been started in AIIMS, Delhi. Actually, today internet addiction is becoming a big problem not only in the country but all over the world. Especially children and adolescents are most in its grip. How any person including teenagers can save themselves from this addiction of internet and social media, let us know...

## Use as needed

First of all, understand what is internet addiction? According to experts, it is such a state of mind when people spend hours on online games, net surfing or social sites. There is no time limit. Loss of control over himself. If internet is not available, then they become impatient, restless or suffer from depression. Even lying, tends to run away from problems and soon turn negative.

If you are also facing any such problem, then be alert in time. Spend as much time on the Internet as you need. Never keep your phone or tablet on the bed while sleeping. Read a book instead of an e-book.

## Direct communication with friends and family

There is no doubt that internet facility is available everywhere from school to home. We get many types of information from the

Internet. According to the need of the profession, people use it. It has played an important role in promoting online education. It is a major means of connecting with distant relatives or friends online, but when virtual conversations become more, study time is spent chatting on WhatsApp or Facebook, then it is called addiction. To avoid this, try to establish direct communication with friends, relatives or parents. Go out for a walk with them, sit down and have a meal together. Share your thoughts with them.

## Develop a hobby

According to experts, many times children become dependent on social sites to overcome their stress or loneliness. Some shy kids, teens, youths talk more freely in the virtual world than face-to-face. Due to this their social circle does not increase and after a time they start feeling lonely. In such a situation, you should identify those activities in which you find peace and happiness. If you have a hobby, try to hone it. Develop a support system of friends - classmates, family members or counselors who will stand by you in difficult times. You should also make a habit of controlling your emotions better.

## Give fixed time to online

The best way to not get addicted to the Internet is to set a fixed



By: Vijay Garg

time. Whenever you go online, keep in mind the time. Also keep in mind how many times a day you did online chatting, working or studying. If it seems that this is affecting the rest of your important activities or routine, then be careful. Set priority. If you want, set a timer before going online and promise yourself that you will turn off the computer or laptop or turn off the smartphone data after the stipulated time. Switching off the phone during school, coaching or any other hobby class is also a good option.

## Avoid Selfie Obsession

Today, from children to adults, selfies are also addicted. According to an estimate, teenagers upload over 100 selfies a day to smartphones or Facebook. They hope that more and more people like those pictures. Otherwise, they become restless and due to this they also become self-centred.

## Give full time to kids

Virtual media and smartphones have largely influenced the physical activity of adolescent children. Children spend most of their time playing video or mobile games. Playing outdoor games is becoming less and less. Children are resorting to WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc. instead of face-to-face conversation. The list of friends on Facebook may be increasing, but they do not have time to meet or talk to relatives or their own parents. This is increasing the loneliness of the children. They are suffering from depression. Somewhere parents are also responsible for this. To pay attention to children

or peek into their lives

Instead they are glued to smartphones and the Internet in their spare time, while they need to spend as much time as possible with children. Have dinner with them. Share things. Try to solve their problems or problems.

## Disorientation in emotional quest

Adolescence is the stage of age when many types of hormonal changes occur in children. They seek emotional attachment in others. Social media is giving them a platform where they make new friends. Feel free to talk to them. Children who are a little shy tend to shy away from interacting face-to-face in real life. Such children are able to express their feelings freely on social media. In this way the virtual world itself becomes their society.

They start spending more and more of their time there. Moreover, it is the easiest way to establish identity in a few moments. Teenagers think that being active in the virtual world gives one a celebrity status. Of course, with the increase in the reach of social media, there have been many positive changes, but the misuse of anything gives the opposite result. Cyber addiction is the same. It would be better if adolescents and youth social

Set aside a time of day for the media, when apart from knowing the views of others, they can also express their views effectively.

## Addicted to games

Due to all the features of video games in the smartphone, children and teenagers have become so addicted that they are playing games on the smartphone continuously for 6 to 10 hours. This affects not only education, but also the social circle is shrinking.

billion people, and accounts for 20% of the world's nutritional intake. Wetland stimulates plant recruitment from diverse seed bank and increase productivity by mobilizing nutrients.

Wetlands act as nature's shock absorbers. In the river basins, they act as natural sponges, absorbing rainfall, creating wide surface pools and reduce the impact of flooding in rivers. The same storage capacity also safeguards against drought. Wetlands help fight climate change. Peatlands alone store more than twice as much carbon as all the forests in the world. In the cultural legacy, wetlands are also related to our emotional history such as the tied knot between the Khamba and Thoi and the Loktak Lake.

The role of forests to our wetland is vital for all living being. The freshwater availability and its quality on a global scale depend on our forests. It's simple: the health of our wetlands linked to the richness of our forests in the catchments. We cannot manage wetland without forests and thus forest has the critical role - for water, food and livelihoods of all living beings.

India has recorded 757,000 wetlands and 46 Ramsar sites occupying 11.4% of country's geographical area (Parikh and Parikh, 1999). Thus 10.2% of the earth's total wetlands are found in India. Our wetlands support around 5100 species of flora and fauna. They represent 23% reptiles, 13% amphibians, 23% fishes, 65% birds and 26% mammalian species. Wetlands in India support 20% of all the known range biodiversity in the country (Deepa and Ramachandra, 1999). But we have lost 30% of our wetlands due to urbanization, land use change and pollution.

Manipur, surrounded by many hills with numerous wetlands but majorities of them are in dying state, need to observe such a global red light day. Almost all the migratory birds in the state are coming on these

Lake. But due to indiscriminate felling in the catchments, 4.5 million cu.m. of soil are eroded each year and 0.65 mcm are deposited in the Loktak Lake reducing 4 mcm of water holding capacity in the last 10 years. About 18 rare indigenous fish species also have lost from the Lake. If it's the trend, then we may not see the Loktak Lake in the 2050.

Other important existing but degraded lakes are Kharungphat, Khoidumpat, Pumlunpat, Lokoipat, Sanapat, Yalapat, Poiroupat, Ikopat, Waithoupat, Ngakrapat and Loushiapat. These lakes remain threatened due to artificial eutrophication and large scale encroachment for cultivation and fish farming. Since the healthiness of our wetlands is so much challenged, this year the number of migratory birds coming to the state have been reduced drastically. It is really a challenge for our ecosystem.

Soil erosion due to large scale deforestation in the catchments followed by the change in the land use pattern and fish farming inside the wetlands are the root causes for the loss of wetlands. Development activities such as roads and canals inside the wetlands are also another reason. And this is again made worse with the excessive deposition of plastic and other harmful wastes and water being diverted to make dams, ponds, channels and canals.

Enabling people for a decent living and at the same time ensuring the conservation and safety of wetlands is our primary objectives of this day. We need also to educate the younger generation about the importance of wetlands and wetland conservation. The dreams of Manipur for being a world tourism hot spot will come true, only when we conserve our hills, forests, wildlife and the wetlands altogether. Therefore, let's join hand today to save and secure our wetlands for a better tomorrow.

(The writer is a Environmentalist, email-numall@yahoo.in)

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# India's daily COVID count drops below 2 lakh; 1,67,059 new cases reported

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 1:

India's daily COVID-19 tally dropped below 2 lakh as the country reported 1,67,059 fresh infections in the last 24 hours, pushing the cumulative caseload to over 4.14 crore.

The death toll has risen to 4,14,69,499 with 1,192 fatalities reported during the one-day period, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The active cases de-

creased to 17,43,059—4.20 per cent of the total infections—while the country's recovery rate stands at 94.60 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The weekly positivity rate stood at 15.25 per cent, while the daily positivity rate was recorded at 11.69 per cent and the case fatality rate at 1.20 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,92,30,198 with 2,54,076 re-

coveries reported in the last 24 hours.

The cumulative number of anti-Covid vaccine doses administered in the country so far has crossed 166.68 crore.

The COVID inoculation coverage in the country has crossed 166.68 crore as of Tuesday morning.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baan' on Monday, said that India is fighting the new wave of COVID-19 aggressively, resulting in over 4.5 crore chil-

dren getting jabbed with the vaccine. He further said that the number of COVID infections is declining, describing it as a "very positive sign".

"The faith of our people in our nation's vaccine is a great source of strength... Approximately 60 per cent of Indian youth aged 15-18 years old have been vaccinated. It will help this age group to focus on their studies without any hindrance and continue with their mundane rituals without fear," the Prime Minister said.

# Poll preparedness: Meeting with Political Parties representatives held



IT News  
Ccpur, Feb 1:

Ahead of nomination process for the first phase poll of the State Assembly election 2022 which is scheduled to begin today, the District Election Officer/DC Churachandpur Pawan Yadav briefed the representatives of all recognized National/State political parties and intending candidates and discussed matters relating to candidates' permission, offline/online nomination process yesterday at DC's Conference Hall, Mini-Secretariat Complex, Churachandpur.

The political parties' representatives and intending candidates were sensitised on the use of SUVIDHA, ENCORE and C-VIGIL.

The District Election Officer/DC Churachandpur Pawan Yadav briefed the representatives on the importance of Covid-19 vaccination and the importance of observing the extant Covid-19 protocols like wearing of mask and maintaining social distance norms and carrying hand sanitizer.

The DEO informed that during the nomination filling process, only 2 vehicles will be allowed in the campus and the number of persons along with

candidate for submission of nomination is restricted to three (3). The whole process will be video-recorded and will be under CCTV scanner, he added. The representatives were also briefed on other pertinent issues such as intermediate strong rooms, etc.

District Nodal Officer (SUVIDHA and C-vigil) briefed and familiarized the participants on the use of ENCORE and SUVIDHA websites with special focus on filling online nomination and e-affidavit.

Representative of political parties clarified their doubts and queries during the briefing from the resource person.

# NSCN (IM) chairman says Naga political destiny lies in the hands of the group

Agency  
Kohima, Feb 1:

The National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) on Monday said the Nagas' political destiny lies in their hands. "We should, therefore, not allow ourselves to be caught napping," NSCN (IM) chairman Q. Tuccu said in his speech on the occasion of the 43rd NSCN Raising Day on Monday.

Recalling that the Naga political movement never had a smooth-sailing, Tuccu said Naga freedom fighters underwent a gruelling test of physical and mental fortitude, and the "Naga nation" was tested because it was a question of saving the history and political identity of the Nagas.

"Today we are placed in a situation which demands our resolve to stand strong and committed. We are being tested again by the Government of India using her mighty army to apply outrageous violence empowered under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), against innocent Naga civilians," the outfit leader said, referring to the kill-



NSCN (IM) chairman Q. Tuccu

ing of 14 Naga civilians in Mon district last month.

He called the death of 14 villagers at Oting in Mon district of Nagaland on 4 and 5 December as "one of the most painful incidents" in the history of the Naga political struggle. "We are with the Oting and Konyak people and together we shall fight for justice," he stated.

"Twenty-four years ago, the Government of India offi-

cially signed the Second Indo-Naga Ceasefire with NSCN, the only legitimate political organization leading the Naga political movement. The Indo-Naga political dialogue that followed is still going on," Tuccu maintained.

Referring to the signing of the Framework Agreement in 2015 with the Centre, he stated that the political significance of the agreement lies in the fact that the Government of India

and NSCN (IM) have entered into an agreement to establish a new relationship for peaceful co-existence of the two entities on the basis of shared sovereignty.

"This is the only key to an honourable and acceptable solution for a durable peace. NSCN is totally against economic packages or imposed political packages as these are far from giving the Nagas a lasting solution. We put on record to reiterate our stand that the Nagas will abide by the principles of the Framework Agreement. There is no other way and we shall remain guarded to stand firm with the Framework Agreement," he asserted.

The NSCN leader also stated that the historical and political rights of Nagas are clear before the world. "For the legitimate rights we protected, NSCN was successful in getting Nagalim admitted into UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization) as a bona fide member. Today, many international organizations are solidly behind UNPO to support NSCN," he added.

# Lt Gen CP Mohanty, Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Superannuates from Service

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 1:

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Vice Chief of the Army Staff, superannuates from service after four decades of illustrious service. His tenure in the office will be remembered for the huge increase in emergency financial powers to purchase urgently required weapon platforms and equipment and the impetus given to induction of niche and disruptive technologies in the Army. As the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, he was instrumental in executing a number of critical procurement decisions, especially involving emergency procurement to augment own preparedness along Northern borders. He also laid emphasis on modern methods of training and education within the Army to deal with the emerging national security challenges.

An alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College,



Dehradun, National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Lt Gen CP Mohanty was commissioned into the Rajput Regiment on 12 Jun 1982. In a career spanning four decades, the General officer served across a wide spectrum of conflicts and terrain profiles and tenanted a host of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments. He commanded a battalion on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and later in the North East. He has the unique distinction of commanding two brigades: first on the Line of

Actual Control and later on, the multinational UN Brigade in Democratic Republic of Congo. He later commanded the Rangiya based Division in a counter insurgency environment and the Sikkim based Trishakti Corps immediately after the Doklam incident. Before taking over as the Vice Chief, the General Officer commanded the Pune-based Southern Command of the Indian Army.

An alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College Wellington, Higher Defence Management Course Secunderabad and the National Defence College New Delhi, the General Officer's staff and instructional assignments include an instructional tenure at NDA, Brigade Major of an Armoured Brigade, Military Advisor in Seychelles, Colonel Military Secretary (Selection) in the MS Branch, Brigadier General Staff (Operations) of a Corps in the Eastern Theatre and Director General, Operational Logistics and Strategic Movement.

# Centre extends work from home for 50% non-senior staffers below Feb 15

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 1:

The Centre on Monday extended work from home arrangement for 50 per cent of its employees below the level of Under Secretary till January 31, because of the rise in Covid cases.

In an order issued on Monday extending the arrangements till February 15, it said Central government officers and staffers will have to follow staggered

from attending offices.

The Personnel Ministry had on January 3 issued an order allowing work from home 50 per cent of employees below the level of Under Secretary till January 31, because of the rise in Covid cases.

In an order issued on Monday extending the arrangements till February 15, it said Central government officers and staffers will have to follow staggered

timing—9 am to 5.30 pm and 10 am to 6.30 pm—to avoid overcrowding in offices.

"Physical attendance of government servants below the level of Under Secretary shall be restricted to 50 per cent of the actual strength and the remaining 50 per cent shall work from home. A roster may be prepared accordingly by all the departments concerned," it had said.

All officers of the level of

Under Secretary and above are to attend office regularly, the order stated.

Personnel Ministry also extended the suspension of biometric attendance for the employees till February 15.

It had earlier this month suspended the marking of biometric attendance for all its employees till January 31, as a precautionary measure to check the spread of COVID-19.

# PM Modi's YouTube subscription crosses 1 crore; closest global leader is Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro with 36 lakh

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 1:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday crossed 10 million (1 crore) subscribers on YouTube. The closest global leader to him is Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro with 36 lakh subscribers.

Bolsonaro is followed by Mexico's Manuel López Obrador, who has 30.7 lakh YouTube subscribers.

The next on the list is Indonesian President Joko Widodo with 28.8 lakh subscribers. Meanwhile, the



White House has 19 lakh subscribers and US President Joe Biden has 7.043 lakh subscribers.

Indian National leaders are far behind PM Narendra

Modi with the closest being Rahul Gandhi at 5.25 lakh YouTube subscribers. He is followed by Shashi Tharoor (4.39 lakh), Asaduddin Owaisi (3.73 lakh), MK Stalin

(2.12 lakh), and Manish Sisodia (1.37 lakh).

PM Modi's currently has more than 7.53 crore followers on Twitter, 6.5 crores on Instagram, and 4.6 crores on Facebook.

The YouTube channel of PM Modi was initiated on October 26, 2007. It currently has over 1,643,140,189 views.

The most-watched video on PM Modi's YouTube channel with 70 million views shows the welcome he received from Divyangs at Kashi in 2019.

# Assam COVID cases rise again as 1,811 infections reported

Agency  
Guwahati, Feb 1:

Assam logged 1,811 new COVID-19 positive cases on Monday, registering an increase in fresh infections after having been on a declining trend for the last four days, as the overall caseload climbed to 7,16,406, a National Health Mission (NHM) bulletin said.

The day's fatalities decreased by one in a day to 19, it added.

The new 1,811 cases were detected from 38,837 sample

tests conducted during the day, which was an increase from 910 fresh cases found from 13,100 tests done on Sunday.

The day's positivity rate is 4.66 per cent, down from 6.95 per cent recorded on the previous day.

Among the new cases, Kamrup Metropolitan district, which primarily comprises Guwahati city, reported 389 infections, an increase by 32 against the previous day's cases.

Golaghat logged 106 fresh cases, while Lakhimpur and

Kamrup (Rural) reported 93 and 75 cases respectively, the NHM bulletin said.

Nineteen fresh fatalities pushed the COVID death toll to 6,461, with the death rate being 0.90 per cent.

Three deaths were reported from Dibrugarh and Jorhat, and two from Cachar, Darrang and Tinsukia districts. Baksa, Bapeta, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Kamrup Metropolitan, Majuli and Udalguri reported one fatality each.

The number of COVID-19 positive patients dying due to other reasons is 1,347.

# Protestors burn NPF flag amid ticket row in Tengenoupal district



Courtesy: EastMojo Imphal, Feb 1:

Protestors burnt the Naga People's Front (NPF) Party flag on Monday evening in Manipur's Tengenoupal district, hours after the party announced it would contest ten seats in the upcoming Manipur Legislative Assembly elections next month.

The list includes two former Congress leaders who recently joined the party.

Supporters of Morung Mokunga, a former minister and an advisor to NPF president who sought an NPF ticket from Tengenoupal (ST), staged a protest after the party issued a ticket to a new entrant.

Apart from M Francis

Ngakjopa, the NPF has shortlisted Dangsawa Korungthang Maring, another former Congress leader, from Tengenoupal (ST) constituency for the Manipur polls next month.

Disappointed with the allotment of the party ticket, some party workers alleged that the party gave a ticket to Tengenoupal (ST) constituency to a candidate who did not have the public's mandate.

In December, the Tengenoupal unit of the NPF had warned of a mass resignation if they gave the party ticket for the Manipur elections to D Korungthang Maring, who was then in Congress and was planning to join NPF. Eventually, he joined the party later in

December last year.

Notably, such protest and burning of party flags is not the first incident in the run-up to the state polls next month.

Soon after the BJP released the 60 candidates list for Manipur polls, angry party workers of the hopefuls and intending candidates stormed on roads and staged protests in various places in the state. They even pulled down party flags and banners and set them on fire. The irate supporters of BJP also burnt effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister N Biren Singh and shouted slogans.

A few candidates have resigned from the BJP and joined the opposition Congress, NPP and JD(U).

# N. Budhachandra accorded warm reception by people of Jiribam

IT Correspondent Jiribam, Feb 1:

N. Budhachandra Singh, BJP candidate of 40-Jiribam Assembly Constituency accorded warm reception by the people of Jiribam District today at the helipad of Jiribam.

On his arrival from Imphal after declaration of his name as a BJP candidate of 40-Jiribam AC, the supporter of BJP and his sympathisers gives warm reception chanting slogans "BJP Jindabad long live BJP, N. Budhachandra Singh Jindabad".

Therefore, he went to Jiribam BJP Mandal office where he paid floral tribute to the founder leaders of BJP as well as he was facilitated by the BJP Jiribam Mandal office bearers and members.

N. Budhachandra Singh, BJP Candidate of Jiribam Assembly Constituency said that Jiribam is a land where different communi-



ties are settling together. He also said that let us live with love and affection without discriminating caste, creed and religion.

He added that in his vision all the communities are same to him. He also assured till he will be there in Jiribam, he will not allow anyone to raise communal issues.

Speaking at the programme of BJP Mandal office L. Veerjit

Singh, spokesperson, BJP Manipur Pradesh said that during the time of ticket seeking there may be some misunderstanding among the aspirants candidates of Jiribam. He appealed to all "Let us unite together to fight the election and to get victory in the upcoming election of Jiribam Assembly Constituency".

Later, a public meeting was held along with his support and

villagers at his home at Ningsingkhul, Jiribam.

It might be recall here that during the declaration of BJP tickets of 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly chaos has been raised in many constituencies of Manipur. However, Jiribam assembly seems to be completely free from such disorder and maintain peaceful political atmosphere.

Contd. from Page 1

## Union Budget 2022 ahead of assembly....

Five years later, unemployment is still a problem but the BJP is at the receiving end. Farmers' protest has only added to unemployment woes. The Samajwadi Party and the Congress have promised to create lakhs of jobs if they were voted to power in Uttar Pradesh.

Akhilesh Yadav has promised "best quality" laptops to students if the Samajwadi Party is voted to power.

The Union Budget is likely to address the issue with allocation increments in job-creating sectors. Nirmala Sitharaman may replicate what her predecessor late Arun Jaitley did in 2017.

When Arun Jaitley presented the Union Budget barely 10 days before voting began in Uttar Pradesh, he devoted a significant portion of the budget

speech on asserting measures aimed at influencing the youth through job creation, education and skill development. Other focus areas were doubling farmers' income and infrastructure building in rural areas.

**WOMEN**

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has sharpened political focus on women voters, especially in Uttar Pradesh. She promised 40 per cent party tickets in the Uttar Pradesh election after having raised the issues relating to women in the state in the past two years.

Priyanka Gandhi's slogan, "Ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon [I am a girl, I can fight]" has become one of the talking points of the UP polls. Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati have also targeted the BJP over women-related issues.

The BJP faces a challenge to keep women voters aligned to the party in the seven-phased polls. Union Budget 2022 may offer a helping hand in a similar way as 2017. Back then, the Union Budget announced Rs 500 crore for Mahila Shakti Kendras and direct cash transfer of Rs 6,000 to pregnant women. Though the scheme was available nationwide, it was received well in the Uttar Pradesh election in 2017.

**HEALTH**

Covid-19 has been the dominant public health issue in the country. Uttar Pradesh with the biggest population and poor public health infrastructure hit national and at times international headlines during the first and second wave of the pandemic.

The Modi government has launched a number of health

schemes to boost public health infrastructure in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Union Budget 2022 may announce a greater allocation for public health infrastructure to be built in collaboration with state governments in smaller cities as public health and sanitation is a State List subject.

**BUT DOES CENTRE HAVE THE MONEY?**

Incidentally, this is one such rare occasion when the Centre has collected more taxes than it estimated when Nirmala Sitharaman presented the last Union Budget. Given the revenue collection till December 2021, Nirmala Sitharaman may announce surplus tax collection of more than Rs 2.25 lakh crore. This gives the Modi government an opportunity to present a budget that suits the BJP in poll-bound states.

## Heroin No. 4 seized

IT News Imphal, Feb 1:

A team of Chakpikarong police along with 37 AR Salluk post under the supervision of Chandhel SP Hemant Pandey, IPS conducted frisking and checking in connection with the upcoming SAE-2022 for

area domination, confidence-building, and sanitisation along Chakpikarong Mombi Road near Beaulah Village. During frisking and checking one Eco Van, bearing Regd No. MNO1G9542 grey in color which was playing towards Sugu side was stopped for checking. On checking two

packets suspected to be Heroin No. 4 weighing about 742 gm (approx 1.5 crore in the International market) along with the vehicle was seized from one Thangoula Kipgen, 20 year, son of Late Mangboi Kipgen of Sapermeina village, Saptu Gamphazol sub-division, Kangpokpi district.

## Sports

## Bartholomew Ogbeche shines as Hyderabad FC thrash NorthEast United FC 5-0

Agency Fatorada, Feb 1:

Star striker Bartholomew Ogbeche scored a brace on either side of half-time to take him top of the charts in the Hero Indian Super League's all-time scorers' list and also ensure Hyderabad FC a 5-0 win over NorthEast United FC here on Monday.

Ogbeche scored in the third and 60th minute to take his tally to 14 goals this season and overall number to 49, one more than Sunil Chhetri and Ferran Corominas.

Ogbeche achieved the feat in just three-and-a-half years in India's premier club competition. Besides Ogbeche, Akash Mishra (45th), Nikhil Poojary (84th) and Edu Garcia (88th) also found the back of the net as Manolo Marquez's men ran riot at the P.J.N Stadium here to stretch the lead at the top to four points and also do the double on the Highlanders.

They have 26 points from 14 games. NorthEast United's tumultuous season continued unabated as they remained on 10 points from 15 matches.



It took Hyderabad three minutes to nose ahead and Ogbeche was at the right place at the right time, slamming home a rebound after Joao Victor's header pinged off the post and fell kindly for the red-hot Nigerian who took his tally to 13 goals this season and joined Ferran Corominas and Sunil Chhetri in the all-time leading scorers' list in the Hero ISL with 48 strikes.

Thereafter Hyderabad dictated the game and kept press-

ing the NorthEast United backline. In first-half added time, the yellow shirts made it 2-0 with Akash Mishra scoring his second goal in as many games, heading in a Joel Chianese corner from the left side home with aplomb.

For NorthEast United, a brief spell of possession with Marco Sahaneke, their most impressive player, did not bear much fruit as they went into the break trailing 0-2.

Ogbeche doubled his tally

at the hour mark, further underlining his credentials as the league's best marksman. Chianese whipped in a cross but Subhashish Roy Choudhury dealt with the danger only to see the ball sent back in towards the far post.

Chianese headed the ball into the path of Ogbeche who nodded low with the ball scraping past the keeper and into the net.

Chianese deserved a goal for all his industry and almost had one after he got free from his marker but drilled his effort inches wide of the target.

There was drama in store Suhair Vadakkepedika's goal was disallowed after the striker thought he had pulled one back for the Highlanders.

Poojary piled on the misery for NorthEast United, getting on the scoresheet after substitute Sahil Tavora put the ball on a plate for Poojary who ran in to hammer the ball hard and low, across the keeper.

It was 5-0 soon after. Edu Garcia joined the party with a late strike as Hyderabad not only consolidated their lead at the top but also improved their goal difference.

## U19 World Cup: India, Australia face off in blockbuster semi-final

Agency Coolidge (Antigua), Feb 1:

Heavyweights India and Australia will face off in a blockbuster Super League semifinal of the Under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday, having beaten their opponents on the field and COVID-19 off, on way to the last four stage.

India's preparations for the age-group showcase were impacted heavily by the virus, with hardly any national camps or tournaments in the last two years except the recent Asia Cup.

The four-time champions started the tournament on the right note, overcoming a good South Africa side by 45 runs, but soon ran into a situation where they were struggling to field a playing XI after multiple players were found to have contracted COVID-19 hours before their match against Ireland.

Five members of the squad were unavailable for their second group clash, against Ireland on January 19 after a COVID outbreak.

Captain Yash Dhull, his deputy Shaik Rasheed, Aaradhya Yadav, Manav Parakh and Siddarth Yadav were part of that group and missed both the Ireland and Uganda fixtures, forcing the BCCI to fly in reinforcements.

India were without many players for their match with Uganda and had to call in six reserves to play with the non-infected members of their squad.

But a spirited India got the better of all the challenges thrown at them and soundly defeated Ireland and Uganda before prevailing over Bangladesh by five wickets in a tricky chase in their quarterfinal match on a surface that was not conducive for playing strokes.

India are now back to full strength and in another good news, Nishant Sindhu has recovered from COVID-19 and will be available for selection for the all-important semifinal.

But if the match against Bangladesh was any indication, India would like to improve their finishing with bat.

However, before that, de-

spite missing many first XI players, India put up huge totals against Ireland (307/5) and Uganda (405/), and registered their biggest ever victory terms of runs against the African team.

Now up against a formidable Australian side, India will take confidence from the fact that they made the semifinals with wins on the trot despite the challenges posed the virus.

This is the fourth time in a row that India will be appearing in the last-four stage of the competition.

India have a strong batting presence with the likes of Harnoor Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Raj Bawa, who broke Shikhar Dhawan's record for the highest individual score by an Indian batter at the U-19 World Cup with his 162 not out against Uganda, shouldering the responsibility, besides skipper Dhull and Rasheed.

In fact, it was Dhull who set the tone for the team with his solid 82 against South Africa in their tournament opener.