

'BJP made a good Football team, we'll win': CM Biren Singh hopes party can form Govt alone in Manipur

Courtesy: News18
New Delhi, Feb 2:

Ahead of the Manipur state assembly elections, chief minister N Biren Singh in an exclusive interview with News18.com said he hopes that the BJP can form the government alone in the north-eastern state. "BJP has made a good football team and we will win," the former football player said.

On forming any pre-poll alliance with National People's Party and Naga's People's Front, Singh said he has had a "bitter experience" with the coalition government. "After polls, we may have a post-poll alliance with our fellow parties. We will not break up ties but we will not have any pre-poll alliance this time."

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) being a poll issue in Manipur, the CM said a mutual understanding between the state and the Centre should be reached, and "we have to create the ground reality for the removal of AFSPA... National security is our prime concern. AFSPA has to be repealed."



Here is the interview:
Election rallies have been banned so how will you carry out digital campaigns?

Yesterday, the instructions have come from the Election Commission. There are restrictions but we will follow. Considering covering farther areas, you will be happy to know that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated 1,336 WiFi areas. We have the facility and we will go digital in every way.

There are talks that Biren Singh's loyalists have got the ticket, and people are protesting that. Even your son-in-law has got ticket, is that correct?

There is nothing like that Biren's man. BJP is a cultured and disciplined party. We made the decision after verifications and surveys. The decision was taken by highest Parliamentary board led by Modi. Everybody knows how my son-in-law got the ticket. Our government almost was toppled, gone to dissidents and alliance partners. Who saved our government in the crucial time? That is the reason, he resigned from the Congress to save the BJP. This credit has to be given, it's not about my son-in-law. The credit also has to be given to those MLAs who did not leave BJP at that time. They have got the

tickets. BJP does not forget the sacrifice made by workers for the betterment of party.

What is your message for people who left the party and joined the Congress?

You see, this has happened not only in Manipur but even in Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Central leaders have done the verification. They have done head-to-head counting in the survey, then taken the decision. Sarat Singh is a good politician, according to the survey, but winnability and loyalty were also seen, so then, he was dropped. We are not saying they are bad. The ticket has to be given to only one person in one constituency, this time we had lot of contenders for one post, this is not our fault.

How important a poll issue is repealing of AFSPA?

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) removal is a must. People along with the government are demanding that AFSPA be withdrawal from Manipur. An unfortunate incident took place recently as elections are around the corner.

contd. on page 4

Governor visits Covid-19 Vaccination Centre at JNIMS



IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

Governor of Manipur La Ganesan on today visited the Covid-19 Vaccination Centre at JNIMS Porompat.

During his visit, he inspected the Covid Vaccination Centre at JNIMS auditorium. The Centre started operating since January 16, 2021.

As part of the visit, he also distributed Covid Vaccination certificates, pens and badges to those fully jabbed with second vaccination doses and immunity doses belonging to different age groups and professions.

Governor La. Ganesan also interacted with the doctors, nurses, frontline workers and other related officials of JNIMS and Health Department, Manipur. He also discussed matter relating to the vaccination status of the state with the Covid-19 Vaccination team of JNIMS.

Additional Chief Secretary Health & Family Welfare Shri Vumlunmung Vualnam IAS, JNIMS Director Prof. Laishram Deben Singh, doctors and other concerned officials were present during the Governor's visit amongst others.

UKLF refutes allegation made by NPP candidate

IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

The United Kuki Liberation Front in a press Statement clarified about the allegation made by one NPP Candidate Lunkhopao Haokip, who alleged United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) for involving in brutal attack of his workers as baseless and made up story. On the alleged incident of 29th January, 2022, the UKLF clarified

that its cadres were never involved in the incident and any other activities that contradict the So0 ground rules. Till date, UKLF strictly adheres the So0 ground rules and are confined in the designated peace camp as per the instruction of the Authority concern where several inspections had been conducted.

The organisation extended its sympathy to the victims of the incident but

condemned the false allegation of Lunkhopao Haokip for maligning the image of UKLF, the press release added.

The press release further said, "Lunkhopao Haokip should come before the Organisation to clarify his allegation to damage the image of UKLF failing which the organisation will bar him and his workers from entering its operational area."

RIMS Director Prof. A. Santa inaugurates Electrical Section Building

IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

Prof. A. Santa Singh, Director, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal inaugurated the newly constructed Electrical Section building today. The Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal is expected to get more funds in the next budget which is a very good step. Funds of the institute will be nothing less than any AIIMS in India and it will be a massive jump. Both the Ministry and the institute have

been monitoring regularly the progress of various works being done in this institute stated by Prof. A. Santa Singh, Director, RIMS.

Director further stated that the Ministry closely monitored all the progress of various works taking up in the institute. He also expressed happiness that the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India has increased the annual budget of RIMS by 27.6% from the previous year. The central government has given special emphasis to the development

of RIMS in particular and Manipur in general. Utilization of fund of our institute and comparing it with other medical colleges of other North East States, we are far ahead from other medical colleges. The institute is able to do very well on all fronts. After some years later, the institute will be able to compete with the best of the best medical colleges in India. The health ministry recently selected 12 prominent central medical institutions in India including PGI, Chandigarh, RIMS, NEIGRIMS, and new

AIIMS institutes for Critical Care Management, and appreciated the roles of these medical institutions in these areas and also sanctioned to start Critical Care Block Center. The Director stated that the institute is getting more funds and there will be no shortage of funds in the institute.

The newly Inaugurated Electrical Section Building attended Medical Superintendent, RIMS Hospital, faculty members from Engineering Cell both Civil and electrical staffs also attended the program.

Wind of change

By: Shyamunder Haobam
Imphal, Feb 2:

It was a big bang when BJP announced the list of contestants of all sixty assembly constituencies of the state.

Three sitting MLAs were denied party tickets while some former Congress MLAs were given BJP tickets. There were violent protest in some constituencies against the BJPs process of selection of it's candidates for the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly elections. Many has now left the BJP, individually or in groups with some announcing the demolition of mandals.

The reasons behind all these may be due to too many intending candidates of the BJP which had more than one intending candidates in most of the constituencies.

The political outlook of the

Stat suddenly changes from BJP congress battle to a different scenario with the birth of a formidable political party in the State in the form of JDU.

Manipur JDU chief Hankhanpo has grown confidence and is quite content with the present situation of JDU with many heavyweights joining from the BJP.

So is the NPP by announcing 13 more lists of candidates over the previously announced 20 candidates in the first phase.

Just a few days back, State of the political situation was a different scenario but it seems JDU and NPP have matured a lot and has more probability of winning more seats than previously expected.

NPP and JDU win more seats may impact the winnability of BJP since most of them are defectors from the BJP. The BJPs numbers might

reduce than expected as they will be contesting against former BJP candidate.

The political power game has become more interesting with each passing day but chances of the BJP forming the next government are very high.

Even if BJPs chances of getting the magic number is very low they may from the government either with JDU alone which are partners of the NDA or BJP may form the government with both JDU and NPP, who are also part of the North Eastern Democratic Alliance NEDA.

Will NPP which are also expected to perform better expected to win in about 6 seats will be left in the lurch?

The post poll outcome is uncertain and congress might take somersaulting moves to form a Congress led government. Anything can happen in

a state where anti defection laws are abused.

The need of the hour is a new political party with a regional outlook which can understand the sentiment of the citizen. A Political party controlled remotely by Delhi, Shillong and Bihar will always fail to perform upto the mark as either the central leaders fail to understand the local issues or the leaders of the state fail to convince their so called high commands

We certainly need a wind of change for the development of the state instead of the same wine in new bottle.

We need to understand that the players are the same just swapping to different sides.

We need new players with dedication, who can understand the sentiment and situation of the state and who can sincerely perform.

State Handloom Expo 2021-22 inaugurated at Nilakuthi

IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

State handloom Expo 2021-2022 was inaugurated at Urban Hut of Nilakuthi, Imphal East. The event is organised by Manipur Apex Handloom Weaver And Handicrafts Artisans' C.S. LTD, Paona Bazar, Imphal and under the sponsorship of Development Commissioner for Handloom Ministry of Textile, Govt of India, New Delhi.

The keynote and welcome address was given by S. Bhubon Singh and in his speech, stated that Manipur Handloom product are included in Geographical Indication i.e. GI but we need to

work hard more to put more handloom product in GI.

Ch. Tombi Devi, Guest of Honour stated, we need to modify our Handloom product to make it universal and accepted by different communities example our rani phi made as a Saree full.

Konsam Ibomcha Singh, Padmashree Awardee attended the event as Guest, A. Ronika Devi, The Manipur Apex Handloom Weaver And Handicrafts Artisan' C.S. Ltd. Imphal as President and Ch. Tombi Devi, Project Manager District Handloom and Textile, Imphal East, M. Ibohah Singh, Assistance Director, Weaver's Service Centre, Porompat,

Imphal East, Dr. Opendro Singh, Social Worker and Designer of Handicrafts, Y. Shantikumar Singh, Office-in-charge, National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd. Porompat, Imphal East as Guest of Honours respectively.

The Chief Guest of the function, Konsam Ibomcha Singh, Padmashree Awardee stated that Market is very important in handloom and Handicrafts Work. So, we need to develop our market.

The expo which starts today will continue till February 15. Altogether 60 stalls participated in this year State Handloom Expo.

Digital Rupee uses a pearl garland type technology

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The new Budget proposes a 30 percent tax on income from the sale or transfer of virtual and digital assets such as Cryptocurrencies. There are estimated to be around Rs 45,000 crore worth of Crypto assets in India right now with more than 15 million investors. However, efforts to legalize Cryptocurrencies have been paused for the time being. The government is probably waiting for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to first conduct a pilot launch of its own digital currency. Perhaps because of this factor the Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill is not being presented in Parliament. Union Finance Minister Ms Nirmala Sitharaman also announced in the Budget that in the financial year 2020-23, the Reserve Bank of India will launch its own Digital Rupee. Digital Rupee will be based on Blockchain Technology. A blockchain is a database of transactions that is shared over a computer network. Blockchain collects information electronically in digital format. It keeps the record completely safe. This technology can be easily understood with the example of a pearl garland.

The key difference between a database and a blockchain is how the data is prepared. A blockchain collects information together in groups, called blocks, which contain a set of information. Only a certain amount of data can be stored in each block. When a block is full, it closes and joins the previously filled block, creating a chain of data called a blockchain. You can think of it like a train with many compartments or a pearl garland, in which pearls are attached one after the other. In any database, information is represented in tables, whereas a blockchain packs its data into chunks (blocks). When a block is filled with information or data, it is set like a stone and becomes part of the blockchain. Each block in the chain is given an exact time stamp when it is added to the chain. The data or information recorded in the blockchain can be viewed, but cannot be edited or changed.

According to blockchain analysis company CipherTrace, in the year 2020, theft and fraud of Cryptocurrency caused a loss of more than 14,000 crores of rupees. If there is any loss in such transactions, then even the police or the court cannot help the victim, as there are no rules and regulations in place for this at present. The responsibility of loss lies entirely with the investor. The servers of exchanges that trade Cryptocurrencies in India are located outside the country and no one knows which country's laws will apply to them. Even an organization like the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) also can not do anything in this matter or fraud. Investing is done in Cryptocurrencies in the form of Bitcoins. This is a very fluctuating game. In June 2021, within 24 hours the value of a Cryptocurrency called Titan had come down from about 4,500 rupees to 15 paise. That is the risk involved. Therefore, never make the mistake of falling into the trap of Crypto related advertisements. There is currently no security system in India to track Cryptocurrency transactions. Nor is there any government regulation binding on such transactions.

Wetland Action for People and Nature

By: Sanjenbam Jugheshwor Singh
Asst. Prof. JCRE Global College, Babupara, Imphal



As per the definition of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), wetlands are areas where "water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Wetlands are some of the planet's most important ecosystem and play a crucial role in water security, a barrier against natural disasters such as flooding. They also help fight climate change and prevent soil erosion. They're a heaven for wildlife, they filter pollution and they're important stores of carbon and form one of the most important sinks for greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. But they're also one of the earth's most threatened habitats. Some 85% of wetland present in 1700 was lost by 2000, many drained to make way for development, farming or other productive uses, disappearing three times faster than forest, and their loss spells an existential threat for hundreds of thousands of animals and plant species. Healthy wetlands- critical for climate mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity and human health and prosperity-punch above their weight in terms of benefits, says Leticia Carvalho, Principal Coordinator for Marine and Freshwater at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Making sure that they continue to deliver vital ecosystem services to humanity requires their prioritization, protection, restoration, better management and monitoring.

Wetlands, which include marshes and peat lands, are the unsung heroes of the climate crisis. They store more carbon than any other ecosystem, with peat lands alone storing twice as much as the entire world's forest. Inland wetland ecosystems also absorb excess wa-

ter and help prevent floods and draught, widely seen as critical to helping communities adapt to a changing climate. It's encouraging that there is increasing recognition of wetlands as an invaluable but overlooked nature-based solution. Wetlands built by humans, such as reservoirs, also contribute to human well-being and have other benefits. One project in the Baltic, for instance, aims to improve water quality in lagoons polluted by fertilizer run-off using floating, vegetation-rich wetlands to remove nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Wetlands teeming with species are a key ally in our fight to stop biodiversity loss. Over 140,000 described species- including 55% of all fishes- rely on fresh water habitats for their survival. Freshwater species are important to local ecosystems, provide sources of food and income to humans and are key to flood and erosion control. Yet wetlands species are going extinct more rapidly than terrestrial or marine species, with almost a third of all freshwater biodiversity facing extinction due to invasive species, pollution, habitat loss and over-harvesting. The good news is that protection, sustainable management and restoration of wetlands works.

Improving management of wetlands brings health, food and water security benefits- critical to the health and livelihood of 4 billion people reliant on wetlands services, says the Global Wetland Outlook. Under sustainable development Goal-6, Target-6, all countries are committed to protecting and restoring wetlands by 2030 and UNEP has special role in helping to monitor and achieve that target. The Okavango Delta in Botswana and Pantanal in Brazil are iconic examples of inland, vegetated wetlands teeming with wildlife. But wetlands come in many shapes and sizes and are uniquely under pressure from demographic and development forces, notably from agriculture.

The lack of conservation of wetlands can have harmful consequences in several aspects such as climate change mitigation, water and food security, disaster management and so on. Therefore, conservation of wetlands is crucial to prevent the biodiversity of the country. In 1971, Convention on Wetland of International Importance also known as Ramsar Convention was held near the shores of the Caspian Sea in Ramsar in Iran. February 2, World wetland day is the United Nations International Day of Importance

when the Convention on Wetland of International Importance was signed on 2nd February 1971 to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits. It was also aimed to make the World's population aware of conservation and wise use of wetlands. The day was founded as initially five nations signed the Convention but today over 170 nations are signatories to the Ramsar Convention and there are over 2400 listed Ramsar wetlands, including in India. Nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since 1700s, according to the official website dedicated to the day. The World Wetland Day is celebrated to raise awareness among all sections of society, including in India about the values and functions of wetlands, utilization of their resources and their environment importance. Each year, a global theme is adopted to focus attention and help raise public awareness about the value of wetland and raises awareness across the nation. The theme for 2022 is "Wetland Action for People and Nature" and it involves calls for urgent action for protection of wetlands, which in India is also the focus of this year's campaign. It's an appeal to invest financial, human and political capital to save the world's wetlands from disappearing and to restore those we have degraded, according to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Government of India. The Un, meanwhile, says that it is urgent that people raise national and global awareness about wetlands in order to reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to conserve and restore them. World's Wetland Day is the best occasion to enhance people's understanding of critically important ecosystems.

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Advances in Space Science

Space is an area, about which humans know very little. It is something, that is so vast that its extent cannot be measured or even estimated. The sky is full of all sorts of planets, asteroids, stars, galaxies, natural satellites and many other undiscovered objects. The human eye, upon looking from the earth sees only stars and moons but looking under a telescope reveals a different story.

Space can be defined as any location outside the Earth's atmosphere and Space Science can be described as a field which broadly includes all of the various science fields that are concerned with the study of the Universe. Astrophysics, Galactic Science, Stellar Science, Non-Earth Planetary Science, Biology of other Planets, Astronautics/Space Travel, Space Colonization and Space Defence, all are a part of Space Science. Space Science helps us to acquire a detailed knowledge of our own Solar System. It is also useful in understanding the origin of our earth and other planets.

Space Science Advancements
Artificial Satellite: The world's first artificial satellite to be put into the earth's orbit was Sputnik. It was launched on October 4, 1957, by the former Soviet Union. It was also the first notable step in the evolution of Space Science. It is also considered as the beginning of 'The Space Age'. A month later Sputnik II was launched into orbit. It carried a dog named Laika, which became the first living being and the first passenger to go into space.

Human Spaceflight: Human Spaceflight was made possible by

the Soviets. Yuri Gagarin was the first human to take a spaceflight. It was undertaken on April 12, 1961, when the cosmonaut made one orbit around the Earth aboard the Vostok 1 spacecraft. It was launched by the Soviet space program and designed by rocket scientists Sergey Korolyov and Kerim Kerimov. The 'First Woman in Space' was Valentina Tereshkova, who was on board Vostok 6 on June 16, 1963. Both spacecraft were launched by Soyuz 3KA launch vehicles. Alexei Leonov made the 'First Spacewalk' when he left the Voskhod 2 on March 8, 1965, and Svetlana Savitskaya became the 'First Woman' to Spacewalk on July 25, 1984.

Man on Moon: The U.S.A. is credited with the first human spaceflight to land on the Moon. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Aldrin became the 'First Humans to land on the Moon'. The Lunar module Eagle which carried the astronauts became the 'First Manned Spacecraft to land on the Moon'. The Apollo 11 mission was launched on July 16, 1969, it carried Mission Commander Neil Alden Armstrong, Command Module Pilot Michael Collins, and Lunar Module Pilot Edwin Eugene 'Buzz' Aldrin, Jr.

Space Stations: Salyut 1 was the 'First Space Station of any kind put into orbit'. It was launched on April 19, 1971. The Salyut mission comprised of a three-man crew flying the Soyuz 11 spacecraft. Mir Space Station was a Soviet Space Station. It was the 'World's First consistently inhabited long-term research station in space' and the 'First of

the third generation type of space station', constructed from 1986 to 1996 with a modular design. The station was in operation for fifteen years until 23 March 2001, when it was deliberately de-orbited, breaking apart during atmospheric re-entry over the South Pacific Ocean. The station currently holds the record for the longest continuous manned presence in space, at eight days short of ten years, and was occupied for a total of twelve and a half years of its fifteen-year lifespan. The International Space Station is an internationally developed research facility currently being assembled in Low Earth Orbit. On-orbit con-



By: Vijay GarG

with the naked eye and, as of 2009, is the 'Largest Artificial Satellite in Earth's orbit' with a mass larger than that of any previous space station.

Space Voyages: Various unmanned spacecraft was launched into space for studying other planets. From 1964 to 1976, Mariner IV, V, VII, and IX studied Mars and gathered various details about the planet. From 1976 to 1982, Viking I and II took over. By that time, the probes collected 52,000 pictures of the planet and mapped around 97 per cent of its surface. In March 1989, space shuttle Atlantis launched a spacecraft, Magellan, on a voyage to Venus. In October, the same year,

or 2020. The Mars Pathfinder (MESUR Pathfinder later known as The Carl Sagan Memorial Station) was launched on December 4, 1996, by NASA aboard a Delta II just a month after the Mars Global Surveyor was launched. After a 7-month voyage, it landed on Ares Vallis, in a region called Chryse Planitia on Mars, in the Oxia Palus quadrangle, on 4 July 1997. From its landing in July 4, 1997 until the final data transmission on September 27, 1997, Mars Pathfinder returned 16,500 images from the Lander (spacecraft) and 550 images from the Rover (wheeled robot named Sojourner), as well as more than 15 chemical analyses of rocks and soil and extensive data on winds and other weather factors. Findings from the investigations carried out by scientific instruments on both the lander and the rover suggest that Mars was at one time in its past warm and wet, with water existing in its liquid state and a thicker atmosphere.

Hubble Space Telescope: The Hubble Space Telescope is a space telescope. It was carried into orbit by the Space Shuttle Discovery in April 1990. It is named after the American astronomer Edwin Hubble. Although not the first space telescope, the Hubble is one of the largest and most versatile. It is a vital research tool and a public relations boon for astronomy. The HST is a collaboration between NASA and the European Space Agency, and is one of NASA's Great Observatories, along with the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, the Chandra X-ray Observatory, and the Spitzer Space Telescope.

Water on Moon: Chandrayaan-1 was India's first unmanned lunar probe. It was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation

in October 2008 and operated until August 2009. The evidence of water molecules on the surface of the moon was found by the moon mineralogy mapper (M3) of the US-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and by India's own Moon Impact Probe (MIP) on-on board and Rayaan-1. The discovery is of great significance for the possible utilization of the water.

Space Tourism: Space tourism has also become a reality. Russia has started sending tourists for space travel who are willing to pay the exorbitant charges. Dennis Titi became the first "fee-paying" space tourist on April 28, 2001. He visited the International Space Station (ISS) for seven days. South African computer millionaire Mark Shuttleworth became second and Gregory Olsen became the third space tourists. As of 2009, orbital space tourism opportunities are limited and expensive. Russian Space Agency is the only one providing transport. The price for a flight brokered by Space Adventures to the International Space Station aboard a Soyuz spacecraft is US\$20-35 million. Other companies are also in the race to provide such facilities.

New Planets: Hundreds of Extrasolar Planets (also known as Super-Earth) have been discovered since 1992. These planets are found around other stars. Planets throughout the Milky Way Galaxy share characteristics in common with our own. Some of these are Gliese 876 d, which is roughly six times Earth's mass, OGLE-2005-BLG-390Lb, and MOA-2007-BLG-192Lb. The smallest found to date is MOA-2007-BLG-192Lb. As of October 2009, there are 374 known extrasolar planets, ranging from the size of gas giants to that of terrestrial planets.



struction of the station began in 1998 and is scheduled to be complete by 2011, with operations continuing until at least 2015. The ISS orbits at an altitude of approximately 350 kilometres (220 mi) above the surface of the Earth, travelling at an average speed of 27,724 kilometres (17,227 mi) per hour and completing 15.7 orbits per day. The station can be seen from the Earth

Atlantis launched Galileo to probe Jupiter. Voyager I and II were sent to probe Jupiter and Saturn by the US as early as 1977. Voyager, I was propelled from its intended course while Voyager II was able to scan through Neptune's blue cloud tops and found a ring of debris encircling it. Voyager II is expected to send information from the far end of the universe until the year 2015

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Focus of Budget on providing basic amenities to poor, middle class, youth: PM

Agency
New Delhi, Feb 2:

The focus of the Union Budget is on providing basic amenities to the poor, middle class and youth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday, and asserted that it is imperative that India becomes self-reliant.

In his address on 'Aatmanirbhar Arthvyavastha' at a BJP event, he said that post-Covid, the possibility of a new world order is emerging and the initial indicators of it are already visible.

A big change is coming in the way the world is viewing India, he said.

"People, globally, want to see an empowered and strong India. It is imperative for us that we take our country forward at a rapid pace and



strengthen it across several sectors," Modi said.

It is very important that India not only becomes self-reliant but also that a modern India is built on the foundation of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Leaving aside the political angle, the budget has been welcomed from all quarters, Modi said.

This Budget focuses on providing basic amenities to

the poor, middle class and youth, he said adding that his government is working on the saturation of basic facilities.

Modi also said migration from border villages is not good for national security and the budget has provisions to develop 'vibrant villages' on the border.

In the last seven years, the decisions taken are continuously enlarging the Indian economy, Modi said.

He said 7-8 years ago, India's GDP was Rs 1.10 lakh crore. Today, our GDP is nearly Rs 2.3 lakh crore.

In a televised statement on Tuesday, Prime Minister Modi had said the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was "people-friendly, progressive" and full of possibilities for infrastructure, investment, growth and jobs.

Finance Minister Sitharaman unveiled a Rs 39.45 lakh crore budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing to fire up the key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic.

While she primed up spending on infrastructure to create jobs and boost economic activity, Sitharaman did not tinker with income tax slabs or tax rates.

Assam Rifles seizes Narcotics items



IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

In two separate operations, Phundrei Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) in joint operations with Manipur Police seized narcotics in

Chandel and Kakching district on 31 January and 01 February 22.

Based on specific input, troops of Assam Rifles along with Manipur Police launched these operations which led to seizure of narcotics items of Rs 27 lakhs

and Rs 1.4 Crores in Kakching and Chandel district respectively.

The recovered narcotics items along with drug pedler were handed over to Chakpikarong and Kakching Police station for further investigation.

Zydus begins delivering its needle-free Covid vaccine to government

Agency
New Delhi, Feb 2:

Zydus Cadila has begun supplying its needle-free anti-Covid vaccine ZyCoV-D to the government, the company announced on Wednesday.

The company has started the supplies of its Covid-19 vaccine ZyCoV-D to the government of India against their order from its newly commissioned, state-of-the-art Zydus Vaccine Technology Excellence Centre at the Zydus Biotech Park in Chandigarh, Ahmedabad," said the company in a statement.

The government last year placed an order for 10 million vaccine doses for the national anti-Covid immunisation programme. The company is also planning to make the vaccine available in the market.

ZyCoV-D is the world's first plasmid DNA vaccine. A three-dose vaccine, it is to be administered intradermally using the painless PharmaJet needle-free system called Tropis on day 0, day 28, and day 56.

The vaccine will be priced 1 265 per dose and the applicator 1 93 per dose excluding GST. The company said it has

signed an agreement with Shilpa Medicare Limited, a contract manufacturing organisation, to produce doses of ZyCoV-D. It also has a pact with Enzychem Lifesciences of the Republic of Korea for the manufacturing license and technology transfer for the vaccine.

"Zydus VTEC manufactures the drug substance for the needle-free DNA Plasmid vaccine, ZyCoV-D. The manufacturing process and in process material transfers within the plant are automated," Zydus said in the statement.

The national drugs regulator granted the vaccine approval for restricted use in emergency situations for people aged 12 and above. The company earlier announced it should have a production capacity of about 10-12 million doses per month.

The Union health ministry has said the Zydus vaccine would initially be used in districts in Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal having low first dose coverage. The vaccine will be rolled out nationwide later.

AR foils cross border smuggling

IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

Tengnoupal Battalion of Assam Rifles (South) foiled cross border smuggling near Kwatha village in Tengnoupal

district yesterday.

During a border domination patrol, troops of Assam Rifles uncovered a large number of packages concealed in thick foliage in the forest. On thorough search of the packages, illegal goods including betel nuts, li-

quor, cigarettes and sandal wood items were recovered.

The smuggled items are assessed to be of worth Rs 9.61 Lakh.

The recovered contraband items were handed over to Customs Department, Moreh.

Assam Rifles conducts Medical Camp



IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:

In continuation of the efforts of Assam Rifles to reach out a helping hand for the local population and assist them in humanitarian aid, Shangshak Battalion under the aegis of IGAR(S) conducted a medical camp at

Mongkot Chepu Village, Ukhrul district on 30 January on the occasion of World Leprosy Eradication Day.

As part of Assam Rifles Civic Action Program, the medical camp was organised to assist the villagers who have no access to basic healthcare services. Medical team from Assam Rifles car-

ried out the health checkup of 167 villagers to assess their health status. The individuals diagnosed with severe diseases were referred to Civil Hospital for detailed examination.

The medical camp culminated with distribution of essential medicines to villagers.

FOC-in-C (West) Hosts Maharashtra NCC Republic Day Contingent

NCC General Elective Credit Course Getting Good Response



The cadets of Maharashtra NCC directorate with Navy officers and NWA President Charu Singh at Navy House on Tuesday. (Photo credit: Defence PRO).

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, Feb 2:

Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command (WNC), hosted the National Cadet Corps (NCC) contingent of Maharashtra Directorate at the Navy House, Mumbai, and interacted with the cadets and the staff.

The NCC Maharashtra Contingent comprising 57 cadets won the prestigious Prime Minister Banner at Republic Day Camp 2022 for standing first overall in addition to winning a rich haul of Trophies and Medals.

During the At Home func-

tion, the C-in-C and Mrs. Charu Singh, President NWA (Western Region) interacted and encouraged the NCC cadets to join the armed forces. The C-in-C also felicitated the prize winners and awarded Command scholarships to six meritorious cadets for their all-around performance during the academic year 2020-21.

Maj Gen Y P Khanduri, Additional Director General(ADG) NCC Directorate Maharashtra, Senior officers of Hqrs. Western Naval Command, Group Commanders, officers, and Staff of NCC with spouses were present for the occasion.

The Maharashtra Directorate had also fielded a Contingent

of 57 Cadets, both boys, and girls, drawn from various districts of the state. A camp was held on the eve of Republic Day in Delhi. The cadets did their best in various competitions like Drill, Rajpath Marching, Guard of Honour to PM, PM's Rally Line Layout, Flag Area briefing, and also the cultural event. The consistent excellent performance of the contingent throughout the camp in all events saw the Maharashtra NCC Directorate being adjudged the Best Directorate.

Senior Under Officer Siddhesh Jadhav was the Banner Bearer and Cadet Captain Nikita Khot was the Trophy bearer. The prestigious PM

Banner was won by the State Directorate after seven years. In 2014 Maharashtra NCC had won the PM banner. Last year it was a runner-up.

While the strength of NCC cadets across India is 13 lakh, Maharashtra has provision to train over one lakh students. The NCC units are in 799 schools and 502 colleges.

Now since the NCC has been made a General Elective Credit Course as per National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, more students are expected to get themselves enrolled for the course. Under the Choice Based Credit System, the students as cadets will be able to avail employment incentives and benefits offered under various central and state govt schemes to NCC cadets.

Speaking to the Imphal Times, Maj Gen Y P Khanduri, Additional Director General(ADG) NCC Directorate Maharashtra, said that there was a positive response from Maharashtra Government about enrolling more students for the NCC course and the meetings held with Maharashtra Sports Minister Sumil Kedar were fruitful. From the new academic year, more students are expected to join the NCC. Ninety Universities across the country have already opted for the NCC as an elective subject after the implementation began last year.

Government open for peace talks with HNLC, says CM Conrad Sangma

Agency
Shillong, Feb 2:

After the recent IED blast in Shillong's Police Bazar, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Tuesday said that the Meghalaya Government is for peace dialects with the Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) but it is not subject to conditions.

The CM said that for the past three years there have been attempts to communicate with the outfit through the central government and other agencies. He also added that the government is taking steps to prevent the recruitment of minors by such militant groups. It may be mentioned that HNLC claimed the responsibility for the explosion that took place in the Police Bazar of Shillong on Sunday.

The proscribed militant

outfit claimed that the act was carried near the Delhi Mistan because the establishment had not paid "taxes" to the outfit. The blast took place near a business establishment named Delhi Mistan Bhandar.

The police said that the explosion did not cause any risk to life as the area was under the Sunday lockdown.

Conrad Sangma has termed the bomb blast at the Police Bazaar area in Shillong as a

"cowardly act". "An attempt to disrupt peace and bring harm is nothing but a cowardly act," said CM Conrad Sangma.

Sangma further said that those behind the bomb blast in Shillong on Sunday evening will be brought to justice.

"Perpetrators will not be spared. We will ensure peace prevails in the state," said Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma.

Name Change

I, the undersigned, Phuraihatpam Jiten Sharma do hereby declare that I have relinquished, renounced and abandoned the use of my old name **Mr. Ph. Jiten Sharma** as I have assumed my new name **Phuraihatpam Jiten Sharma**.

Sd/-

Phuraihatpam Jiten Sharma
Singamei Makha Waikhom Leikai
Imphal West, Manipur

Covid-19: India logs 1,61,386 new cases in last 24 hours, deaths surge by 1,733

Agency
New Delhi, Feb 2:

Continuing a downward trend, India registered 1,61,386 new cases of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, the Union health ministry data showed on Wednesday morning. However, the number of Covid-19 fatalities mounted to 1,733 today, including 638 backlog deaths from Kerala. The death toll surged to 4,97,975.

The active cases dropped to 1,21,456 during the past day. The country's active case count now stands at 3.90 per cent.

Meanwhile, the daily positivity rate fell from 11.69 per cent in the previous day to 9.36 per cent in 24 hours, the ministry data showed.

India's recovery rate surged to 94.60 per cent with 2,81,109 recoveries recorded in the span of a day.

More than 732 million tests have been conducted up to February 1, of which 17,42,793 were conducted on February 1.

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage nears 1.7 billion, including more than 57 lakh vaccine doses on Tuesday.

A total of 4,97,650 booster doses were administered in the last 34 hours, while over 13 lakh children

between 15-18 years of age received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Meanwhile, the cumulative number of anti-Covid vaccine doses administered in the country so far has crossed 167.29 crore. India surpassed the one crore mark in the number of cases on December 19, 2020. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year.

To condemn every marriage as violent and every man a rapist not advisable: Smriti Irani

Agency
New Delhi, Feb 2:

The protection of women and children in the country is a priority for all but condemning every marriage as violent and every man a rapist is not advisable, Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani said in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Her comments came in response to CPI leader Binoy Viswam's supplementary query on marital rape. He sought to know if the government had taken note of Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act on the definition of domestic violence as well as Section 375 of the IPC on rape.

"...let me say, to condemn every marriage in this country as a violent marriage, and to condemn every man in this country as a rapist is not advisable in this august house," Irani said.

The minister said the se-



nior member knows that Rule 47 of the procedures in the Rajya Sabha disallows elaboration on a subject that is currently sub judice.

The government's endeavour, she said, is to protect women in this country in collaboration with state governments. Currently, over 30 helplines are functional across India, which have assisted over 66 lakh women. Besides, 703 'one stop centres' are functional in the country and these have assisted over five lakh women.

records from them. But the Centre cannot make a recommendation on behalf of state governments today in this house, she added.

BJP leader Sushil Modi asked if the government is in favour of criminalising marital rape or giving immunity as criminalising it will end the institution of marriage. Sushil Modi also said it will be difficult to prove when the wife consented or not.

Irani responded by saying the matter is sub judice and she cannot elaborate. "However, I would like to highlight to him for research purposes, it finds a reflection in the 172nd report of the Law Commission and also the department of standing committee related to home affairs in the year 2013," she added.

DMK leader M Mohamed Abdulla asked if the government takes measures to create awareness on domestic violence at the school and college levels.

To this, the minister said the member is suggesting that the Centre engage with state governments and seek

Assam Rifles conducts Medical Camp

IT News
Imphal, Feb 2:



In continuation with the efforts of Assam Rifles to reach out a helping hand for the local population and assist them in humanitarian aid, Mantripukhri Battalion under the aegis of IGAR(S) conducted a medical camp at Heingang Village, Imphal West district today.

As part of Assam Rifles Operation Sadbhavana Project, the medical camp was

organised to assist the villagers who have no access to basic healthcare services. Medical team from Assam Rifles carried out the health checkup of 250 villagers to assess their health status. The individuals

diagnosed with severe diseases were referred to Civil Hospital for detailed examination.

The medical camp culminated with distribution of essential medicines to villagers.

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BJP made a good Football team....

Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and all states bordering Myanmar have instability. National security is our prime concern. AFSPA has to be repealed. We have to create the ground reality for the removal of AFSPA. Mutual understanding between the state and Centre should be there.

Why there is no pre-poll alliance with Naga People's Front (NPF) and National People's Party (NPP)?

We are feeling stronger and more confident this time as I have had a bitter experience with the coalition government. Good governance and maintaining a balance with the alliance partner is difficult than to govern people. This time, we are hoping the BJP can alone form the government. After polls, we may have a post-poll alliance with our fellow parties. We will not break up ties but we will not have any pre-poll alliance this time.

Do you have an understanding with the NPP and NPF?

We have a friendly fight.

Our senior leaders feel that we will get a two-third majority. They have advised me to maintain the coalition dharma even after polls.

What is your number this time? And are you going to be the CM?

The CM will be decided by the Central leader. We have done a lot for the state; welfare schemes have reached the grass roots level. The PM has always monitored development in this area and that is where we are confident that we will come with such a majority.

People are saying that you are not fighting the Congress but dissidents in your party. Is it true?

It was in the beginning but not now. We are all united and we will fight together and stand by the poor.

The Congress says it will come to power. Why should people vote for you?

We now have 29 MLAs and we will cross the 40-mark. People have tasted the Congress. How people suffered at that point of time—two months

of blockade, a fake encounter, insurgency. I was in the Congress and I did not have a say there.

Hills still don't have a multi-specialty hospital. Is development still an issue?

It's developing and improving now. A lot of health infrastructure projects have come up. Medical colleges are also coming up. We have gone to people of both the valley and hills. People connect is our main thing. We have made a grievance cell. We are with the people. We have been reaching out to them with development.

You are the captain, what do you have to say to people and your team?

We have promised to come back. All 60 candidates gathered around the PM and JP Nadda ji, and then we shouted together "Hanna Hanna BJP". It's a teamwork, a single player will not win. Every player will play their role in their respective position. BJP has made a good football team and we will win.

Sports

ISL: Romario's late strike helps FC Goa level with Odisha

Agency
Bambolim, Feb 2:

Odisha FC suffer a huge blow in their quest for semi-finals qualification after a 1-1 draw with FC Goa in the 2021-22 Indian Super League (ISL) at the Athletic Stadium in Bambolim. Goals from Jonathas (61' P) and a last-minute equaliser from Romario (90+5') meant that neither team would take away three points.

The result prevents OFC from rising to fifth place in the points table, level on points with Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC. As for FCG, the winless run extends to five games in the division. Plenty of end-to-end stuff was observed in the starting few minutes by both teams. The Gaurs had a bigger share of the possession but struggled to translate it into scoring opportunities.

Airan Cabrera got space behind OFC defence at the first quarter of the hour but ended up elevating his shot above the crossbar. On the other end, Liridon Krasniqi missed a great opportunity to score owing to brave goalkeeping from Naveen Kumar.

Arsheep Singh also had to pull off a strong save from Edu Bedia right after the drinks break. Princeton Rebello thought he had scored at the 40th-minute mark until Thoiba Singh made a goal-saving block inside the box. Both



teams lacked inspiration in the attack, leading to no goals at the halftime break. Post the restart, Aridai Cabrera demanded a penalty for a potential handball but to no avail. The striker got his shot past the goalkeeper but saw it blocked by the defender, seemingly with the hand.

However, right at the hour mark, the Kalinga Warriors were awarded a penalty after Javier Hernandez was tripped by Alberto Noguera inside the box. Jonathas stepped up and sent his spot-kick into the top left corner for the breakthrough goal. A few minutes later, Jerry Mahwimthanga came close to extending OFC's lead but his chip hit the crossbar as it

had too much elevation. Derrick Pereira made several changes heading into the last stage of the match, pushing for the equaliser.

Four minutes were added for stoppages which saw more pressure from the Gaurs, looking for that elusive equaliser. It finally came through Romario who scored through a header in the final minute of the added time, thus sharing the points between both sides. In their upcoming fixtures, Odisha FC plays bottom-placed SC East Bengal at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Monday whereas FC Goa has a nine-day rest period before their clash with Chennaiyin FC at the same venue on Thursday.

FIFA World Cup Qualifiers: Argentina pip Colombia, Ecuador secure playoff spot

Agency
Sao Paulo, Feb 2:

Colombia started the South American World Cup qualifiers as a favorite for one of the region's four direct spots in Qatar, while underdog Ecuador was expected to fail under coach Gustavo Alfaro.

Tuesday's round ended with the Colombians in need of miracle after losing 1-0 at Argentina, and the Ecuadorians secured fifth place at least by tying with Peru 1-1, putting Ecuador in an international play-off against an Asian team.

A win would have put Ecuador in third place in the region and going to Qatar, but that seems to be only delayed to the end of March, when the two final rounds will take place. Brazil (39 points) and Argentina (35) have already qualified. Ecuador has 25 points, three ahead of Uruguay. Peru is now at 21 points in fifth place, with Chile one point behind. Colombia has 17.

Bolivia (15), Paraguay (13) and Venezuela (10) have no chance of qualifying.

Martinez scores for Argentina

Lautaro Martinez scored the only goal of the match in Cordoba in the 29th minute after he was left alone in the penalty box by two Colombia defenders. Goalkeeper Camilo



Vargas made several important saves, including three shots by veteran Angel di Maria.

Argentina did not count on superstar Lionel Messi, who is still recovering from Covid-19.

Colombia's last rituals are less dangerous: Bolivia at home and Venezuela away. Coach Reinaldo Rueda's team will have to win both, overtake Chile and one other between Uruguay and Peru in order to get to Qatar. Colombia has not scored in the latest seven matches of qualifying.

"This is not over, we want to go to it until the end," Rueda said in a news conference.

"Maybe we need more clarity in the midfield and also in our finishing. We miss that energy."

Argentina managed to get the best opportunities despite missing several defenders plus Messi and midfielders Rodrigo de Paul and Leandro Paredes.

Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez said the result proves Argentina has "more than 11 players." "This is to the credit of a team, the absences were not noted. This team is getting stronger and stronger," he said.

Peru vs Ecuador

It took Ecuador only two minutes to start dreaming of its return to the World Cup, when Michael Estrada calmly put it in the back of the net after a long pass from a defender. Peru struggled to block the Ecuadorians, but pulled even in the 69th minute with a header by Edison Flores — and the backing of the crowd. The draw puts coach Ricardo Gareca's team in competitive position for fifth place, with two points ahead of Chile and four ahead of Colombia.

Ecuador's final challenges in qualifiers will be at Paraguay and then hosting Argentina. Peru will travel to Uruguay, and

then take on Paraguay at home.

Also on Tuesday, leader Brazil thrashed Paraguay 4-0 at home with goals scored by Raphinha, Philippe Coutinho, Antony and Rodrygo. Coach Tite did not count on an injured Neymar playing, and also used the game to test out other players like Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni did.

Uruguay gave new coach Diego Alonso his second consecutive win on the job — a 4-1 hammering of Venezuela. Rodrigo Betancur, Giorgian de Arrascaeta, Edinson Cavani and Luis Suarez all scored for Uruguay. Venezuela's only goal was from Josef Martinez.

Uruguay could secure its World Cup spot with a home win against Peru in the next round.

Also, Chile beat Bolivia 3-2 in the altitude of La Paz thanks to two goals by Alexis Sanchez and another by Marcelino Nunez. The result kept the Chileans in contention in sixth place with 19 points and nearly ended the chances of the hosts, who remain with 15 points. The Bolivian goals came from Marc Enoumba and Marcelo Martins.

"This was a reward to our efforts, but it doesn't finish here," Chile striker Sanchez said.

Chile's final challenges will be at Brazil and home against Uruguay.