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## Miscreants shot father of NPP candidate, NPP supporters attack supporters of the rival BJP candidate

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

At what could be term as another poll violence, unknown miscreants shot at the father of National People's Party (NPP) candidate, Lourembam Sanjoy Singh, contesting from Andro assembly constituency Friday night. Following that, another group of people dismantled the house of some supporters of the rival candidate whom they suspected as the perpetrator of the poll violence. Around 6 people including a woman was reported injured.

As per report, unidentified gunmen suspected to be supporter of the rival candidate of L. Sanjoy fire rounds of gunshots when Lourembam Samjai, the father of the NPP candidate was discussing election related matters with some of the supporters at his residence at around 11 pm.

74-year-old Lourembam Samjai, received a bullet injury

## India wins right to host 2023 IOC session in Mumbai

Agency

Mumbai, Feb 20:

India won the right to host the 2023 IOC session in Mumbai. This will be the second time India hosts an IOC session, having done so in 1983 in New Delhi. India won the bid unopposed at the 139th IOC session that was held in Beijing, China, on the sidelines of the Winter Olympics. Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, IOC member Nita Ambani, IOA president Narinder Batra and sports minister Anurag Thakur presented India's proposal for the hosting rights at this year's IOC Session.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed happiness that India has been chosen to host the 2023 International Olympic Committee IOC Session. In a tweet, Mr Modi expressed confidence that it will be a memorable IOC session and will lead to positive outcomes for world spo

on his right shoulder. He is currently undergoing treatment at SHJIA Hospital at Langol.

NPP leaders, including its national president, Conrad K. Sangma and Deputy Chief Minister Y. Joykumar Singh visited the injured candidate's father.

Talking to the media on the sideline of their visit, Sangma said that pre-poll violence is intensifying in Manipur. He said that he has visited Manipur five times since 2002 in connection with election but he had never seen the kind of pre-poll violence occurring nowadays.

Considering that

controlling the situation is the need of the hour, NPP will draw the attention of all concerned and higher authorities such as the CEO of Manipur, Election Commission of India and MHA, the CM of Meghalaya said.

He strongly condemned the attack on NPP candidate, L. Sanjoy stating that "the incident simply reflected the frustration of certain individuals. In democracy, we believe in the casting of votes through speech and expression using their own conscience. As such this kind of behaviour is strongly condemnable."

He further said that

authorities concerned should take cognizance of the prevailing unwanted scenario of the state as it would hinder in conducting a free and fair election if such situation continues.

Joykumar said that the incident occurred Friday night at Andro constituency where an NPP candidate was attacked when he was sitting with his father and some Meira Paibis. Carrying out pre-poll violence has become a habit nowadays as the recent incident wasn't the first time and is occurring in other constituencies too. Both people of the state and politicians should take the matter of pre-poll violence

seriously, he expressed.

Later, a delegation of the party led by Sangma met the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manipur in connection with the attack.

"Apprised the Chief Electoral Officer of Manipur about the attack on our candidate's father last night and on the series of incidents that took place around Manipur causing great concern for the safety of our candidates and the people," tweeted Sangma.

The incident comes a week

after a low-intensity bomb was exploded near the residence of NPP workers in Khabesoi village in Imphal East district.

Earlier, the party had also issued a statement drawing the attention of the authority that its party candidates and workers are abused and intimidated in a targeted manner by several militant groups in favour of BJP.

Meanwhile, BJP candidate Th Shyamkumar condemn the attack to his workers by supporter of NPP candidates. Those injured in the attack by

the NPP supporters are undergoing treatment at Raj Medicity and Advance Hospital.

This is the third incident of gun-related violence that occurred in the state ahead of polls. A student was shot dead in poll related violence in Heirok village in Thoubal district last December. The second incident occurred in Samurou in the second week of January wherein two persons including a close aid of Manipur Agriculture Minister was shot dead by unknown gunman.

## CORCOM boycotts PM visit, calls total shut down on Feb 22

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

The proposed visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the state of Manipur on February 22 has been boycotted by the conglomerate of armed rebel group CORCOM. A statement by the publicity committee of the armed rebel group stated that the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the state of Manipur (Kangleipak) is to campaign for the upcoming state assembly election which will be conducted in two phases in February and March. It said that the visit is to extend the colonial rule in the region and thus on the day of the visit of the Prime Minister, the CORCOM has

announced total shut down from 1 am of the day till the Prime Minister remain in the state. The statement said that the total shut down will be exempted for medical services, fire service, water supply and other health related issue.

The statement further added that the visit of the Prime Minister is not to ensure independent to Kangleipak which had been occupied by them for over 70 years. Such an effort is not new and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit is also not the first of its kind. Political parties of India have tried and conducted time and again to suppress the erstwhile nation Kangleipak by cheating the people during election time.

The statement said that the

upcoming election is not to decide the fate of the people of Kangleipak. Instead, the government form after the election under the constitution of India from time to time has threaten the integrity, land and the lives of the indigenous people. In almost all the manifestos of various political party nothing has been mention to protect the land and people of the state.

This election is a battle for power and for that various kind of criminal activities are being witness. Every people knows who are these criminal even though they tried to hide themselves. The CORCOM term this election as a tool to separate the people by spewing venom to the people.

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Conrad Kongsai Sangma, who is also the National President of the National People Party NPP said that the NPP has officially complaint to CEO and Chief Election Commission of India for taking necessary step to conduct the upcoming Manipur Legislative Assembly election in a Free and fair manner.

The NPP National President said this while speaking during a flag hosting Cum Public Meeting of Sheikh Noorul Hassan, the NPP candidate of Kshetrigao Kendra today.

Sangma expressed apprehension of certain poll related violence happening in

the state and the various intimidation to the NPP candidates and the workers by armed group.

"Steps should be taken in the best possible way to provide enough security to the candidate to make sure that the upcoming election is conducted without fear and in a free and fair manner", Conrad K Sangma said.

NPP candidate Sheikh Noorul Hassan, who is also the General Secretary (org.) of NPP, Manipur while speaking on the occasion said that the upcoming 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election, is very challenging. He said that it is time for the people to choose right Candidate to defeat communal candidate and to wipe out communal politics. He also

said that the people should elect the candidate who can bring inclusive development in the Constituency.

The function was attended by Md. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, president NPP, Kshetrigao Unit as a President of this function. Deputy Chief Minister Yumnam Joykumar, the National Vice President of NPP, MLA Yumkham Erabot Singh, the NPP Candidate of Wangkhei Assembly Constituency and Huidrom Vikramjit Singh Vice President, NPP Manipur State and NPP Candidate Yaikul Assembly Constituency and Md. Fajlur Rahman, Pradhan of Kshetrigao Part 1 Gram Parishad and Md. Abdul Qudus, Pradhan Kshetrigao Part 2 Gram Parishad also attended the function.

## Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Culture Ministry to organise 2-day event on International Mother Language Day

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 20:

The Culture Ministry will organize a two-day event on the occasion of International Mother Language Day as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The event will start from tomorrow at Indira Gandhi National Center of Arts, New Delhi. During the event, keynote address will be delivered by Culture Secretary, Director of UNESCO Cluster Office and renowned lyricist and poet Prasoon Joshi. The function will also witness poetry

recitation, group song and dance. A webinar on Using Technology for Multilingual Learning-Challenges and Opportunities will be held.

A book, Tribal and Indigenous Languages of India written by Dean of IGNC Prof. Ramesh Gaur will also be launched in the event.

An event Ekam Bharatam will witness distinguished presence of Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi to formally release the Vande Bharatam soundtrack. The song which has been co-

created by Grammy Award winner Ricky Kej along with tabla maestro Bikram Ghosh was a part of the dance presentations by the Culture Ministry on Republic Day event this year.

International Mother Language Day is observed worldwide on 21st February every year to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism. The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day, first came from Bangladesh.

The general conference of the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided to celebrate February 21 as International Mother Language Day in year 2000. Every year a unique theme is chosen by UNESCO to celebrate this special day.

The theme of 2022 is, Using technology for multilingual learning challenges and opportunities. It focuses on the potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support the development of quality teaching and learning for all.

## UPRFM boycotts Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

United People's Revolutionary Front of Manipur (UPRFM), an armed rebel group, while boycotting the visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called total shut down in Manipur from 1 am of February 22.

A statement of the outfit said that even though the prime Minister visited the state frequently its bring no good for the future of the Kangleipak. Using the mask of Democracy, the

people of the region has been suppressed and colonized. The statement also mention about the series of human rights violation committed by the Indian force to the people of the region it further said that the people were tame time and again during election time and shattered the right to live of the people of the region.

The statement of the outfit further said that the total shut down called will be exempted for emergency services, and other ritual related services.

# Drones are going to be as important as tractors

## Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The life of common people has already changed in India with the advent of smartphones and internet connectivity. Now get ready for a 'drone revolution', which is set to have a huge impact on the lifestyle of urban and rural people and the economy of the country. The drone revolution has begun and toy helicopter-like drones (flying objects) are ready to be a part of everyday life. The government has simplified the policies for the manufacture and flying of drones, so that their commercial use can be made accessible. Drones were already being used for military operations and professional photography, now they are being applied in agricultural work as well. Drones will prove to be helpful for the farmers in the same way as the tractors changed the fate of agriculture. Since independence in India, if any area has been totally neglected, it is farming. Besides the use of tractors, threshers, tube wells and pumping sets, not much technology has been applied in agriculture so far. Except for large farms, agriculture has stayed away from modern machinery. In such a situation, the formal launch of 100 Kisan Drones, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, assumes significance. This is the beginning of the drone era in Indian agriculture.

At present, drones will be used to spray pesticides, chemical fertilizers, seeds, water etc. in the fields. Gradually, they will also be used in the work of survey of agricultural land, measurement, taking the produce like fruits and flowers to the market and sending essential medicines and vaccines to the villages. At present, more than 200 Indian startups are engaged in drone manufacturing, whose number will be in thousands in the coming years. The seeds of a new tech revolution have been sowed with Agri Drones and Kisan Drones, whose growth will be felt rapidly. According to the Drone Federation of India (DFI), the drone industry in India can grow ten times to Rs 50,000 crore in the next five years. The industry can employ 10,000 people in the next three years and double to this in the next five years. According to a July 2021 report by BIS Research, the global drone market, currently dominated by the US, China and Israel, is estimated to reach \$ 28.47 billion in FY 2021-22, with India likely to hold 4.25 per cent.

Apart from rare photography, drones can be used in many areas and tasks like spraying of pesticides on crops, delivery of medicines in remote areas, land survey, monitoring of wildlife, law and order and traffic management by police, photography of impossible places, wedding photography, filmmaking, disaster management, construction activities and journalism etc. Himachal Pradesh's first Drone School will open in Kangra, where youth willing to take up drones as a career will get training. New career options are emerging for the youth as a drone pilot or drone operator. Drones are also called Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). Now the rules and regulations related to drones have come into force in the country, which has made their manufacture and use accessible. Jobs are available in this field like software development, assembling, repair, drone pilot and drone operator.

# Need to Reopen schools and address the learning losses



By: Vijay GarG

Young students have forgotten writing notes, numeracy skills, reading abilities and tables facebook sharing button/twitter sharing

Intermittent school closures have caused an almost insurmountable learning loss among students. Data from various factsheets, reports and surveys present a grim picture of how students from classes I-XII were affected by the pandemic-related school closures. Children have lost writing, reading and numeracy skills; many young students in under-resourced schools have trouble recognising alphabets, while many others have forgotten tables beyond those of 2 and 3.

Educators say that the time is ripe for the reopening of schools, to begin catch-up programmes and remedial classes to bridge the learning gap. They point out that large-scale vaccination programmes and strict following of Covid protocols can help in keeping children in schools.

According to a factsheet released by UNESCO, "more than 616 million students remain affected by full or partial school closures. Many

have lost basic numeracy and literacy skills and learning loss due to school closures have left up to 70% of 10-year-old children unable to read or understand a simple text, up from 53% pre-pandemic in low- and middle-income countries."

Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a global consulting firm, and Teach for India, a fellowship that helps under-resourced schools, compared how other countries and some Indian states have dealt with continuing education through Covid; their findings are compiled in a report titled 'India Needs To Learn — A Case for Keeping Schools Open.' The report reveals that while schools were mostly shut in 2020 (first half), many countries kept schools largely open through subsequent waves. In 2021, many countries including Japan, South Africa, US, UK, and Portugal had schools operational in-person for large parts of the year. In fact, many countries such as France, Canada and UK prioritised keeping schools open vis-a-vis malls, shops, and gyms. In late December 2021, 70% districts in India had less than 25 daily cases. However, with the approaching third wave, most states imposed statewide school closures.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2021 for Chhattisgarh says that in the pre-Covid-19 period basic learning outcomes in the state were promising, but Covid-19 caused schools to shut for in-person classes, leading to a drastic drop in children's foundational reading and arithmetic levels in primary classes.

Contd. on page 3

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# Congress flip flops in election campaign may damage the party respects

## AAP is getting some boost following last minute appeal by Kejriwal

By Harihar Swarup

A columnist has aptly summed up the poll scene in Punjab and how the ruling congress party committed gaffe after gaffe. "The Congress's campaign in Punjab is a lesson how not to win elections", he wrote. Chief Minister Charanjit Channi, appears to be a general without foot soldiers, his peers putting spokes rather than lending shoulders to the party's electioneering.

A majority of the Congress's 11 Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs from the state had opposed Navjot Sidhu's elevation as the party unit's President. Most of them are now confined to their constituencies and did not show any interest in selection of the party's poll candidate. It was known that the then Chief Minister, Capt. Amarinder Singh, was not on good terms with Sidhu. As a matter of policy, the PCC chief is appointed in consultation with CM so that government and organization function in co-ordination. From day one of his appointment, Sidhu started working against CM in a bid to replace him.

The worst happened when the central leadership began humiliating Amarinder Singh and ultimately removed him, virtually forcing him to quit the Congress even as Congress President, Sonia Gandhi told Capt. to continue. It is well known that Amarinder Singh has deep roots in Punjab; this was evident when he defeated Arun Jaitley in Lok Sabha elections.

Under Amarinder's leadership the Congress might have retained Punjab.

The Aam Admi Party and SAD, in the meanwhile, are going ahead with full speed. Arvind Kejriwal is frequent flyer to Punjab where his local mascot Bhagwant Singh Mann has been vigorously campaigning.

Known for bipolar fights between the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal, Punjab appears a psephologist's nightmare. On the face of it, the question isn't as to who would form the government, or get a majority. The rush apparently is for single-largest party status.

As the vote date (on February 20) nears, this real time poll bulleting could change. A prognosis that wouldn't perhaps alter is about defeats and victories with small margins. That's essentially because the voter is spoiled across the Doab (23), Majha (25) and Malwa (69) regions that together account for the 117-member assembly. Besides, the Congress, SAD- BSP and AAP, there's the BJP-Punjab Lok Congress and a farmers' formation in the arena.

In 2017, the Congress, then led by Amarinder Singh, had romped home with flying colours in all three regions, especially Malwa, where it won all except two of 25 seats. The SAD and BJP got one seat each; Majitha (Amritsar) and Sujanypur (Pathankot). The honours then shared by Navjot Singh Sidhu,

who campaigned in concert with the Captain, winning for himself the Amritsar (East) constituency.

The Captain now is a BJP ally and Sidhu a pale version of his charismatic self. The latter's presence in the ongoing campaign is going to be restricted, given the tough challenge he faces from the SDA's Bikram Majithia, who has shifted his base from his Majitha pocket borough to fight from Amritsar.

The former cricketer continues to draw crowds; rendered doubtful by his excitable ways is his excitable ways in his ability to make the electorate stay and sway. His impetuous personal conduct belying the wisdom he spews, there are serious questions about his leadership acumen, making the lesser orator, Chamjit Singh Channi, shine in contrast.

The Congress's understated chief ministerial face might have upstaged Sidhu in their intra-party tussle for prominence. But he has his task cut out as the party's sole pan-Punjab canvasser. The incumbent party's eclectic 2017 appeal isn't in evidence in Majha and has waned considerably in Doab where the expected Dalit polarization appears truncated by BSP's SAD-aided countervailing thrust.

What makes the climb steeper for Channi in Malwa is the grant of furlough to the imprisoned Dera Sachcha Sauda Chief, Gurmeet Ram Rahim, whose band of obedient

supporters could alter the outcome in close fight across the electorally crucial region stretching from Patiala to Fazilka and Ferozepur.

Its common talk in the countryside that Dera, probed for sacrilege cases (which damaged the SAD in the previous elections) would work against the Congress and help the BJP, whose government in Haryana has set its chief free for 21 days ahead of Punjab elections.

Much in the manner of the farmers' alliance (the Sanyukt Samaj Morcha), the Dera might cut into the potential APP support base of marginal farmers and other social group. But the strength of Arvind Kejriwal's party is its eik mouqa (one chance) appeal in an ambience where people feel let down, even betrayed, by mainline contestants.

Kejriwal indeed has acquired greater acceptability after projecting Bhagwant Singh Mann, the MP from Sangrur, as chief ministerial candidate. He is to Mann what Anna Hazare was to him in 2011-12 India Against Corruption movement that catapulted him to fame and political power.

At the core of his poll promises is the Delhi model of relief (freebies) and development. Not just that, many candidates the party has fielded are from technocrat, civil servants and social activist stock and that imparted luster to its maiden 2014 bid for power. (IPASERVICE)

# Yoga- The Science of Mindfulness, Wellness and Cure



By - M.R.Lalu

Yoga has become a tradition, passion and fashion in a world of tremendous impeccable changing tendencies. It is getting welcomed across the globe at a much faster pace. Ever since the U.N declaration on the need of Yoga being promoted as a wellness system to promote good health and mindfulness, the demand for yoga trainers and the number of practitioners increased in millions. More people are ready to give a try to yoga and ayurveda than the modern medical cure. Researches on yoga and ayurveda began to send affirmative views on their efficacy. Modern medical science mostly deals with the body. Medical Science across the globe considered health as a state of no disease on the body level; whereas, yoga and ayurveda deal with mental and spiritual aspects too. Health, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or illness. This definition directly points to the advantages and authority of yoga practice as a wellness system.

As researches are on, the modern medical science also began to concede to the fact that not only the physical but the emotional and spiritual aspects of wellness should also be counted. It is in fact to be stated that if the body is the instrument, the mental and spiritual energy can act as the fuel to carry out its functions. The International Day of Yoga is observed on June 21

and the historic declaration was made in 2014 by the United Nations. It was a diplomatic win for India and recognition for the tradition that we practiced and preserved for generations. Yoga can tremendously help to enhance immunity. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika elaborates yoga as a holistic practice to ward off diseases and keep the body and mind with vigour. Yoga therefore needs to be seen as a mechanism that tries to understand the body and mind in their totality. Mistaking yoga as just a process of twisting and turning of the body beyond its capacity is normal. That is how it is propagated.

A practitioner needs to understand the inner and outer dimensions of yoga practice and the effects it brings. The science of yoga (yoga shastra) clearly states the body as a multi-layered mechanism. It is necessary to know the body and the mind in their totality. This ancient wellness science is believed to have originated 2500 years ago. Maharshi Patanjali in his yoga sutras or aphorisms scribbled the importance of a healthy living for a healthy society. He deals with the physical, emotional, intellectual and the spiritual aspects of an individual in detail. Practicing yoga regularly enables a person to go beyond the limits of his body and mind. Breathing exercises, popularly known as Pranayama activates intrinsic powers in our body and helps us to calm down the mind. Scientifically proven facts tell us about the ability of yoga and pranayama to increase the duration of life. Undoubtedly, yoga has the ability to raise a man from his animal instincts and help him discover his divine realms. It is because the practitioner becomes attentive to the smallest movement that he makes and he becomes totally watchful of the impulses of his mind. To go into the minute details of everything with complete attention is what yoga



makes a practitioner capable of. Yoga literally means 'to unite or to join', a union of the microcosmic self and the macrocosmic self with complete awareness. Whereas, the most prominent definition of yoga that suits in the modern context is 'skilful action'. This makes yoga a daily affair. Any action done with complete awareness and perfection is yoga. Awareness comes from attention and attention comes from trying to be totally mindful. Yoga philosophy tells that diseases and discomforts of the body emerge from the level of mind or beyond; which means, the problem of the body cannot be cured at the level of body alone but at the level of both body and mind.

Modern world provides us with plenty of opportunities in every field. But in the middle of the hustle and bustle of life, we really miss the art of living. The young generation is getting swayed away by the influence of cell phones, laptops and social media. Their concentration is severely affected. Regular yoga practice can help them gain concentration. The reason why yoga is gaining acceptance rapidly is that it can relieve the practitioner from stress, hypertension, obesity and cardiac problems. The change in the lifestyle would deeply impact the physical, mental and spiritual health of a person. Dedicated

practice of yoga on a regular basis can balance the faculties of our life. The harmonious development of physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual faculties can be possible through the practice of yoga. Promoting yoga as a packaged branded property is a reality. It has mushroomed into a multimillion-dollar industry. We are sure to hit thousands of flashy personal web pages of yoga institutions.

Rapid commercialization of yoga is trending at full speed and it is difficult to recognize the real stuff. Before stepping onto a yoga mat, take your resolve as to what you need to accomplish by becoming a practitioner. A yoga expert from a recognized school of yoga can help you overcome a lot of health problems. But do not forget, it is important to practice the wellness system with its traditional flavor. Surya Namaskar, a combination of multiple yoga postures is essentially a great exercise to increase vitality and immunity. The Ministry of AYUSH went on organizing a Global Surya Namaskar Demonstration Programme on 14 January 2022 aiming a participation of 1 crore people. In a world of chaotic troubles and tribulations, yoga leads the way to peace and tranquility.



# Postal Ballots will play vital role -Th.Kirankumar

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

Postal Ballots will play a vital role in Assembly Constituencies where there is close contest between candidates, District Election Officer/DC Imphal West Th.Kirankumar said briefing media persons on Saturday at his office chamber regarding the district's preparedness for the ensuing 12<sup>th</sup> Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2022 Elections.

DEO Kirankumar, while explaining the different types of postal ballots in length, said the first type of postal ballots is for the Absentee Voters. There are 2834 Absentee Voters for Senior Citizens or 80+ electors and 444 Absentee Voters for PwDs in the district, he added.

Regarding voting facility for the Absentee Voters, the DEO said altogether 55 polling teams will visit their homes in two rounds. The road chart of each polling team has already been sent to all the candidates of the 13 ACs in the district.

The first round of visit will start from 8am of February 21 and continue till February 22. For those who missed the first round, a second trip will be made on February 25, he said adding that, the details have also been uploaded on the district's official



website. He continued that voters who have opted for this facility will be informed about the schedule timing of the visits personally or to their family members through SMS on their registered mobile numbers as well as through home visits by the BLOs.

The second type of Postal ballot is for the Service Voters. There are 3190 Postal Ballots for Service Voters in the district. He explained that the postal ballots and the required documents have already been sent to the voters electronically on February 12. Ballot papers received till 7:59 am of March 10 only will be accepted.

The third type of postal ballot is for those on election duty. Officials on election duty who want to avail postal ballots can submit their forms till February 21 to the concerned ROs, he said adding that two time slots

for voting will be provided to those found eligible. The first slot will be on February 24 at the training centres and the second will be at the time of dispersal of polling personnel, he added.

Stating that tracking of vehicular movement of the polling teams is crucial, the DEO said certain applications have been initiated to monitor their movement. He further said movement of vehicles carrying EVMs will be monitored through the e-tracker application fitted in the vehicles.

Another application – Booth App will be utilized to monitor real-time voter turnout information by the officials. Crowd management outside the Polling Stations will be done using e-Atlas app.

Highlighting the initiatives taken up for the PwD voters, the DEO said that through 'PwD app'-mobile application, PwD voters can ask for

vehicles and wheelchairs assistance. Kirankumar also said that all the 530 Polling Stations in the district will be webcasted and monitored from the DEO office.

Altogether 14 out of the 55 candidates in the fray in the 13 Assembly Constituencies of Imphal West district have criminal antecedents, he said adding that there is a total of 3,80,480 electors in the district. The DEO said a total of 18,326 EPIC cards for new voters have been distributed in the district through the BLOs.

Further speaking on the initiatives taken up for the smooth conduct of the election in the district, the DEO said details including lists of candidates, important phone numbers of concerned officials including ROs, AC wise Observers, where the public can highlight their complaints and grievances have also been displayed at polling stations and localities.

The DEO further sought cooperation of the public to ensure free, fair and peaceful voting in the district so that there is no need to conduct re-polls. He also appealed to the media persons to ensure that any news report related to the district is cross checked with the officials concerned so that the true report is put before the public.

# Transgenders shouldn't shy away from exercising their democratic rights:RO Lamsang

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 20:

17-Lamsang Assembly Constituency has 12 Transgender electors which is the highest marked in electoral list in Imphal West district, said Returning Officer Salam Padmapati emphasizing further that they should not shy away from exercising their democratic right.

The RO said adult franchise is the sole right of an elector and no one should step on it. The constituency's fate will be driven by the people and their representative, she said adding that people cannot afford to just watch the progress of other constituencies and wait for their turn.

She said we are all responsible citizens of the State with a clear understanding of democratic form of government and what we want for our future generation. We should leave no room for violence, she said appealing to all citizens of the constituency to come forward as a mature and civilized society and ensure smooth, free and fair conduct of the election.

Lamsang AC, which has a total of 33,437 electors, also has 430 electors who are above the age of 80 years and two others who are above the age of 100. There are 16,224 male and 17,201 female electors and 225 PwDs in the constituency, she said adding that 181 postal ballot for 12D for Absentee Voters in the constituency.

17/26-Awang Khunou has the highest number of electors



R.O - Salam Padmapati

with 1151 electors, and 17/47-Leitong with just 237 electors has the lowest number of electors in the constituency. Two polling stations – 17/39-St Edmund School (Northern Wing) and 17/40-St Edmund School (Southern Wing) have been identified as Model cum Women Polling Stations.

17-Lamsang Assembly Constituency has five candidates in fray for the 12<sup>th</sup> Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections, 2022. They are Education Minister and BJP candidate Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh, NPP candidate Pukhrabam Sumati Devi, Independent candidate Arambam Karamjit Singh, JD(U) candidate Dr. Khundrakpam Kanba Meitei and INC candidate Likmabam Manibabu Singh.

Manipur People's Party's Laishram Samungouba Singh was the first MLA to represent Lamsang AC at the Manipur Legislative Assembly. He defeated Khundongbam Jugeshwar of the CPI in the 1972 General Elections.

CPI's Jugeshwar defeated MLA Shamungouba in the 1974 election before being defeated by Independent candidate Phuritsabam Sagor Singh in the 1980 election.

Sagor, the sitting MLA, fought the 1984 election as an Independent candidate again but lost to another Independent candidate Mutum Deven.

Deven, who was MPP candidate in the 1990 General Elections, defeated Sagor of the Janata Dal for the second time to represent the constituency in the State Assembly.

Starting from the 1995 election till the 2017 election, only two candidates have shared the Lamsang seat between them. Sorokhaibam Rajen won the Lamsang seat in 1995 and 2000 Assembly Elections as INC and MSP candidates respectively defeating W.Brajabidhu in both elections.

However, Indian National Congress candidate Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu Singh represented the Constituency for three consecutive terms, winning the 2002, 2007 and 2012 elections defeating his arch rival Sorokhaibam Rajen in all three elections. Sorokhaibam Rajen contested the 2002 election as Federal party of Manipur candidate, 2007 elections as Manipur People's Party candidate and 2012 elections as the Nationalists Congress Party candidate.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections, 2017, Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh came back with a BJP ticket to regain the seat defeating INC's Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu. Rajen was later inducted as a minister in the present State cabinet under Chief Minister N.Biren Singh.

## Contd. from Page 2

## Need to Reopen schools....

The report is based on a survey of 46,021 children in the age category of 3-16 years in 33,432 households across 28 districts of Chhattisgarh.

Recently, findings of a parliamentary committee highlighted the disproportionate impact of Covid on the education of girls. Education ministry submitted that "school closures in India have affected 320 million children enrolled from pre-primary to tertiary levels of education. It has been estimated that of these, about 158 million are female students."

### Back on track

Educators say that children have forgotten how to write descriptive answers and it will take years of hard work to get them back on track. "They find it difficult to write answers for subjective type questions. Students in junior classes will still be able to bridge the learning gap, but those in class XI and XII, who have spent the past two years attending online classes from home will face the heat. They will be entering the university system with a weak foundation. Schools will have to revise the curriculum from the previous grade for which they mostly attended classes online," says Sridhar G, founder, Chethana PU College, a pre-university college in Bengaluru, affiliated to Karnataka Pre-University Education Board. An IIT-Kharagpur graduate and a PhD from Johns Hopkins, Sridhar G says that focussing on STEM education can help the country shed covid-induced shackles.

Once the schools reopen, we will go slow in completing the syllabus. We will be conducting remediation classes to bridge gaps we come across through assessment. There have been no lab classes and the writing, reading, and numeracy skills have suffered a lot. It will be a challenge for schools to keep them away from gadgets when they return to schools."

Children from lower-income groups and under-resourced schools have not been able to attend online classes at all in some cases. "Schools must start with proper safety and Covid protocols. Students from lower-income families do not have enough smartphones, on average there are three-four children in a family, in different grades with varied class timings. It gets to be very difficult for their parents to provide them with a smartphone or a laptop each. Most children, who before the pandemic began, could recite tables up to 20, today cannot go beyond the tables of 2 and 3," teachers say, to highlight the seriousness of the situation.

# Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram celebrate 34th Statehood Day; PM Modi extends greetings

Courtesy Inside NE  
By-Indira Chetry  
Guwahati, Feb 20:

The Northeast Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram are celebrating their 34th Statehood Day on 20 February. Both states were created on this day in 1987.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today greeted the people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram on their statehood days and praised their culture and traditions.

Heaping praise on the frontier state Arunachal, Modi said that the people of the state are known for their "culture, courage, and strong commitment to India's development."

"Greetings to the wonderful people of Arunachal Pradesh on the special occasion of their Statehood Day. The people of this state are known for their culture, courage, and strong commitment to India's development. May Arunachal Pradesh keep scaling new heights of progress," Modi tweeted.

"Best wishes to my sisters and brothers of



Mizoram on their Statehood Day. The entire nation is proud of the great Mizo culture. The people of Mizoram are known for their kindness and commitment towards living in harmony with nature. Praying for the state's continuous growth," he wrote in another tweet.

Union Home Minister Amit, extending his greetings, wrote, "Heartiest greetings to our sisters and brothers of Mizoram on their statehood day. The state of Mizoram is blessed with immense natural beauty and vibrant culture. I pray for the continued progress and

prosperity of the state."

"Statehood Day greetings to the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The land of the Rising Sun is known for its rich cultural heritage and patriotic zeal. May the state scale new heights and keep contributing to the development journey of our nation," he said in another tweet.

Many leaders of the northeast Indian states also greeted both the states and heaped praises on their respective cultures and traditions.

Statehood day is



celebrated to mark the foundation of the state or union territory. Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram

celebrate their statehood day on February 20. Both states were carved out of Assam on this day in 1987.

## Certificates Lost

I, the undersigned, Elangbam Khogen Singh, do hereby declare that I have lost my Migration Certificate bearing registration No. 1090 of 2003 and my Registration certificate issued by the Manipur University on the way between Khagempalli to Keishamthong in Imphal West district on January 29, 2022.

My Roll No. for appearing the B.A (Genral) xamination is 442533.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Elangbam Khogen Singh  
Keishamthong Elangbam Leikai, Imphal

# Peaceful polling underway for Assembly Elections in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh; Voter turn out till 1 pm in UP 35.88% and 34.1% in Punjab

**AIR Lucknow, Feb 20:**

In the poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, polling for the Third Phase of Assembly Elections is progressing smoothly. The polling will be conducted till 6.00 P.M. in the 59 Assembly Constituencies spread over 16 districts going to polls today. The state is witnessing seven-phase elections. In addition, the Single-Phase polling for Assembly Elections for 117 seats in Punjab is also being held simultaneously. The average voter turnout registered till 01.00 P.M. in this phase was 34.10 per cent in Punjab and 35.88 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed voters to vote in large numbers in the Punjab elections and the third phase of assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh which are being held today. In a tweet, Mr Modi called upon people, particularly the youth as well as first time voters to exercise their franchise in large numbers. The Third Phase of polling in Uttar Pradesh is being conducted in 59 Assembly Constituencies including 15 ACs reserved for the Scheduled Castes from 16 districts. These districts include Hathras, Kanpur Nagar (Kasganj), Etah, Mainpuri, Firozabad, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Etawah, Auraiya, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur district. During the 2017 Assembly Elections, BJP bagged 49 out of the 59 seats going to polls today, while Samajwadi Party won eight and Congress and BSP got one seat each. There are 627 candidates including 97 women in fray for 59 seats included in this phase. Maximum 15 candidates each are vying for three seats including Etah, Mehroni and Mahoba while minimum three candidates are in the fray for Karhal seat. The total number of eligible electors for this phase is 2.16 crore including 1.16 crore male, 99.90 lakh female and 1,060 third gender voters. In all, 25,794 Polling Stations have been set up in the concerned constituencies for their convenience. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has formed an alliance with Anupriya Patel's Apna Dal (Sonelal) and NISHAD Party led by Sanjay Nishad. The Samajwadi Party has entered into an alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal, Shivpal Yadav's Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia), Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party led by Om Prakash Rajbhar, Janvadi Party (Socialist) and Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) led by Krishna Patel and Mahan Dal. All India Trinamool Congress has announced support to the SP, but decided not to field its candidates in the polls. Meanwhile, the Congress and Bahujan Samaj Party have announced to go in for the upcoming polls without any alliance. Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen

has formed an alliance with Babu Singh Kushwaha's Jan Adhikar Party and Bharat Mukti Morcha. Bhim Army Chief Chandrashekar Azad's Azad Samaj Party has also floated an alliance with over 30 regional parties. The alliance is named Samajik Parivartan Morcha. The Janta Dal (United) is contesting the polls independently in the state. The prominent BJP candidates participating in this phase include Ministers Satish Mahana, Ajeet Pal Singh, Jaiveer Singh, Ram Naresh Agnihotri, Lakhan Singh Rajpoot, Manohar Lal and Neelima Katiyar, Union Minister Professor S. P. Singh Baghel, former Minister Manoj Prajapati along with Hariom Yadav while the partner NISHAD Party has fielded Chhote Singh and Apna Dal (S) has fielded Saroj Kureel and Rashmi Arya. Samajwadi Party President and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, former Minister Alok Shukla along with Jitendra Yadav, Saifurrahman, Arshad Jamal Siddiqui, Brajmohan Rahi, Arvind Singh Yadav, Pradeep Kumar Yadav, Anil Kumar Dube, Satish Nigam and Suman Maurya Shukla and Rekha Verma are also participating from the party while alliance partner Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Chief Shivpal Singh Yadav along with Pradeep Chaudhari from Rashtriya Lok Dal are in fray. The BSP has fielded Pankaj Mishra, Alok Verma, Arun Kumar, Prashant Ahirwar, Lalji Shukla, Avdesh Kumar Singh, Arun Mishra, Junaid Khan, Rajneesh Tiwari, Ramphool Nishad, Chandra Bhushan Singh Bundela and Shazia Hasan during this phase while Naresh Katiyar, Manoj Kumar, Mathura Prasad, Sohel Akhtar Ansari, Rahul Richharia, Kuldeep Singh, Haji Suhel, Brij Lal and Urmila Khaabari, Luis Khursheed, Vineeta Devi, Dr. Chhavi Varshneya, Umakanti and Pratima Pal from Congress are also in the fray. Suneel Kumar is representing AIMIM while former Minister Narendra Yadav is contesting as an independent candidate. During the Single-Phase polling in Punjab, total 1,304 candidates including 93 women are in fray for 117 seats. Maximum 19 candidates each are vying for Sahnewal and Patiala Rural seats while minimum five candidates are in the fray for Dinanagar seat. The total number of eligible electors for this phase is 2,13,19,804 including 1,12,98,081 male, 1,00,20,996 female and 727 third gender voters. In all, 24,740 Polling Stations have been set up across the state for polling. In the Single-Phase elections held in 2017, Indian National Congress secured a comfortable majority winning 77 seats and Aam Aadmi Party bagged 20 and Shiromani Akali Dal 12 seats while Bharatiya Janata Party got three and Lok Insaaf Party two seats. While the ruling Congress

and Aam Aadmi Party is contesting in Punjab on its own strength, Bharatiya Janata Party has formed alliance with former Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt). Shiromani Akali Dal and Bahujan Samaj Party have also come together to fight these elections. Apart from Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi contesting from two seats, other prominent candidates from Congress include State Unit Chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, Deputy Chief Ministers Sukhinder Singh Randhawa and Om Parkash Soni. From Shiromani Akali Dal, Five-time Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and Party Chief Sukhbir Singh Badal along with the first woman President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and three-time MLA Bibi Jagir Kaur and former Minister Bikram Singh Majithia are main contestants. Two-time Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh is leading the group of Punjab Lok Congress while BJP State Unit President Ashwani Sharma and former Union Minister Vijay Sampla are among prominent faces of the party while Parminder Singh Dhindsa and Paramjit Kaur Gulshan are taking part from Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt). Aam Aadmi Party's Chief Ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann, Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema and Kulwant Singh are major candidates from the party while Founder of Bharatiya Kisan Union and Sanyukt Samaj Morcha leader Balbir Singh Rajwala and BSP State Unit Chief Jasvir Singh Garhi are also in fray. The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is being used along with Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) at every Polling Station, with a view to enhance the transparency and credibility of the election process, as VVPAT allows the voter to verify his or her vote. The arrangements have already been made to ensure availability of adequate number of EVMs and VVPATs for the smooth conduct of elections. In view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and rising cases of Omicron variant across the country, Election Commission has laid focus on COVID-safe elections with maximum participation. It is going to ensure the safety of vote and voters as both are equally and critically important in democracy. The Election Commission has decided to allow maximum 1,250 electors in a Polling Station instead of earlier stipulation of 1,500 electors. Accordingly, there is a major change in the number of Polling Stations in the poll-bound states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Option of Postal Ballot facility has been extended to the

electors who are COVID-19 positive or suspect as certified by competent authority and are in-home or institutional quarantine along with those marked as Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and above the age of 80 years. As per the Election Commission instructions, the concerned Chief Electoral Officers are ensuring that every Polling Station is equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) like drinking water, waiting shed, toilet with water facility, adequate arrangements for lighting, ramp of appropriate gradient for the Persons with Disabilities. The special facilities include mandatory sanitization of Polling Station, thermal checking of voters at entry point either by polling staff or paramedical staff or an Asha worker. At the last hour of poll, such electors will be facilitated for voting, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. In view of the pandemic, the Commission has decided to extend the poll timing by one hour in all Assembly Constituencies. The COVID-19 patients, who are quarantined, will be allowed to cast their vote at the last hour of the poll day at their respective Polling Stations, under the supervision of health authorities, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. Proper mechanism of collection and disposal of waste or used gloves will be put in place at each Polling Station. Meanwhile, Senior BJP leader and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address public meetings at Haridwar and Unnao in Uttar Pradesh today. BJP President Jagat Prakash Nadda will address public meetings at Shravasti, Balrampur and Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh today. Senior BJP leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address public meetings at Amethi, Pratapgarh and Lucknow today.

## 'They shoot, we hide': Life amid shelling on Ukraine's front line

**By Liz Cookman  
Courtesy: Al Jazeera  
Marinka, Ukraine, Feb 20:**

Valentina Gordeyeva realised something was coming when the tops of nearby fir trees started to shake but as she ran to shelter in a nearby shop, a shard of shrapnel pierced the soft flesh of her left hand. "I was holding a bag and felt pain, and then I saw blood running down my bag," the 65-year-old said, her thumb and wrist now bandaged after she became one of four civilians wounded in shelling by Russian-backed separatists since Thursday. Pointing to the site where she was hit near a bus stop in Marinka, eastern Ukraine, she said a nearby school had also been damaged in the attack. The city of 10,000 is right on the front line, with separatist territory just metres away. It lies just beyond the western edge of Donetsk, the self-proclaimed capital of one of two territories in the Donbas region controlled by pro-Russian separatists. After eight years of a conflict that has killed more than 14,000 people, many here have gotten used to the threat of guns and artillery. Most of the city's buildings are riddled with the scars of conflict, and intact roofs or windows are rare. However, as tensions with Russia spiralled over the last few days, the attacks have become the most intense in years, hitting residential areas – even a kindergarten. Artillery fire has intensified along the entire front line, the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs said on Saturday. Soldiers on the front near Mariupol, a port city in the far east of the country, told Al Jazeera they experienced the heaviest shelling they can ever recall on Friday night, sharing chilling audio recordings of explosions. On Saturday, two

### Civilians in eastern Ukraine describe fear and destruction as shelling by Russian-backed separatists escalates.

Ukrainian soldiers were killed and four others were injured. When Al Jazeera visited Marinka on that afternoon, the booms of continued shelling could be heard nearby. The escalation has left Western powers fearing Ukraine is now on the brink of the full-scale war it has warned of for weeks. Russia has accused Ukraine of shelling its territory and of carrying out a "genocide" on separatists. Separatist leaders have since called for a mass evacuation of civilians to Russia and declared a full military mobilisation. US and Ukrainian officials say attacks have been staged as a pretext for a Russian invasion. Despite apocalyptic warnings in Western media, many Ukrainians have remained stoic in the face of the rising threat from Russia. Yet as the ceasefire violations grow, the atmosphere is beginning to change and some are taking refuge in cities further from the front. 'They've lost their minds' For Blinova Tetiana Anatolivna, 46, the last straw was the shelling of a water pumping station in her town. She fled in her friend's car from Volnovakha near Marinka to the eastern port of Mariupol on Saturday. "I have relatives in Donetsk and all they want and I want is peace," she said. Many of those who remain in the area are elderly, sick or do not have enough money to relocate, they are likely to bear the brunt of an escalating conflict. Aid groups have warned that 2.9 million people on both sides of the front line

are already in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Gordeyeva lives alone in a small bungalow in the centre of Marinka after her husband died of an illness and her children moved away. When the conflict first began in 2014, she moved to another village to stay with her sister. She is considering doing the same again, but she does not want to leave her home even though her children – who she didn't tell about her injury – have urged her to leave. "Something big is going to happen. We don't exactly know what but we are, I am, extremely afraid," she said. Meanwhile, in a small village on the south eastern edge of Marinka, Olena Ivanivna, 65, lives with her three grandchildren who had to stay home from school on Friday because the shelling was so heavy. They also spent much of the week sheltering in bunkers. The house Ivanivna built with her late husband is within sight of separatist-held territory. It has been hit so many times over the years she says the roof is "like a colander". On Saturday morning the ceiling plaster came down, perhaps, she says, because of the reverberation of a nearby explosion. For the last week, they have had no electricity and now she fears the water will stop after a nearby pipe was damaged. Yet they have nowhere else to go. "They haven't been shelling for a year. It was good. But now they've lost their minds," she said. "Now we don't leave our homes. They shoot and we hide. That's it."

## UP polls: Samajwadi Party govt withdrew cases against terrorists, says PM Modi

**Courtesy HT  
Lucknow, Feb 20:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched an all out attack on the Samajwadi Party over death sentence to 38 convicts in the 200 Ahmedabad blasts case. "The Samajwadi Party government withdrew cases against several terrorists accused of terror attacks in Uttar Pradesh. While the terrorists carried out blasts across the state, the SP government didn't allow trials against them," news agency ANI quoted PM Modi during his poll rally in Haridwar. "Blasts took places at court premises in Lucknow and Ayodhya in 2007. In 2012, the SP government withdrew case against a terrorist named Tariq Kazmi.

But the court foiled the SP government's conspiracy and the terrorist was sentenced to life imprisonment," the prime minister said. "Both SP and Congress leaders address terrorists like Osama bin Laden as 'ji'. They even wept on the elimination of terrorists in Batla House encounter," he added. The BJP and SP have been involved in a bitter war of words ever since the Ahmedabad court sentenced 38 convicts to death in the 2008 serial blasts case. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath has been aggressively attacking the Samajwadi Party, alleging that the family members of 2008 Ahmedabad blasts case accused were seen with Akhilesh Yadav asking for

votes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also attacked the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party, accusing the previous government of not cooperating with the Centre in the state's development initiatives between 2014 and 2017. "I regret that these Parivarwadis (dynasts) didn't help my government between 2014 and 17," he added. Continuing his attack on the Samajwadi Party, Modi said, "During the government run by Mafiawadis (protecting goons), land grabbing was common. The henchmen of these leaders could grab anyone's land. But the double engine government has shut their shops." Sharpening his dynast jibe, the prime minister also

warned voters against exercising their franchises against whom he calls 'Parivarwadis'. "Those who carry out their misdeeds in the dark, such dynasts can never bring light in the lives of the people," he said. Exhorting the voters to get inked in favour of BJP, the prime minister said that the people of Haridwar had made preparations to play Holi twice. "The first Holi will be played with BJP's bumper victory on March 10. If you want to play Holi on that day, you must make arrangements at polling booth," he added. Haridwar goes to polls in fourth phase of UP Assembly elections on February 23. The counting of votes will take place on March 10.