

## Prime Minister Modi attended public rally in poll bound state Manipur

**Manipur is becoming the gateway to trade with the rest of East Asia: PM Modi on connecting Manipur with the world**

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

Ahead of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election scheduled to hold in two phases – February 28 and March 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today addressed a public meeting at Luwangshangbam Cricket ground here in Imphal.

The Prime Minister was given a warm reception with traditional flavor by cultural performers of the state. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, State BJP President A Sharda devi, Minister Th. Biswajit, Union Minister of State Dr. Ranjan, Rajya Sabha MP Maharaj Sanajaoba and other leaders of the state and Union BJP leaders along with thousands of BJP supporters received the Prime Minister who is in a few hours visit in the state. The prime Minister was given a rousing welcome from Airport till he reached at Luwangshangbam ground by supporters of BJP on the way.

PM Modi started his address by highlighting that Manipur has completed 50 years of its establishment in the past month only. PM Modi said, "In the decades of Congress rule, Manipur only got inequality and unbalanced

development. But in the last five years, the Double Engine Sarkar of BJP has made sincere efforts for the development of Manipur."

PM Modi spoke on the troubles, the people of Manipur had to face under previous governments and how the Double Engine Sarkar has transitioned the state into a People's Government. PM Modi further said that the BJP government has taken care of Manipur during the pandemic completely, be it providing free vaccines to every poor and tribal family equally or building a robust health system.

Hitting out at the opposition, PM Modi remarked, "The Congress government had made 'bandh' and blockade the fate of Manipur. The Congress party could never understand the feelings of the people of the North East, the problems of the people here." PM Modi also iterated the problems of ration the people of Manipur faced before 2017. He said, "Even in this crisis of Corona, the BJP government is ensuring free ration to 22 lakh people of Manipur. That is, out of every 10 people in Manipur, there are 7 people who are getting the benefit of the free ration facility." PM

Talking further on the success of the Double Engine Sarkar in Manipur, PM Modi said, "Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, more than 60 thousand houses are



Modi also mentioned how leaders of Congress, on several occasions, mocked the culture and attire of the people in the Northeast and Manipur.

being built in Manipur. Most of it is owned by women. Our government has connected more than 1.25 lakh houses of the state with electricity connections. It is our government that has given 1.5 lakh free LPG connections to the mothers and sisters of Manipur under the Ujjwala scheme."

PM Modi also spoke on

Manipur becoming the gateway to trade with the rest of East Asia and connecting Manipur to India through railways. The PM said, "The day is not far when the train will come till Imphal, you will be connected to the whole country through rail. This connectivity is also going to boost the tourism sector here." He iterated how connectivity is



"Manipur is the land of charismatic players like Mary Kom and Mirabai Chanu. The country's first sports university, which has been set up in Manipur, will make this region an international hub of sports."

PM Modi made people aware of the various schemes that the BJP government is implementing to develop Manipur holistically. PM Modi said, "The farmers of Manipur will benefit from the Mission Oil Palm started by our government. BJP is promoting bamboo farmers, the bamboo industry and the MSMEs here. It is our government that changed the rules pertaining to bamboo."

PM Modi finally addressed that for the development to continue, the people of Manipur should not let the previous government of 'Bandhs' and Blockades come into power. PM Modi also reiterated his connection with the people of Manipur by making people aware that the PM has been visiting Manipur throughout his life. He also said that he has visited Manipur more than all Prime Ministers of the country combined due to his dedication towards the people of Manipur.

## Congress ruled and ruined the country: Th. Biswajit

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

Manipur Cabinet Minister Th. Biswajit Singh said the Bharatiya Janta Party always strives for the people's development and welfare, stressing the party has brought peace and development since it came to power for the first time in Manipur in 2017, while Congress ruined Manipur and the country.

Addressing a gathering before the arrival of PM Narendra Modi at Luwangshangbam for a BJP's mega public meeting, the Works Minister said: "Congress had been in power for many decades in the country and Manipur. Therefore, I want to say: Congress ruled the country; Congress ruined the country and our state, Manipur. They only leave bandh and blockades and made our state a



killing field."

Biswajit also reminded the masses of the untoward incidents that Manipur faced during the people's demand for the Inner Line Permit system in Manipur.

"The people of the state had suffered a lot. Many people lost their lives, and many others had to live with a disability during the ILP demand protest in Manipur. However, it was the Bharatiya Janta Party government that had fulfilled the people's long-cherished de-

mand of ILP."

Biswajit went on to attack the Congress party, alleging that they did not work for the welfare of the people and made the public suffer for many years. But the BJP, Biswajit stressed, has fulfilled the most promises made before the 2017 election.

"The Bharatiya Janta Party leaders had promised ahead of the 2017 election that Manipur will be free of band and blockades. And this first promises made to the people was fulfilled soon," he said.

## Polling for Absentee Voters begins in Kangpokpi

IT News  
Kangpokpi, Feb 22:

As Kangpokpi goes to poll in just a week, polling for the Absentee Voters began today in 51-Saitu (ST) Assembly Constituency (AC). Altogether 106 Absentee Voters that is, citizens over 80 years of age and persons with disability (PwD) are eligible for postal ballot to cast their votes at home in Kangpokpi district. 17 polling teams have been formed to visit the house of the Absentee Voters in the three assembly constituencies of the district and to enable them to exercise their voting rights.

For the 51-Saitu (ST) AC, first round of briefing of electors on voting procedures and

collection of marked ballot papers for Absentee Voters was held through house-to-house visit by the designated Polling Officials.

Altogether 62 Absentee Voters – 53 numbers of Senior Citizens (above 80 years of age) and 9 numbers of persons with disability (PwD) will exercise their voting rights. Second round of house-to-house visit by the designated Polling Officials will continue till February 24, 2022 if the need arises.

For the 50-Kangpokpi (Gen) AC, the first round of house-to-house visit by the designated Polling Officials will be held tomorrow (February 23, 2022). A total of 27 Absentee Voters – 25 Senior Citizens (above 80 years of age)

and 2(two) numbers of persons with disability (PwD) will exercise their voting rights.

Also, the first round voting for the absentee voters for the 46-Saikul (ST) AC will be held tomorrow (February 23) and if needed it will continue till February 25, 2022 in the second round through house-to-house visit of the designated Polling Officials. A total of 17 Absentee Voters – 13 Senior Citizens (above 80 years of age) and 4(four) numbers of persons with disability (PwD) will exercise their voting rights.

There is no case of Absentee Voters with Covid-19 suspect or affected person from the three assembly constituencies of Kangpokpi District.

## Kangpokpi Poll 2022: Apps for transparency, to ease voters

IT News  
Kangpokpi, Feb 22:

District Election Officer, Kangpokpi led by Kengoo Zuringla and the entire election team are tirelessly working in full swing as the poll date draws closer for the first phase of the ensuing 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election, 2022.

DEO is ensuring that the election is carried out in a free, fair & transparent manner and there are no room left for corruption. She appealed to the voters to utilise their power to elect their choice of representatives without any fear and biasness.

Interacting with the DIPR officials of Kangpokpi district, she further said that there are numbers of mobile apps from which a common citizen/voter can avail information related to the ensuing election such as eVIGIL app, Voter Helpline app and Know your Candidate app. Stating that eVIGIL stands for Vigilant Citizen and is available as a free app for all Android users in India, she continued that people can lodge complaints of poll malpractices and any incident of violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) through eVIGIL app from any mobile number.

She said that the app al-



lows a person to report any violation of MCC by simply taking a photo or video and also helps to log-in anonymously and track the com-

plaint ID which will be acknowledged by ECI. She further added that once logged-in, a citizen can click a photo or record a video (of up to 2

minutes) and submit it as digital proof along with automated location mapping by the Geographic Information System.

Regarding the **Voter Helpline app**, users can download their digital photo voter slip. They just have to link up their mobile phone with that of EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card) card. Voters can show the Digital Photo Voter slip at the polling station, instead of the physical photo voter slip, she added.

Further she said, anyone can call the toll free Voter Helpline number 1950 or dial mobile numbers 6033904313,

6033904314, 6033904292 for any queries related to Kangpokpi district. She said that callers can enquire on subjects such as EPIC, electoral roll, online registration and lodge a complaint by simply dialling into the toll-free numbers.

About the **Know Your Candidate**, she said that ECI has developed Know your Candidate (KYC) mobile applications for both Android and iOS platforms for informing about "criminal antecedents" status of candidates. This allows citizens to browse candidates with/without criminal antecedents and empowers

the citizens to know the criminal antecedents of the candidates, she added.

ECI has designed in-house software for complete candidate and election management through software called **ENCORE** which stands for Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment. This provides seamless facility for Returning Officer to process candidate nomination, affidavit, Voter turnout, counting, results and data management. She gave details regarding the various apps which are a part of the Encore, which are as follows:

contd. on page 4

# Can e-Commerce really impact traditional shops?

## Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



In the next ten years, e-commerce will grow substantially and online players like Facebook and YouTube will enter the e-commerce space to compete with the giants like Amazon. Globally over 60% physical stores will close and those that survive will be experience centres. Most large shopping centres will close. It was tweeted by Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises, who enjoys a huge fan following on social media. Hundreds of twitter users reacted to the shocking futuristic statement made by one of the top businessmen of India. However, most of the users were against the idea of closing down brick and mortar stores, as the traditional stores provide jobs to millions of people. One user, Utsav Verma supported the statement by saying that you can get all the variety on Amazon, which you cannot get at a shop. It's a pain to go to the market, find parking, and browse through unmanaged shelves. "Still, there will be things which I would like to touch, feel and try before buying," he opined.

Another user, Mohit Gupta did not agree and said, "Technological development is an ongoing process. Traditional stores will evolve as the years pass. Nothing goes dead as new technologies come in to help. Logistics and time for delivery will always ensure the presence of physical stores." Arunava Sanyal also had similar feelings. He replied, "With the arrival of online editions, we all expected the books and newspapers to vanish, which did not happen. Many people enjoy the 'touch and feel' part of shopping, which will endure. I expect both online and physical stores to survive." One user, Kushagra said, "I do not foresee brick and mortar stores going out of fashion anytime soon. E-commerce is surely convenient, but shopping is more about the experience rather than just convenience." No doubt, e-commerce will gain weight in India too and many of the pop and mom shops may suffer if they do not change with the time. However, those stores would definitely survive or rather flourish, who will keep evolving and adopt new technologies.

According to Italian consultancy Finaria, global e-commerce retail sales may reach more than 4 trillion dollars in 2025. Physical stores must consider this and aspire to take their business online. If they don't opt for online presence, they will lose tech-savvy customers, who look for a simple, quick and convenient purchase comfortably from anywhere. That day is not far away, when delivery drones will be put on the task by the e-commerce companies. Still, experts opine that offline shops and online retail stores must be connected and should complement each other. That will ensure a perfect consumer experience. Having all sorts of payment options will also be a decisive factor in buying. Virtual stores, mobile or m-commerce, chatbots and artificial intelligence will also play a significant role in the future shopping trends. The desire for instant access and fast turnaround, 24/7 availability, will be the norm in coming years, driven in particular by millennials (born during 1980-95) and also by Gen Z consumers (born during 1996-2010). The later generation is more digitally active, hence they would prefer an online ecosystem for shopping.

# Respect for the women – Hypocrisy must go

Multiplicity is what the fabric that a society is woven into. Variety gives it the essential beauty and makes it adorable. India has its strength in encompassing such diversities into its fold irrespective of their source and sociability. This has been the idea that we, as a nation, believed and followed. Societies, mostly patriarchal in nature across the globe, positioned themselves above the essential femininity and setting a hierarchy confining and conveniently forcing it to confess to what the patriarchy dictates. To some extent India is not different. Putting a veil around what the patriarchy believed as a safe and standard custom for the women, in a society of rigid phraseologies, we become advocates of women's rights. Lustrous vocabularies such as women rights, religious freedom, liberty and equality would decorate our debates. Lamentations on women rights will be aired to houseful audiences by channels, with no deliberations arguing on what, if someone wants to unveil themselves from the suffocating and incarcerating attire imposed on them by the same patriarchy. So, the convenience of the mighty gender is running the show. Everything can be justified and suppressed to the level of its satisfaction. Young girls choosing hijab over education in the recent tussle in Karnataka reveals this superimposed hand of an invincible patriarchy. No wonder, it can't work otherwise. The discourse is about constitutional rights being forcefully trodden to dust by a constitutional establishment, the government. The constitution, being indiscriminate on religious rights, equally blessed everybody with freedom to express and prosper. Therefore, someone's right to choose between what is professed in religion comes under religious freedom and apparently unquestionable. Attempts to question such practices should definitely be addressed inside the boundaries of the constitutional values. Going beyond it definitely invites unpleasant repercussions.

Do religions, to what a large number of cohorts are submissive to, give them the freedom to take a breath of personal liberty, without being oppressed and persecuted by the mighty dominance of the masculine? An answer to this question will be the most unpleasant in today's tensed atmosphere. Without adequate reforms put in place, no practices, however good and astutely followed they are, will survive the storm of time. Of course, for a period of time, such suppressive and forcefully submissive choices enforced on people will run. But the efficacy and reliability and divinity of such practices will remain questioned and surfaced below the lid of discontent. In a democracy, the constitutional values need to be upheld as supreme while respect for individual choices is upheld. When individual choices are being caricatured as the maxim and if they bring collective negative repercussions while the orthodoxy taking center stage in retaliation, there needs to come reforms for the collective good. Religions, not open to reforms and inefficient to change as per the demand of time, remain obsolete and disturbing irrationally inviting distress in the amiability of every society.

The feminine, being susceptible to such dominance remains a pitiable reality. Women across the globe are frequently forcefully pressed to silence and to what we call a family, a minute segment of the society itself, is an example for such dominance and suppression. Starting from an innocent scratch of a male toddler in the school, to the one blow she received at the face from a belligerent husband, a woman seems to be too self-ordained to be tortured. Facing an acid attack in the street to a torture inside the confinement of a home, she is made to suffer.



By: M.R. Lahu

Masih Alinejad, the renowned Iranian journalist is a living example to what she calls a fight against the acrimony of the religious patriarchal establishment. She, being freed herself from the veil, had to flee from her homeland and take asylum elsewhere. Her "My Stealthy Freedom" is a social media movement that attracted thousands of veiled lives. Every woman for that matter, is a silent rebellion boiling inside the four walls of the patriarchy. With more than a million followers in Facebook, world across, she raises questions on the unscrupulous and irrationally justified religious male dominance. The days to come might witness a volcanic eruption of the feminine anger against the male infringement. Legitimizing the subordination of women in the name of religion is tantamount to disrespect the constitutional values of a democracy, which is also a challenge that is thrown in advance to check the reactions. The essential point is, when personal choice and freedom are being debated at length, voices against the extent to which religions curtail the very idea of freedom for women is not heard. The silence is thickly blanketing the animosity on women, deliberately diverting the subject of discourse in the name of religious freedom. The verdict on Lucy Kalappura, a Kerala nun on being sexually harassed multiple times by a clergy found no justice for the feminine in her. As an endorsement of vote bank politics, the ruling establishment in the state is blamed to have manipulated the issue to such a level that the angel of God had to desperately sit back and shed tears. Traditions in India mostly propa-

gated the idea of reverence for women. With a large number of scholars being women, Vedic debates were a usual affair in the ancient education system. From house makers to scholars to rulers, the Indian society for generations flourished with women contributing for the society. The Manusmriti the Dharma sastra as ordained by the first law giver Manu, gives accounts of how feminine gender needs to be helped and respected. As the text advocates that a girl, in her childhood should be protected by her father. In her younger days, according to the text, she is supposed to be taken care of by her husband and she, no doubt, should be protected by her children in old age. This idea of protection offered by the men according to the text, does not necessarily qualify the term male dominance. Ambiguity to what it is interpreted as should not be sidelined. Indeed, it is debatable as to what extent, in which, such versus are manipulated and enforced on the women by a male supremacy. Another verse of the same text gives a profound meaning of respect and admiration for the feminine. The verse "Yatra Naryastu Pujyante Ramante Tatva Devata" is the best of accolades that a religious text can offer to the women in a society. Which tells 'where women are honored, there the deities are pleased.'

In essence and practice, it is necessary for everybody in the discourse to sit and amicably debate on the unfathomability of the hypocrisy involved while fixing narratives. Taking the issue of women rights from multiple angles, it is the women of the country, who should fearlessly stand up and set narratives. To come out or remain in the veil is their right, but to play into the hands of the hypocrisy of the patriarchy, should be taken with sensibility and courage. Lives of women like Masih Alinejad set an example for such a discourse.

(The writer is a Freelance Journalist/ Social Worker)

# Bad loans of Indian Banks leapfrogged in last seven years

## Business-political nexus may be behind rising bank fraud

By: Nantoo Banerjee

Business is rarely risk free. So are bank loans. There is nothing unusual about non-performing loans or assets. They exist in every economy. But, when business promoters collude with bank management to manipulate loans in their personal favour, they become a matter of serious concern. And, this seems to have become a growing trend in India. The latest report on the promoters of a Gujarat-based ship construction firm, ABG Shipyard, defrauding a consortium of 28 banks and financial institutions to the tune of Rs.22,842 crore should be a cause of worry as the forensic audit by Ernst and Young (EY) consultancy revealed that between 2012 and 2017, the promoters colluded together to illegally divert

and misappropriate large funds in criminal breach of trust.

The loan account was declared as 'non-performing asset' (NPA) in July 2016 and 'fraud' in 2019. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered an FIR against ABG Shipyard Ltd and its directors, including chairman and managing director Rishi Kamlesh Agarwal, in what could be the biggest bank fraud case in the country's history. Unfortunately, the authorities, including the banking regulator Reserve Bank (RBI), the government and banks, do not seem to be enough concerned.

Between 2014 and 2020, an RBI data analysis would show the total burden of non-performing loans on banks was nearly 365 percent more than the amount during the previous six years of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) rule. A scrutiny of banking data since 2008 would show the massive amount of bad loans being written off in recent years. RBI put the new gross NPAs of public sector banks (PSBs) from 2014-15 to 2019-20 at nearly Rs.18.28 lakh crore, up from around Rs.5 lakh crore from 2008-09 to 2013-14.

PSBs wrote off bad loans worth Rs.63,388 crore during 2014-20. It was a massive write-off if compared with the 2008-14 gross amount of Rs.32,109 crore. Usually, banks write off non-performing loans which are over four years old as part of their exercise to clean up balance-sheet. "As borrowers of written-off loans continue to be liable for repayment and the process of recovery of dues in written-off loan accounts continues, write-off does not benefit the borrower," NDA Minister Anurag

Thakur told Parliament in 2019.

India ranks quite high in the list of major economies such as the US, China, Japan, France, Germany, the UK, Israel, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden, Australia, Denmark, Indonesia and Malaysia. Among others, in terms of bank NPAs. According to a Global Economy study based on World Bank data of non-performing loans as percentage of bank loans in 102 countries in 2020, India's was recorded at eight percent. However, RBI has lately forecast that the rate of banks' bad loans will increase to 9.8 percent by March 2022 under the baseline scenario and to 11.22 percent under a severe stress scenario.

The forecast is quite alarming compared with the Global Economy-listed figures of countries such as China (1.84 percent), Malaysia (1.57 percent), Indonesia (2.75 percent), Australia (1.11 percent), the UK (1.22 percent), Israel (1.48 percent), Canada (0.53 percent), Sweden (0.51 percent) and the USA (1.07 percent). In 2017, the NDA government promulgated an ordinance to amend the Banking Act, which was subsequently passed by Parliament, giving RBI more powers to tackle the problem of Indian banks clogged under the burden of Rs.9.64 trillion of NPAs. However, the problem persists as the latest RBI forecast suggests.

Little is reported officially about the role of India's large business houses in big bank frauds and continuously growing NPAs. This is despite the fact that an overwhelming percentage of bad loans are on account of big business borrowers. While genuine and small defaulters are punished regularly, bullied by bank-engaged private

musclemen or bouncers for loan recovery and their personal assets are seized, big business defaulters often go scot free. Many take shelter outside the country. Three years ago, this government asked banks to provide passport details of people associated with soured loans of more than Rs.50 crore.

According to CBI, most ABG Shipyard loans were given by banks between 2005 and 2012. SBI said the company's account turned NPA on November 30, 2013. The account was restructured in 2014. But, its operations could not be revived. Obviously, the lenders failed to properly assess the chances of revival before agreeing to the loan restructure. Who were the assessors? Did they act under political or other external pressure? Why fresh look out notices against the fraud stars now? During the financial year 2019-20, the lender banks declared the ABG Shipyard account as 'fraud'. Why did it take this long for CBI to file FIR against the directors of ABG Shipyard and ABG International Private Limited? What prevented the arrest of the offenders?

Interestingly, many of the big bank defaulters are NRIs though they live mostly on India-based business operations. A good number of them have multiple passports and residences in tax havens. The law and the legal system seem to be soft on them in India compared to those in North America, Europe and Asia. Imagine big-time fraud star Diamantaire Mehul Choksi has been happily hiding in Antigua and Barbuda since 2018 after leaving India! Nirav Modi, nephew of Mehul Choksi, continues to cool his heels in a UK jail as he is afraid of poor conditions of Indian jails.

Nirav Modi is accused of an alleged involvement in the Rs.14,000-crore bank fraud case. NRI businessman Vijay Mallya, a big bank fraud accused in India, has been living in the UK ever since he managed to leave the country on March 2, 2016. Banks are still anxiously awaiting Mallya's extradition with the hope that the money they lent to the former Kingfisher boss will be returned to them. Mallya was a former Congress-Janata Dal (Secular)-BJP supported independent Rajya Sabha MP for two terms. In advanced countries, bank fraud is regarded as a felony. In the US, conviction for bank fraud carries imprisonment of upto 30 years and/or a fine of upto \$1 million.

Many feel collusion among top bank officials, powerful political bosses and rampant nepotism has allowed big business to loot India's banking system. According to a list compiled by All India Bank Employees Association, the largest body of bank employees, 17 public sector banks had, as on September 30, 2019, a total of 2,426 wilful defaulter loan accounts worth Rs.1.5 lakh crore. Those wilful defaulters included ABG Shipyard, Kingfisher Airlines, Rotomac, Nakshatra Brands, Amtek Auto, Diamond Power Infrastructure, Siddhi Vinayak Logistics, Deccan Chronicle Holdings, Ashapura Garments, Electroltherm India, Nakoda, VMC Systems, Varun Industries, Zoom Developers, among several others. These are accounts where borrowers are not willing to pay despite their having a repayment capacity to a substantial extent. Hence, an element of criminality undoubtedly exists. After all, banks are dealing with public money. (IPAService)

# Mother tongue is our identity



By: Vijay Garg

The mother tongue is our identity and it bears witness to our existence and our survival. Through this our thinking moves and it accompanies us from birth to death. Research from around the world has shown that everyone is very attached to their mother tongue because we can express our feelings, emotions and feelings in a very effective way. In today's modern, capitalist and technological age we should never shy away from learning other languages in order to broaden our horizons of knowledge, thinking and thinking but they should not be used without forgetting our mother tongue. Should All the languages of the world are the mother tongues of their respective communities which deserve equal respect and love. The more languages we know, the more knowledgeable and intelligent we will be. But according to linguists and psychologists, we can learn other languages better only if we first have a good command of our mother tongue. Therefore, the mother tongue should be accorded due respect in all government or non-government educational institutions in the mother tongue speaking areas and then other languages should be used without any discrimination. Teachers should also use different languages in their classroom according to the understanding, need and interest of the students. We all have a duty to take care of our mother tongue on the basis of priority and to give equal respect to other languages.

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# Biological E's Covid-19 Vaccine Corbevax Gets Emergency Use Approval for Children Aged 12-18

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 22:

Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company Biological E Ltd on Monday said its coronavirus vaccine Corbevax, also India's third homegrown vaccine, has received an emergency use approval in India for use in children aged 12 to 18 years.

The approval is likely to significantly ramp up the government's ongoing drive to vaccinate children between 15 and 18 years of age, and later for those between 12 and 14 years of age.

It comes at a time when schools across the country are opening up as Covid cases are witnessing a considerable decline.

"With this approval, we are closer to finishing our global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Once fully vaccinated, children can

resume their activities and educational pursuits in schools and colleges without any apprehension," said Mahima Dada, Managing Director, Biological E. Limited.

Biological E had sought the emergency use authorisation of Corbevax on February 13. The expert panel of India's central drug authority had later recommended granting restricted Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) to Biological E's vaccine. The recommendation was sent to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for final approval.

Corbevax is India's first indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19. The Drugs Controller General of India had approved the vaccine for restricted use in adults on December 28, but it was incorporated in the country's vaccine drive.

In a statement, the pharmaceutical company said that it initiated the clinical study in October 2021 and evaluated the available safety and immunogenicity results of the ongoing phase 1/11 study, which indicated that the vaccine is safe and immunogenic.

Corbevax is India's first indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19. The Drugs Controller General of India had approved the vaccine for restricted use in adults on December 28, but it was incorporated in the country's vaccine drive.

Corbevax is administered through intramuscular route with two doses scheduled 28 days apart and is stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius temperature and presented as 0.5 ml (single dose) and 5 ml (10 doses) vial and 10 ml (20 doses) vial pack.

# Active COVID-19 cases in India settle below two lakh after 49 days

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 22:

India added 13,405 new coronavirus infections in a single day, taking the virus tally to 4,28,51,929, while the active COVID-19 cases dipped below two lakh after 49 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The death toll climbed to 5,12,344 with 235 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The daily COVID-19 cases in India have remained below one lakh for 16 consecutive days.

The active cases declined to 1,81,075 comprising 0.42 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has further improved to 98.38 per cent, the ministry said.

A reduction of 21,056 cases

has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload of India in a span of 49 days.

The daily positivity rate was recorded as 1.24 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded as 1.98 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,21,58,510, while the case fatality rate was recorded as 1.20 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 175.83 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-

crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 235 new fatalities include 128 from Kerala and 21 from Karnataka.

A total of 5,12,344 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,43,586 from Maharashtra, 64,273 from Kerala, 39,816 from Karnataka, 37,981 from Tamil Nadu, 26,105 from Delhi, 23,435 from Uttar Pradesh and 21,143 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

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

# Patsoi with maximum voters can strengthen festival of democracy: RO Samson

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:



19-Patsoi Assembly Constituency, having the maximum electors in Imphal West, can strengthen the festival of democracy, said Returning Officer Samson Huidrom appealing to all the 37,302 electors of the constituency to come out and exercise their democratic rights to choose the right representative on Monday.

RO Samson said the constituency has 19,607 female voters and 17,683 male voters. He said there are 12 transgender electors, one above 100 years of age, 619 electors above 80 and 375 PwD electors in Patsoi AC and 196 electors have been found eligible for Postal Ballot (12D) for Absentee Voters.

There are 49 polling stations with five sectors and 196 polling officials. Polling Station 19/3 with 1176 electors has the highest number of electors and 19/25 with 321 electors has the lowest electors. 19/18 Model Higher Secondary School (N/W) and 19/19 Model Higher Secondary School (S/W) have been identified as Model cum Women Polling Stations.

Patsoi AC has four candidates in the fray for the 12th

Manipur, INC candidate and sitting MLA Akoijam Mirabai Devi, NPP candidate RK. Rameshwar Singh, BJP candidate Saram Kunjakeswor (Keba) Singh and JD(U) candidate Wakambam Ibomcha Singh.

19-Patsoi Assembly Constituency was represented for six terms by Dr. Leishangthem Chandramani in the Manipur Legislative Assembly since Statehood in 1972. He became Deputy Chief Minister in the MSCP led government under Chief Minister Wahengbam Nipamacha.

In the 1st Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections, 1972, L Chandramani contested as Independent candidate and defeated Akoijam Kulachandra of the Indian

National Congress. Dr. Chandramani contested the 1974 elections as MPP candidate and defeated Independent candidate Nongthombam Ibomcha Singh. For his third term as the MLA of the constituency, Dr. L Chandramani contested the 1980 elections as Janata Party candidate and defeated Nongthombam Ibomcha Singh, who contested as the Manipur People's Party candidate.

Winning the 1984 elections, INC candidate Dr. L Chandramani retained the seat for the fourth consecutive term, defeating Independent candidate Nongthombam Ibomcha Singh for the third time in a row.

Dr. L. Chandramani faced

defeat for the first time in the 1990 elections in the hands of his arch rival N. Ibomcha, who contested as the ICS(SCS) candidate.

Dr Chandramani returned to the Manipur Legislative Assembly winning two more terms in the 6th and 7th Assembly Elections in 1995 and 2000. In the 1995 elections, he defeated MPP's Nandeibam Muhendro Singh and later CPI's Leishangthem Thoinren in the 2000 election.

CPI's Moirangthem Nabadwip handed Dr. Chandramani his second defeat in the 2002 election. Dr. Chandramani had contested the election as the Federal Party of Manipur candidate.

In the 9th Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections, 2007, Independent candidate Saram Kunjakeswor (Keba) Singh defeated MPP's Dr. Leishangthem Chandramani Singh.

In both the 10th and 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections, INC candidate Akoijam Mirabai Devi defeated Saram Kunjakeswor. In the 10th Assembly Elections, Kunjakeswor contested as the ATIC candidate and in the 11th State Assembly Elections, 2017, he contested as the NEIDP candidate.

# Regional Outreach Bureau, Imphal organises SVEEP

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

A one day Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme on Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) was organised at Patsoi Part 1, Imphal West District by the Regional Outreach Bureau, Imphal, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India yesterday. L. Shyamji Singh, President of local club Patsoi Part 1 presided the event.

Dr. Aribam Ibomcha Sharma, Head of Office, Regional Outreach Bureau,



Imphal, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India explained on Informed

Choice and Ethical Voting to the audience which consist mainly of new and first time voters.

Speaking as a resource person, Samson, SDO, Patsoi, explained on inclusive and accessible election, Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). He also explained the importance of every single vote which will elect MLAs, who in turn will be a part which will elect the president of India.

A quiz contest was held and prizes along with certificates were distributed. Private Registered Troupes (PRTs) of ROB, Imphal, Manipur Thang-Ta Cultural Association performed Thang-Ta show while M/s United Artist Association performed a drama - Meehukhanba (Election).

# India's Naval Might in Full Display at President Kovind's Fleet Review

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Feb 22:

President Ram Nath Kovind conducted the review of the Indian Navy's fleet (PFR-2022) off the Visakhapatnam coast in the Bay of Bengal in which India's maritime defence might was on full display on Monday.

Sailing on the indigenously designed Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel INS Sumitra, designated as the Presidential Yacht, Kovind sailed past 44 ships anchored in four columns in the Bay of Bengal and received the ceremonial salute from each of them. The theme of the President's Fleet Review-2022 was Indian Navy 75 years in Service of the Nation, commemorating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (75 years of Independence), an Indian Navy release stated.

The crew of each ship presented a salute with the traditional 'Three Jais', a symbolic act called "Man and Cheer Ship," in a demonstration of the unconditional allegiance of

Navy personnel to the country and the Supreme Commander.

The President was accompanied by First Lady Savita Kovind, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhat, Andhra Pradesh Governor

Biswabhusan Harichandan, Chief of Defence Staff General M M Naravane, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) Vice-Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta and other officials on board the Presidential Yacht.

Along with the ships, there was a Parade of Sails, comprising two Laser Bahia, six Enterprise Class, and six Indian Naval Sailing Vessels Mhadei, Tarini, Bulbul, Hariyal, Kadalpura, and Neelkanth. Rescue divers conducted 'combat jumps' from the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk-I, demonstrating a quick rescue using a Rescue Basket. The President also reviewed the mobile submarine column that included INS Vela, a re-



cently-inducted Made in India Kalvari class submarine.

The ALH from the Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 322 in Kochi, are known as the "Guardians", used in disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and rescue operations. Two Hawks from the INAS 551, known as "Phantoms", performed tactical manoeuvres in Viper formation, while Naval aircraft, including Chetak, Dhruv,

Seaking, and Dornier, conducted a composite fly-past.

Marine Commandos (Marcos) from the Special Operations unit INS Karna on the eastern seaboard, performed combat free-fall water jumps from a designated drop zone from a height of 6,000 feet. Displaying immaculate skill, the Marcos completed precise landings in a sequence in close

proximity to the Presidential Yacht. On completion of the review, the President returned to base with ceremonial piping of the salute, followed by a 21 Gun Salute.

On the occasion, the President said that India believes in 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' to focus on cooperative measures for sustainable use of oceans. He said that a large part of global trade

flows through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Safety of the seas and of the maritime commons, therefore, remains a critical requirement.

The President noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indian Navy has been providing aid to friendly nations by supplying medicines and evacuating stranded Indian citizens and foreign nationals in different parts of the world under 'Mission SAGAR' and 'Samudra Setu'. The effective deployment of the Indian Navy in times of crisis has underscored India's vision of being the 'Preferred Security Partner' and 'First Responder' in the IOR.

The headquarters of the ENC of the Indian Navy located at Vizag had made a glorious contribution during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. The ENC was instrumental in the naval blockade of the then East Pakistan and the sinking of Pakistan's submarine 'Ghazi'. It was a decisive blow to Pakistan and the 1971 war remains one of the most emphatic vic-

tories in our history, he added.

He noted that about 70 per cent of the contents of several warships and submarines under construction in various public and private shipyards across the country are indigenous. Soon indigenously built aircraft carrier, 'Vikrant' will join the service. This is an impressive contribution to the making of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India).

As the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, every President of India reviews the Indian Naval Fleet once during his five-year tenure and PFR-22 was the 12th edition. The PFR is aimed at assuring the country of the Indian Navy's preparedness, high morale, and discipline.

This was the second time that Visakhapatnam hosted the PFR, the first being in the year 2006 by the then President of India APJ Abdul Kalam. In 2016, the then President Pranab Mukherjee inspected the International Fleet Review in Visakhapatnam, popularly called the City of Destiny.

# 1765 wall writings, 16085 posters, 3215 banners removed for MCC violation in Imphal West: Nodal Officer Shantikumar

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

Altogether 1765 wall writings, 16085 posters, 3215 banners have been removed for violation of Model Code of Conduct, said Nodal Officer, MCC Imphal West Pangambam Shantikumar.

He said till date a total of 31,015 cases have been recorded for defacement at public property including 1740 wall writing, 15045 posters, 3130 banners, and 11,100 others which have all been removed. Another 2012 cases have also been recorded for defacement on private property including 25 wall writings, 1040 posters, 85 banners, and 862 others, and all of these have also been removed, he added.

The Model Code of Conduct is a set of norms established in consensus by groups of political parties so that ruling parties, prominent parties or those having more resources do not take undue advantage through their positions and to ensure that there is a level playing field for all candidates during the conduct of elections, said the Nodal Officer.

Appealing to all including candidates, their agents, workers and the public to abide by the set guideline of the Model Code of Conduct and ensure smooth conduct of free and fair elections, he said, citizens can play a responsible role in the conduct of free and fair elections.

The MCC Team is also responsible to receive complaints through the cVIGIL



app, a user-friendly application cVIGIL, introduced by the ECI to ease monitoring of any MCC violations, he continued. The cVIGIL app eases lodging complaints regarding any MCC/expenditure violations by the citizens and disposal of such complaint by the MCC team, he added.

Citizens can submit photos, videos of any MCC violation along with their location immediately on witnessing the violation through this app, he said, explaining further that, location mapping of the complainant is very important while using this app. By using this app, the complainant will not have to visit the office physically to lodge his or her complaint, he added.

The cVIGIL was activated in the district since the day election was notified for the State on January 8, 2022. Altogether 138 cases have been received as of February 20 by

the MCC Cell Imphal West, he said and added that, while 75 cases have been disposed, 63 cases have been dropped as these cases were found to be "Duplicate case, frivolous, non-violation of MCC and not related to election."

Some common reasons found in the cVIGIL complaints, he said are posters/banners without permission, names and addresses of printer and publisher, installation of more than permitted number of banners/posters/flags in public places, money and gift distributions, campaigns and use of loud speaker during silent period, etc.

Further elaborating on the utility of the app, the Nodal Officer said that once the complaint is received on the application, his team, which also include 39 Flying Squad Teams (FST), will get into action and assigned the case to the concerned FST to move directly to the location

receive through the application. This ensures easy and fast disposal of MCC violation cases, however, if the complaint is found to be complex, a report will be submitted to the RO for necessary action, he said.

He continued that a report will also be sent to the concerned ROs even if the case has been disposed by the MCC team.

Three FSTs, along with one vehicle are assigned for one Assembly Constituency each, he said adding that each FST is a five member team including three police personnel, one magistrate and a videographer. Another five vehicles are on reserved so that they can be used to reinforce any FST teams in the constituencies.

Other forms of complaints are also received by the MCC, he said, highlighting further that, the cell has received 25 cases of written/telephonic all of which has been disposed. The Cell has also received two Referred Complaints from Nodal Officer, MCMC and six from Nodal Officer Social Media all of which have also been disposed, he added.

The Nodal officer also said that his Cell with 10 members and the FSTs putting their best efforts to address and dispose all complaints and any sort of MCC violation in the district till date. He continued that his team is vigilant 24x7 in all 13 ACs in order to maintain the Model Code of Conduct and smooth conduct of the election.

# ATSUM appeals to defend the rights of tribal population while casting their vote in the upcoming election

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

The All Tribal Students' Union Manipur (ATSUM) has appealed to the tribal people of the state which is around 1.3 million to elect candidate who will stand firmly in unity for the collective future of the tribal people.

In a statement, signed by President of the Union Paotinthang Lupheng and General Secretary SR Andria, the ATSUM appealed to the tribal populace to elect representatives whose vision, competence and integrity will be able to pick up the course of the new Hill Area Committee (HAC) ADC Bill 2021 and translate it into an Act.

The ATSUM statement also

stated that since independence, the tribals in our state have lived as a neglected population despite the guarantees in the Indian constitution through Article 371C.

"We appreciate the Hill Area Committee for their historic union across party lines and ethnic divides to unanimously adopt the Manipur Hill Area Autonomous District Councils Bill 2021 on 16th of August, 2021", the statement said.

It further added that the ATSUM with the unrelenting support of Kuki Students Organisation (KSO) and All Naga Students Association Manipur (ANSAM) have been impressing on the present BJP-led Government to table the Bill

and take it forward. And added that the Union along with other tribal bodies are extremely disappointed at the response and position of the State Government which continues to deliberately deny our advancement as equal citizens of this state.

"Our only hope of translating our collective ideals is by electing representatives who would embark this collective demand to translate the new HAC ADC Bill 2021 into a reality", the statement sent strong words.

The Statement of the ATSUM urged all the tribal candidates across the political spectrum to give a primary commitment to the new HAC ADC Bill 2021, keeping aside your respective party manifestoes and policies.

# Miscreants threaten rights activist Sobita Mangsatabam

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

Women and child rights activist Sobita Mangsatabam, who is also the secretary of Women Action for Development (WAD) has been reportedly threatened by unknown miscreant on the morning of February 20.

As per report two unknown persons coming on Red Colour Activa Scooter bearing number MN01AC 3426 parked the scooter in front of the gate of the office of the WAD and shouted several slang words and pushed the gate at around 9.45 am on Saturday. The report said, the shouting was heard by the

eldest son of Sobita, however, avoided thinking it to be an argument at the Advanced Hospital as it usually used to happen between the Hospital Authority and the Patient Parties.

At about 12.30 pm, the caretaker of the office compound went out to buy some goods where she was informed by the shop owner near the office gate that there were two person came on the scooter and shouted against the name of Sobita using uncivilized and barbaric words which challenged the modesty and reputation of women, the report added.

It could be mentioned that earlier in August, 2017 Ms. M.

Sobita was subject to threat, intimidation and harassment by unknown miscreants. Yet again she was threatened on 29th of July, 2019 by a person with gun. Ms. Sobita Mangsatabam has been serving as the Secretary of WAD and as the Convener of Women Committee of UNMM and have been working for the rights of deprived women in the state.

"WAD strongly belief that such an act were well planned and coordinated by some vested interest group of people to challenge the work of Ms. Sobita. We consider this matter very seriously and highly condemn such an act", a statement said.

# Polling for absentee voters begins in Imphal West

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 22:

With polling for Imphal West just a week away, polling for Absentee Voters for the 13 Assembly Constituencies in the district has begun on February 21. Altogether 3278 people including citizens over 80 years of age and persons with disability are eligible for postal ballot to cast their votes at home in Imphal West district as Absentee Voters.

A total of 989 Absentee Voters casted their votes in the district today, which include 84 voters in 10-Uripok AC, 121 in Keishamthong AC, 73 in Singjam AC, 76 in Sekmai AC, 77 in Lamsang AC, 130 in Konthoujam AC, 87 in Patsoi AC, 115 in

Langthabal AC, 129 in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa, 67 in Wangoi and 58 in Mayang Imphal. The actual vote count for Sagolband AC and Thangmeiband AC cannot be ascertained till the filing of this report.

The whole process will be conducted in two rounds with the first round continuing till February 22. For those who are left out during the first phase, a second trip will be made on February 25.

Contd. from Page 1

# Kangpokpi Poll 2022: Apps for...

**ENCORE Nodal App** — The candidates/political parties can make the any permission request online using the portal <https://suvdha.eci.gov.in>. The nodal app allows them to give no objection certificate on the go, thereby saving considerable time.

**Booth App** facilitates faster identification of voters using quick search of the electors based on serial number/EPIC number/name. This reduces the queue in the polling station, helps in faster polling and provides an error-free recording of real-time poll voter turnout with minimal intervention.

**Voter Turnout App** provides approximate voter turnout percentage of each constituency to the larger public. The application is available in the Google Play store and

Apple App Store. **ENCORE Counting** is an application <https://encore.eci.gov.in/> is an end-to-end application for Returning Officers to digitize the votes polled, tabulate the round-wise data and then take out various statutory reports of counting.

The timely publication of the round-wise information is vital for establishing a single source of authentic data. The counting data entered by respective Returning Officers is available as 'Trends and Results' for public view through 'ECI Results website' <http://results.eci.gov.in/>. DEO Kengoo Zuringla requested all the voters of the district to exercise their franchise on 28th February, 2022 and abide by the Covid appropriate

behaviour to ensure that each and every family member and loved ones are saved from the deadly virus.

Meanwhile, Commissioning of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPAT) to be used in connection with the ensuing 12th State Assembly Election 2022, was also completed for District. The commissioning process was carried out as per procedures laid down by Election Commission of India in presence of Central Election Observers, representatives of contesting candidates, Returning Officers, DNOs and security officers and other election officials of the district, she added. DEO said that the Strong room was sealed successfully in their presence.

## Sports

# Former world medallist Sarjubala set for pro debut on February 26

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 22:

Former world champion-silver-medallist Sarjubala Devi is all set to make her debut in the professional circuit on February 26, when she will take on Tanzania's Kayage Lulu Gaithabi in a 51kg category showdown in Dubai.

The diminutive former youth world champion is registered with the Indian Boxing Council. The 31-year-old Kayage has seven wins against six losses in her professional career.

"I have been training really well. Although it is the same sport, there is a lot of difference in amateur and professional boxing. I used to box three rounds earlier, now it is going to be six rounds, so I am preparing myself for it," the Manipuri pugilist, who was also a multiple-time national medallist during her amateur days, said in a statement.

"It is not just skills; it is a lot more than that. Since the bouts are longer with more rounds, endurance is a big requirement."

"Apart from the regular gym workouts, I am also going for long runs with my trainers, so that I have the endurance for Pro fights. It is exhaustive, but I am enjoying it," she added.

The 28-year-old also hoped that amateur boxers find more



support for turning professional from the Boxing Federation of India.

"As per the rules, only the number one boxer in each category in the country gets to represent the country at international tournaments. When the top boxer plays the international tournament, the second and third-ranked players don't get an opportunity to play."

"I feel the Boxing Federation of India should allow amateur boxers to fight Pro bouts when they are not representing the country. This will help them stay fit for international exposure and at the same time earn some, as most of the boxers in India come from humble backgrounds," she said.

Apart from Sarjubala's pro-

fessional debut, the evening in Dubai will also feature India versus Pakistan fights.

Promoter Mujtaba Kamal feels the cards have the potential to be a big hit in the Pro boxing scene.

The fight card features three current WBC India number one boxers in their respective weight divisions — Faizan Anwar (WBC India Rank 1, Welter Weight), Lalrinsanga Tlau (WBC Youth World Champion & WBC India Rank 1, Super Featherweight), Nutlai Lalbiakima (WBC India Rank 1, Minimum Weight).

The promoter said the bouts will offer handsome purses to the boxers.

"It is first-of-its-kind money for Indian and Pakistani boxers.

On an average, the boxers are going to take USD 2500-USD 3000 after the bout. Also, we have made the fights live on pay-per-view."

"Each boxer will get around 7-10 per cent from the subscription amount. This has never happened in the history of Indian and Pakistan Pro boxing," he said.

Faizan Anwar (IND) vs Yameen Khan (PAK) Sarjubala Devi (IND) vs Lulu Kayage (TAN) Lalrinsanga Tlau (IND) vs Muhammad Sikandar Abbasi (PAK) Nutlai Lalbiakima (IND) vs Fida Muhammad (PAK) Laldingliana (IND) vs Muhammad Ammar Khan (PAK) Shaikhom Rebaldo Singh (IND) vs Mukhtiar Ahmed Kakar (PAK)