

## AMWJU condole the demise of journalist Surchand



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) condole the demise of Khangrakpam Surchand Singh, Assistant editor of the fortnightly journal "Kholloao". Late Khangrakpam Surchand Singh succumbed to Covid-19 on Monday. He was also a member of the National Council of the Communist Party of India-Manipur State Council (CPI-MS).

The Editors Guild Manipur, also expressed shock at the sudden demise of Khangrakpam Surchand, who is serving as the Editor of bimonthly Kholloao. A statement said that he used to serve as the Asst. Editor of the daily Kholloao. Surchand, during his lifetime, was a dedicated journalist and in his demise Manipur's media has lost a precious soul.

EGM and its members shares the grief of his family members, relatives, friends and colleagues and pray for his soul. May he rest in peace in the heavenly abode EGM added.

Earlier members of the CPI MSC visited late Surchand's residence at Moirang Hanuba Leirak and paid tribute to the departed soul.

## Dr. Joykumar in Marquis Who's Who in America 2009



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

Dr. Joykumar S. Thokchom, a research Physicist at the University of Dayton Research Institute, Ohio (USA) has been biographed in the Marquis Who's Who in America 2009.

Dr. Thokchom was selected for his scientific achievements in the areas of lithium battery and fuel cell technologies.

Also, recently he has been invited to deliver an invited talk on "Solid-state Li electrolytes" at the forthcoming Electrochemistry Gordon Research Conferences, Ventura (California) January 2010."

## A Congress candidate's affidavits found filed without Notary signature

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

In an interesting scene witnessed today during the scrutiny for candidates nomination papers for the Thongju Assembly constituency, the affidavit of the congress candidate Seram Niken was found to be without the signature of the Notary or the Oath Commissioner.

As per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India, all the affidavit filed by candidate to the returning officer should be countersigned by the Notary Officer or in other words by the Oath Commissioner. However, when the nomination papers filed by the Congress Candidates Seram Niken were checked, it was found that in all the four affidavits submitted by Seram Niken, the INC candidate was found without the signature of the Notary or



the Oath Commissioner except his own.

The matter was indeed a serious one as it could be treated as incomplete or could be challenged. Further, this could remain as a hurdle to the political career of the candidate if in case any person challenges it through proper forum.

However, BJP candidate Biswajit didn't make much complaint except pointing it

out and requested the Returning Officer to accept his candidature terming it as ignorance of the Congress party and its candidate.

Three candidates who are in the fray in Thongju Assembly constituency have cleared the scrutiny. Works Minister Th. Biswajit is contesting as BJP candidate, Seram Neken as INC candidate and S. Preshyojit as JDU candidate.

## BJP will not make promises that can't be fulfilled: Union minister on manifesto for Manipur polls

Courtesy: The Print  
Imphal, Feb 9:

Union Minister Bhopender Yadav has said the BJP is preparing a "unique" election manifesto for the upcoming Manipur polls and will "not make any promise that will not be translated into action".

Yadav, the BJP's in charge of the polls in the northeastern state, said the saffron camp has held discussions with various stakeholders and set up a committee to draft the manifesto.

"We will come out with a unique election manifesto soon. A committee has also been formed to draft it. The party will not make any promise that won't be translated into action," Yadav said. Asked whether the BJP has selected any chief ministerial candidate, he said the N Biren Singh government has been

ruling the state "successfully" for the last five years and the party is going to "fight the election under his visionary leadership".

"The BJP will win two-third seats of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. The central board of the party will decide who will be the CM," Yadav said at a press conference here on Tuesday.

Elections to 60-member

Manipur Legislative Assembly will be held on February 27 and March 3, and votes will be counted on March 10.

Speaking on the Union Budget for the 2022-23 fiscal, he said the new scheme, Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East, will be implemented through the northeastern council to ensure overall development in the region.

## The Editorial

### Battle of the intending candidates over, now the game of throne begins

The battleground for the intending candidates inside political parties has been over now and the ground is now set for the game of throne the next government. The game may be classified into three tiers – first, it is among the political leaders of the respective political parties, the second is among the political parties who are expecting majority number of seats in the next state legislative assembly and the third is among the shrewd political leaders who are capable of playing the X-factors.

For the first phase poll which is scheduled on February 27, a total of 176 candidates are in the fray. If the ECI doesn't reconsider postponing the polling date by sidelining the demand by the Christian community to fix it on some other day, polling will be held in 38 assembly constituencies of the state. Before the announcement of the candidates by respective political parties, there were hectic unseen war going on between aspiring candidates. It was seen in major political parties like the BJP, Congress and even in the RPI (Athwale). The scene for burning of flags at various constituencies by intending candidates of the political parties following the denial of party tickets is over now. Interestingly, even before the peoples' mandate is declared the game to form government by political parties has already begun. As all political parties seem to know that no particular political party is unlikely to get the magic number to form the government, the major political parties has started looking for partners in the post-poll political theatre. Even smaller parties that have been expecting some few numbers are hoping to play cards by holding the top post, which is the Chief Ministerial post. That is not the end even among party candidates there are unseen war for the top post. Who are playing this why is a matter yet to be discussed but there are talks going on about, among the candidates of the same political party for the post. Of course, it is natural that people contesting the election spread propaganda of having more chance of winning the election to become MLA, those MLA spread propaganda to become minister and those ministers to make his people believe that he or she will be the next Chief Minister. These are strategies for election in contemporary Manipur's political spectrum.

But then, when candidates of the same political party started actual cold war for the chief ministerial post some other rival or friendly political parties definitely are benefited. So, the talk about projecting some candidates as chief ministerial candidates for the party may be speculated as a well plan rumours by leaders of opponent political parties. For example, if the NPP legislative leader is being projected as the next chief minister then definitely there will be a crack in the NDA partnership at the center which will again be a big loss for the government in Meghalaya which is going hand in hand with the ruling BJP. Similarly, if some people started spreading news about the president of the MPCC to be the next Chief Ministerial candidate of the congress party then the expected differences may sabotage the poll strategy of the Congress party. The same is with the BJP, the news (by some media) about Works minister or the former Education Minister trying their best to become chief minister definitely will sabotage the poll strategy of the BJP. These are all known facts and the candidates and leaders of all political parties knew it. However, it keeps playing, and finally it is turning into a cold war and likely to be in the public domain.

On the other hand, the battle for the post-election will be more interesting. As the political theatre is more likely to be played by smaller parties, Political parties expecting to lead the next government may find headache to offer better privilege to whoever they invited.

Scrutiny has been over for the first-round election today and people are watching how the heavy-weight political players are performing. People are watching 'who is the best player in the game of throne'.

## BJP & NPP candidate file nomination in Jiribam

IT Correspondent  
Jiribam, Feb 9:

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate of Jiribam Assembly Constituency N. Budhachandra Singh filed a nomination paper today at DC office, Chingdongleikai, Jiribam.

Today the Candidate was accompanied by Spokesperson BJP Manipur Pradesh L. Veerjit Singh, Ex Minister of Manipur A. Biren Singh, K. Saratkumar Singh, Vice- Chairman,



Manipur Food Industries corporation Ltd and his supporters.

Later, the candidate filed his nomination paper to the office of the returning officer in Jiribam district.

Thereafter, MK. Abbas Khan NPP candidate also filed his papers to the returning officer for the Jiribam constituency.

It might be recalled here that the election for 40-Jiribam Assembly Constituency will be held on 2nd phase on 3rd March.

## UNLF's army wing MPA celebrates 35th Raising Day

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

Army wing of the United Liberation Front, (UNLF), the Manipur Peoples' Army (MPA) today celebrated its 35th raising day.

The main function of the raising day of the proscribed armed group was held at the General Head Quarter of the MPA. The celebration was also held today at other battalions of the MPA by following the COVID-19 SOP, said a statement by the Deputy Secretary of Publicity, M. Sak-hen.

At the main function held at the GHQ of the MPA, UNLF chairman NC Koireng, who is also the Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the rebel group, Vice Chairman Thabal, COAS-M of the MPA M. Chaoba among others attended. On the occasion the Secretary of the Central Committee of the UNLF and other members attended the function.

The Raising Day was also held at 293 Bn, Tactical Units and other Task Force with the respective bn Commanders, Unit Commanders and task force commanders and other



members of the MPA. At the function held at CSF, the CSF Director led the function.

Earlier yesterday, in a statement the UNLF recounted how MPA was formed and the difficult training undergone by the Wing amidst shortage of food, shelter, clothing and ammunition.

It also recalled the bravado and courage of the previous leaders of MPA, who

mentored and guided the younger members.

As such, the outfit offered deep respects to the first Chief of Army Staff of MPA, (L) Brig Ayekpam Wangpa alias Tomba.

The outfit further recalled its first action against the Indian Occupation Force (IOF) in December, 1990 wherein it ambushed a CRPF convoy at Lamdan in Leimaton hills.

Since then, several successful ambushes against IOF have been carried out during which many MPA members also sacrificed their lives.

It continued, "However, UNLF/MPA wants to remind the people that the struggle for independence would not be easy, considering the changes Manipur has undergone in the last 10 years.

contd. on page 4

# The silver world spreading like the full moon

## Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The demand for silver is increasing across the world. In a way the world of silver is growing like the full moon and there are many reasons for this change. Work from home (WFH) became a necessity due to the pandemic, due to which the way of doing things also started changing. When office work shifted to homes, there was an increase in the use of mobile phones, laptops, personal computers and other electronic gadgets, in which silver is used in large quantities. The demand for silver has increased in the world for the last five years, while its supply has been hampered during the Covid period. Silver mining is decreasing and demand is increasing. At present, the price of one kg of silver is 61 thousand rupees, which is estimated to increase to 74 thousand rupees this year. Industry experts believe that the price of silver can reach Rs 1 lakh per kg in the next three years. Silver has given around 63 per cent return on investment in the last four years. In India only last year SEBI approved Silver ETF (Exchange Traded Funds). ETFs are sold and bought on exchanges and like stocks, their prices fluctuate up and down. These funds provide many types of benefits to the investors.

The demand for silver is increasing year by year and will further increase in view of the changes taking place in the economies globally. Silver has many uses in the technical field, due to which its demand is increasing worldwide. Silver is used in many 5G devices. 5G technology is expected to consume up to 500 tonnes of silver by the year 2025. Similarly, in the next four years, the automobile industry, particularly car industry, is expected to consume 2,800 tonnes of silver at an annual growth rate of 22 per cent. Silver is used in some medical devices used to treat respiratory problems and Covid related complexities. The importance of green energy is being understood by everyone, so the demand for solar energy is increasing and there is a lot of use of silver in its equipment. Silver is the metal with the highest thermal conductivity and, being the most reflective metal, is an important part in solar panels. Domestic demand for silver will increase with the Productivity Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes launched by the government to attract photovoltaic cell manufacturing in India.

This metal is increasingly being used across the globe in another rapidly growing segment, that of water and air purification. Silver is an important aspect of the jewelry market. Jewelry accounts for 34 per cent of the total silver demand in the country. The demand for silver in the year 2020 was more than 1000 metric tonnes. Not only is silver cheaper than gold and platinum, but it also has a plethora of latest designs in the new age which attract the modern youth. The anklets of women's feet are made of silver only. Another important feature of silver jewelry for married women is necklaces worn around the toe, which are believed to be useful in improving fertility. Overall, due to the popularity of technology, the demand for silver is on the rise almost all over the world and will continue to increase.

# Model Code of Conduct: A moral Code

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

Political parties are campaigning and gears up in full force for the upcoming Assembly elections 2022 in five states across India- Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur- which are set to be conducted in February and March. The Election Commission of India always imposes its **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** in states where the elections are set to take place to make sure that the voting and campaigning process goes smoothly. This Code contains a set of guidelines for the political parties and candidates during the elections. According to the rules set by the ECI, the MCC immediately comes into force as soon as the election schedule and dates are announced for the states to make sure that the election and polling process remains fair and free. The main reason why ECI's Model Code of Conduct is imposed in the poll-bound states is to make sure that the central government or the ruling parties in the states do not misuse their position of power to gain unfair advantage in the election.

The fact is the MCC evolved as part of the ECI's drive to ensure free and fair election and was the result of a consensus among major political parties. It has no statutory backing. Simply put, this means anybody breaching the MCC can't be proceeded against under any clause of Code. Everything is voluntary. The ECI can issue a notice to a politician or a party for alleged breach of the MCC either on its own or on the basis of a complaint by another party or individual. Once a notice is issued, the person or party must reply in writing - either accepting fault and tendering an unconditional apology or rebutting the allegation. In the latter case, if the person or party is found guilty, subsequently he/ it can attract a written censure from ECI- something that may see as a mere slap on the wrist. However, in extreme cases, like a candidate using money/ liquor to influence votes or trying to divide voters in the name of religion or caste, the ECI can also order registration of criminal case against the candidate under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code or Income Tax Act. In case of a hate speech, a complaint can be filed under IPC and CrPc; there are laws against the misuse of a religious place for seeking votes etc.

The expert view is that, as of now, following the MCC is purely hinged on morality, not the fear of law. Since poll campaign are turning uglier, more personal and combative, the moral obligation entailed in the model code can really bear down heavily on candidates at a time when they are trying show to the voters how upright and competent they are for the job. The MCC carries significant moral weight; indeed former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quaraishi had described it as the **Moral Code of Conduct**. Filling an FIR, particularly against a senior leader during the election, in itself becomes a cause of huge embarrassment to the party the candidate represent. It presents the candidate as ethically wrong to the people. Even if it just rap on the knuckles, most politicians do not relish the reprimand by the ECI. What if a party or politician ignored the notice? The ECI believes that the voters doesn't forget or forgive a politician who tries to take on the election regulators or attempts to brazen it out. There are numerous examples of politicians who got into a slanging match with the ECI over MCC violations and were severely punished by voters. And yet the abysmal depth the many states election campaign plumbd has underscored the inadequacy of the MCC in dealing with erring politician, with many wondering if giving statutory backing to the Code could be the answer. After all, it is argued, which politician would flinch from a mere reprimand if the prize is victory in an important election?

Both ECI and several independent experts however believe that giving statutory backing to the MCC would only make the job of the Commission more difficult. This is because every alleged offence will then have to go to an appropriate court and right up to the Supreme Court. Given the slowness of our legal system- election petitions filled decade ago are still pending before many High Courts- it is anybody's guess what that situations might lead to. Former CEC VS Sampath had once told that the MCC is meant to provide an **"immediate solution, instant remedy to certain situation"**. When notice for Model Code of Conduct violation is issued, we give 48 hours to reply and reply is usually in by the 47th hours, however big a politician may be. If the contestant is wrong, the person tenders an apology. Since such an apology brings the candidate to the immediate notice of the voters as the wrong doer; it is a deterrent unlike a situation when a case against a candidate goes to the court and may linger, giving the benefit of doubt to him/her. One may say, we only give censure or reprimand but that is not the point. Parallely, under the laws of the land action will be taken. An FIR will be filed, that case will continue for months and years, Sampath had said. The previous UPA-2 government did, in fact attempt to quietly give statutory backing to the MCC. A former Law Minister during UPA-2 regime announced a scheme after the declaration of Model Code in an upcoming election. Though the EC advised him not to do so, he didn't pay heed. So the EC wrote to the President and the Minister was censured and fined. The move came soon after the Law Minister had a very public run-in with the ECI, UPA ended up with egg on its face and the hush-hush moved was dropped. Later, the parliamentary standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice recommended that the MCC be given statutory backing by enacting a law. However that recommendation found very little acceptance. Incidentally the reason the parliamentary Panel made the recommendation was that the ECI, while enforcing the MCC, sometimes appeared to be encroached upon legislative power of parliament. In the coming days, with electioneering heating up in the five poll-bound states, there may be more occasions for the EC to not just issue show cause notices but even order FIR against high profile candidates for MCC violations. **If there are instances of senior leaders violating MCC, "there are also those who understood their moral sanctity"**.

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# Spring of 'B-Team' party and Fate of Regional Party in Manipur

By: Khalid Khan and Firdos Ahmad\*\*\*

There has been an emergence of the 'B-Team' party in Manipur for the upcoming 12th Assembly Election 2022. Some of the basic questions that are pertinent are given as: Which party is being called the 'B-Team' Party in Manipur? Why does it emerge in Manipur? Does it seemingly appear under the influence of the present government? Is it charged and framed under the supervision of many influential political leaders of the ruling party in Manipur? Why do many political leaders from different political parties switch to Janata Dal (United)-JD (U) rather than other political parties? Why do many intending candidates join the National People's Party (NPP)? To examine and scrutinize the above queries is the sole of the article.

There have been many corner contests between the BJP and Congress for the upcoming 12th General Assembly Election. It has been a tradition of the present government that those who do not get a ticket of BJP used to go to other national parties especially JD (U). Why it is so is because, to begin with, this party is/was a part and parcel of the NDA government. Additionally, it is reported from the *Naharolgi Thoudang* that many veteran politicians of Manipur including Yumkham Erabot Singh from the Wangkhei Assembly Constituency who allegedly accused that the politicians and leaders of the ruling party especially 'the state BJP president Sarada Devi took 2 or 3 crore of money from those people

who are willing to get tickets for the BJP party (3rd February 2022). Those crore of money have been used for their personal benefits and vested interests (*Ibid.*) though many politicians of the BJP Manipur like the Minister of Works Th. Biwajit Singh denied many such strong allegations from other parties. It is quite evident from the NDTV report that BJP is the richest party in India by declaring its assets worth Rs. 4,847.78 crore in the financial year 2019-20, the highest among all political parties, followed by the BSP at Rs. 698.33 crore and the Congress at Rs. 588.16 crore based on the Poll Reforms Advocacy (ADR) group after analyzing the assets and liabilities of national (seven) and regional parties (44) in 2019-20 (29th January 2022).

The more justly interesting and thrilling one is the spring of Bihar based JD (U) party in the soil of Manipur which many scholars think and say orally that this party is being appeared as the 'B-Team' party of the present government. It has been able to capture the imagination of many former BJP candidates and others including those who are BJP ticket seekers. So far 36 candidates have been listed as the final one for the JD (U) party. The most striking one is that out of the 36 candidates, at least two are sitting MLAs and it has many more former MLAs in the final list. Almost all the candidates were intending BJP candidates. There is a high chance that these candidates can well eat into the vote share of the ruling party. Another important point is that of giving of a JD (U) ticket to Sikander Ali. To ensure the victory of the BJP candidate Dr. Usham Deben Singh, an arch rival of Congress MLA Fajur Rahim, Sikander Ali got JD (U) ticket after denying to the intending candidate Sakir Ahmed for JD (U) ticket. One more possible reason is that of sharing of votes among the clans to Fajur Rahim and Sikander Ali as both of them belonged to the same *sagei* (clan) called *Cheshaba Sagei* in the Wabagai Assembly Constituency. *Sageism* (Clanism) played a crucial role for the vote sharing and distribution in this constituency.

It is orally said by the people of Manipur that Bihar based JD (U) is springing out increasingly as a 'B-Team' party of the present government in Manipur. Why not others including the regional parties such as NPP? People started asking why many ex-MLAs of Manipur including its own members of BJP got denied of BJP tickets and joined other political parties especially JD (U) in the contemporary political scenario of the state of Manipur. Even BJP leaders who were denied tickets joined the NPP also. The NPP is contesting the polls on its own. Former bureaucrat turned politician Pukhrem Saratchandra Singh from the Moirang Assembly Constituency joined the Congress party after BJP denied him a ticket. Why many of the new entrants into the BJP including the Moirang Assembly Constituency got ticket of the BJP after denial of its own member on the ground that it is orally undoubtedly a fact that some BJP leaders took lots of money for those who are BJP ticket seekers and gave the tickets to the new

entrants. This news has been circulated among the local newspapers on a wider scale.

It is noted that the Chief Minister of Manipur claimed of the developmental works done by the BJP led coalition government in Manipur for the last five years. Firstly, he talked that the state is peaceful and Manipur is a state which is free from violence though there are many violence related gruesome incidents in the state including the abduction and killing of renowned tribal social activist Athuan Abnonmei by some suspected NSCN (IM) armed cadres from Tamenglong district headquarters on Wednesday morning of 23rd September 2021. Justice has not been delivered till now. There was a hullabaloo over this barbarous killing of Abnonmei in the hill and valley areas. Another example is that of killing of other party members that include one student and another one was the student's father who was seriously injured at Heirok Assembly Constituency by some persons who allegedly belonged to the ruling party. Further, two persons including one Havildar and one active worker of state Agriculture Minister O. Lukhloi Singh were shot dead brutally at Samurou Awang Leikai near Machu Cinema Hall by unidentified persons but the problem is that of denial of justice over this issue. In the Mayang Imphal Assembly Constituency, many common people were taking pledge at bullet and gun point in the name of giving vote to the candidate who belonged to the ruling party. The videos are widely circulated in the social media and even in the TV channels also. There is a fear of psychosis in the psyche of the common people. Additionally, in some other Assembly Con-

stituencies like Andro, Lamlai, Naoriya Pakhanglakpa and Singamei, violence and tension had also gripped in the last few weeks. Where is the question that the state is peaceful for the last five years? Still many of the critics called this government an 'advertisement' government though the party leaders including the CM himself denied such strong allegations in the Impact TV's Special Broadcast on 19th January 2022. In addition, in higher education, job employment, media tolerance, health infrastructure, drinking water facility, etc. nothing has changed in the last five years of Manipur. While considering the implementation of ILP in Manipur, in an attempt to silence the shrill anti-CAB agitation and win over other sections of the society as supporters of CAB, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the extension of ILPS to Manipur by simply saying in the Parliament that 'Mizoram is protected by ILP, which is a provision of Bengal Eastern Regulation Frontier Act, 1873. Now keeping the sentiments of the state, we are taking Manipur too under ILP, by which a very serious problem of Manipur has been fixed. Hon'ble Speaker! These Manipuri people have been demanding it for a long time. And now, on behalf of the Manipuri people, I would like to pay huge respect to the Prime Minister' (December 9, 2019). Who is a Manipuri? Which is the base year that defines Manipuri are the basic fundamental questions that need to be kept while implementing the ILP system in Manipur. Such provisions are missing. It is just like a car driving without a wheel. Furthermore, based on the reports of Public Affairs Index (PAI) of the Bengaluru based think tank

Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Manipur is the least developed small state in terms of governance. Where is the question of developmental works done by the present government for the last five years? People brood over these issues wisely and give their valuable votes for the upcoming 12th General Assembly Election 2022.

The NPP is emerging as a strong party with its collective and secular visions for the upcoming 12th General Assembly Election. Many scholars think that this party is being considered as the genuine one as it has the heart of regionalism under the dynamic National President Conrad Sangma. The Action Document 2022 of the NPP covers many crucial aspects of regionalism especially in the Manipur context for the repeal of AFSPA 1958. Though it is an ally of the BJP led coalition government, it has its specific priorities, considerations and emphasis on issues related to regional and regionalism. Many NPP leaders firmly believed that the party is eyeing to win at least 20 seats. Many survey reports indicate that there is a high chance of winnability of many candidates for the NPP especially Kshetrigaon, Moirang, Mayang Imphal and Wangoi Assembly Constituencies. A notable section of the voters are explicitly giving priority to the regional and secular party rather than the alleged 'B-Team' party and its close associates for the upcoming 12th General Assembly Election in Manipur.

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# Next Covid-19 variant will be more infectious than Omicron, possibly deadlier, warns WHO

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 9:

Even as the world limps back to normalcy with the Omicron wave subsiding, experts have warned that the next Covid-19 variant will be more transmissible, and perhaps, more deadly than its predecessors.

In a recent press briefing, World Health Organization (WHO) epidemiologist and technical lead on Covid-19 Dr Maria Van Kerkhove stressed that the pandemic is far from over and future variants will be in some way more virulent than Omicron is now.

"The next variant of concern will be more fit, and what we mean by that is it will be more transmissible because it will have to overtake what is currently circulating. The big question is whether or not future variants will be more or

less severe," Dr Van Kerkhove said.

She further warned that the next variant could more easily evade immunity, rendering vaccines less effective. However, she doubled down on the imperative of getting the jab as it protects against severe illness and death, as exhibited during the Omicron wave.

"We expect that with the right interventions, the circulation of Covid-19 will be low. But even within those circulations, there will be flare-ups among people who are not protected by the vaccine or those who have waning immunity," added Dr Van Kerkhove.

## How Delta, Omicron Evolved

The Delta variant that was first detected in India in October 2020 was labelled a variant of concern by the WHO. Delta was spreading 50 per cent

faster than the Alpha variant, which was 50 per cent more contagious than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, more commonly known as the coronavirus.

Cut to six months later and the Delta strain had ravaged the country, causing a record-breaking number of daily cases and claiming lives. By June 2021, it was responsible for a fresh surge in cases in the UK, Israel, Russia, Australia and several other parts of the world.

Omicron, which was quickly tagged as a variant of concern after being detected in South Africa in late November 2021, has replaced Delta as the dominant strain in a much shorter interval. Though milder, Omicron is at least two to four times more transmissible than the Delta variant. It also possesses an enhanced ability to evade

vaccines, on top of a reinfection rate five times that of Delta.

Dr Van Kerkhove has cautioned that there is "no guarantee" the coronavirus will get weaker as it evolves and that although the world might hope that's the case, "we can't bank on it."

## Is There An End In Sight?

However, there is a silver lining too. A study conducted at Steve Biko Academic Hospital Complex in South Africa offers a possibility of Covid-19 ending in the near future.

Based on the results, the researchers suggested that "Omicron may be a harbinger of the end of the epidemic phase of the Covid pandemic, ushering in its endemic phase".

These studies are, however, only indicative and conditional to the emergence of new variants.

# Assam Rifles recovers Chinese Grenades



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

Phundrei Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a joint operation with Manipur Police recovered two Chinese Gren-

nades near village Serou Makha Leikai, Kakching district yesterday.

Based on specific input, troops of Assam Rifles along with Manipur Police launched a joint operation which led to timely identification and dis-

arming of the Chinese Grenades by the Bomb Disposal Squad.

The timely action by Assam Rifles and the Manipur Police averted possible attack on Security Forces in view of the upcoming elections.

# Param Vir Chakra awardee promoted and posted as an instructor at NDA, Pune

IT Correspondent,  
Mumbai, Feb 9:

The Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) Sanjay Kumar of 13th Battalion, Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, who was awarded Param Vir Chakra (PVC), was promoted to the rank of 'Subedar Major' on Tuesday.

Sanjay Kumar was promoted to the rank of 'Subedar Major' by Air Marshal Sanjeev Kapoor, Commandant, National Defence Academy (NDA), Pune for his continued dedication and devotion to the service. He will be giving leadership training as an instructor to young cadets at NDA.

"It is a matter of great pride and privilege for NDA to have Subedar Major Sanjay Kumar, who was awarded PVC, India's highest gallantry award, for his selfless commitment and sacrifice in the face of enemy, being posted as Instructor and he



Air Marshal Sanjeev Kapoor, Commandant, NDA doing honours to JCO Sanjay Kumar who was promoted as 'Subedar Major' on Tuesday.

will be a role model for the cadets", Air Marshal Sanjeev Kapoor said.

Sanjay Kumar, was enrolled as a young rifleman in 13th Battalion of The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles. On July 04, 1999, during the "Operation Vijay", he volunteered to be the leading scout of the attacking column tasked to

capture area Flat Top of Point 4875 in the Mushkoh Valley.

The attacking column was stalled by the enemy's heavy automatic fire from one of the sangars. Realising the gravity of the situation, Rifleman Sanjay Kumar, with utter disregard to his personal safety, charged at the enemy. In the ensuing hand-to-hand

combat, he killed three of the intruders and was himself seriously injured.

Despite his injuries, he charged onto the second sangar. Taken totally by surprise, the enemy left behind a Universal Machine Gun (UMG) and started running. Rifleman Sanjay Kumar picked up the UMG and killed the fleeing enemy. Although bleeding profusely, he refused to be evacuated. The brave action on his part motivated his comrades and they took no notice of the treacherous terrain and charged onto the enemy and wrested the area Flat Top from the hands of the enemy.

Subedar Major Sanjay Kumar, will be a source of inspiration and a living example of true military ethos, courage and valour for the future leadership of Indian Armed Forces training at NDA, a Defence spokesman said.

# AR conducts Medical Camp

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 9:

In continuation with the efforts of Assam Rifles to reach out to the local population and assist them in humanitarian aid, Tengnoupal Battalion along with 165 Infantry

Battalion Territorial Army (Assam) under the aegis of IGAR(S) conducted a Medical camp at Khongkhang village, Tengnoupal district on February 6.

The Medical camp was organised to assist the villagers who have no access to ba-

sic healthcare services. Medical team from Assam Rifles carried out the health checkup of the villagers to assess their health status.

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

# 4,844 foreigners granted Indian citizenship in 5 years, 1,773 in 2021 alone: Govt

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 9:

As many as 4,844 foreigners have been granted Indian citizenship in the past five years, the government told the Lok Sabha Tuesday. In 2021, the government granted almost three times the number of Indian citizenships compared to 2020, the House was informed.

According to the data, 817 foreigners were granted Indian citizenship in 2017, 628 in 2018, 987 in 2019, 639 in 2020 and 1,773 in 2021.

"The citizenship of India is governed under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Citizenship to eligible foreigners is granted by registration under section 5, by naturalization under section 6 or by incorporation of territory under section 7 of the Citizenship Act, 1955. The reasons for taking Indian citizenship vary in terms of specific circumstances of each applicant subject to the provisions contained in the Citizenship Act, 1955 and rules made thereunder," Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in reply to a question.

While rules for Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are yet to be framed, government data, earlier presented in Parliament, shows a significant majority of those granted Indian citizenship since 2018 were minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and belonged to Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Christian faiths.

According to data provided by the government in Parliament earlier, as many as 8,244 people from Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Christian faith from the three countries applied for Indian citizenship of which 3,117 were granted the same till December 2021. Interestingly, between 2018 and 2020, the total number of foreigners from across the world who were granted Indian Citizenship stood at 2,254. The overall data for 2021 was not available.

"Number of citizenship ap-

plications received from Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Christian minorities groups from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan during the year 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 is 8,244. The number of Indian citizenship granted to people belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Christian minorities groups from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan during the year 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 is 3,117," MoS Home Rai told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply to a question.

The CAA was enacted by Parliament on December 12, 2019, but its rules have not been framed as yet. The legislation, which grants citizenship to illegal immigrants belonging to Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, Christian and Buddhist communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, was passed by Parliament amid vehement criticism from the Opposition that pointed out the communal agenda behind the law as it conspicuously left out Muslims. Indian does not have a refugee policy.

"All foreign nationals including refugee seekers are governed by the provisions contained in The Foreigners Act, 1946, The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and The Citizenship Act, 1955," Rai said in his reply.

## Career Guidance

# XII Board Exam and NEET UG 2022 prepare, toppers share how to manage both at the same time

National Testing Agency (NTA) would be conducting the NEET UG 2022 examinations in May, right after the Class 12 Board Examinations of 2022. NEET UG 2022 would be conducted on May 6th. Nearly 10 lakh students from all over India have registered for the Medical entrance test, managing both at the same time is a task that can be both daunting and stressful. Toppers of Medical Entrance Examination share tips on how to manage both at the same time.

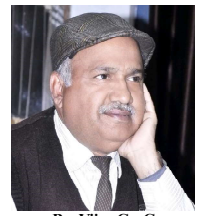
However, before we share the tips, here is a simple advice given out by teachers and experts. Teachers ask students to ensure compartmentalization. It is essential to not worry about the entrance examinations. The preparation is already done, notes teachers and experts. What is essential at

this time is to concentrate the efforts towards handling the board examinations and then moving on to the entrance exam prep. Toppers agree on the fundamental and share how the strategy has helped them excel in NEET and score well in boards at the same time.

## Toppers' Tips to manage CBSE Class 12 Board Exams 2022 and NEET UG 2022

### Blackout the entrance examinations ahead of the board examinations

All toppers share that just ahead of the board examinations they made an extra effort to keep the worries of the entrance examination at bay. Easier said than done with the level of competition, the strategy helps as it gives the students the ability to look at one problem at hand rather than worrying about two. Teachers second the opinion and urge



By: Vijay GarG

students who are preparing for both to look at the board examinations as equally important. Students have been preparing for NEET Main for over year or two...it is imperative, teachers say, to give undivided attention to board examinations now.

**Concentrate on the curriculum of the CBSE Class 12 Board Exams for Physics, Chemistry and Biology**  
Toppers share how they

used the board examinations as a preparation for their NEET UG examinations in previous years. With most of the syllabus similar to that of Class 12 board examinations of CBSE, candidates appearing for both should wholeheartedly revise for the Physics, Chemistry and Biology board. This is the time when the class 11 topics can be ignored and focusing on them would have a negative impact on the class 12 board examinations.

## Don't give NCERT Textbook problems a miss

This is an advice that is applicable to both with equal importance. NCERT Textbook numerical, though limited in number, try and cover a variety of topics. Toppers share that these questions provided in the NCERT Textbooks should be taken as the type of questions. Also, candidates preparing for

NEET should try and tackled the HOTS or High Order Thinking Skills questions provided in the reference books to get that extra edge. Another topper shared that the small boxes in NCERT textbooks once reminded him of a particular question as he remembered going through the same.

## Topics to be stressed on after CBSE Class 12 Board Examinations

There is usually a gap of about a week or 10 days between the NEET UG examination and CBSE Boards. Toppers feel that this is the time when they should focus only on solving sample papers for the entrance examination. With most of the revision done, toppers feel that sample papers were the quickest way of determining which subject or which topic required their special attention.

## RC Book Lost

I have lost my RC Book of Vehicle Gypsy bearing Registration No.MN04A 9594, Issued by the District Transport Officer, Thoubal on the way between Khangabok and Imphal on 30 January 2022.

Finders are requested kindly handover the same to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Thokchom Jadumani Singh  
Khangabok Khullakpam Leikai  
Thoubal District



# India logs 71,365 New COVID-19 cases, Active tally declines to 8,92,828

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 9:

India logged 71,365 new coronavirus infections taking the country's total tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,24,10,976, while the active cases declined to 8,92,828, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The death toll climbed to 5,05,279 with 1,217 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprise 2.11 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 96.70 per cent, the

ministry said.

A reduction of 1,02,063 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.54 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 7.57 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,10,12,869, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has ex-

ceeded 170.87 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 last year.

The 1,217 new fatalities include 824 from Kerala and 57 from Maharashtra. A total of 5,05,279 deaths

have been reported so far in the country including 1,43,155 from Maharashtra, 59,939 from Kerala, 39,447 from Karnataka, 37,809 from Tamil Nadu, 26,010 from Delhi, 23,343 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,884 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.

## Naval Investiture Ceremony-2022



IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, Feb 9:

The medals and distinguished service awards were presented to ratings and officers, at the Naval Investiture Ceremony - 2022 for the Western Naval Command (WNC) held at Mumbai on

Tuesday.

Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, presented the awards announced on Independence Day 2020 and Republic Day 2021 to the recipients.

During the Ceremony,

Commander Dhanush Menon and Haridas Kundu MCA (FD) II were conferred the Nau Sena Medal (Gallantry), while Commodore Anil Marya was conferred the Nau Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty). Rear Admiral Sandeep Mehta, Surgeon Rear Admiral Arti Sarin, Com-

modore Srikanth Kesnur, Captain Birendra Singh Bains, Captain Sumit Singh Sodhi, Captain Kapil Bhatia and Jai Singh, MCPO 1 (GW)/ Hon Sub Lt were conferred the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM).

The Commander-in-Chief also presented Unit Citations to INS Gomati and Base Victualling Yard (BVY) (Mumbai) that delivered exceptional performances over the past year.

The Admiral acknowledged the contribution of all family members of the awardees for their unstinted support to service personnel in the performance of their duties.

The ceremonial event, traditionally conducted centrally for all awardees, was conducted within the Command due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. The ceremony was witnessed by a number of senior dignitaries of the Indian Navy as well as spouses and families of the awardees.

## JD(U) office open at Jiribam

Agency  
Jiribam, Feb 9:

Ahead of Assembly election, the Janata Dal (United) office for Jiribam Assembly Constituency has been formally opened at Babupara, Jiribam.

Today, the President of JD(U), Jiribam branch

MK. Badain hoisted the party flag with arrow symbol in presence JDU workers and supporters of Jiribam.

Speaking with the media persons, MK. Badain said that Md. Ashab Uddin will contest on JDU ticket for the ensuing 12- Manipur Legislative Assembly Election from 40 Jiribam

Assembly Constituency.

He added, the party will do all the needful for the candidate in the election.

The flag hosting ceremony was attended by JD(U), Jiribam branch President, MK. Badain, General Secretary, Th. Magajit Singh and Treasurer, Bappa Roy.

## Khullang Eshei's Inaugural Function held



IT News

Imphal, Feb 9:

Inaugural function of Khullang Eshei was held on 25th January on 2p.m. at SSC Community Hall Salangthong.

Imphal East.

The President member of the function were S.K. Mangang, State Kala Academy Awardee, Theatre Director and S. Muktabali Leima, Veteran Artist or Guru

Sumang Leela. The aim of the function was our culture should keep to a special position in our society. Our culture is at in unique place in our society as well as in international level.

Contd. from Page 1

## UNLF's army wing MPA celebrates...

Nonetheless, the love and support of the people is UNLF/MPA's biggest strength and it will suppress all enemies and fulfil the wishes of the people".

The outfit also extended greetings to the leaders, officers and cadres of member parties of CorCom,

along with leaders and cadres of other groups including NSCN and ULFA.

It then wished for propagation of unity of WESEA region and for ushering in a democratic revolution of all groups/communities suppressed by India.

UNLF/MPA further offered its respects to all the martyred members of MPA and shared the grief of the bereaved families.

It also paid its respects to the members who have been left with permanent injuries or differently-abled after fighting with IOF.

## Sports

## ISL: ATK Mohun Bagan storm into top-four with 2-1 win over Hyderabad FC

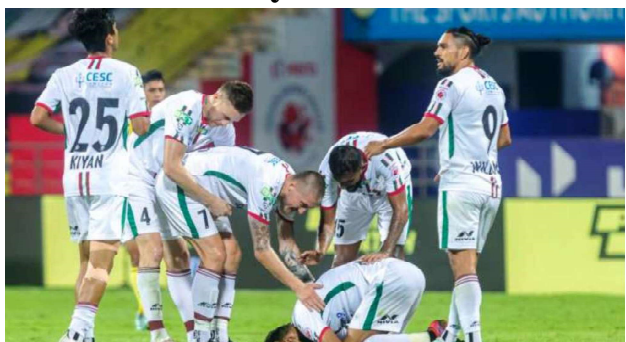
Agency  
Bambolim, Feb 9:

ATK Mohun Bagan extended their unbeaten run to nine games and broke into the top-four with a 2-1 win over Hyderabad FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Athletic Stadium, here on Tuesday.

After a barren first half, Liston Colaco opened the scoring for ATKMB in the 56th minute with Manvir Singh (59th) doubling their advantage in the next three minutes. Joel Chianese (67th) pulled one back for Hyderabad but could not muster another goal as they succumbed to their third loss of the season, still remaining top of the table with 26 points from 15 games. ATK Mohun Bagan moved to the fourth position with 23 in their kitty from 13 games.

Both teams started slowly but upped the ante as the match progressed. ATKMB looked the more promising side with Hugo Boumous creating a lot of chances. The Frenchman looked in the mood and combined well with Liston Colaco and David Williams as the Mariners looked to prise open Hyderabad's defence.

Boumous forced Laxmikant Kattimani into a good save while at the other end Amrinder Singh kept Bartholomew Ogbache at bay. Hyderabad



were on the backfoot in the face of constant ATKMB probing. Against the run of play, Nikhil Poojary shot just over from a Joel Chianese low cross.

The Mariners suffered a double setback when the excellent Boumous and ever-dependable Carl McHugh picked up injuries and had to be replaced by Joni Kauko and young Kiyari Gini respectively. Close to half-time, Colaco and Chianese had attempts straight at the keeper.

The second half started on a frantic note, Rohit Danu finding the crossbar in his way after he fired a poor ATKMB clearance from a Hyderabad free-kick.

Soon after, ATKMB took

the lead. Williams was on his bike off a counter-attack, finding Colaco who darted down the channel, cut back and curled the ball at the far post, leaving Kattimani with no chance. It was Colaco's sixth goal of the campaign as he found the net against his former side with aplomb.

Three minutes later, Manvir doubled the team's tally. This time Joni Kauko fed Manvir with a beautiful ball for the latter to beat an onrushing Kattimani and slot the ball into the back of the net with ease.

Stung by the double blow in quick succession, Hyderabad went on the offensive and got their reward when a powerful Joao Victor free-kick

was punched only as far as Chianese by Amrinder, the Australian then guiding the ball inside the goal.

Hyderabad coach Manolo Marquez brought in Javier Siviero in place of Victor with fifteen minutes remaining on the clock in search of the equaliser. Danu saw his shot saved by Amrinder moments after as the yellow army pulled no punches.

Colaco then missed a sitter with an opening goal in front of him after he and Nassiri exchanged passes inside the goalmouth. Danu also missed a good chance to score from Akash Mishra's cross before Colaco fluffed his lines from close again, Nassiri crossing the ball to him.

## India outclass France to open Pro League campaign

Agency  
Potchefstroom, Feb 9:

After the high of the Olympic bronze medal in Tokyo, the Indian men's hockey team started 2022 in style, thrashing France 5-0 in their opening match of the FIH Pro League at Potchefstroom, South Africa, on Tuesday.

Harmanpreet Singh and Varun Kumar got the first two goals from penalty corners before Shamsher Singh, Mandeep Singh and Akashdeep Singh found the target to secure a thoroughly one-sided verdict.

India face hosts South Africa in their next FIH Pro League encounter on Wednesday.

The Indians, under head coach Graham Reid, took time to get into groove as the French exerted some pressure in the opening quarter, which ended goalless. The few opportunities that India got - including two successive penalty corners - were repelled by resolute defending or wasted by errant shooting. It was in the second period that the floodgates opened with Harmanpreet (21st minute) and Varun (24th) getting on the scoresheet through set-pieces, both finding the target with low shots to the goalkeeper



Arthur Thieffry's right, and Shamsher capping a quick counterattack with India's third goal, the final pass coming from Abhishek.

The second half started with Mandeep Singh making it 4-0 from an assist by skipper Manpreet Singh in the 32nd minute. Akashdeep, playing his 200th match for India, then found the target with a reverse hit in the 41st.

France tried to make some sort of comeback in the final quarter and earned back-to-back penalty corners in the 48th minute, but could not reduce the margin. The Indians too couldn't add to their tally in the last 15 minutes but the final scoreline would be a satisfactory one against a team ranked 13th in the world which entered the FIH Pro League

after Canada pulled out due to Covid-19 concerns.

Once the Indian team got into rhythm, they kept the French defence under relentless pressure. When the first half ended, India had had 14 shots at goal, with their opponents managing just five. Australian Reid's wards converted two of their four penalty corners while the European team failed to make use of the three they got.

By the time the game ended, the Indians had taken 22 attempts at goal, compared to only nine by the French. Though possession was evenly distributed, the Olympic medallists made much better use of the ball, making as many as 34 circle penetrations as against 26 by the opponents.