

## Two died in gun attack at Shamurou; Irate locals blocked road; JAC formed



IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10:

Irate locals of Shamurou today block road at Mayai Lambi road today morning after 2 persons were shot at by unidentified miscreants late yesterday evening.

Report said that some

unidentified gunmen shot the two persons including a supporter of Agriculture Minister Oinam Lukhoi near Machu Cinema Hall at Shamurou under Wangoi Police Station in Imphal West, located along Mayai Lambi Road, around 10 pm Sunday. The two were im-

mediately rushed to the hospitals but succumbed to their injuries.

The deceased have been identified as one Abujam John and Sashikanta. John was rushed to Advance Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries around 10.30 pm on Sunday night. Sashikanta

was reported dead at Raj Medicity early Monday, police report said.

The deceased Sashikanta was a Havildar of IRB while John his cousin brother was a supporter of Agriculture Minister O. Lukhoi.

While the reason for the killing is yet to be ascertained and the culprits remain at large, locals strongly protested against the killing by blocking traffic movement at Mayai Lambi road.

Demanding justice for those who were killed in the incident, a joint action committee was formed in an emergency meeting at the complex of New Young Sporting Club, Shamurou early Monday.

The meeting unanimously resolved that the JAC will take up necessary action against the killing of Abujam John and Abujam Rishikanta alias Tomba.

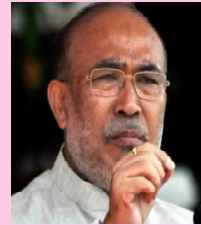
It was also resolved that

## Chief Minister N Biren Singh condemns gun attack

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10:

Chief Minister N Biren Singh has condemned the killing of two persons in the strongest term while visiting the victims' families on today morning.

Condemning the incident, CM Biren said that it was an attack on the BJP supporters. The government will not remain silent until the perpetrators are arrested,



the chief minister added. One Abujam John, an active worker of Agricultural Minister Lokhoi and

Sashikanta, a Havildar of IRB, were shot at by unidentified persons near Machu Cinema Hall at Shamurou, located along Mayai Lambi Road, around 10 pm Sunday.

John was rushed to Advance Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries around 10.30 pm on Sunday night. Sashikanta was reported dead at Raj Medicity early Monday, police said.

the JAC will not accept the bodies until the relevant source of killing is furnished proactively.

The meeting further resolved to demand Chief

Minister N Biren Singh to open a police outpost at a feasible area in Shamurou Municipal Council and fit modern technological devices like CCTV to prevent

such crimes in the future. The JAC resolved to launch further action if the facts of the killing are not furnished within 48 hours from 10 am of Monday.

## Rani Gaidinliu statue unveiled

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10:

Padma Bhushan awardees, Freedom Fighter Rani Gaidinliu statue was unveiled today by the family of Rani Gaidinliu in coordination with Assam Rifles in Tamenglong District. The statue of Freedom Fighter Rani Gaidinliu was unveiled today by Yambem Laba Chief adviser of Kangleipak Kanba Lup (KKL), family members of Rani Gaidinliu where necessary assistance to the family was provided 39 Battalion of Headquarters 21 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of Headquarters Inspector General Assam Rifles (East).

Rani Gaidinliu is one of the renowned freedom fighter



from Manipur, who is also famous as Daughter of the Hills.

The ceremony was conducted at Rani's native place in village Luangkao part -1, Tousem sub division under Tamenglong District. During the ceremony was celebrated by the locals of Luangkao-I village alongwith with family members of Rani Gaidinliu and troops of Kamai company operating base of 39 Assam Rifles. Ceremony culminated with the Refreshments.

All the villagers, Rani Gaidinliu Foundation and the Family members of Rani Gaidinliu appreciated the efforts of Assam Rifles for assisting them for organising the historical ceremony of unveiling the statue of Rani Gaidinliu.

## "Catch The Rain" Campaign held at Thoubal district



IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10:

Stepping into the last legs of Catch The Rain Campaign Phase II (1st October 2021- 31st January 2022) as part of Jal Shakti Abhiyan jointly organised by National Water Mission under Ministry of Jal Shakti and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan under Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, Nehru Yuva Kendra Thoubal in association with Phouden Youth Club conducted cleaning of public pond at Thoubal Wangkhem and another Assam Writing Competition at Sapam Khongjom, today the 9th January 2022.

The youths of Wangkhem and Phouden after the cleaning

exercise took a pledge on ethical voting and signed on a Democracy Wall to vote without fear and favour as part of SVEEP-Signature Campaign.

The Slogan writing Competition was organised on the theme "Rainwater Harvesting & Water Conservation" and prizes were given by NYK Thoubal volunteers. A painting competition on the same theme was also organised recently on 7th January 2022 by NYK Thoubal volunteers at Wangoo Tera, Kakching. An Essay writing competition followed by a rally to spread awareness on Rainwater Harvesting was also organised as part of this Catch The Rain Campaign on 6th January 2022 at Salungpham, Thoubal with Salungpham

Youth Association.

This Catch The Rain campaign was launched in October 2021 and multiple training of youths programs, water talks, water pledges, poster campaigns, knowledge competitions, demonstration activities had been conducted till date in various parts of Thoubal & Kakching.

"Catch The Rain" Campaign is aimed at creating awareness through youths, sensitization of communities on the need of water conservation, rain water harvesting, minimizing wastage and re-use of water & mobilization of people in the Rainwater Harvesting & Water Conservation initiatives of the government throughout the country.

## 70-km walkathon in Nagaland demanding repeal of AFSPA

Agency  
Dimapur, Jan 10:

Hundreds of Nagas from different walks of life on Monday joined the two-day walkathon from Nagaland's commercial hub Dimapur to state capital Kohima, a distance of more than 70 km, demanding the repeal of AFSPA, and justice for the 14 civilians who were killed by security forces in Mon district.

The walkathon, which stemmed out of social media posts following the Mon killings, gained the support of various tribal bodies and civil society organisations in the state.

It began at the Super Market area of Dimapur with volunteers and participants holding placards, demanding the repeal of the "draconian" Armed Force (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and justice for the victims.

Rukewez Wetsah, one of the coordinators of the walkathon, said it was a peace-



ful, silent and democratic measure to convey the resentment of the people over AFSPA, and reassert "our dignity as human beings".

"Not paying heed to the demand of the people in the aftermath of the Mon incident, the Centre on December 30 extended AFSPA for six more months," he lamented.

"The public has come together to express their displeasure against the Centre's deci-

sion," he said.

Fourteen people were killed by security forces in a botched anti-insurgency operation in Mon district over December 4 and 5, leading to nationwide outrage and renewing the demand for repeal of AFSPA.

Maintaining that the state government and its police force are more than capable to handle the law and order situation, Wetsah said Nagas don't need the colonial-era law — AFSPA.

The participants also observed a minute's silence in the honour of the victims of the Mon incident.

Member of Forum for Naga Reconciliation Rev Dr Ellen Konyak offered prayers after which the walkathon began.

As the march crosses villages and towns on its way to Kohima, more people are expected to join, Wetsah said.

The participants would spend the night at Piphema, halfway to Kohima, before restarting the march on Tuesday morning for the state capital. They would submit a memorandum to the Centre through Governor Jagdish Mukhi.

The Konyak Union, the apex body of the tribe to which the victims belonged, had demanded that justice be done by January 10.

It had also declared non-cooperation with the security forces till justice is delivered. It is scheduled to hold a crucial meeting on January 14 to decide the further course of action.

## Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tests Covid positive

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 10:

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted that he has tested positive for Covid-19 and has isolated himself at home. The senior BJP leader said he had "mild symptoms".

"I have tested positive for Corona today with mild symptoms. I am under home quaran-



tine. I request everyone who have recently come in my contact to isolate themselves and get tested," tweeted Rajnath Singh.

Several ministers and politicians, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, have tested positive during the ongoing Covid outbreak in India, which has been triggered by the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

# The Seven Years Devastation (1819-1826) in Manipur

By - Maibam Chanu Babiya

## Introduction

**The Seven Years Devastation** or **Chahi Taret Khuntakpa** was the period of Burmese rule during which the valley of Manipur was devastated for seven years beginning from 1819 AD till 1826 AD. The episode began from the **12<sup>th</sup> day of Poinu 1819** and brought to an end in **February 1826**. It is regarded as the darkest and the most tragic yet landmark event in the history of Manipur. It had grave consequences overall in the political, social, and economic conditions of the kingdom. This tragic period exposed the inhuman approach of the Burmese when they carried out intense torture and plunder during which the melancholy people of Manipur greatly suffered leaving indelible marks in their minds. Apropos to this, **Dr. N. Birachandra** in his book **"Seven Years Devastation: 1819-1826"** stated **"This chapter of the history will ever be remembered by the Manipuris (Meeteis) as an undisguisable scar on their face, recalling the ferociousness, inhuman treatment of the Burmese and their intention to exterminate the community which excelled the works of Hitler upon the Jews"**. Manipur had never faced such a cataclysm in the past as that brought by the Burmese subjugation.

## Origin

The Seven Years Devastation can be taken as a repercussion of various factors that had been taking place since the reign of **Maharaj Garibniwaj (1709-1748)** till the reign of **Maharaj Marjit (1813-1819)**. Most of the ills of Manipur was led by the behavior of Garibniwaj may it be the destroying

of those valuable Puyas (manuscript) or the breaking of the correct line of succession as by handing over the throne to his incompetent son Chit Shai instead of Shyam Shai who was the rightful heir to the throne. His imprudent act resulted in a war of succession among his descendants which greatly hampered the political stability of the kingdom. Although he was the greatest king and the most successful conqueror in the history of Manipur, he was also responsible for the downfall of Manipur.

Another factor was the conspiracy and revolts which were taking place among the princes instigated by the nobles, queens, and Brahmins for their prospects. Disunity, distrust, conspiracy, revolt, frequent change of rulers, etc. were the general features of those days during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The frequent change of rulers completely shook the strong political system which Garibniwaj and his predecessors had built up. The unified Manipur, which he took all his efforts to build up, was tumbled down by his weak and unworthy successors. Instead of consolidating the nation and preparing to defend their motherland, most of the succeeding kings thought only for royal pleasure and the throne. This made it almost impossible to defend the kingdom during the Burmese invasion.

Moreover, the conversion of the state religion into Hinduism took a toll on the moral, social, and political life of the Manipuris. Earlier they were warlike people, but after the conversion, the whole community became religious minded people and gave credence to the softer senti-

ment of Vaishnavism based on "Bhakti and Prem" (love and devotion). Thus, in those critical moments instead of preparing for war and improving their defense system, they confined themselves in religious affairs. Above all, the adoption of the new religion started dividing the Manipuri society into two groups as Manipuri Hindus who claimed higher status, and Non-Hindus who were looked down upon as untouchables and kept apart from all social and political affairs of the kingdom. Eventually, the king of Manipur failed to receive full cooperation from the hill tribes during these critical periods which later affected the military system of the kingdom. Thus, the conversion into Hinduism can be considered as the most important factor which led to the defeat of Manipur to the Burmese.

The military system of the kingdom during those periods had many defects which made it difficult to defend the kingdom against the Burmese who were rising to great power. After the king of Manipur failed to receive full cooperation from the hill tribes, the military armies became much lesser in number as the hill tribes refused to aid irregular armies for the king. One of the major defects in the military system of Manipur was the inability to equip the soldier with firearms, unlike the Burmese. So, it was impossible to fight against the Burmese with swords and spears. In addition to this, there was a lack of leadership among the royal armies due to the absence of efficient and brave warriors and king on the battlefield. Again, the ignorance of the new war strategy and tactics by the military and the deterioration of their physical and moral behavior due to the conversion to Hinduism greatly affected their military system making it impossible to defend the kingdom against the Burmese.

While Manipur was in a state of utter chaos and turmoil, the Burmese rose in power under their brave and ambitious **King Alungmya (1754-1763)**. Determined to build up a united Burma, he brought many changes in the social as well as political systems of his kingdom. Their military system was reorganized and well equipped with firearms. Burma was no longer weak and divided. Their spirit of unity and imperialistic ambition led to the rise of their power in an incomparable position to the Manipuris. Thus, leading to the event of 1819-1826 in Manipur.

The immediate cause of the outbreak of the event in Manipur was the defiance of the order of **Bagidaw**, the king of Burmabmy **Marjit**, the king of Manipur attend his coronation ceremony. In 1813, Marjit ascended the throne of Manipur driving out his brother **Chourjit**, who was the then king of Manipur, with the Burmese help by **submitting Kabaw valley along with the very independence of the kingdom**. Ashamed before his nobles and subjects for his submissive position, he canceled his Burmese suzerainty and showed many signs of independence. In 1819, when Bagidaw became the king of Burma, Marjit was ordered to attain the coronation but he refused to go. Being angry at the defiance of his order, the Burmese king sent a large army under **General Mahabandula** to invade Manipur and punish Marjit. Marjit was defeated and fled to Cachar. Thus, the tragic period of **"Chahi Taret Khuntakpa"** began.

## Scenario

The Burmese completely rooted out the Manipuri forces and laid waste to whatever they came across on their way mercilessly killing all the inhabitants of the valley regardless of sex and ages looting and plundering the valley. Women and children were intensely tortured. It is said that they were locked up in big

houses without any ventilation and brundry chilies until they died of the smoke. Groups of men were bound together by impaling a cane creeper called "Yairi" through their palms and then whipped when they were taken as prisoners to Burma. About 3,30,000 captives were carried away. They continued these inhuman acts for one whole year from December 1819 to January 1821. Then, they left Manipur entrusting the administrative works under their puppet kings. There were altogether seven rulers during this period.

Meanwhile, horror and agony of the Burmese oppression caught the ear of **Herachandra**, a Manipuri prince. While all the other princes fled to Cachar, leaving the people in the hands of the enemy, he collected all the Manipuris hiding in the jungle and hills and founded a revolutionary party consisting of 800 men in March 1820. He adopted guerilla warfare and was able to cut off small detachments of the Burmese army step by step. His one remarkable achievement was the killing of the maximum force of the Burmese army with the help of the Manipuri women. He disguised himself as a beggar, went to the houses of the Burmese army having Manipuri wives, and made secret plans with the Manipuri women to kill their husband. The plan was executed in one full moon night. When the Manipuri women heard the voice of the conch, they suddenly attacked their sleeping husbands. Before Gambhir Singh came out to Manipur, Herachandra tried his best to liberate Manipur and made the task of Gambhir Singh easier. His love and dedication for his motherland were beyond compare.

On the other side, the Manipuri princes who had taken shelter in Cachar came together and dethroned its ruler Govindchandra. Thus, dividing the plain of Cachar among the princes viz, **Chourjit, Marjit, and Gambhir Singh**. Soon enough, there started a clash of supremacy among the princes. In 1823 AD, Gambhir Singh drove out Chourjit and Marjit and became the undisputed ruler of Cachar. In the meantime, the internal dissension among the Manipuri princes in Cachar, their clash for supremacy, and the aggressive designs of the Burmese Government in Assam invited the attention of the British Government in Cachar. Amid such an alarming situation, the Burmese attacked Cachar on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1824. The British demanded Gambhir Singh for a joint attack against the Burmese forces. In due course of the war, Gambhir Singh along with his 500 irregular armies successfully drove out the Burmese force. The British officers were very much inspired to see the sincerity, gallantry, and endurance of the Manipuri force though they were irregular armies and realized that Gambhir Singh could easily liberate Manipur with the British's assistance and he might be a useful ally of the British Government. Gambhir Singh agreed with the British Government to help each other in course of war with Burma and to liberate Manipur and make himself the independent King of Manipur. Accordingly, the British Government allowed Gambhir Singh to raise a Levy called **Gambhir Singh Levy** consisting of 50 horses and 300 armies from the Manipuris residing at Sylhet in 1824 AD. Two British Officers, Captain Grant, and Lt. R Pemberton were attached to the force to train drill and discipline. The force was henceforth called the **Manipuri Levy**. The British Government supplied the arms and ammunition to the troops and carried all expenditures. Nara Singh, a courageous Manipuri Prince was appointed as leader of the Levy.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1825, Gambhir Singh left Sylhet for Manipur with his Levy accompanied by Lt. R Pemberton. On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1825, they reached the Manipur Valley and captured two

outposts of Burmese armies at Nunga and Mayang Keinou. The next day, they advanced further towards Imphal and found that the Burmese had retreated from Manipur Valley. Thus, **Gambhir Singh became the king of Manipur in June 1825**. Then, he started the conquest for Kabaw Valley and captured the Burmese stockyard in Tamu. After crossing Ningthee River, they captured another Burmese camp and saved 200 captives of Manipuris. Thus, by the end of February 1826 AD, Gambhir Singh completed the conquest of the Kabaw Valley and planted his flag on the right bank of the Ningthee River ending the so-called **Seven Years Devastation** in Manipur. The 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo Burmese War was also brought to an end by signing the **Treaty of Yandaboo 1826** on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1826. By this treaty, the King of Ava recognized Raja Gambhir Singh as an independent king of Manipur. The Burmese Government insisted on the English to stop all their interference in the country.

## Effects

The Seven Years Devastation had extensive effects. Large scale plunder and torture were carried out for about one year. About **5,50,000** Manipuris were killed during this period. Manipur was economically ruined. All the buildings and temples were demolished. The Burmese looted away all their belongings and collected whatever they could. More than **3,30,000** Manipuris were carried away as captives. Thus, Manipur became an arena of plunder and fresh harvest of slaves and cattle. The Manipuri people, in fear of the Burmese oppression, remained hiding at the jungles and hills of Manipur deserting the valley. After the devastation, only **2016** souls constituted the population of Manipur.

The devastation also affected the social, political, and economic life of the kingdom. It brought about a new political system in Manipur. During those periods, there was a frequent change of rulers. Thus, there was political instability in the kingdom which brought untold miseries to her inhabitants. Above all, there was also an economic depression in the kingdom as the Manipuris left the valley deserted. The works of agriculture and industries were ruined. The fertile land was converted into a jungle as a result, a frequent famine occurred.

At the end of the devastation, Manipur entered an alliance with the British which later led to the outbreak of the **Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891**. Internal dissension, weakness of the ruling family, and other factors eventually led to the surrender of the independence of Manipur to the British. Besides political changes, there were also changes in

the socio-economic life of the Manipuris. It led to the scattering of the Manipuris in the neighboring countries i.e. Cachar, Assam, Tripura, and Bangladesh. The economy was improved due to the expansion of foreign trade. The way of life was also considerably changed.

The military system was altered, firearms were introduced to the Manipuri Armies by the British. They no longer depended on their primitive weapons. After the Seven Years Devastation, intellectual and moral awakening took place in Manipur. Thus, the Seven Years Devastation had its good and bad effects on our society.

## Conclusion

The Seven Years Devastation remains an unforgettable event that still horrifies the minds of the Manipuris until today. It was mainly brought about by the mistakes made by our Manipuri Kings. The first mistake was made by Garibniwaj by handing over the throne to Chit Shai. This marked the starting point of the never-ending conflicts, wars, and controversies during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The one mistake he made was followed by many other mistakes among his successors which eventually led to the tragic period. In my perspective, I would say that the negligence of our religion was the root cause of the downfall of Manipur. Even though the Burmese were the ones that brought the devastation and terror, they only did what we had done to them. According to **"History of Burma from the Earliest Times to 10 March 1824"** by **GE Harvey (London, 1925)**, it is clearly described that the Seven Years Devastation was long-awaited revenge by the Burmese for what the Manipuris did to them over the years. It is a well-known fact that during the reign of Garibniwaj, the Burmese suffered not less than the Manipuris. So, it would be imprecise for the Burmese to take all the blame. Moreover, the Seven Years Devastation led to the initial modernization of Manipur and marked the beginning of the Modern Period. Manipur was reborn into a new kingdom after the devastation. It was no longer flooded with conflicts, chaos, and turmoil. In the end, even though the worst resides in the event of the Seven Years Devastation, we could still see the best if we change our perspectives. So, whether or not to make it a sorrowful end lies in the perspective of each reader.

*(The write up is an award winning essay on the online competition which was held during August 2020 organized by the Campaign for Peace & Democracy in Manipur. The writer is from Lairikyengbam Leikai, Imphal)*

## Smell of books or convenience of e-books?

### Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



I like to read a book by holding it in my hand instead of reading one online. I have heard a lot about e-reading, but the desire to feel a book or newspaper in my hands while reading is always on

top of my mind. When the pandemic changed many habits of people in the last two years, how could the habit of book reading remain untouched? Many people have made e-books and e-reading a part of their habits. To explore the available options, I organised a discussion around the topic to find out what the authors and book lovers were thinking on this. Carrying bulky books when you are travelling creates problems. On the other hand, it is always better to download your favourite books on your phone, tab or Kindle and read the books as and when you want. Amazon Kindle is said to be one of the best e-reading apps. You can download the app from Google store and use it on smartphone, tab or laptop. There are many other apps out there, but Kindle is said to be the most popular.

If your eyes start straining after reading or if you want to enjoy a book while working, audio books are a fantastic idea. Audio books are a bit expensive as compared to e-books. One month free subscription is given on the site, after that they may charge a fee of Rs 99 for a book every month. Some audio books are also available for free. An author said that "the habit of reading is her super power". She has a point, because the more you read, the less it is. Reading a novel or stories enhances imagination and reading non-fiction books enhances knowledge. Whatever is read, it improves vocabulary also. To get into the habit of e-reading, download the Kindle app on your smartphone and try reading free books. Then see what you like more. Try audio books as well. Once this test is complete, decide how you want to read. Well the truth is that reading is important, the method of reading is secondary.

Reading e-books on a tablet has its own fun, it comes with a lot of features. As far as distractions are concerned, turn on the Zen mode to avoid notifications. The Paper White Kindle is expensive, but it offers a great experience for e-reading, such as reading in the dark or reading under the sun. Charge its battery once and it lasts for a week. The dictionary function is also available when you tap a word on the screen. There are many apps like Kindle app, ePub app, Kindle reader, Google Playbook etc. which can be installed on a smartphone to enable you to read thousands of books on the go. One author said she enjoys reading books on her tablet through the Kindle app. Not only can the font size be increased on it, but there is also a facility to highlight important text and she is able to make notes also. According to the Association of American Publishers, the demand for e-books was low in 2014, but in 2020-21, the demand for e-books was 22 percent higher. The survey also showed that 90% of the readers were college students.

(\*\*\* The writer is a senior journalist and columnist.)

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## Poetry

### Life

By: Ashing Muivah

Unbeknownst arrived into this world,  
Naked, innocent, blind and curled;  
Gradually began to see and yell,  
Yet, that's just how life excel.

Felt the love, care and pampering,  
Then started that usual bantering;  
Reprimands, spanking I cared not  
'cos I was an adventurous Autobot.

Began to see the world around  
Then realised that beauty abounds;  
Unfamiliar colours surrounded my life,  
Things to be enjoyed is rife.

Life is but about oneself to choose,  
Happiness let no human lose;  
Appreciations and encouragements let be;  
Then life will surely pour it's favour on thee.



# PM Narendra Modi security breach: SC agrees to set up committee headed by former SC judge to probe lapses

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 10:

The Supreme Court, on Monday, agreed to set up an independent committee, to be headed by a former Supreme Court judge to probe Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security breach in Ferozepur, Punjab last week. While hearing a petition on the matter, the top court asked both the Centre and Punjab governments not to go ahead with their inquiries in the matter.

The court also proposed to include DGP Chandigarh, IG National Investigation Agency, Registrar General of Punjab and Haryana High Court, and ADGP (security) of Punjab, in the independent committee.

Earlier today, a bench of SC headed by CJI Ramana began the hearing of a plea seeking a court-monitored probe into the incident involving a breach of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security during his visit to Ferozepur in Punjab. A three-judge bench, headed by Chief

Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana and consisting of Justice Surya Kanta and Justice Hima Kohli took up the petition filed by an organisation - Lawyers' Voice.

After being told that the Centre has issued show-cause notices to Punjab officials, the Supreme Court told the Centre that the notices issued by it to Punjab officials were self-contradictory. The court added that by constituting Committee, Centre is seeking to enquire if there was a breach of SPG Act and then, on the other hand, it is holding Punjab Chief Secretary and Director General guilty.

"There is a breach and the Punjab government has admitted as well. The question is if an inquiry is held, what will be its scope. If you want to take disciplinary action against officers what remains for this court to look into?" the court asked.

During the hearing on Monday, senior advocate DS Patwalia, Advocate General of

Punjab government, told the Supreme Court that the records have been taken into consideration by the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The Punjab government also said that seven show-cause notices have been issued to the state officers as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against them. "Please appoint an independent committee, and give us a fair hearing," the state government said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the Supreme Court that show-cause notices were issued to DG and Punjab Chief Secretary before the proceedings of Central govt's Committee was halted. No hearing was done by the committee appointed, he said.

Appearing for petitioner Lawyers' Voice, senior advocate Maninder Singh had earlier told the apex court on Friday that the breach of PM Modi's security in Punjab is not

merely a law and order problem, but a matter under the Special Protection Groups (SPG) Act.

"The matter of Prime Minister protection is a national security issue and comes under parliamentary purview," Singh said in the court, news agency ANI quoted.

The petition has alleged that the breach of PM's security was a deliberate lapse on part of the state government. It has urged the Supreme Court to take strict action against the 'erring' officials of the Punjab government. The PIL also questioned why and how private persons were given access to PM Modi's route.

"The overall responsibility for ensuring the safety of the Prime Minister rests with the State government and the responsibility for providing proximate security will rest with the Special Protection Group (SPG) as per the SPG Act 1988," the petition said.

# Assam Rifles seizes Narcotics and Ammunitions



IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10:

Moreh Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) seizes narcotics tablets and ammunitions from a suspected house in Chavangphai village,

Tengnoupal district on 08 January.

Based on a specific input, the troops of Assam Rifles cordoned a suspected house. On deliberate search of the house, huge quantity of WYI narcotics tablets, 12 live rounds and two fired cases of

12 Bore Rifle, two live rounds of pistol were recovered.

The recovered narcotics tablets are assessed to be of worth Rs 18 lakhs.

The seized narcotics and ammunitions were handed over to Moreh Police Station for further investigations.

## Career Guidance

# Education trends that will create ripples this year

The education sector has witnessed many developments in the last two years, from the rapid growth of the EdTech industry to the large-scale adoption of remote or hybrid learning and the announcement of the National Education Policy in 2020. These events are still reverberating in the education sector and are expected to further change its landscape.

### Cashing in

Investment in the EdTech industry went up significantly between the period of January-August 2021, with an almost four-fold upswing at roughly USD 3.81 billion compared to USD 971.5 million in 2019. Three of the startups achieved unicorn status, with valuations above USD 1 billion, while one became a decacorn, valued at over USD 10 billion, within the same period.

At the same time, there has been consolidation within the industry with mergers and acquisitions picking up pace. As the Indian market reaches its full potential, larger companies are looking for inorganic avenues of growth. This trend will likely continue in 2022, as the bigger players consolidate their position further by acquiring, or merging with, other companies. Along with these developments, we will also witness more exits as early investors cash in on the growth.

### NEP in action

More than a year after NEP2020 was announced, the momentum is likely to increase in 2022, as state and education boards race to implement the policy within the stipulated time frame. School rationalisation has to be completed by 2025 and, by 2040, all higher educational institutions have to become multidisciplinary.

Apart from sweeping changes in the educational ecosystem, some of these guidelines will require legal amendments from some of the states, as well as the Centre. For instance, the categorisation of



By: Vijay GarG

universities under three categories will require legislative action. The education sector will continue to see sweeping changes as states work to achieve the NEP goals. However, the timelines for the implementation of these guidelines will vary across states as each region deals with its unique demographic and political compulsions. These can include factors such as the number of private and public schools, literacy levels, and the percentage of minorities and backward castes.

### Chinese EdTech industry

The Chinese government's crackdown on its USD 100 billion-strong EdTech market can benefit the booming Indian industry, at least in the short term. Since the Chinese EdTech sector was significantly larger than the Indian market, the inflow of capital can be significant, and investments may pick up even this year. The Chinese crackdown had another impact. There is now a rising consciousness within the industry to include public policy initiatives to counteract any negative action by the government. Accordingly, we may see more public-private partnerships on education or skilling programmes.

### Mainstreaming of hybrid education

A recent survey predicts a further 14% dip in attendance due to fears of the Omicron strain. Most schools and colleges have switched to a hybrid approach, with online and offline classes being con-

ducted simultaneously. This approach involves both in-class and remote learning, with online assignments and projects. While hybrid learning is not a new concept, Covid-19 has made it mainstream.

### Lifelong learning

Reskilling programmes received a boost during the pandemic, as companies focussed on bridging the skill gap in their workforce. A global survey by McKinsey revealed that 69% of respondents took up skill-building programmes during the Covid-induced lockdown. This push for upskilling is expected to gain further traction in 2022, as Indian corporates continue to focus on learning and development of their employees. Lifelong learning is now expected to be the new normal as professionals continue upgrading their skills in the course of their careers to retain a competitive edge. Other than improving the skill levels of its workforce, HR managers will also look at online upskilling programmes as a more economic means of boosting employee morale, ensuring their retention.

### Learning in Metaverse

The Metaverse, or the confluence of our physical and digital realities, is closer than we imagine and is expected to go mainstream in the next five to 10 years. Consequently, teaching/learning in the domain will also pick up in the near future. This can have long-term implications as institutions leverage the metaverse for imparting immersive experiences, using both augmented and virtual reality to further accelerate learning.

The education sector is going through quite an upheaval, with policy initiatives, the rise of the EdTech segment, and emerging modes of online/hybrid learning. These ongoing changes will have a long-term impact that will be critical in equipping our students with future-ready skills.

# MEA renews its agreement with TCSL for the Passport Seva program V 2.0

IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, Jan 10:

The Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has signed an agreement for second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP-V2.0) with M/s. Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCSL), and has appointed the firm as the service provider for the project.

The PSP-V2.0 is a continuation and enhancement of PSP-V1.0, an e-Governance instrument, which introduced unprecedented transformation in delivery of passport related services to citizens. The focus was on timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable platform, accessed by citizens in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and a committed, trained and motivated workforce.

Under the agreement, the TCSL, will be managing the project for another nine-and-a-half years, which can be extended for two more years. The deal as per new agreement, is expected to be in the range of Rs 6,000-8,000 crore.

The project design has ensured that the support functions like citizen interface, technology backbone, call centres, training and change management are provided by the Service Provider, and the Government has continued to exercise all sovereign and security related function in the passport issuance process, an MEA statement said.

The number of public dealing offices has increased across the country. Ministry is working towards opening of a Seva Kendra in every Lok Sabha Constituency where there is no Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) or Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK). As on date 93 PSKs, 428 POPSKs and 36 Passport Offices are operational in the country. This was Program was recently connected to over 176 Indian Missions / Posts through Global Passport Seva Programme (GPSP), providing seamless delivery of passport services to Indian diaspora.

The key elements of PSP-V 2.0 include: setting up of a state-of-art digital ecosystem, process overhauling and integration among various stakeholders and

database, improving citizen interface, upgrading technology, adopting best practices and strengthening data security. Security aspects, including strategic assets such as Data Centres, Database and the Application Software will be owned by the Government.

There would be strict access controls across the system, incorporating biometrics. On the digital front, the programme envisages a Data Centre, Disaster Recovery Centre and Government Secure Repository networked to all PSKs/POPSKs, Passport Offices and also to Indian Missions/Posts abroad, an electronic file system for passport processing

running across the passport issuance ecosystem and 24x7x365 monitoring and supervision through state-of-art Network Operation Centre (NOC) and Security Operation Centre (SOC).

Recognizing the need to continually improve the quality of Government to Citizen (G2C) services and the mantra of Good Governance via IT and digital media, the Passport Seva Programme would be embarking on technology upgradation with the use of Biometrics, Artificial Intelligence, Advance Data Analytics, ChatBot, Auto-response, Natural Language Processing, Cloud Enablement.

## Name Change

I, the undersigned, **Ahongshangbam Bijyalakshmi Devi** do hereby declare that **A. Bijyalakshmi Devi** and **Ahongshangbam Bijyalakshmi Devi** are same person. This is true to my best knowledge

Sd/-  
**Ahongshangbam Bijyalakshmi Devi**  
Singamei Mayengbam Leikai  
Imphal, Manipur  
#9856268609

## Name Change

I the undersigned do hereby declared that I have renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of old name **Wangkhem Naresh Singh** as I have assumed my new name **Wangkhem Naresh**.

Therefore, all name recorded in my documents and other official purposes should be written as **Wangkhem Naresh** and not as **Wangkhem Naresh Singh**.

Sd/-  
**Wangkhem Naresh**  
Achanbigei Warok  
Near Maria Montessori School  
Achanbigei, Imphal East

## Name Change

I the undersigned do hereby declared that I have renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of old name **Wangkhem Soma Devi** as I have assumed my new name **Wangkhem O Soma**.

Therefore, all name recorded in my documents and other official purposes should be written as **Wangkhem O Soma** and not as **Wangkhem Soma Devi**.

Sd/-  
**Wangkhem O Soma**  
Achanbigei Warok  
Near Maria Montessori School  
Achanbigei, Imphal East

## MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

### NOTIFICATION

Imphal, the 9th January, 2022

**No.01/06(01)/2022-LA(E)DR:** In continuation of this Secretariat Notification of even number dated 06/01/2022, it is hereby informed to all the intending candidates that the entire process of direct recruitment to I (one) post of Committee Officer in the Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat has been put on hold with immediate effect until further notification in this regard.

Sd/-  
**G. Tapankumar Sharma**  
Joint Secretary (Admn.),  
Manipur Legislative Assembly

### Lost

I have lost a bag containing the Registration documents of my Honda Activa vehicle, bearing Registration Number MN01D 0461 in between Imphal to Nambol on January 9, 2022.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
**Tongbram Somorjit Singh**  
Contact No. 9856248440

# India records almost 1.8 lakh COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, 146 deaths; Omicron tally zooms past 4000

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 10:

India saw a single-day rise of 1,79,723 coronavirus infections taking the total tally to 3,57,07,727, including 4,033 cases of the Omicron variant reported across 27 states and union territories so far, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry on Monday.

The number of active cases has increased to 7,23,619, the highest in around 204 days, while the death toll has climbed to 4,83,936 with 146 fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

Of the total 4,033 cases of Omicron variant, 1,552 have recovered or migrated.

Maharashtra recorded the maximum number of 1,216 Omicron cases, followed by Rajasthan 529, Delhi 513,

Karnataka 441, Kerala 333 and Gujarat 236.

A total of 1,79,723 new coronavirus infections were reported in a day, the highest in around 227 days.

A total of 1,86,364 new infections were reported on May 27 last year.

The active cases have increased to 7,23,619, accounting for 2.03 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has decreased to 96.62 per cent, the ministry said.

An increase of 1,33,008 cases has been recorded in the active caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 13.29 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate was 7.92 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people

who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,45,00,172, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.36 per cent.

The cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive have crossed 151.94 crore.

India's COVID-19 infection 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; 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 infections on May 4 last year and three crore on June 23.

The 146 new fatalities reported on Monday included 44 from Kerala, 18 from West Bengal and 17 from Delhi.

A total of 4,83,936 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,41,639 from Maharashtra, 49,591 from Kerala, 38,370 from Karnataka, 36,855 from Tamil Nadu, 25,160 from Delhi, 22,928 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,901 from West Bengal.

The health 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.

# The Union Govt organises the first ever India innovation week

IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, Jan 10:

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the first ever Startup India innovation week, has been organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) till January 16, to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India.

The goal of the startup and innovation festival is to bring together the country's key startups, entrepreneurs, investors, incubators, funding entities, banks, policymakers, and other national/international stakeholders to celebrate entrepreneurship and promote innovation. The week seeks to exchange knowledge on nurturing startup ecosystems, to develop entrepreneurial ecosystem capacities, to mobilise global and domestic capital for startup investments; to encourage and inspire the youth for innovation and entrepreneurship and to showcase high-quality, high-technology, and frugal innovations from India.

With participation of States/UTs and various departments of Government of India, the week-long programme will address key aspects of the startup ecosystem through interactive sessions, workshops, and presentations based on themes such as Academia & Mentorship Support to Startups, Incubation and Acceleration Support to Startups, Market Access through Corporates & Government to Startups, and Funding & International Avenues to Go Global.

In addition, based on the identified themes, there will be various parallel activities such as Experience Booths, Pitching or Reverse Pitching Sessions, and Innovation Showcases.

India is emerging as a global innovation hub, boasting the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. DPIIT has recognised more than 61,000

startups as on date. Our startups representing 55 industries, spread across 633 districts with at least one startup from every State and UT of the country have created over 6 lakh jobs since 2016. 45% of the startups are from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and 45% of them are represented by women entrepreneurs. Startups have the potential to accelerate India's integration into global value chains and create global impact.

Highlights of the week-long celebration are: Prime Minister's interaction with start-ups, the declaration of National Startup Awards 2021, Launch of Doordarshan Startup Champions 2.0 show, Roundtable with Global Investors and domestic funds, Launch of Open Network for Digital Commerce Digital Strategy.

Participation by Ministry of Education, Niti Aayog, Office of PSA, DBT, DST, MeitY, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, among other departments, in various sessions. Launch of 'Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge' by Department of Fisheries and Pitching sessions and corporate connect programs for startups from across the country.

Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) week

Similarly the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) is celebrating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava, iconic week till January 16. The MHI is focused on developing a globally competitive, green and technology-driven manufacturing sector including automotive and capital goods sector, which propels growth and job creation.

As part of the celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava, the MHI in association with its Central Public Sector Enterprises and autonomous bodies has planned series of events and activities across

the country including at Haridwar, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Jhansi, Pune, Hyderabad etc during the iconic week.

The events will take place at Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Pune, Andrew Yule & Company Ltd. (AYCL), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL), Braithwaite Burn & Jessop Construction Co. Ltd. (BBJ), Kolkata, Bridge & Roof Ltd. (B&R), Kolkata, Cement Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI), Central Manufacturing Institute of India (CMTI), Bengaluru, Engineering Projects (India) Ltd. (EPIL), Fluid Control Research Institute (FCRI), Palakkad, Hindustan Machine Tools Ltd. (HMT), Hindustan Salts Ltd. / Sambhar Salts Ltd. (HSL/SSL), Rajasthan etc.

The focus is on the themes of Actions@75, Achievements@75, Ideas@75, Resolve@75 and Freedom Struggle in areas of Innovation, Manufacturing Excellence, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Environment & Sustainability, Swachha Bharat, Swastha Bharat, Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle etc. The events include Inaugurations, New Product launches, Technology Demonstrations, Technical Exhibitions, Seminars, Webinars, Expert Lectures, Yoga and Meditation sessions, Health Camps, Cleanliness Drives, Competitions on Freedom Struggle and Movements, etc.

Thrust is on following "Whole of Government Approach" and people's participation i.e. "Janbhagidari" in the events and activities in the week-long celebrations. Directions have been issued to ensure Covid-19 social distancing & hygiene protocols during the events and activities. Thrust is being given to leverage Information Technology and Virtual modes for organizing the events/activities.

# PPFA slams on nurturing Hindutwa angle with BulliBai episode

IT Correspondent  
Guwahati, Jan 10:

Expressing utter dismay over the imposition of communal colour to the BulliBai episode by a section of organisations and media outlets, Patriotic People's Front Assam (PPFA) urges everyone to wait for logical conclusion of the online application that allegedly put a number of celebrity women on auction.

It may be mentioned that over a hundred women, largely Muslim personalities including journalists, were listed with doctored photographs in the BulliBai app as readied for online

selling as maids in the first week of January 2022. Lately however the app was closed down by the concerned authority.

Expressing shock over the matter, a number of women activists filed police complaints in New Delhi and Mumbai under various sections of laws dealing with gender bias, sexual harassment, religious enmity, etc. Till date, four persons have been arrested suspecting their involvement in the crime by the police from different places including one from Jorhat in Assam.

All the detained are reportedly students includ-

ing a young lady and there is no such fact emerging out of the probe that they got involved with the crime with no religious agendas with probable instigations from the Hindu nationalists. PPFA demands a fair probe into the episode and urges all concerned not to pollute the atmosphere with communal discourses.

Mentionable is that Neeraj Bishnoi, a student of computer engineering, who was lately arrested from Jorhat has been suspected to be the mastermind behind the BulliBai app, developed on the hosting platform GitHub. Initial re-

ports suggest that Neeraj (who actually hails from Rajasthan) has distorted sexual orientations and no way connected to any Hindu nationalist outfit.

"The culprits should be punished under the law. But there is no logic in nurturing the Hindutwa angle for the benefit of international media markets as the app targeted mostly Muslim women. The conscious citizens of Bharat should keep an eye over those anti-national elements, so that they cannot hatch a conspiracy taking advantage of the episode," said a PPFA statement issued to the media.

## Sports

# ISL 2021-22: Kerala Blasters beat Hyderabad FC, go on top of points table

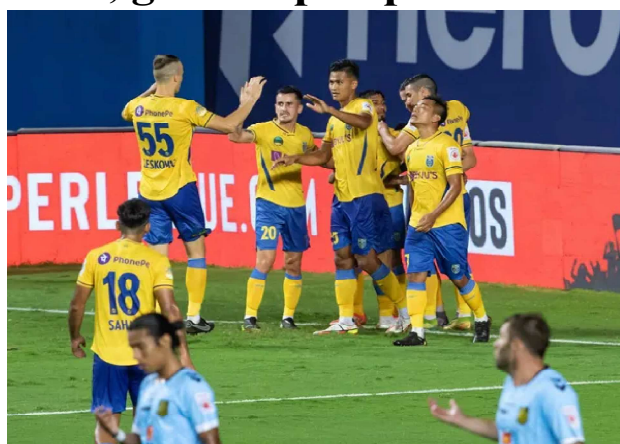
Agency  
Vasco da Gama (Goa):

Kerala Blasters brought Hyderabad FC's unbeaten run to an end with a 1-0 win and jumped to the top of the table in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2021-22 season at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Sunday.

Alvaro Vazquez (42nd) scored a first-half goal which eventually proved to be the winner as Kerala stretched their unbeaten streak to nine games, moving to the top of the points table with a better goal difference than Mumbai City FC, both being on 17 points from 10 games.

Hyderabad, on the other hand, saw their eight-game unbeaten run come to an end as they dropped to the third in the table having 16 points from 10 matches.

Hyderabad had a chance to take the lead early on when Edu Garcia's free-kick was deflected onto the crossbar by Prabhukhan Gill. Bartholomew Ogbeche was shown his fourth yellow card in the next minute,



meaning he will miss the next match. Kattimani pulled off a brilliant save in the 24th minute to deny Jorge Diaz as Kerala kept knocking on the door.

As the match progressed, both teams tried to carve open a clear-cut chance before Vazquez

helped the yellow shirts' nose ahead. A long throw-in was met by Sahal Abdul Samad who flicked it behind in the danger area where Vazquez struck a sweet volley to beat the keeper all ends up.

Hyderabad came close through Ogbeche on the

cup of half-time but the Nigerian shot wide. In the second period, Hyderabad tried to up the ante but failed to muster any real opportunity in front of goal barring one where Kerala skipper Jessel Carneiro kept his side in the lead with a goal-line clearance.

# SAI to shut down training centres amid rise in Covid-19 cases

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 10:

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Monday said it has decided to close its 67 training centres across the country due to rising Covid-19 cases.

"In view of rising cases of Covid-19, the Sports Authority of India has decided to close the 67 SAI Training centres across the country," the SAI said in a statement.

"The decision also comes in the wake of directives issued by various states to suspend sporting activities for the safety of athletes," it added.

The centres would be reopened after a review of the situation in due course of time.

India reported a rise of 1,79,723 Covid-19 cases on Monday.

The number of active cases has increased to 7,23,619, the highest in around 204 days, while the death toll has climbed to 4,83,936 with 146 fatalities reported this morning by the health ministry.



With several Covid-19 cases reported in the country's top training facilities, the SAI had last week ordered implementation of stricter protocols, including weekly testing of all athletes and support staff at its campuses across the nation.

The stricter SOP was announced after as many as 24 sportspersons and 12 support staff members tested positive for the virus at the SAI's Bhopal centre.

Also last week, as many as 35 junior athletes at the Sports Authority of India's Bengaluru facility, who were participating in various national events, had tested positive for the highly

contagious virus. That was after the nodal sports body had conducted random tests on 210 people comprising 175 athletes and 35 coaches.

On March 31 last year, 30 sportspersons and support staff across disciplines were found to be Covid-19 positive after 741 precautionary tests were conducted at the National Centres of Excellence in Patiala and Bengaluru.

SAI had also formed a panel to closely monitor the implementation of SOPs, quarantine norms, isolation facilities and suggest measures to contain the spread of Covid-19.