

PWD Minister bullshits Congress MLA's allegation of Rs. 800 crore scams

Congress MLA seems to lack the knowledge of Budget estimates - Biswajit

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Minister of the Public Works Department, Government of Manipur Thongam Biswajit today bullshits the allegation by Congress MLA K. Meghachandra about misappropriation of Rs. 800 crore in the Public Works Department during 2021-2022.

"There is no allocation of Rs. 800 crore for the financial year 2021-2022, it seems that the Congress MLA Meghachandra seems to lack the knowledge of the Budget estimate which had been handed over to him during state assembly session", Biswajit said adding that he

needs to clarify the unfounded and baseless allegations as the MLA may mislead the people.

Talking to a group of media persons at his official quarter at Sanjenthong, Imphal, the PWD Minister Th. Biswajit said that the Congress MLA K. Meghachandra seems to be ignorant of the PWD Budget Estimate. He said that the total budget estimate for 2021-22 is Rs. 754.0036 crore under 6 (six) different heads (MH: 2059, MH: 2216, MH:3054, MH: 4059, MH: 4216 and MH 5054. But due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the budget estimate was restricted by 40% for the minor works and 60% for the major works. Because of this



the available budget with the PWD is Rs. 631.81 crore and the upto date expenditure is

Rs. 363.39 crore.

Among these we could take up normal work for im-

provement of specific strategic roads/bridges in hill and valley area is Rs. 150 crore. Our of the Rs. 555.7158 crore budget under the MH:5054 - R&B, Rs. 374.7158 crore is Tentative Budget and the Expenditure on these tentative budget will be incurred only after authorization by Finance Department upon the credit of the fund in the State Government Account. Tentative budget is mandatory as there is a need for state matching share for the fund sanction from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for taking up External Added Project (EAP). We can utilize Rs. 150 crore from the state fund. However, due to fund restriction of 60% due to

Covid-19, we could utilize only Rs. 90 crore.

The restriction of funds by the Finance department is done as per rules of the government and not as per the desire of the PWD.

The PWD Minister Biswajit further appealed to Congress MLAs to stop spreading false propaganda to the people with an agenda to mislead the party.

"The BJP has been working whole heartedly for the welfare of the people and state as the BJP doesn't believe in the working style of the Congress Party", Minister Biswajit said. He also appealed the Congress MLA to do politics base on facts and figures and

not simply by spreading false and unfounded allegation.

He also said that the allegation leveled against the PWD by Congress MLA was already discussed in the state assembly session and the expenditure and fund for non-plan head had already been provided to all the members of the state assembly officially.

"I wonder why the Congress MLA is spreading the unfounded allegation when he already has the related documents", the Minister said mocking the Congress MLA saying that MLA K. Meghachandra seems to have lacked of knowledge of the budget estimate of the PWD.

CEO convenes meeting with political parties



IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Manipur Rajesh Agrawal today convened a meeting with recognized National & State political parties at the Conference Hall of Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur, Lamphelpat. CEO informed that meetings with political parties will be held weekly on a regular basis.

The CEO briefed on Model Code of Conduct, COVID Norms, Criminal Antecedents, Election Expenditure, EVMS & VVPATs, Identity Proof for

voting, amongst others. With the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct, defacement of government, public properties and unauthorized defacement in private property complied within specified timelines. Altogether 53,252 defacements were removed so far, Agrawal added. Photographs of political functionaries were also removed from government websites.

Political parties were also informed that no road show, Pad-yatra, cycle/bike/vehicle rally and procession, physical rally of Political parties or probable candidates or any

other group related to election shall be allowed till 15th January, 2022. Rallies and meetings shall be allowed only in earmarked places and with prior permissions of district administration. Stating that Election Agents/ Polling Agents/ Counting Agents without double dose vaccination shall not be allowed on duty, Shri Rajesh Agrawal appealed to all political parties to check on the vaccination status of their respective Polling Agents. He also informed that necessary arrangements would be made by the office of the CEO, Manipur for

COVID Vaccination.

Rajesh Agrawal continued that as per Supreme Court Order, political parties/ candidates should publish criminal antecedents in newspapers/TV on three occasions. Booklet on Criminal Antecedents was also provided to the representatives of political parties. For publishing criminal antecedents, a list of newspapers and TV channels will be notified soon, he added.

CEO also urged the Candidates to appoint Election Expenditure Agents to ensure timely filing of expenditure statements/accounts. Regarding P-2 & P-3 polling stations, he also informed that intermediate strong rooms had been identified and would be notified to all candidates and political parties by DEOs.

Representatives of Political Parties also expressed their views, suggestions and grievances during the meeting.

Joint CEO, Manipur, Ramananda Nongmeikapam, Joint CEO (II), Manipur, Md. S. Daulat Khan and State Nodal Officer, Media and W. Phajatombi Devi were also present during the meeting.

CNE on Trauma & Critical Care Nursing : A sentinel in time of Global Pandemic



IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Prof. A. Santa Singh, Director, RIMS, Imphal inaugurated a "Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) Program on Trauma & Critical Care Nursing: A Sentinel in time of Global Pandemic" was held at Jubilee Hall, RIMS, Imphal today.

The CNE program was organized by College of Nursing,

RIMS. Prof. A. Jamuna Devi, Principal, College of Nursing, RIMS delivered a keynote address. Prof. A. Santa Singh, Director spoke on Trauma & Critical Care during COVID-19 Global Pandemic and Dr. Manju Dhandapani, Assoc. Prof., National Institute of Nursing Education, PGIMER, Chandigarh, Prof. R.K. Lenin Singh, HOD of Psychiatry, RIMS, Mrs. L.C. Mala, Assoc.

Prof., CON, RIMS and S. Silbia Devi, Lecturer, CON, RIMS spoke on Emergency & Triage of Trauma Patients, Psychological aspect of Trauma & COVID-19, Impact of COVID-19 in children and its Nursing Management, Management of Pregnant Women in COVID-19 Pandemic respectively.

All the faculties, staffs and students attended the inauguration program.

NSCN-K (N)

warns builder and construction companies

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Rebel group NSCN-K (N) has warned the builders and construction companies in the state of Manipur to act upon on the information dispatched by the organization to them earlier.

A statement by Kathig Lmk, Supervisor, Manipur-in-charge, NSCN-K (N) said that if the builders and construction companies working in the state of Manipur fails to act upon within the month of January, 2022 the NSC/GPRN shall not entertain any complaints/ grievances as whatsoever in case any unwanted situation arises in the days to come.

WHO approves two drugs for COVID-19 treatment

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

The World Health Organization (WHO) today recommended two new drugs to treat patients with COVID-19.

The drug baricitinib (a type of drug known as a Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor, also used to treat rheumatoid arthritis) is strongly recommended for patients with severe or critical covid-19 in combination with corticosteroids, says a WHO Guideline Development Group of international experts in The BMJ today.

Their strong recommendation is based on moderate certainty evidence that it improves survival and reduces the need for ventilation, with no observed increase in adverse effects. The WHO experts note that baricitinib has

similar effects to other arthritis drugs called interleukin-6 (IL-6) inhibitors so, when both are available, they suggest choosing one based on cost, availability, and clinician experience. It is not recommended to use both drugs at the same time.

However, the experts advise against the use of two other JAK inhibitors (ruxolitinib and tofacitinib) for patients with severe or critical covid-19 because low certainty evidence from small trials failed to show benefit and suggests a possible increase in serious side effects with tofacitinib.

In the same guideline update, WHO also makes a conditional recommendation for the use of the monoclonal antibody sotrovimab in patients with non-severe covid-19, but only in those at highest risk of hospitalisation, reflecting

trivial benefits in those at lower risk.

A similar recommendation has been made by WHO for another monoclonal antibody drug (casirivimab-imdevimab). The experts also note that there were insufficient data to recommend one monoclonal antibody treatment over another – and they acknowledge that their effectiveness against new variants like omicron is still uncertain.

As such, they say guidelines for monoclonal antibodies will be updated when additional data become available.

Today's recommendations are based on new evidence from seven trials involving over 4,000 patients with non-severe, severe, and critical covid-19 infection.

They are part of a living guideline, developed by the World Health Organization

with the methodological support of MAGIC Evidence Ecosystem Foundation, to provide trustworthy guidance on the management of covid-19 and help doctors make better decisions with their patients.

Living guidelines are useful in fast moving research areas like covid-19 because they allow researchers to update previously vetted and peer reviewed evidence summaries as new information becomes available.

To make their recommendations, the panel considered a combination of evidence assessing relative benefits and harms, values and preferences, and feasibility issues.

Today's guidance adds to previous recommendations for the use of interleukin-6 receptor blockers and systemic corticosteroids for patients with severe or critical covid-19;

conditional recommendations for the use of casirivimab-imdevimab (another monoclonal antibody treatment) in selected patients; and against the use of convalescent plasma, ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine in patients with covid-19 regardless of disease severity.

Book release

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

A book entitled "The Anal Indigenous Theology & The Advent Of Christianity", written by Dr. Bs. Khelhring Anal was released by Dr. L. Khlonil President The Anal Scholars & Writers Forum on the occasion of the Anal Phemha Alum 2022 on Thursday at Anal Khullen Village Chandel District Manipur.

Emoinu Erat and Gaan Ngai message

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Kabui Union, Manipur, United Committee Manipur among others wish the people of the state on occasion of the Emoinu Erat Puja and the Gaan-Ngai.

In its message, Kabui Union, Manipur wish the people of the state to live a prosperous and harmonious life with the coming of the Emoinu Erat Thouni thouram and the Gaan Ngai. The Union also appealed the people, CSOs and the government not to put prefixes or suffixes to the Gaan Ngai as it would tantamount the aesthetic and the traditions of the Kubui community.

Corona is here to stay, Work from Home to continue

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



This year also, the culture of Work from Home (WFH) is likely to continue, because Corona is here to stay for a longer period, or may be forever. The virus will live here permanently and we have to

learn to live with it. It is heard that the central government is working on a certain plan to bring in a legal framework for WFH practice that aims to define the liability of employers for employees who are working from their homes. Work from home culture is going on not only in our country but in many countries around the world. With the arrival of Omicron, the new variant of Corona virus, the culture of WFH is likely to continue in 2022. The central governments and private companies are also considering the suggestion that a hybrid model should be adopted, in which some days work is done in the office and some days from home. The Delhi government has already given instructions to private companies to keep their offices closed and adopt the work from home model. In the last two years, the functioning of almost all large corporate companies has been affected a lot due to this reason.

Since the employees have to spend on computers, electricity and internet etc. for WFH, the government is also considering fixing the working hours and paying internet and electricity bills also. The government has started feeling that Corona is not going to leave us soon, so rules should be made regarding long-term work from home so that no party has to suffer and the wheel of the economy keeps spinning. In the new structure of the government, companies from all sectors will be asked to follow the guidelines. Many countries have already made rules in this regard. Keeping in view the changing health situation, Bangalore-based Infosys has said that it has taken a cautious approach. Earlier, the company owned by NR Narayana Murthy had said that it would bring its employees back to the office. Similarly, HCL had the same plan and is now taking precaution.

As soon as the third wave of Corona started, work from home in corporate companies started again. It is estimated that the situation will remain like this till April or longer, till then the normal functioning of the offices will be disrupted and the employees will work from their homes only. Cipla pharmaceutical company has issued a work from home order, while Mahindra & Mahindra Mutual Fund has asked employees to come to office only for three days, for the remaining three days they will work from their homes. State government employees in Maharashtra will also follow the work from home rule of three days a week. Other companies where the work from home rule has come into force are Parle, Flipkart, Dabur, RPG, MakeMyTrip and Marico. Less than 10% of the employees of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT company, are currently working from their offices. The Ministry of Health has also advised companies not to call back their employees and implement the work from home system as much as possible. Earlier, many companies in the IT sector were preparing for the return of employees to their office space.

Stay away from books like guides and files



By: Vijay Garg

Today, in the name of 'Guide and File', unverified study material is being provided to our students, which

That is the result of guttin-like shops, untidy coaching institutes and publishers with mercantile professions. Those materials ('the material is impure') are often produced by professional writers who spin the same material and give it to multiple publishers for publication. Although professional people earn money by selling their examination material, but it is proving fatal for the students. Such material has been imbibing the thinking power of our students. Earlier the student used to

persevere to acquire 'knowledge', whereas the main goal of today's student is to get a job. So our students will have to 'self-examine'; Because now job is also becoming scarce for them. For example - 700 seats are vacant in a government office, for which 2 to 3 lakh number of candidates appear in the examination, out of which 75 thousand appear successful in the written examination and by the time of the oral examination, 10 thousand are cut-off. The students remain.

Only 700 of them are selected after the oral examination. In such a situation, the statutory selection of candidates under reservation has also become a 'daunting' challenge for the unreserved 'qualified' candidates. That is why in order to deal with all these discrepancies ("handling is inappropriate.") students should board a boat for detailed study. Any student who keeps on studying the subject material prescribed under his syllabus, his face remains full of aura of self-confidence. He is neither afraid of any kind of examination nor remains confused and doubtful about his studies. The duration of one year is sufficient for the complete preparation of any competitive examination. Yes, for this you have to make your student life regular and restrained. Reliable books have to be studied thoroughly.

For this, the ability to choose books should also be there. Those who are subject experts, one should keep studying the books written by them. One should also stay away from the shadow of 'Guide', 'Guess paper', 'File etc.', because only their cover page and the guidelines prescribed for the respective examinations are changed and the content inside remains the same, which does not know how many examinations. is used in. Such material is not readable, but completely futuristic. Care should be taken while selecting books also. For example, for the compulsory subject 'General Hindi/Hindi-Bhasha', there are thousands of books of such authors who neither know nor understand any aspect of Hindi-grammar. With the help of two-four books, a student writes a fatal book or gets two-four people to write it. The same situation is seen in coaching shops also. In such a situation, our students have to study future seeker books.

Violations of rights of journalists in Manipur (Prevention of press freedom in Manipur)

By: Rinku Khumukcham

Introduction:

With the advancement of communication technology and development of multiple channel for reaching out to people, the idea of the framer of the constitution of India, which he even felt the importance of press no longer is relevant today unless the constitution of India defines who are the journalists. The regulations and guidelines which need to be followed while setting up print or electronic media houses today seems irrelevant again with the fast growing internet facilities as well as other electronic media which cannot be controlled in practice, is creating confusion on who should be certified as journalist as anybody writes today. We all know that other professions - like our learned Advocates, or doctors who treat patients, or engineers who build roads and buildings all required a specific legitimate qualification. But today, anybody become journalist no matter from which subjects he or she has been trained. And this is allowed by our Constitution which makes no difference from a common citizen, as there is no specific provision called "Freedom of Press" in the Constitution of India as found in the American Constitution. We all know that that time the framer of the Constitution of India had already understood on why the 1st amendment of the American constitution include "Freedom of Press"

The point that need to be remembered here is that Freedom of press is not specifically mentioned in article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution of India and what is mentioned there is only freedom of speech and expression. In the Constituent Assembly Debates it was made clear by Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, that no special mention of the freedom of press was necessary at all as the press and an individual or a citizen were the same as far as their right of expression was concerned.

What specific provisions protect the rights of the Journalists in India?

We all know that our nation today show so much concern about the role of media in the running of government. If not officially announced, the media/press is often termed as the fourth estate of democracy. But the irony is that there is no provision found in the constitution of India on who should be called journalists who are working either at print or electronic media. There has not been a single law or any provision found in the constitution of India for the protection of journalist community in the country. The so called provisions provided under Article 19(1) (a) mentioned about freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed to all the citizens of India, with some limitations. We all know that Article 19(1)(2) also stated that various matters that affect - Sovereignty and integrity of the State, Security of the State, Friendly relations with foreign countries, Public order, Decency and morality, Contempt of court, Defamation, and Incitement to an offence are forbidden to express in any medium of mass media.

The Supreme Court of India has already held that there is no specific provision ensuring freedom of the press separately but this freedom of the press is regarded as a species of which freedom of expression is a genus.

Therefore, press cannot be subjected to any special restrictions which could not be imposed on any private citizen, and cannot claim any privilege (unless conferred specifically by law), as such, as distinct from those of any other citizen.

Leaving aside the laws that suppress the freedom of press or say freedom of speech and expression, since the time of emergency (1975 to 1977),

Journalists have been the most surveillance citizen of the country. There were reports about imposing censorship laws to newspapers and those failed to follow or wrote against the government were reported imprisoned. The exact number of how many journalists have been thrown to jail during those period is not officially known but certain all together nearly 200 of them including the activists, opposition political party leaders and other writers of that time including Kuldip Nayar, senior editor at The Indian Express were arrested.

After emergency too certain laws like sedition laws, NSA etc. still continue to be used by successive governments till today. Article 14 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution do mention about the protection of not only the journalists but also the citizens who stand up and express criticism to the government. But then, the Sedition law (Section 124A (IPC)) and others like the NSA are still used as a tool to silence any voice of dissents against the government till today.

As per report by The International Press Institute (IPI), which is a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists for press freedom, Dhaval Patel, owner and editor of the Gujarati news portal "Face of Nation", was detained and charged with sedition for writing an article about the possibility of leadership change in Gujarat due to an increasing number of coronavirus cases in the state. Patel was charged under Section 124A (Sedition) of the Indian Penal Code and Disaster Management Act Section 54 (spreading false panic), on May 11, 2020.

On May 10, Delhi police summoned Mahender Singh Manral, a correspondent of The Indian Express newspaper, for a report about police investigation into the possibility that an audio clip of Tablighi Jamaat leader, Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, had been doctored.

On August 2018, Sudha Bharadwaj (lawyer and trade unionist), Vernon Gonsalves, Varavara Rao, Gautam Navlakha and Arun Ferreira, all prominent Rights Activists were arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

(Provided here is the details about their arrest - <https://thewire.in/rights/police-take-sudhabharadwaj-into-custody-raid-homes-of-lawyers-activists-across-cities>)

There were and are many other similar cases of journalists being detained or harassed on certain charges using independent agencies.

When it comes to the state of Manipur, the then Editor of the Vernacular daily - Naharlogi Thoudang (present Chief Minister of Manipur) Nongthombam Biren was arrested in April 2000 for publication of a speech by social activist Th. Ibomyama on charge of Sedition and anti-national. Both were put in jail for a month and released by revoking case following protest by the people of the state.

Earlier during 1980-81, the founder editor of the Hueiyen Lanpao newspaper Salam Bharat Bhushan and the Editor of "Matam" Meinam Mithai, were booked under NSA for reporting news related to Underground (UG) activities and imprisoned for 3 months. (The case was however revoked). On May 9, 1999 a rally was organized against the closure of a printing house and detention of two editors of monthly magazine by police on charge of having nexus with the underground elements.

On April 27, 2011 the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) conducted a surprise raid at the office of Ireibak daily newspaper published by Lamyamba Publication Trust located at Palace Compound, Imphal. A reporter of Kangla Pao, an evening daily, Yambem Biren was arrested from his house by a team of Assam Rifles on September 10, 2003.

Yambem Biren was reportedly picked up without any charges. After intervention of the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) he was however released on the same day.

On August 14, 2004 the state government banned broadcast of ISTV the then only cable news service for telecasting peoples' protest against AFSPA.

On February 20, 2005 personnel of the 130th CRPF brutally assaulted N. Noren Singh (Reporter of Sangai Express) and W. Lukhoi (reporter Mannabha) while they were covering an agitation by Meitei Rivalists group at Sajiwa Jail, Manipur.

On May 14, 2007 personnel of the 38th Assam Rifles posted at Kotlien in Tamenglong district snatched the cameras of Th. Brojen (Reporter Ireibak Daily) and G. Gagan Sharma of ISTV while they were on duty covering news of an alleged rape case (allegedly committed by AR jawan). AMWJU reports say that the two were also brutally assaulted and along with another Journalist of Sangai Express daily (Bokul) they were detained and harassed.

In October 2008, the then DGP (Yunnam Joykumar) now the deputy Chief Minister of Manipur summoned functionaries of the AMWJU and the Editors and forced them to reveal the name of those reporters who published a news stories regarding urea smuggling which allegedly involved state force. In the same year, that was in October 2008, the then ICD Minister N. Biren Singh (Former Editor of Naharlogi Thoudang) humiliated and scolded a reporter of Poknapham Newspaper in front of other reporters in connection with the reporting of a retaining wall constructed at Moirangkhom. ISTV news had broadcasted what the minister had aggressively scolded and intimidated the reporter on the day.

In October 28, 2009, (late) Khelen Thokhom, the correspondent of The Telegraph newspaper of that time was threatened and detained at Tera Bazar in Imphal West district by personnel of 3rd IRB even after showing his Identity card.

On August 10, 2013 the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had asked the Editor of Naharlogi Thoudang, to produce a copy of a photograph related to the 32nd raising day of underground group PLA, which was published on September 25, 2010. The Editor, Kh. Loyalakpa was also asked to name the reporter who filed the story.

There are more cases regarding violations to the rights of journalists and obstructions on their duties by state agencies which are not recorded after resolving the matter with the concern government authority.

As the framer of the Indian constitution Dr. Ambedkar had already stated that no special mention of the freedom of press was necessary at all as the press and an individual or a citizen were the same as far as their right of expression was concerned there are no specific laws to protect the freedom of journalists. When the freedom journalists who are the spinal cords of the newspaper of media houses are not protected, how could it be ensured the freedom of press?

Even the Supreme Court of India had held that there is no specific provision ensuring freedom of the press separately but this freedom of the press is regarded as a species of which freedom of expression is a genus.

"Therefore, press cannot be subjected to any special restrictions which could not be imposed on any private citizen, and cannot claim any privilege (unless conferred specifically by law), as such, as distinct from those of any other citizen." (Ref: <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-2906-comparison-of-indian-and-american-freedom-of-press.html>)

Attempt to silence the journalists

In this age of investigative journalism, the law of the nation does not grant reporters immunity from disclosing material received from confidential sources. This means that journalist can be put behind bars for refusing to tell where they get their information.

There seems to be a paradigm shift to the concept of Media as an indispensable pillar of democracy. It was believed that media provides public opinion and shapes it without partiality. Media today has been used as tools for self gain of giant corporate houses, political parties, highly influential personality etc.

However, control of media by either owner of the corporate houses or the politicians, it is always next to impossible to silence the media. That must be the reason for the establishment to impose certain laws to curtail the free speech and expression to curtail the media. Controversial sedition laws (Article 124A, 153 B of the Indian Penal Code), National Security Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, etc. are some of the tools of the establishment to control the free speech particularly free reporting by journalist community. According to a report available in Scroll.in 154 journalists were arrested or faced government hostilities between 2010 and 2020. 40% of these journalists were reported either to have arrested or faced hostilities in 2020 alone. Most of those journalists are from among those who refused to bow for mercy of the so called powerful individuals who wanted to control media. In today's India there are reports of government utilising various statutory or autonomous bodies or even the judiciary to curtail the voice of journalists. But the fact is that all those machineries when left with no means came to media to seek justice. We all know how four senior judges of the Supreme Court of India - Justice J Chelameswar, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice MB Lokur and Justice Kurian Joshep - all top and high profile judge of the highest court of the country came to press on January 18, 2018 mounting a virtual protest against the Chief Justice Dipak Mishra.

The other threats and intimidation:

As per record from the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union from June 1993 till December 2012, at least 7 (seven) journalists were killed while on duty. Among them 6 were killed by unidentified gunman while one died in police firing to control agitation. As per record available with the AMWJU as many as 30 cases of journalist being kidnapped, media houses threatened with bombs, assault to journalists happened in the state. All perpetrators are either armed rebel groups. (copy of the list is enclosed here separately).

Recent threat at Poknapham newspaper (2019) has forced the media houses to work under the protection of the state security forces. For months during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was to begin almost all media houses were provided security personnel to guard their offices.

Conclusion:

In order to make sure that mediapersons work freely without any intimidation, the nation today needs to frame a certain regulations on the qualification of who should be a journalist and subsequently some provisions either by amending the constitution of India or through a legislation to make sure that journalist is a profession that the country's law makers often called it "fourth estate of democracy". It is not about granting special privilege but to make sure that media officially becomes the fourth estate of our nation.

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Nagaland govt firm on repeal of AFSPA: Rio

Agency
Kohima, Jan 13:

Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Wednesday iterated that the Nagaland government is firm on the unanimous resolution adopted in the state assembly on December 20, 2021, demanding the repeal of AFSPA from the state.

Interacting with journalists on the sidelines of a programme at Kiruphema near here, Rio said, despite the Union

Home Ministry's decision on December 30 last year to extend the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958, for another six months in Nagaland, the state government is firm on the resolution adopted in the House.

The AFSPA gives Army personnel sweeping powers to search, arrest, and open fire if they deem it necessary for 'the maintenance of public order' in 'disturbed areas'.

"The demand of the Naga public and also the state Cabi-



net is very clear for repeal of AFSPA while the state Assembly had also passed a resolution on December 20, 2021, and we stand firm with the resolution," the chief minister said.

The clamour for withdrawal of the controversial Act from the state has come to the fore after 14 civilians were killed and several injured in three separate incidents of firing by security forces spread

over two days last month, the first of which was possibly a case of mistaken identity.

On his December 23 meeting with Union Home Minister in Delhi along with his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma, Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton, and Naga Peoples' Front Legislature Party leader T R Zeliang, Rio said discussions were held with Amit Shah that as AFSPA is an Act of Parliament, there

is a need for setting up a committee for reviewing it.

"We decided that though the system will be in place till the committee submits its recommendations, there will be no armed forces operations during the period," Rio said.

The process of repealing the AFSPA, if recommended by the committee, will start following the submission of the panel's report, he said.

Asked if the government will make public the report of the SIT, entrusted with the investigation of the killing of 14 civilians in Mon district on December 4 and 5, Rio said the probe team has completed its investigation and is awaiting the final forensic report.

On the demand for providing compensation of Rs 1 crore to the next of kin of the people who lost their lives and Rs 50 lakh each to the injured in the incidents of December 4 and 5, Rio said "It has been communicated to the Union Home Ministry and the response is awaited".

Assam Rifles apprehends a PLA terrorist

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Mantripukhri Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a joint operation with Manipur Police apprehended a cadre of terrorist group PLA in Androkhuman Nungbungbi Leikai in Imphal East district on January 11.

Based on specific input, troops of Assam Rifles along with Manipur Police launched



an operation which led to the apprehension.

The apprehended terrorist

was handed over to Andro Police Station for further investigation.

44 Assam Rifles inaugurates Rani Gaidinliu Open Air Lounge at Tamenglong



IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

Tamenglong town is connected to Imphal by a civil helicopter service with helipad within the 44 Assam Rifles Camp. The passengers didn't have any safe waiting area away from helipad, making presence of vehicles and passengers dangerously close to helipad. To further strengthen the safety measures at helipad 44 Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ 22 Sector AR/ IGAR (East) constructed Rani Gaidinliu Open Air Lounge close to Helipad.

The structure is a concentric semi circular structure with outer rectangular flower beds supported by local bamboo craft as boundary wall. The green plants depict the vivid flora of Tamenglong with

flower beds depicting the four cardinal directions of district boundaries. The central arena has three semi circular beds. The outer semi circular bed with ornamental plants depicts the vast jungles of the district as Prakriti Chakra. The middle raised semi-circle depicts the vibrant culture & heritage of the area as Sanskriti Chakra. The inner raised semi circle with the name of Rani Gaidinliu inscribed on it depicting the bravery and valour of this soil as Veerta Chakra.

The lounge has basic facilities for passengers to wait for boarding/ de-boarding the

helicopter. This facility was inaugurated on 12 Jan as a New Year gift to the locals of Tamenglong by DIG, 22 Sector AR. The plants for landscaping have been collected from various parts of the district. On the bamboo craft walls the visitors shall have a glimpse of vivid culture of the district including important places of tourist interest. There is a provision of lighting up the lounge area in the evening. This facility shall not only ease the passengers waiting time but, shall enhance the passengers safety around the helipad.

ICMR experts reject inclusion of Molnupiravir in Covid treatment guidelines for fourth time citing safety concerns

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

Experts of the ICMR's National Task Force on COVID-19 for the fourth time have unanimously rejected the inclusion of anti-viral drug Molnupiravir in the coronavirus treatment guidelines saying its "known and unknown harms far outweigh its claimed benefit".

Responding to a question over Molnupiravir's inclusion in the treatment guidelines amid doctors prescribing it, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said experts have had extensive debate and discussions and reviewed the data available from three trials on the drug on Monday.

"We had extensive deliberation and the final conclusion was that Molnupiravir has certain risks that warrant caution in its use. Experts present in the meeting opined that there is a rampant and irration-



nal use of Molnupiravir. Efforts should be made to restrict its use as known and unknown harms far outweigh its claimed benefit," he said on Wednesday.

"The currently available synthesised evidence was reviewed and the members unanimously agreed that it does not merit the inclusion of Molnupiravir in the national treatment guidelines for COVID-19," Bhargava said.

The emerging evidence will constantly be reviewed, he added.

"And lastly it was further highlighted the current clinical window of application appears extremely narrow for Molnupiravir with relevance only to the following—elderly, unvaccinated, with other comorbidities."

"There was no evidence of benefit in diabetes and those who were previously infected with COVID-19 or were vaccinated," he said.

India's drug regulator on December 28 had approved the anti-Covid pill for restricted use in emergency situations.

Molnupiravir is an antiviral that inhibits SARS-CoV-2 replication by viral mutagenesis, the health ministry earlier had said in a statement.

The UK MHRA on December 4 granted approval for Molnupiravir under special condition for treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults with a positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test and who have at least one risk factor for developing severe illness.

The USFDA on December 23 granted Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for Molnupiravir for treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalisation or death, and for whom alternative COVID-19 treatment options authorised by the FDA are not accessible or clinically appropriate.

Alert about probable drone attack during ensuing Republic Day in Maharashtra

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, Jan 13:

The Maharashtra police have issued an alert about probable terrorist attack using the Dark Net strikes which can be aimed from a distance of 20 km to 30 km, during ensuing Republic Day.

The Maharashtra Cyber department has reported that individuals with terrorist tendencies were discussing drone attacks, chemical attacks and cyber attacks on the Dark Net. Dark Net is 99 per cent compared to surface internet. Tor Browser is used in the Dark Net which is not easily traced, because it uses a lot of proxy bouncing. Alerts have been issued for drone strikes on Mumbai and other important cities.

Special Inspector General of Police (State-Cyber) Tashvi Yadav, con-



firmed that the suspicious communication is being monitored and Mumbai and other major cities in Maharashtra are on alert. Citizens have also been instructed to be vigilant through investigative mechanisms.

Terrorist Conversations from the Dark Net

The drones are dangerous. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has already been

on high alert for possible drone strikes in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. "Suspected drone spotting reported by villagers in Sandhawan of Kanachak area near International Border in Jammu: A search is going on", J&K Police said in a tweet.

Drone strikes can be aimed from a distance of 20 km to 30 km. Payloads can be mounted on drones. Besides, backtracking them is not easy. If the

criminal uses a mobile phone, his IMEI number can be traced, but the culprit cannot be traced back to the drone. That is why it is demanded that anti-drone system should be installed in Maharashtra as soon as possible.

In the meanwhile a proposal to set up the cyber security project at a cost of Rs 900 crore at Mahape in Navi Mumbai is still pending.

Security Forces Conduct Medical Camp in Ukhrul

IT News
Imphal, Jan 13:

In continuation with the efforts of security forces to reach out a helping hand to the local population, Somsai Battalion under the aegis of IGAR(S) of Spear Corps conducted a medical camp at Challoo and Kongai Vill, Ukhrul district, Manipur yesterday.

As part of Op Sadbhavna, the medical camp was organised to assist the villagers who have no access to basic healthcare services. Medical team of security forces carried out the health check-ups of 209 villagers and necessary medicines were distributed. The individuals diagnosed with severe diseases were referred to Civil Hospital for detailed examination. Locals appreciated the efforts of the security forces.

Assam and Nagaland Governor Jagdish Mukhi tests COVID-19 positive

Agency
Guwahati, Jan 13:

Governor of Assam and Nagaland – Prof Jagdish Mukhi has tested positive for COVID-19.

Jagdish Mukhi is being currently treated at the Apollo Hospital in Guwahati.

The Assam and Nagaland Governor was admitted to the hospital on Wednesday night.

Meanwhile, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that he is in touch with the authorities at the Apollo hospital in Guwahati.

"I am in touch with authorities to get the latest updates on his health and ensure that he gets the best possible treatment," said Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Name Correction

I, the undersigned, Y. Tsulenthong (D.O.B. 24/07/1978) do hereby declared that my name Y. Tsulenthong has been wrongly entered in my Field Service Documents (FSD) as Tsulenthong. My name should be corrected as Y. Tsulenthong. The name of my legal wife K. Atsula whose date of birth is 20/10/1983 has also been wrongly entered in my Field Service Documents (FSD) as 20/10/1986. And also the name of my 3 (three) legal children Lenlitsu Quinker, Amili Quinker and Sudeyvi Quinker have also been wrongly entered in my Field Service Documents (FSD) as Lenlitsu Yim, Amili Yim and Sudeyvi.

I do hereby declared that all the names and date of birth entered wrongly should be corrected accordingly.

Sd/-

Y. Tsulenthong

Chumukedima, Dimapur, Nagaland
P.O. Chumukedima

India registers 2.47 lakh new COVID-19 cases, highest since May; Omicron tally at 5,488

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

India reported 2.47 lakh fresh COVID cases, 27 per cent higher than yesterday, and 84,825 recoveries in the last 24 hours. As of today, there are 5,488 Omicron cases in the country with 28 states confirming the presence of the Omicron variant.

80 coronavirus patients lost their lives in India in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 4,85,035.

This is the highest single-day rise of the ongoing third wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat have emerged as states of concern with the Union health ministry saying that around 300 districts are registering weekly COVID-19 case positivity of more than 5 per cent.

While Maharashtra has a test positivity rate of 22.39 per



cent, West Bengal has 32.18 per cent, Delhi 23.1 per cent and Uttar Pradesh 4.47 per cent.

In a press briefing on Wednesday, NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr VK Paul said Omicron is not like the common cold and people must not take it lightly.

He further said that the current surge is due to the Omicron variant adding that it has not replaced Delta as the dominant strain.

"There should be a ratio-

nal approach for medicine use. We are concerned about the overuse and misuse of drugs. Don't overuse, it will have an aftermath. Have warm water, do gargles in-home care," he said.

The Union government has also directed chief secretaries of all States, Union Territories to take immediate measures to ensure optimal availability of medical oxygen at health facilities, in view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, the global coronavirus caseload has topped 315.3 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 5.51 million and vaccinations to over 9.51 billion, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 62,727,044 and 843,624 followed by India.

Netaji's kin writes to PM Modi asking to have Subhash Chandra Bose's image on currency notes

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's kin wrote to PM Modi ahead of Netaji's 125th birthday asking him to have the freedom fighter's image on currency notes.

Chandra Bose, who is also a BJP leader, wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister of India to also declare January 23 as a national holiday. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on January 23.

In a 9 pointer letter, Bose states that he submitted his suggestions for the 125th birth

anniversary celebration of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

In the letter, he asked to declare January 23 as a national holiday to honour Netaji. He also said to convert 4 coaches in trains into a mobile Netaji museum for people across the nation to know about the heroism of the Azad Hind Fauj.

Apart from the above, he also wrote to The Gazette of India to ensure flag hoisting at Red Fort in Delhi on October 21 every year.

He also asked for the Indian flag to be hoisted in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands on

December 30 every year by the President or Prime Minister of India. This is to commemorate the flag hoisting by Netaji, the first head of state of free India, on December 30, 1943.

"Build Netaji's statue in front of India Gate, New Delhi. Construct INA memorial at the Red Fort to pay homage to the martyrs of Indian National Army, who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of our motherland. Implement Netaji's inclusive ideology across the country to unite all communities to build a new India that Netaji envisioned," wrote Bose to PM Modi.

DoNER Minister reviews Covid preparedness in Northeast

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

Union Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Minister G Kishan Reddy on Wednesday held a review meeting to monitor the preparedness of the eight states of the Northeast with respect to the Covid-19 situation.

He called on all the state Health Ministers to develop medical and health infrastructure, procure medicines and procure Covid-19 specific essentials such as masks, PPE kits and oxygen concentrators etc.

The Union minister also urged the states to use all media and communication channels to bring awareness about the 3rd wave due to the Omicron variant.

The Minister called on the state officials to ensure that all Covid specific protocols are followed and

stressed on regular RT-PCR testing, and home isolation in the case of non-critical cases as per the standard operating procedures (SOPs) released by the Centre.

He also requested all the 8 states to adopt the Teleconsultation platform eSanjeevani that has hubs at a district level to ensure that those under home isolation have access to regular health care and monitoring and also to ensure that they have supplies of essentials and medical kits.

Apart from this, Reddy advised strict enforcement measures and extensive testing and contact tracing measures.

He said, all measures should be taken for observing Covid-appropriate behavior and management of micro containment zones, wherever it becomes necessary.

Joint Secretary, Health, Lav Agarwal, presented state-specific observations and requested individual states to prioritize based on the specific issues highlighted for the respective states.

During the meeting, brief presentations were given by the states on the steps taken to strengthen the monitoring and containment mechanism, measures taken to enforce the norms of Covid appropriate behaviour, testing of Omicron, status of buffer stocks of essential drugs, the status of beds (normal, oxygen and ventilators) and functionality of oxygen supply equipment.

The Union Minister directed a periodic review to monitor the Covid scenario in the region and assured to take up state-specific issues with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for early redressal.

'Assam, Meghalaya reach understanding on 6 disputed areas': Himanta Biswa Sarma

Agency
Guwahati, Jan 13:

Assam has reached an understanding with Meghalaya on resolving six of the 12 areas of dispute along the border between the states and will sign a memorandum of understanding later this month, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in Guwahati on Wednesday after a meeting with his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma.

"Following today's discussion, we have reached mutual understanding on the government level on resolving the dis-

putes. In principle, both states have agreed to consult opposition parties, student unions and other stakeholders on this issue on January 18," Sarma said.

Last year, the two chief ministers agreed to sort out the differences in a phased manner and decided to first focus on six of the 12 disputed areas along the inter-state border.

The six areas that were taken up first for resolution are Tarabari, Gizang, Hahim, Boklapara, Khanapara-Pilangkata and Ratacherra. The areas fall in Kamrup, Kamrup (Metropolitan) and Cachar districts of Assam and West

Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi and East Jaintia Hills districts of Meghalaya.

Both states set up regional committees comprising senior ministers after this broad agreement to visit the disputed areas and speak to local residents and other stakeholders. Earlier this month, the two state governments exchanged reports of their respective committees at a meeting in Shillong.

"Mutual understanding between two governments on the border issue has to be ratified by other stakeholders. The government can't take a deci-

sion on it on its own. We hope to sign a memorandum of understanding with Meghalaya within this month," said Sarma.

Meghalaya deputy chief minister Prestone Tynsong who was present at Wednesday's meeting told reporters that the two chief ministers will meet again in the next 3-4 days, which will be followed by a meeting with union home minister Amit Shah.

"Hopefully we would have a final agreement before January 21 (the 50th statehood day of Meghalaya) which will be made public," he said.

Sports

India Open hit by pandemic, seven Indian shuttlers test positive



Agency
New Delhi, Jan 13:

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to hamper all activities including sports events as now the India Open tournament has been rocked by the virus. Seven Indian players-Kidambi Srikanth, Ashwini Ponnappa, Ritika Thakur, Teessa Jolly, Mithun Manjunath, Simran Singh and Khushi Gupta have tested positive and have withdrawn from the event, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) said on Thursday.

"The players returned a positive result to a mandatory RT-PCR test conducted on Tuesday. Doubles partners deemed close contact of the seven players have also been withdrawn from the tournament," the world governing body said in a state-

ment.

"The players will not be replaced in the main draw and their opponents will be given a walkover to the next round."

The BWF announced the news in the wee hours on Thursday but didn't reveal the names of the seven players.

B Sai Praneeth, the 2019 world championship bronze medalist, double specialists Manu Attri and Dhruv Rawat had tested positive for the virus ahead of their departure for the national capital and had pulled out before the start of the tournament.

The entire England badminton contingent had also withdrawn ahead of the Super 500 event after the country's doubles specialist Sean Vandy and coach Nathan Robertson tested positive for the virus.

Organised by the Badminton Association of India, the 2022 edition of India Open is being held behind closed doors at the Indira Gandhi Stadium's KD Jadhav Indoor Hall.

As per the COVID-19 protocols, all the participating players are being tested everyday at the hotel and outside the stadium.

Two-time Olympic medalist P V Sindhu, World Championships silver and bronze medalists Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen, London Games bronze winner Saina Nehwal are among the Indian players who have reached the second round of the tournament.

Among top international stars, world champion Loh Kean Yew, three-time men's doubles world champion Mohammad Ahsan, and Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan are competing in the tournament, which is being hosted for the first time in three years following the cancellation of the last two editions due to the pandemic.

Delhi reported 27,561 COVID-19 cases, the second-highest single-day rise since the pandemic began, and 40 deaths on Wednesday.

ISL: Kerala Blasters beat Odisha FC to reclaim top spot

Agency
Kochi, Jan 13:

Prior to the match, Kerala Blasters head coach Ivan Vukomanovic had expressed serious concerns about the Covid situation inside the bio-bubble of the Indian Super League.

Less than 24 hours before their match against Odisha FC on Wednesday, it was reported that one of the Odisha players tested positive.

However, there was no postponement though as the match went ahead as scheduled, and it was business as usual for Blasters as they secured a clinical 2-0 win.

Nishu Kumar (28) and Harmanjot Khabra (40) got on the scoresheet as they reclaimed the top spot on the table and stretch their unbeaten run to ten in the process.

Kamaljit Singh, Odisha's first-choice keeper, was the Covid casualty. As for Blasters, while they were missing injured captain Jessel Carneiro, Nishu slotted into the squad while Adrian Luna were the



captain's armband. Kiko Ramire's team was not too adventurous and largely chose to sit back and defend.

Blasters were unable to break down a stubborn Odisha who looked resolute and didn't give Vukomanovic's team any space to operate with.

It was Odisha who had the first real chance of the game when Javi Hernandez tested

Prabhsukhan Gill with a drilled effort. Gill had to dive low to deny Hernandez.

It was as if Blasters were woken up from their slumber as they switched gears and it was one-way traffic for the remainder of the half.

Odisha's resistance was broken just minutes later as Luna picked out Nishu just outside the box. After controlling the ball and taking a touch to create space, the

full-back curled the ball past Arshdeep Singh.

Momentum quickly swung and Blasters were laying siege to the Odisha goal. They went on to extend their lead in the 40th minute when Khabra who was lurking at the near post nodded in a corner from Luna as Blasters were in full control. They never let go of that control till the final whistle.