

Battleground 2022 Manipur Election is set

Left out BJP intending candidates started joining new political parties

IT News
Imphal, Jan 31:

A day after the BJP announced the list of its candidates for the 60 assembly constituencies for the upcoming state Assembly election scheduled to hold in two phases—Feb-27 and March 3, there appeared a paradigm shift in the electoral politics in the state.

BJP MLA from Moirang Assembly Constituency, P. Sarat Singh who had been denied BJP tickets had joined the Congress party along with Ningthoujam Biren, a former Minister who got elected from Sekmai Assembly Constituency, and Ningthoujam Joykumar Singh, an intending candidate of Bishnupur Assembly Constituency. Source from the MPCC said that some more candidates may also join the party later today evening or tomorrow. The Congress

Party had already announced 40 names of the candidates who are contesting in 40 assembly constituencies on January 22, 2022.

Nitish Kumar led JD(U), which restrained from filing candidates in the last assembly election now is fielding candidates in not less than 10 seats. Maybe the number may rise with more candidates which have been denied tickets by the BJP are likely to join either today or tomorrow. MLA Khumukcham Joykishan who had won election thrice from the Thangmeiband Assembly constituency joined the JD(U) and one of the prominent youth leader Th. Brinda Devi, who is contesting from Yaikul Assembly constituencies had also joined the JD(U) and since then there are more candidates in the line to join the JD(U).

On the other hand, 6 (six) intending candidates including two MLA of the BJP who

had been denied ticket by the BJP is also all set to contest the election in NPP ticket. Source said that the NPP leadership had already accepted them to join the NPP. Among them are MLA Y Erabot of Wangkhei Assembly Constituency, MLA Rameshwar of Kakching Assembly constituency, former Minister L. Mangi of Kumbi Assembly constituency, former BJP MLA Sobhachandra of Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Assembly constituency, Former MLA N. Loken of Sagolband Assembly constituency, Anwar Hussain of Lilong Assembly constituency and Rameshwar of Patsoi Assembly constituency.

Meanwhile, NPF is also all set to field candidates in 16 assembly constituencies. In the last Assembly election the NPF field 15 seats and won 4 seats. With the four seats, NPP played a major role in the formation of N. Biren Singh Government.

ECI extends ban on road shows, Pad-yatras, cycle/bike/vehicle rallies and processions till Feb 11

Relaxation in numbers permitted for Physical public meetings, indoor meetings and door to door campaigning

New Delhi, Jan 31:

Chief Election Commissioner Shri Sushil Chandra along with Election Commissioners Shri Rajiv Kumar and Shri Anup Chandra Pandey today held another comprehensive review of the present situation of Covid 19 infection particularly in the states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The Commission accompanied by Secretary General and concerned Deputy Election Commissioners, met with the Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and the Chief Secretaries, the Chief Electoral Officers of the five Poll Going States through virtual mode to assess the present status and projected trends of COVID pandemic. In depth discussions were also held with respect to current Vaccination status of 1st, 2nd doses for eligible persons in the respective States as also

arrangements for polling personnel.

All the State Chief secretaries informed the Commission about reports of Covid 19 infection either plateauing out or tapering as on date. They also said that the positivity rate is showing a decline with the number of hospitalisation cases also registering a declining trend. The State officers however said that covid protocol precautions need to be continued to be observed so that no undue spurt takes place due to intense public contact because of heightened political activity. Chief Election Commissioner Sh. Sushil Chandra also emphasised that while deliberating on relaxation of restrictions for physical rallies, indoor/outdoor meetings, door to door campaigning, practicality of implementation of orders by field level functionaries should be ensured in the wake of prevailing situation. After taking into consid-

eration inputs, facts and circumstances and ground reports from State officers and Secretary Health, GOI as also the requirements of necessary political activity in election mode by political parties in present situation, the Commission has decided as follows:

1. No road shows, Pad-yatras, cycle/bike/vehicle rallies and processions shall be allowed till February 11, 2022.

2. Commission has now decided to allow physical public meetings of Political parties or contesting candidates in designated open spaces with a maximum of 1000 persons (instead of existing 500 persons) or 50% of the capacity of the ground or the prescribed limit set by SDMA, whichever number is lesser, from February 1, 2022 for all phases.

3. The Commission has also enhanced the limit for door to door campaigns. Instead of 10 persons, now 20 persons, excluding security

personnel, will be allowed for door to door campaigns. Other instructions on door to door campaigns will continue.

4. The Commission has now granted relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of a maximum of 500 persons (instead of existing 300 persons) or 50% of the capacity of the hall or the prescribed limit set by SDMA is allowed.

5. Political parties and contesting candidates shall ensure the compliance of COVID appropriate behaviour & guidelines and Model Code of Conduct at all occasions during the activities connected with elections.

6. It shall be the responsibility of the DEO concerned to identify and to notify the designated spaces in advance for the aforesaid purposes.

7. All remaining restrictions as contained in the Revised Broad Guidelines for Conduct of Elections, 2022 issued on 8 January 2022 shall continue to operate.

Assam Rifles takes tremendous role in curbing drug menace: Governor

IT News
Imphal, Jan 31:

Governor of Manipur La Ganesan said Assam Rifles is taking tremendous role in curbing drug menace in the State. He was speaking at the Investiture Ceremony held today at the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan in Imphal.

Governor said it is a matter of great satisfaction to know that IG, AR (South) recovered drugs of approximately Rs. 1800 crores. He said, Assam Rifles is very popular particularly in the North East and therefore, is now-a-days popularly known as "Sentinels of North East". While recalling the tragic incident that killed Colonel Viplab Tripathy, Commanding Officer of 46th Assam Rifles along with his family and seven Jawans, La. Ganesan said, his sacrifice indeed inspired all ranks in the Army.

La. Ganesan further said



that security forces have dedicated contributions to maintain law and order situation as well as protecting our country at different situations and places. Those who are receiving these honours will find ways of serving the nation and communities. Governor also thanked the officers and expressed confidence that they will leave no stone unturned to discharge their valuable responsibilities to uphold the dignity and sovereignty of our Nation.

Governor handed over four

Citations to Colonel Aditya Deo, Commandant of 16th Assam Rifles, Colonel J. Narayanan, SM, Commandant of 20th Assam Rifles, Colonel Tejas B Candade, SM, Commandant of 24th Assam Rifles and Colonel Vikas Saha, Commandant of 25th Assam Rifles respectively and one appreciation letter to IG, AR (South) Major General Alok Naresh.

DGP Manipur P. Doungel, Addl. Chief Secretaries M.H. Khan and P. Vaiphei attended among others in the ceremony.

Major General Rajan Sharawat, VSM assumes appointment of IG Assam Rifles (South)

IT News
Imphal, Jan 31:

Major General Rajan Sharawat, Vishist Seva Medal took over the reigns of Assam Rifles in Manipur as the new Inspector General Assam Rifles (South). He relieved Major General Alok Naresh who proceeding on posting after successfully completing his tenure.

A highly qualified and proficient officer with vast counter insurgency experience, Major General Rajan Sharawat has previously commanded a unit in Assam and a Brigade in Jammu and Kashmir.



The General Officer has appealed to the people of Manipur to continue extending their love and support to the security forces. He also urged the State Government officials and members of the

media for their cooperation and empathy.

The General Officer exhorted all ranks of the IGAR (SOUTH) to continue striving for peace and prosperity in Manipur.

Parliament Budget Session 2022 :

Govt focused on aid to farmers, Make-In-India defence projects: President Kovind

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

Amid the plans by the Opposition to corner the government over farmer issues during the Budget session 2022, which began on Monday, President Ram Nath Kovind in his address to a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament, highlighted the Centre's efforts to help the farmers.

In his speech, President Kovind covered a range of issues concerning India's development journey in its 75 years of Independence, farmers' issues, the country's Covid-19 vaccination programme, free ration and housing for the poor, women-focused schemes, defence exports, PLI schemes, Afghanistan crisis among others.



President Kovind lauded the government's effort to empower farmers in the country and said that the government stands by farmers and small farmers are the core of policies, adding that the Centre has taken

several measures to increase their income.

"Our small-scale farmers have a significant role in the country's development; my government has always prioritised 80 per cent small-

scale farmers. As part of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, over 11 crore families of farmers have benefitted. The government has procured more than 433 lakh metric tonnes of wheat, which benefited more than 50 lakh farmers," President Kovind said.

India is holding its Budget session in Parliament starting today and Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Economic Survey 2021-22. She will table her fourth straight Union Budget on Tuesday with financial statements and tax proposals for fiscal year 2022-23.

President Kovind also remembered the personalities who contributed to the development journey of India in its 75 years of independence.

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NSCN Chairman greets people on occasion of the party's 42nd Raising Day

IT News
Imphal, Jan 31:

Chairman of the NSCN/GPRN Yung Aung greets the people of the region on occasion of the 42nd Raising Day of NSCN/GPRN today.

"On this historic occasion of the 42nd Raising Day of the NSCN/GPRN, I give glory and honor to our God almighty for sustaining our genuine struggle till today. I also convey my revolutionary salute and best greetings to all the Naga people and people of our Wesia region", the NSCN

Chairman begins his speech in connection with the day.

He said, "On this day NSCN/GPRN rededicate and repledge to the national oath to honor our moral and political responsibility towards our people on both sides of the impose boundary and we will continue to stand firm on our commitment. We are encourage and inspire by the overwhelming physical, moral and prayer support from all Nagas".

The NSCN leader said that throughout the course of our struggle, thousands and thou-

sands of Nagas from every tribes, from every corners answered the nation's call with great courage and selflessness. These brave Naga patriots stood shoulder to shoulder, fought and died together —determined to be totally free no matter how difficult it may be or how long it took. This fight for freedom has cause unimaginable loss of lives and properties and left deep scars and unforgettable memories on those still alive today.

In the aftermath of the Shillong accord of 1975 and the failure of the NNC, It was

on this day the 31st of January 1980, NSCN/GPRN was formed to assumed the mantle and responsibility of the Naga national movement and to salvage from further destruction, he added.

Yung Aung further added that both India and Myanmar are completely convinced they can succeed to subdue the Nagas by force and keep denying our freedom, but Nagas will never yield to their deception. No power can extinguish our dream to be a free people.

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How can I forget the Triund Trek on Dhauladhar

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



Travelling in the mountains is something unusual. People from the plains look at the mountain with eager eyes. However, day to day life in the hills is quite difficult. There people have to walk a lot for food, water, job and essential items. Still, mountains keep tempting tourists who go there for a couple of days only. A few years ago I had the opportunity to visit Dharamsala. I booked a room in Hotel Dhauladhar of Himachal Tourism Development Corporation. I was thrilled to hear the name Dhauladhar. From Chandigarh to Dharamsala, it takes seven hours by road via Una. Next day, after taking a round of the local market, I reached Mcleodganj by taxi. After having *aaloo ka paratha* and curd at a dhaba, I headed towards Dharamkot village, where foreign tourists were present in large numbers. I visited Vipassana Meditation Centre, Dhamma Shikara and Tushita Buddhist Meditation Center. A little above this point, there was the Golu Devi ka Mandir. As soon as we started trekking, it started to rain.

I had heard a lot about trekking, but this was my first experience of the same. Driver Tinku was also trekking with me. I had cashew nuts, almonds, biscuits, chocolate and a bottle of water in my shoulder bag. I had read experiences of other trekkers on Google before leaving. At first I thought that the ten kilometre climb was not for me, but then I dared to walk. The unseasonal rain added to the thrill. The Dalai Lama temple and the Cricket Stadium in Dharamsala looked smaller from the height. After a straight climb of about four kilometres, we found a tea stall. After drinking tea, we moved ahead. On the way, we found a few foreign tourists. I was getting tired, but so was the urge to climb up. I wanted to see how it feels at the top. After a ten kilometre straight and tiring climb on a rough rocky trek, we finally reached the top. Wow, what a sight it was.

The snow-clad Dhauladhar Summit was in front of my eyes. Around ten or more foreign tourists were already there. The height of Triund is ten thousand feet above sea level. Few villagers of Dharamkot had made makeshift tea stalls on Triund top where hot noodles were also available. There is a rest house of the Forest Department. After talking to the caretaker there, it came to know that there was a shortage of power and water. Water had to be brought from a spring two kilometres down. The weather changes quickly on the top. Within half an hour it started drizzling followed by a hailstorm. We had to trek back before it got dark. So we started walking down in the rain. The rest of the tourists had already left. It was quite slippery on the stones. My shoulder bag and clothes became wet. After three hours of trekking down we were again in our car. It was getting difficult to lift my legs. I was badly tired and unable to move. My fingers were frozen. But I swear, it was fun. Truly, Triund is a great trek in North India.

The Living Dream for a Radical Social Reformation in our Society

Dr. Lamtinthang Haokip: The Man who dares to dream and believe the Impossible!

By: Thangminlun Haokip

Time and again, way back since the colonial subjugation of our country we have had tens of thousands of social revolutionists, social reformers and true patriots who long dreamed of the impossible; an 'idealistic society' where every individual is self-content and lives a healthy and peaceful life; where everyone could be treated the way they should be and have all their rights to live and freely profess, practice and propagate any religion they believe in or not to and the freedom of speech and expression and the freedom to choose what they should do and ought not to (with the intention of not hurting anyone, in any form) and without being deprived of their fundamental rights and dignity; which in those times majority of the populace for a slightest notion, does not believe in such an 'idealistic society' to exist in reality- for it was just like a mere dream for them which would never really do happen. A stateless or classless society was something in which some great minds had deeply believed would be the only amicable solution to put an end to the 'seemingly impossible endless problems' of a society like ours.

With a clear vision put straight forward, through blood, sweat and tears, with all their might and a burning dream within them; some with inks and some with bloods had paved through their long journey of struggle for a 'Unified society where each live for all and all live for each'. And here we are today standing on that soil

which was once nothing more than a battlefield where high spirited, visionary, brave and patriotic beings had fought a good fight for a better today-only for us.

Lately, the state of Manipur, 51-Saitu Area Constituency, Kangpokpi District in particular had seen and experienced a humongous waves which strives and aims for a 'CHANGE' calling the young and old and the 'Youths' to pull up their sleeves (boosts up their confidence), tie their shoelaces (gear themselves up for the fight to bring a social reformation), put their belts on (value and preserve their dignity), raise up their chin (stay brave and confident), and always keep their head held high (stay confident, proud and look forward with a sense of hope for a change).

Dr. Lamtinthang Haokip, a social activist advocating for Socio-Political Reformation in the society and an intending candidate of 51-Saitu Area Constituency for the 12th Manipur State Legislative Assembly, 2022 has brought back the long-lost hope and

smile in the faces and hearts of thousands of people to bring about a significant change and radical transformation to bring an end to these long years of 'Societal Drought for Change' in our society.

A man of vision who live by one quotation quoted by Margaret Mead, an American cultural anthropologist which quoted saying, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." And he firmly believes in the slogan, "Youth For Change" which has had and now instilled a sense of responsibility, hope and faith in the minds of budding, talented and innovative youths- the so called 'pillars of the future', once again. One who dare to put forth his dreams and visions into ground reality by fighting the daily injustices and misgovernance of the government through thick and thin; day in and day out only to see a new dawn break where and when the flags of 'Justice and Equality' would flutter in the air and people could salute it with a sense

of pride, satisfaction, dignity and joy. And they would be living in a harmonious society where there is no black and white, social disparities, social subjugation, denial of justice, and where there would be no intimidation of people to vote for their rightful representatives and social discrimination and malpractices.

Let's put our efforts in ending the daily social evil and unnatural pollutions alarming the harmony and peaceful coexistence of our society in all walks of life- from the malpractices of Village Chiefs to Social Organizations, from Restless Insurgents to Corrupted Government Ministers/MLA's (People's Representatives), and from Ethnocentrism to Social Disparities and Injustices. When we do our part in finding ways and means to stop the pollutions (social evils existing within us), nature (God) will do its duty in executing and accomplishing the needs of the people by bringing back the pre-existing status quo and peaceful coexistence between man and nature and share bed and board and live in that 'idealistic society' we dreamed of.

Let us raise our voices and put our fundamental rights into action and cast our priceless votes which is the only way forward, for now, in putting an end to social discriminations, injustices and disparities in our society and bring about a 'positive and life impacting-radical social transformation' to save ourselves and our future generations!

Morality- NOT A QUESTION OF TEN RUPEES, BUT CHARACTER!

By: Dr. Aniruddha Babar, Dept of Political Science, Tetso College

"Ahh, you know *Aai* what happened today"? I entered Home with excitement, thrown my college bag and entered kitchen. Mother was preparing Dinner. "Don't you dare to come in kitchen with shoes you idiot, go remove them". *Aai* shouted at me. "Ooops, sorry, sorry". I was really guilty as shoes were dirty due to rain and mud, moreover mother has given certain rules which supposed to be followed by papa and me without any question.

"You look so excited, tell me what happened"? A voice came. It was Father, he was watching me while I was removing shoes. Life was so good then. V.G. Vaze College of Arts, Science and Commerce turned out to be the 'perfect' place I was longing for all my life as a poor school kid. After spending more than a decade in useless institution called School I entered a place where I could at least breathe and do my stuffs in my own way minding my own business without anybody's *faaltu* interference. The moment I left school while taking a one final gaze at that gray, dull, lifeless and equally useless ghetto that forced me to willingly enter and find comfort in a self-created 'Solitary Confinement', I realized that neither the school could ever understand me, nor was I able to understand the school.

The newly found liberty in college gave wings to my endless imagination and energy. That was a time I started doing crazy stuffs. 16 years old boy is always full of dangerous possibilities. Climbing mountains to late night outings; sports, dancing; singing; writing; mischiefs, did everything that a newly freed 'Bombay Bru' can possibly do.

"Wait Papa I will tell you", I said sitting beside him on the couch. I was about to tell him a story of one of the greatest adventures I have ever done in my life. "Hmm, I am listening, go on". He said looking deep in my eyes.

"Well, today I travelled in Train without Ticket. You know, I went without ticket and came back without ticket. I walked straight under the nose of TC twice. He could not catch me. I saved 10 Rupees." Some strange kind of pride was oozing out from my words. I was laughing. Father kept looking at me. I was expecting a laughter from him, because throughout my narration I was thinking I did something strange and funny but he did not laugh. His small eyes became smaller. Lips pursed. His deep gaze turned into cold and I realized something is not really right. "You escaped under the nose of TC twice"? Cold words came. "So you travelled without a ticket"? A thunderbolt struck. Finally I realized that Father did not find humor or achievement in my puppy adventure. I immediately stood up from the couch with head facing down- partially in shame, mostly in fear. "Immoral and illegal behavior has no place in this house, do you understand young man"? "What you think was funny, was not funny at all, YOU have committed a crime Boy, you have cheated the Government". OMG, me? Cheated the Government? I could not believe what Father was saying. All my enthusiasm, humor, laughter disappeared and guilt set in. Moreover, Mother was also seeing all "*iamasha*" with angry face.

"The character of Man is his real asset. Once that is gone, everything is gone. Character is protected in the shell called 'morality'. A Father in him immediately transformed into a Teacher. "It doesn't matter whether you are just a Boy, a working fellow, a Top Officer, an IAS, a Politician, A Prime Minister or a President. You must live a moral life. There is no escape. Wealth, Lust and worldly attractions cannot ruin your soul if it is already well guarded by the 'wisdom.'" He continued. "When during the raid on *Kalyan*, the Bijapur Subedar's young and beautiful daughter-in-law was arrested and offered at the feet of King Shivaji Maharaj, he didn't accept such a present, instead on her arrival he exclaimed, "OH, how nice it would have been if my MOTHER were as fair as you are! I wish my MOTHER was as beautiful as you." I was stunned the way conversation was taking twists and turns. "So, you have to understand, whether it be a question of a Woman, Wealth, Power or desire to save TEN Rupees, it is morality and purity of your thoughts, if put to action- their Legal & Moral consequences, should guide your behavior in personal and public life till the end". With these words he got up, went to his study and closed the door behind him. This incident left a big impact on my character.

As I was taking a sip of Hot Soup, I lost in the clouds of thoughts- a deep nostalgia indeed!

Loud ring of Mobile called me back from past to the present. It was a call from an old friend from Delhi practicing at Delhi High Court. We discussed a bit about couple of 'legal matters', she took my suggestions and hung up the phone. "Lawyer never dies. Once a Lawyer, always a Lawyer." I thought to myself. "They don't actually care whether I am practicing or not, or in which part of the world I am nestling or whether I am interested in talking or not, they know this 'silent', 'carefree' Man will always be there. Right?!"

As I kept my ancient Mobile on a table thoughts on human ethics & values again started to revolve in mind. What role should Morality play in the overall life of a Public Servant? Suddenly a question hit, an old one though, asked by one of the students (was it Hippito or Hattenlivo?) from the first batch of Political Science Honours! taught at Tetso. Morality and Public service goes hand in hand isn't it? Government servants or even the so called MPs, MLAs, MLCs and Ministers are subjected to this unwritten law of service that they must perform for the people. Moral values keeps us human, in fact a more useful human I must say.

Study of Asokan Edicts introduces us to the thoughts of Emperor Asoka on private and public ethics. In his "Royal Writs" which carefully engraved on stone tablets, he gave instructions as to the ideal moral behavior expected from his subjects, Royal Civil & Military officers as well as other employees and the EMPEROR himself in their private and public life. Emperor Asoka was also fondly called as "*Dhammashoka*" (Asoka the Righteous) by the people of his time because of his moral governance and unblemished personal character.

Asoka also given probably the oldest version of Social contract theory specifying that rulers and the ruled are owed to each other. The administrative philosophy of Asoka is still relevant in today's democratic structure of our country where the government elected by citizens rules. The democracies in the world have been standing tall and strong deep in the ashes of Monarchies and autocracies however, it seems neither the citizens are able to understand the length, breadth and depth of Democracy, nor their elected representatives and also the so called 'Civil Servants'.

IAS, IPS, IFS, Group A & B as well as State Civil Service Officers are the servants of the citizens of this country- this is what Constitutional morality teaches us, however, the real world experience unfolds certain bitter sets of realities that questions the very foundation of the relationship between Citizens and the State. A moral behavior is a norm for Government Officials. I think the fundamental principle in a democracy is that all persons holding authority derive it from the people; in other words, all public functionaries are trustees of the people. With the expansion of the role of government, public functionaries exercise considerable influence over the lives of people. The trusteeship relationship between the public and the officials requires that the authority entrusted to the officials be exercised in the best interest of the people or in 'Public Interest'. Now the question is, what

does YOUR personal experience tells you about this so called "trusteeship" relationship that you supposed to enjoy with the Government officials? As a citizen of a Democratic country blessed with a Constitutional democracy you must think over it.

How often do you go to meet the DC of your district? How many times have you met the SP? Have you met heads of various departments? For e.g. Rural Development? Or Home? Or Food & Civil Supplies? Health? Education? NO? WHY? Do you think you have no work with them? Or do you feel some sort of fear or inferiority complex to meet Servants of the Public? While speaking on morality in Public Service, we must acknowledge the 'Ghosts of Babudom' that still haunts our people in India even in 21st century in 2022 where we are living in the continuous experience of the bombardment of information and knowledge.

Now you see, One of the most comprehensive statements of what constitutes moral principles of public life came from the Nolan Committee (In 1994, the UK government established the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The committee was chaired by Lord Nolan, and was tasked with making recommendations to improve standards of behaviour in public life), which outlined the following seven principles of public life- Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership. The assessment and evaluation of moral behavior of public servants including that of our elected representatives and public leaders must be done by the people and the civil society organisations on the basis of these principles. Constitution has given this right to us. The continuous evaluation of citizen and state relationship is necessary which may help all of us to draw some sort of solution to various problems like corruption, defective governance or ineffective administration.

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is

appropriate to their office. There have been many cases of MORALTURPITUDE turning into criminal litigations among public servants and elected representatives have been surfacing since last many decades. Despite having pending cases in the court of law; having being booked with serious charges for e.g. ASSAULT, RAPE, OUTRAGING MODESTY OF A WOMAN, VICE CRIMES etc., public servants have been allowed to continue to hold the public office which may likely to be a stronger deterrence to the Free and Fair trial since the possibility of a professional ability of a person holding a powerful and influential position in the Government influencing and vitiating the 'Currents of the Proceedings' cannot be denied.

However, the Sky of Humanity is not so gloomy. The Hon'ble High Courts and the Supreme Court of the nation has proved to be the custodians of Justice and Human values from time again. However, in order to fight against immorality and illegality; firstly a common man have to become morally upright and law abiding citizen. A common man has to become strong and uncorrupt. There have been instances wherein individuals starting with a noble purpose as a 'Human Rights activist', 'Social Activist' turning into 'EXPLOITERS'. With weak character they become victims of their lust for material aspirations and start behaving exactly like the foes against which they pitched their campaigns. There have been NGOs and various civil society organizations which have drifted miles away from their true path of 'Public Service' and 'Social Cause'. Therefore, to straighten up the moral order of the society and its rulers, an individual citizen, firstly, must straighten up their own individual moral character.

Darkness cannot fight with Darkness, it is only the LIGHT that can cut through it. My chain of thoughts somehow keep dragging me back again to my Papa's lecture on Morality- NOT A QUESTION OF TEN RUPEES, BUT CHARACTER!

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PM Modi says Budget Session not to be overtaken by Elections, Encourages MPs to have 'Quality Discussions'

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said discussions in the Budget session of parliament should not be overtaken by the state elections ahead. PM Modi, in the traditional pre-session comments, said the more fruitful the budget session, the better it is for the country to touch economic heights for the rest of the year.

"Due to elections, the discussions in parliament are impacted. But elections have their own place, they will continue. An open discussion is needed in parliament. The budget sets the tone for the whole year, so it is important," he said. He also said that discussions during the session should be driven by good intentions.

The Budget Session of Parliament, which began on Monday, is expected to see the Opposition cornering the government on issues related to Pegasus snooping allegations, farmers and the border



row with China. "In this session too, discussions, issues of discussions and open-minded debates can become an important opportunity for global impact," he said adding he hoped that all MPs, political parties will have "quality discussions with an open mind and help take the country on the path to development

swiftly." Meanwhile, CPI MP Binoy Viswam on Monday submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for his statement in Parliament last year on the Pegasus spyware issue. Viswam said he submitted the notice in light of a recent New York Times report.

The claims that the spyware by the Israeli firm NSO, and a missile system, were the "centrepieces" of a roughly \$2-billion-dollar deal between India and Israel.

The Budget Session comes ahead of Assembly Elections in five states — Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur, and Goa.

UK expands COVID vaccines to at-risk 5 to 11-year-old kids

Agency
London, Jan 31:

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) on Sunday expanded its COVID-19 vaccination programme to cover vulnerable children aged five to 11 years.

Eligible children include those with diabetes, immunosuppression, learning disabilities, and other serious conditions that place them at a high risk from COVID-19.

NHS England said nearly 500,000 eligible children in England are set to receive their first dose of a COVID vaccine in line with advice set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

We know vaccines give significant protection against severe illness from COVID including the Omicron variant, so it is important that our youngest and most at-risk get protected, said Dr Nikki Kanani, an Indian-origin GP and deputy lead for NHS vaccination programme.

The NHS is now vaccinating the most at risk 5 11-year-olds ensuring they get their vital dose of protection. Thousands of young people are still getting protected every day with millions vaccinated so far and we are asking parents not to delay coming forward as soon as the NHS contacts you, please come forward so the NHS can protect their young-est against the virus, she said.

The NHS had earlier opened up vaccines for the over 12 age group and said it has delivered over 3.5 million vaccinations to people aged 12-17, including over 2.4 million first doses.

UK Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said: I would like parents and guardians to be reassured that no new vaccine for children would have been approved unless the expected standards of safety, quality and effectiveness had been met.

I encourage as many as possible to make sure they get their child the jab when con-

tacted — the paediatric vaccine will offer the best possible protection for your child.

In line with procedures, patient information is sent out to parents and guardians with information on the COVID-19 vaccination. Parents and guardians are asked to attend with their children and are asked to read the patient information in advance of arriving for their appointment.

Eligible children in the youngest cohort will get a second dose eight weeks after their first dose and can't receive any vaccination until four weeks after a positive test for coronavirus.

Last month, the JCVI also issued updated guidance recommending all 16 and 17 year olds get a Pfizer/BioNTech booster from three months (91 days) after their second dose. Following the expansion of a third booster vaccine for all 16 and 17 year olds, over half of eligible young people in this age group have already received their top-up protection.

Beneficiaries in 15-18 yrs age group to start getting 2nd dose of Covid vaccine from today

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

Beneficiaries in the age group of 15 to 18 years will start receiving their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine from Monday, officials said.

The drive to inoculate the adolescents in this age group had begun on January 3.

Delhi has around 10.14 lakh beneficiaries in the age group.

Till Saturday, 8,04,690 beneficiaries in the national capital have been administered the first dose.

Covaxin is the only vaccine option for the 15 to 18 year age group, according to Union Health Ministry guide-

lines on December 27. Last week, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had said 85 per cent of Delhi government school students have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

He, however, remarked that the inoculation drive in private schools was going on at a snail's pace.

Govt misled House on Pegasus, says Congress; moves privilege motion



Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

With the first leg of the Budget session of Parliament set to begin Monday amid a high-octane campaign for Assembly elections in five states, the Congress on Sunday gave a notice in Lok Sabha for moving a privilege motion against Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw for "misleading" the House on the Pegasus spyware issue. A similar notice will be given in Rajya Sabha as well.

Citing a report by The New York Times that India bought the Israeli spyware in 2017 as part of a \$2-billion package for weapons, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who wrote to

Speaker Om Birla seeking permission to move a privilege motion, said, "It appears that the Modi Government has misled the Parliament and the Supreme Court and lied to the people of India."

Responding to reports that government allegedly used Israeli spyware Pegasus to snoop on political leaders, journalists, judges and civil society activists, Vaishnaw had on the opening day of the Monsoon session of Parliament on July 19 last year told both Houses that the story was "sensational" and an attempt "to malign Indian democracy and its well established institutions".

"The Government, on the floor of the House, always maintained that it had nothing to do with the Pegasus spyware and it never bought the spyware

from the NSO Group. The Modi Government also lied to the Supreme Court when it was directly questioned about the purchase and deployment of Pegasus," Chowdhury notice on Sunday said.

"In a sworn affidavit, the Government said 'unequivocally, we deny any and all of the allegations against the Government' on the Pegasus issue. In light of the latest revelations by The New York Times, it appears that the Modi government has misled Parliament and the Supreme Court and lied to the people of India. In view of the above, I demand that a Privilege Motion may be initiated against the Minister of Information Technology for deliberately misleading the House on the issue," he wrote.

FOC-in-C, Western Naval Command visits Karwar Naval Base

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, Jan 31:

Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C), Western Naval Command, visited Karwar Naval Base on Saturday and Sunday and took stock of the activities, including the ongoing work of Project Seabird Phase II.

He was received at Karwar Naval Base located at Karwar district in Karnataka by Rear Admiral Atul Anand, Flag Officer Commanding Karnataka Naval Area (FOK) and presented a Guard of Honour.

During the visit, Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, reviewed the operational preparedness of ships and units at Karwar. He was briefed on

the progress of infrastructure development under Project Seabird Phase II A by Vice Admiral T Sobti, Director General, Project Seabird.

The FOC-in-C was conducted around the Karwar Base and provided on-site briefings on ongoing marine works, modernisation of Naval Ship Repair Yard, other elements of marine infrastructure development and town planning aspects in the base.

INS Kadamba, Karwar is currently the third-largest Indian naval base, and is expected to become the largest naval base in the eastern hemisphere after completion of expansion Phase II. The Navy's lone aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya is based at Karwar. The base also has the country's first sealfit fa-

cility, a unique "shiplift" and transfer system for docking and undocking ships and submarines.

Project Seabird Project Seabird involves construction of a naval base over an area of 11,169 acres. Phase I completed in 2005 comprised construction of a deep-sea harbour, breakwaters dredging, a township, a naval hospital, a dockyard uplift centre and a ship lift.

Phase-II of Project Seabird cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security in 2012, envisages expanding facilities to house additional warships and set up a new Naval Air Station, among other plans.

Efforts to Boost Self Reliance in Indian Navy

Over two-thirds of the Navy's modernisation budget has been spent on indigenous procurement in the last five financial years. Out of the 48 ships and submarines, 46 are being inducted through indigenous construction. Project 75(i) envisages indigenous construction of submarines equipped with the state-of-the-art Air Independent Propulsion system at an estimated cost of Rs. 43,000 crore.

Aircraft Carrier Vikrant likely to be commissioned in August this year, is a shining example of the Navy's self-reliance efforts. The Navy is continuously strengthening India's relations with its maritime neighbours with its focus on "SAGAR" (Security & Growth for All in Region).

Career Guidance Missing classes



By: Vijay GarG

One would have expected the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (Insacog) or the National COVID Task Force or the entire body of epidemiologists and virologists to at least now come up with a view on the reopening of schools. Unfortunately, their view eludes us. Schools remained closed for all of 2020 and most of 2021. They began to reopen in several States at the end of the second wave but closed down

again when Omicron surfaced. Scientists predict that the current wave is subsiding fast, but they do not want to tell us if it is okay for children to return to school. Restrictions are being lifted but no State Government is willing to bell the 'school reopening' cat. Is there something we do not know but ought to know? Or is it that nobody wants to take the risk because nobody can say with confidence that the reopening will increase, or not increase, the risk of infection? The children and their parents are owed an explanation. For over 600 days, students have missed school, been kept away from classroom studies and subjected to forced home isolation and, for no fault of theirs, they are becoming victims of mental distress. We hear the usual from the scientists that children have a strong immune system that prevents them from catch-

ing infection easily. On the contrary, months of sitting isolated at home without exercise or physical activity may have dented their immunity.

There is no data on how the children faced infection and no surveys on whether strict precautions in schools can ward off infection till they are vaccinated. To a large extent, the hesitation of the Government in reopening schools is justified because children are the only segment of the population without a vaccine. Those over 15 are getting their first dose now. Vaccines for children above two years of age will have to wait for a while longer, probably till early summer when five vaccines will be available to them — Cadila Healthcare's ZyCoV-D, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, the Serum Institute's Covovax, Biological E's RBD and Johnson & Johnson's 26COV.2S vaccine.

In the meanwhile, there should have been a national assessment of the fall in education reception, or knowledge absorption and in the standards among children, if any. The shortcomings of the online method of teaching are already in the public sphere. Students from poor families are suffering from not being able to afford digital devices or lacking electricity to run them. Parents are beginning to ask why education is not an "essential" service like economic activity is. They find it surprising that bars are the first to reopen, but not schools. They say it is naive to suppose children are not exposed to the virus when adults in the family go out regularly for work. It is time for rationality, not emotions, to decide on the reopening of schools. There is no scientific reason to keep them closed, anyway

India reports over 2.09 lakh Covid cases; Kerala adds 374 backlog deaths

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

India reported 2,09,918 new cases of the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and 959 related deaths in the past 24 hours, according to the Union health ministry data updated at 8am on Monday. This took the overall Covid-19 caseload of the country to 4,10,92,522 while the death toll climbed to 4,95,050.

The higher number of deaths reported in the fresh 24 hours is due to Kerala adding 374 backlog deaths to Monday's count.

The active caseload reached 18,31,268, while the daily positivity rate was registered at 15.77 per cent.

The daily Covid-19 cases across the country have been declining from the past few days in what can be seen as a sign of receding third wave of

the pandemic, driven by coronavirus Omicron variant.

Monday's daily Covid-19 tally saw a dip of 24,363 infections as compared to the spike of infections on Sunday when as many as 2,34,281 infections were reported.

According to the health ministry, 2,62,628 people recuperated from the viral disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries thus far to 3,89,76,122. The current

recovery rate stood at 94.37 per cent.

Under the ongoing coronavirus vaccine drive across the country, as many as 166.03 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far, according to the government data.

India surpassed the one-crore mark in the number of cases on December 19, 2020, and two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year.

Contd. from Page 1 Govt focused on aid to farmers, Make-In-India.....

Here are the top points from his speech:

1. President lauds government's pandemic response: In his address, President Kovind lauded the Modi government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that India's capability in fighting against Covid-19 was evident in the vaccination program. "In less than a year, we made a record of administering over 150 crore doses of vaccine. Today, we are one of the leading nations of the world in terms of administering the maximum number of doses," President Kovind said.

Adding that vaccines saved crores of lives from the virus, the president said, "Many lives were lost due to Covid. Even in such circumstances, our Centre, states, doctors, nurses, scientists, our healthcare workers worked as a team...I am thankful to our health care and frontline workers."

2. On Ayushman Bharat: President Kovind said that Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has helped the poor get quick access to healthcare. "Rs 64,000 crore PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission will prepare the country for a health crisis in future. Availability of medicines at low prices at Jan Aushadi Kendra was also a great move," he said.

He further said that the government is also looking at long-term solutions for health emergencies.

3. Government supporting pharma sector: President Kovind said that the government is fully supporting the pharma sector. Stating that the Centre has brought the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the pharma sector, he added that Ayurved and indigenous treatments are also benefiting from government schemes.

In his address, President Kovind also informed the Parliament that the World Health Organisation's first traditional medicinal centre will come up in India. The WHO has announced that it will set up a Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India.

4. India running world's largest food distribution program: The government is ensuring housing rights for poor and is also working on

schemes to ensure no one sleeps hungry. "To ensure that no one returns home hungry, my government distributes free rations to the poor every month as part of PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojana. Today, India is running the world's largest food distribution program; it has been extended till March 2022," President Kovind said.

5. 28 lakh street vendors received over Rs 2,900 crores: "My government is also running PM Svanidhi Yojana to benefit the street vendors. So far, 28 lakh street vendors have received monetary support worth over Rs 2,900 crores. The government is now connecting these vendors with online companies," President Kovind said.

6. Women empowerment one of the top priorities of Centre: Women are playing an essential role in empowering the nation, said the president in his address. "Women empowerment is one of the top priorities of my government. We are witnesses to the success of Ujjwala Yojana. Through Mudra Yojana, the entrepreneurship and skills of women have received a boost. With 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' many positive results have come to the fore," President Kovind said.

President Kovind also lauded increasing the marriage age of women to 21, and removing triple talaq while talking about women empowerment. "Providing equal status to sons and daughters, my government has presented the Bill to increase the minimum age of 18 years for women to get married and, bring it to 21 years, just like that for men," he said.

He added, "It is a matter of joy that all 33 Sainik Schools have now started giving admission to girls too. The government has also approved the entry of women cadets to the National Defence Academy (NDA). The first batch of women cadets will come to NDA in June 2022."

7. President praises India's performance in Tokyo Olympics, Paralympics: In his address, President Kovind commended India's performance in the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. "We saw the capability of India's youth power in the Tokyo Olympics. Giving its

best-ever performance, India won 7 medals. In the Tokyo Paralympics too, India won 19 medals and set a record," he said.

"To strengthen India's presence in the Olympics and sports activities, the central government - along with state governments - is establishing hundreds of Khelo India centers," he added.

8. Local languages promoted as part of National Education Policy: Local languages are being promoted as part of National Education Policy while emphasis being laid on conducting important entrance examinations in Indian languages. "19 engineering colleges across 10 states teach in 6 Indian languages this year," President Kovind said in his address.

9. Priority given to Make in India in defence contracts: President Kovind said that the government has given priority to Make in India in defence contracts. "Our aim is to ensure that goods required by our armed forces are manufactured in India. The government has taken important steps to convert ordinance factories into 7 Defence PSUs," he said.

10. India one of fastest-growing economies in world: President Kovind also said that relentless efforts by the government have led to India emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. "Due to my government's policies, today India is one of those countries where internet charges are very low. Even smartphone prices are less. The rise of the mobile manufacturing industry shows success of Make In India," he added.

11. President commends operation Devi Shakti: President Kovind also commended operation Devi Shakti during the Afghanistan crisis. It was an operation of the Indian Armed Forces to evacuate Indian citizens and foreign nationals from Afghanistan after the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban.

12. Over 40 unicorns emerged during Covid crisis: While lauding India's startup culture, President Kovind said that over 40 unicorns emerged in India during Covid crisis. "Since 2016, more than 60,000 start-ups set up in country in 56 different sectors leading to 6 lakh new jobs," he added.

Economic Survey 2022: 8 key points you need to know

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 31:

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday tabled the Economic Survey 2021-22 ahead of the Union Budget 2022.

The Economic Survey 2021-22 shed light on different sectors of the economy as well as reforms that are needed in future to accelerate growth.

The macroeconomic stability indicators in the government's Economic Survey suggest that the country's economy is well-placed to take on the challenges of the financial year 2022-23.

STRONG REVENUE

The survey pointed out that revenues have witnessed a strong revival in FY22. This means that the government has fiscal room to provide support if necessary. High Foreign Reserves, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and rising exports have provided a buffer against liquidity tampering.

GDP ESTIMATES

The Economic Survey projected an 8-8.5 per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for the Indian economy in the 2022-23 fiscal year beginning on April 1.

This compares to 9.2 per cent GDP expansion projected by the National Statistical Office (NSO) for ongoing financial year. It also noted that the

GDP growth rate contracted by 7.3 per cent in 2020-21.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and allied sectors remained the silver lining during the Covid-19 pandemic and are expected to grow by 3.9 per cent in 2021-22 after growing 3.6 per cent in the previous year.

SERVICES SECTOR

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the services sector the hardest. This sector is projected to grow by 8.2 per cent this financial year following the previous fiscal's 8.4 per cent contraction.

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

The growth of the industrial sector has been estimated at 11.2 per cent in FY22.

CONSUMPTION

Total consumption is estimated to have grown by 7.0 per cent in 2021-22 with significant contributions in the form of government spending.

AIR INDIA PRIVATISATION

The Economic Survey has highlighted that privatisation of Air India was a significant step in terms of boosting the privatisation drive and gathering disinvestment proceeds.

INCREASE IN CAPITAL SPENDING

According to the Economic Survey, there can be a sharp increase in capital spending by the government as a demand and supply-enhancing measure.

Sports

Nadal wins Australian Open for record 21st major title

Agency
Melbourne, Jan 31:

Rafael Nadal got to 21 first, breaking the men's record for most Grand Slam singles titles and doing it the hard way by coming back from two sets down to beat Daniil Medvedev in an almost 5 1/2-hour Australian Open final.

Nadal was broken when serving for the championship for the first time at 5-4 in the fifth set, but he made no mistake two games later by serving an ace to earn three championship points and converted it on the first attempt.

The 35-year-old Spaniard now has one more major title than Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, his long-time rivals in the so-called Big Three.

With the 2-6, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 win, Nadal also became just the fourth man in history to win all four of the sport's major titles at least twice.



Nadal and Medvedev packed a lot of drama into the final that started Sunday night, was delayed for a while in the 84-minute second set when a protester jumped onto the court, and then finished early Monday morning.

Good evening. No, good morning! Nadal, looking at his watch, told the crowd at Rod Laver Arena when he finally got up for his acceptance speech at 1:30am.

In the background, Rod Laver, the ageing Australian tennis great, was in the stands holding up his smartphone to capture the scenes. A woman nearby held up a sign that stated: Rafa is the GOAT.

For now, in terms of men's major titles at least, Nadal is the Greatest Of All Time.

Nadal said it had been one of the most emotional matches in my tennis career, and he praised Medvedev for the part he played in the 5-hour, 24-minute final. It was the second longest Australian Open final ever, after Nadal's loss to Djokovic in the 2012 decider that lasted 5:53.

His victory was even more remarkable considering Nadal flew to Australia with just two matches under his belt in the second half of 2021 because he was sidelined with a chronic foot injury that can be treated but not cured. He also overcame a bout of COVID-19.

ISL 2021-22: Bengaluru FC beat Kerala Blasters 1-0 to end their 10-Game unbeaten run

Agency
Panaji, Jan 31:

Bengaluru FC rode Naorem Roshan Singh's brilliant strike to end Kerala Blasters' 10-game unbeaten run and break into the top-four for the first time this season with a 1-0 win in the Hero Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Sunday.

After a barren first half, Roshan scored a sumptuous free kick in the 56th minute to break the deadlock as the Bengaluru FC moved to the fourth position having 20

points from 14 games while Kerala remained in third place with 20 points from 12 matches. They lost for the first time since their first game of the season.

Playing after more than two weeks, Kerala looked rusty in the opening exchanges with Bengaluru looking the more threatening side to break the deadlock. Danish Farooq and Prince Ibara came close to scoring but could not keep their efforts on target before Jorge Diaz's botched clearance hit Sunil Chhetri and almost went in but an alert Nishu Kumar cleared the ball off the line. Both

the defences kept things tight as a cagey half came to an end with both outfits cancelling each other out.

Bengaluru deserved a goal all along and it came from a piece of individual brilliance early into the second half. Roshan, brilliant throughout the game and the season, curled in a delightful free-kick from just outside the box, his magical left foot sending the ball past a diving Prabhsukhan Gill and in the back of the net.

Kerala tried hard to draw level but lacked the cutting

edge that have displayed this season in the final third. Harmanjot Khabra powered a volley straight at Gurpreet Singh Sandhu while moments later he was called into action again, smothering an Adrian Luna shot after he was set up by Diaz from the left wing.

Bengaluru came agonisingly close to doubling their lead but substitute Cleiton Silva saw his effort tipped away for a corner at the far post by Gill. Udanta then set up Bruno Silva but his effort flew over the bar as Bengaluru pushed hard to make it 2-0.

NSCN Chairman greets people on occasion

"Tyranny has no heart and knows no truth. It is just pure greed for power and savagery. Such is the brutality of the Indian occupation over the Naga country for the last seven decades. On this day our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent Naga victims of the indiscriminate killings at Mon district on 4th December 2021 by the Indian forces. The whole Naga country is in deep state of shock and rage and there is widespread demand for AFSPA to be removed immediately. Instead India has tightened its grip by extending the draconian law by another six months totally disregarding

and ignoring the cry for justice of the Nagas", he said and added that this appalling and unchecked human rights violation in the Naga country is an attack on the International Human Rights movement and challenged the core principles of the United Nations.

"A Time has come for the International community to take moral and humanitarian responsibility to end the decades-long occupation and allow the Naga people to determine their own future as enshrined in the International law. My dear Nagas, till today India lacked the political will to solved the Naga issue. India's

successive governments failed to live up to its commitment. The Naga pro-talk political groups are also trapped in their own clamor and disunity and has lost the skill of maneuvering the Indian bureaucrats. They have lost their political wisdom the day they give up on SOVEREIGNTY in exchange for the so-called NAGA SOLUTION. These Naga groups had a deep conflicting personal and political interests which makes our issue more complicated and confuse the people. GOI has provided them with only one option — a one way ticket. They can get in but there is no way out", he said.