

## After state govt. request, center now put on halt border fencing work at BP 80 & 81

IT News  
Imphal, June 29:

A team comprising of members of the United Committee Manipur (UCM) headed by its president Joychandra Konthoujam and members of the Moreh Meitei Council today visited Indo Myanmar border near Kwatha Village in Tengoupal district and inspected about any loss of Manipur's territories in the ongoing security fencing being underway.

During the visit it was found that the border fencing works has been put on halt. Quoting a source, our Moreh correspondent said that the BRTF which has been implementing the work under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India had stopped the fencing work around seven days back. The site is where the border pillar number 80 and 81 are located. The government of Manipur had earlier written a letter to the Union Home Ministry to put halt the border fencing work at BP -80 and 81 following protest by Civil Society Organisations under the aegis of the UCM, pointing out that the fencing was done inside the territory of Manipur, which meant that Manipur may lose its territory. During the series of protest, a lady journalist and a member of the UCM sustained minor injury in police action at Khurai area.

The UCM had been claiming that the fencing work being underway is constructed from 3 to 5 km inside the Manipur's territory.

On June 23, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh announced that the border fencing work on the disputed areas with Myanmar between BP 80 and 81 had been stopped with immediate effect.

He said, "I had a talk with the Home Secretary on the controversy of the border fencing at disputed areas with Myanmar. It was agreed that the erection of the fencing in



these disputed areas will be suspended. The Home Ministry is sending an instruction to the Manipur Chief Secretary. A high-level official team will be sent to

hold talks with the Myanmar counterpart".

Following the Chief Minister's instruction, the Chief Secretary had written a letter to the Union Govt. to

halt the fencing work until a proper demarcation is conducted between the Survey of India and the representative of the government of Myanmar.

## No issue with security fencing, but first solve the disputed border – UCM

IT News  
Moreh, June 29:

President of the United Committee Manipur (UCM) Joychandra Konthoujam today said that the UCM has no issue to the security fencing being underway at India and Myanmar border. He however said that the UCM and the people of Manipur will never accept if the fencing is done inside the territory of Manipur.

Joychandra was speaking to media persons while inspecting the nature of fencing work being conducted at BP-80 and 81.

"We have lost many of our territory which has been handed over by our forefather and we would not let it happen again", the UCM said appealing all villagers residing at the border area to support the people of the state.

During the visit at the disputed border area, today morning by the members of the



UCM and the MCM, President of the United Committee Manipur (UCM) indirectly warns villagers who are obstructing or either willing to obstruct any move by any Manipuri in the struggle for protection of the territorial integrity of the state.

"Those giving obstruction and hindrance by any individuals, no matter they

settle in the border areas, to the move for protection of the territorial integrity of the state and the country will be considered the enemy of the people", Joychandra said.

He appealed the government of India to continue the security fencing at the Indo-Myanmar border after settling the disputed border pillar issues.

## Changes & development will see in coming months: La. Ganesan

DIPR  
Imphal, June 29:

Governor of Manipur La. Ganesan has assured people that all round development will be seen in the coming months in the State. He was speaking at an interaction session of MLAs, representatives of Urban Local Bodies & Panchayat, District Level Officers, Civil Society Organizations and beneficiaries held at the auditorium of Mayai Lambi College under Wangoi Sub-Division of Imphal West district today.

Governor said, people have the right to express any issue or grievances before authority whoever he or she may be and their issues should be addressed as soon as possible. He said, in most of the places he visited, he heard complaints made by the people and most of the complaints are of poor connectivity, deplorable road conditions, lack of basic amenities and poor healthcare facilities. Admitting that most of the roads including in the hill areas are in need of taking care, La. Ganesan said, in the coming months, almost all roads will be repaired and people will enjoy a safe passage. He stated that development works which are being taken up in the State will take time to complete and all should cooperate with patience.

Governor further said that, all should take care of good health as it is the only way to



fight any disease. He said, with the support and co-operation of all stakeholders and people, we are able to fight the COVID-19 pandemic successfully and nowadays the rate of infection has decreased to a negligible rate. He appealed people to be very careful and maintain cleanliness and also to get vaccinated at least twice to fight the disease. Reiterating the commitment of the Centre to eradicate Tuberculosis (TB) by 2025, Governor asked the district administration to conduct door to door survey and identify TB patients and take steps.

La. Ganesan expressed confidence that such interaction programme or the JANATA DARBAR will definitely help to identify issues and grievances faced by the people and help

concerned authorities to deal with the issues timely. He also assured the people that he will ask concerned authorities and if necessary will ask Chief Minister to take steps in the interest of the people. Earlier, CSOs submitted memoranda and urged the Governor to look into the issues timely.

Members of Manipur Legislative Assembly, Karam Shyam, Kongkham Robindro, Khuraijam Loken Singh, Adhyaksha of Imphal West Zilla Parishad, R.K. Taruni, Pradhans, Councillors and CSOs, villagers and beneficiaries of various State and Central sponsored schemes and students attended the programme. Earlier, Governor was accorded a warm welcome by Deputy Commissioner, Imphal West, Th. Kirankumar on his arrival at the venue.

## Campaign continue demanding disturbance Free education

IT News  
Imphal, June 29:

Co-Ordinating committee on disturbance free educational zone demand continues its demonstration to stop all form of disturbances to education sector in connection with the Free educational zone demand Day, 2022.

Students and volunteers of various students' bodies formed human chain in front of Samusang Santipur upper primary school in Imphal West district.

## 50<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Padmashri Guru Maisnam Amubi Singh observed

IT News  
Imphal, June 29:

Rajya Sabha MP, Leisemba Sanajaoba unveiled the bust of Late Padmashri Guru Maisnam Amubi Singh, on his 50<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary observation today. The observance ceremony held at Jagoi Marup Complex, Lamboikhongnangkhang, was organized by Manipuri Jagoi Marup, Imphal, one of the oldest dance institute founded by the late Guru.

Speaking at the ceremony, MP Leisemba Sanajaoba said that the Late Guru, father of Manipuri Classical and Solo dance, has created a platform for art and culture

through the unique Manipuri dance form making Manipuri known to the world. The beautiful art form created by the guru has been brought forward by his students till today and hoped that the students will maintain the values and traditions for a better platform for art and culture for future generations, he added.

The MP further stated that the Manipuri society is a very traditional and value-oriented society but there seems to be lack of cultural values and tradition among the present generation. The only people who are safeguarding the cultural traditions and values are those in the field of arts, he

added. Further he said that to developed a disciplined society we need to maintain discipline in every aspect of our life. MP also said that he will extend possible support to the organization in improving and bringing forth the cultural traditions of the Late Guru.

MLA Kh. Raghunani Singh said that art and culture has played a big role in presenting the Manipuri society to the world. He said that culture should be developed practically and effort should be made to promote the standard and quality of Manipuri art and culture for future generations.

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## Fire from short circuit destroys house in Sehlon Village



IT News  
Imphal, June 29:

A devastating fire broke out at Sehlon Village in Chandel District today morning at around 5:00 am and a house was razed to ashes in the inferno. The house belongs to one Doukholun Touthang (50), son of Langjam Touthang of Sehlon Village in Khengjoi Sub-division, Chandel District under Molcham Police Station.

As per report reaching here, no resident of the house was

hurt, however almost all the properties of the house were destroyed in the inferno including a car, which was bought a few months back parked in the vicinity of the house. The properties worth damaged in the fire is yet to be estimated till the filing of this report.

The source of the fire is said to have been caused by the spark from electric Short Circuit. The neighbours joined hands with the Assam Rifles posted at the village to put out the fire.

## Massive search operations in progress for missing JCO in AP

Itanagar, June 29:

On 26 June 2022 at approximately 1400 hours, during an operational patrol in the forward areas of the remote Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, Naib Subedar Amrendra Kumar of Red Shield Division, slipped and accidentally fell into a fast flowing mountain stream. An immediate search operation was launched by search parties in the area along the stream.

A large number of search parties have since been launched and the scope of search has been expanded to include the downstream flow of the mountain stream. Assistance of local villagers and civil administration is also being taken and they have been incorporated in the efforts to locate the JCO.

The extensive search operation has continued non-stop, even as extremely rugged terrain, inclement weather and incessant rains have made progress very slow. Notwithstanding, the adverse climatic conditions, all out efforts are being made by deploying all available resources to locate the missing JCO.

# Why and how Padma bridge is a symbol of Bangladesh's national prestige and economic prosperity?

By: Samina Akhter

The Padma Bridge's self-financing has been recognized both at home and internationally. The country's dignity has also improved. The Padma Bridge is a symbol of Bangladesh's confidence and dignity, as well as an expression of Bangladesh's sentiment. On July 4, 2001, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lay the foundation stone for the Padma Bridge, which will benefit more than three crore people (30 million) in 21 districts throughout southern Bangladesh. The 6.15-kilometer bridge, which includes a four-lane highway and a one-lane railway, is now a reality.

PM Sheikh Hasina made it a reality today in the face of hundreds of difficulties, obstructions, bogus claims, and World Bank machinations. Her father's uncompromising, resolute, and unyielding will-power enabled the construction of the Padma Bridge.

On July 8, 2012, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated unequivocally in this great National Assembly that the Padma Bridge would be built at Bangladesh's own money.

Padma Bridge is 6.15 kilometers in length. However, if we include some of the shore, the overall length will be around 9 kilometers. Cars will operate on the bridge's upper level, while trains will travel on the lower level.

Padma Bridge was built at a cost of Tk 30,193.39 crore (nearly 3 billion USD). Construction of bridge infrastructure, river governance, linking highways, land acquisition, restoration and the environment, as well as salaries and allowances, are all included in these costs.

The bridge will connect a substantial portion of Bangladesh's population, including the country's southern and western regions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched the major bridge and river management projects on December 12, 2015. The design and rehabilitation work has begun on January 19, 2009.

On June 25, the Padma Bridge will be inaugurated in a way that allows the country's ordinary citizens to be a part of this historic achievement — Bangladesh's first freely funded megaproject.

Every one of the country's 4,000+ unions will use pyrotechnics and fire lanterns to brighten up the night sky. During the day, helium balloon clouds will float across the country.

Patients will no longer be forced to lie in an ambulance and leave early while waiting for the ship to arrive. Holding the hand of the bridge over the river Padma, he will be able to travel to the capital in the blink of an eye for better treatment.

People in the districts of Khulna, Bagerhat, Jessore, Satkhira, Narail, Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Magura, Barisal, Pirojpur, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalokati, Gopalganj, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, and Rajbari dream of new ventures centered on this bridge.

On the occasion of the bridge's inauguration, the bus companies will introduce a new bus service.

The benefits of the Padma Bridge, which is helping to industrialize the south and south-west, are now being realized in Mongla's port. Nearby are already several cement factories there. Various export-oriented businesses, such as clothing, have also begun to emerge.

In the same way, the importance of Payra port will rise. The port will boost trade with Bhutan, Nepal, and India's southeastern states.

Mongla is home to a special economic zone with 205 acres of land. Economic zones have already been established at Khulna's Faridpur, Madaripur, and Khulishpur. In Khulna, EPZs are once again turning around.

If gas, electricity, and other amenities are delivered in accordance with demand, the country's southern and south-western regions will be the most prosperous.

The bridge's Bonfit Cost Ratio (BCR) is 1.6 percent and its internal rate of return (ERR) is 18 percent, according to a study report by Monsell, a consultant for the Padma Bridge.

In other words, the organization claims that the bridge's building has benefited the economy.

According to a World Bank analysis, the Padma Bridge's economic impact will boost GDP in the south by 2% and the country's total GDP by more than 1%.

According to a survey conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 24,000 cars will cross the Padma Bridge every day in 2022. There are 6,238 buses, 10,244 trucks, and almost 5,000 minibuses and private automobiles among them.

Every year, the number of automobiles will increase by 6% to 7%. In that situation, by 2050, the bridge will be used by 6,000 different types of vehicles per day.

The Padma Bridge's development would also strengthen the country's integrated communication system. The Trans-Asian Highway (N-6) and the Trans-Asian Railway will be linked by the bridge. As a result, on both sides of the bridge, economic zones, high-tech parks, and private companies are springing up.

Due to the bridge, the seaports of Mongla and Payra will be open. In addition, the tourism business will grow. Domestic and international tourists go to Kuakata Beach, the Sundarbans, the sixty-domed mosque, Bangabandhu's mausoleum, and the resorts along the Mawa and Jajira rivers.

Because there was no Padma Bridge, people had to wait for hours for ferries, with hundreds of people drowning in the Padma's raging waves. Those excruciating days are drawing to a close. Now it's up to the people of the South and South-West to realize their ambitions.

In order to eliminate unemployment, industrial factories will now be built in the area. People will be treated better. The entire south and south-west will change. Everyone is taken aback by the acquisition of Padma Bridge. This is the Bangladesh's marvel.

(The author is a Dhaka-based freelance writer and woman and human rights activist)

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# Inflammable religions and a vulnerable polity



By: M.R. Lalu

An upsurge of the right-wing ideology and its grabbing political power in India is perceived as the result of an emergence of a new majoritarian mindset. The political dispensation at the centre has always come under fire since then and a landslide of criticism was that it was frequently festooned with. What became unusually imperative since its coronation was that the idea of religion in India became an inflammable subject. There have been numerous instances in which the amiability of religions in India's secular atmosphere got smothered and narratives to the effect of blaming it as the result of the political transition that the country witnessed in 2014; to be precise, the year since Narendra Modi walked onto the stage of India. Despite his achievements as the Prime Minister, the inequality that he is blamed to have brought about among the polity on religious lines keep giving him a ridiculous grin. Especially the quantum of volatility that different faiths in the country came face to face with, and the intensity of animosity that the Hindus and the Muslims stood warring against were seen as an outcome of this right leaning ideology being hoisted to power. In fact the vulnerability of a democracy lies in the erroneousness, imprudence and inaccurate introspection with which different faiths are treated and of course, the demography that India is, should always give us a subject of rumination in the direction of more inclusive and amicable religious alignment. Majoritarianism, for that is what it is described as; the political inclination

of the majority or a political establishment accused to be fundamentally tilting towards it, with a view of protecting the aspirations of some and avoiding the exasperation of someone else would drag the country into jeopardy. In its pluralistic essence, viewing the country as majoritarian would turn its social dynamics topsy-turvy.

An impending threat is menacingly visible on India's political horizon which needs urgent attention. With its population crossing 1.3 billion, India would be battling to balance itself between democracy and a theocracy that it might be slowly inching towards. While democracy provides its citizens with the essential freedom to flourish as a social being, theocracy dictates terms holding on to the theatrics of radicalization. Signs to this effect of growing disagreement and dissatisfaction is evident and efforts to cobble together the differences without patching them up resolutely for mere electoral gains is obviously throwing the country on to the brim of a scuffle. This is dangerous. India needs to plan not only for its tomorrow but also for the decades to come. The impending threat is to keep the landscape united without being axed once again on religious lines. Ever since independence, the attitude with which India accommodated its minority was an accurate gesture of inclusiveness that its plurality preserved. While this being the case, there was no glimpse of the majority seeking providence and prominence from the country's political establishment. India has no reason to flourish as a democracy without the Hindus and the Muslims living in concord. This cannot happen through a political adjustment as evidence to prove this theory is plenty. Politics, throughout its history in India, had the privilege to divide religions into deeper and dreadful platforms. Their unity cannot happen at a political level, but deep down at heart for the wellbeing of the nation, a revival

should take place. According to Sri Aurobindo, it is important to find the causes of disunion between the Hindus and Muslims and they can be found in the heart and mind and the remedy to heal the malady of disaffection should be sincerely sought there. He is indicating a cohesive adjustment that the conflicting principles should come up with.

Plurality essentially brings with it certain conflicting differences. India could successfully assimilate all those conflicting elements which had flown into it from across the globe. The only one that failed to accept the essential truth of India and therefore, could not be assimilated to the fold was Islam. This was probably because Islam failed to recognize the cardinal values that a plural social system in India preserved and its all pervasive impulses. Throughout its history, Islam remained reluctant from becoming cohesive and to change its mentality. The Hindus on the other hand, had a tendency to change with the flow of time and developed a capacity to absorb and accommodate. The real trouble that the politics in India caused was to patch up an artificial Hindu-Muslim unity. This was particularly to stage-manage a show that the parties could further use for electoral gains. But the division began to be unfathomable and the solution remained an illusion. Every day broke with a new issue of discomfort between the religious cohorts of both religions and the disruptive flavour that the politics could manipulate the country with, was immensely incongruent. From excavating idols from under the mosques to a disruptive stone pelting in the streets to a massive rioting, everything is a caricature representation of the insensibility that religions have turned themselves into. The recent tumultuous outcry in India was controversial enough to bring the country into a diplomatic standstill, at least for some time and that was the result of this insensitivity with which we dealt with the dis-

union of the plurality.

Religions at war on philosophical differences, possibly trying to establish their spiritual accuracy and ability to deliver salvation instantaneously, keep forgetting the essence of sociability that a new world order would seek; and humanity, tired of the wars and bloodshed would desperately be craving for solutions that a thought or an idea can deliver without any rigidity. This would be the moment when countries seek to break-open their borders in amity and acceptability and who knows, the very idea of religion would fade away or probably be replaced by a new idea which is incredibly accommodative and accessible. No religion for that matter, gains the audacity to prove its depth without being questioned. The intelligence that dares to question the authority of faiths that keep dividing people in the name of metaphysical propositions and doctrines cannot be thrown for persecution. India, a polarised mix of beliefs would probably be designated as the world's most populous landscape in the coming decades, needs to read into the susceptibility that it is inching towards with its plurality. A destination, where most of the religions in the world have flourished and propelled their doctrines steadfastly, would grow manifold in strength and number by 2050 and the situation would seemingly turn more impetuous and impeccably inanimate in terms of creating a breathing space for plurality. An enmity between the warring ideologies would further exacerbate the heat of difference. Manipulating democracy for electoral short-term goals would further deepen the divide between religions and it is sure to bring disastrous repercussions. Majoritarianism, if that is what the present saffron upsurge became a reality with, should hold on to the values of plurality and help India transform into what we call a world leader.

(The writer is a Freelance Journalist/Social Worker)

# On women's rights, West takes a backward step, and India shows the way



By: Smriti Zubin Irani

At a time of distressing furore on social media and on streets against near-total bans on abortion in the West, India's generous stance on the termination of pregnancy is a comforting sanctuary. Coupled with the moratorium on commercial surrogacy and the proposal to equalise men and women's age at marriage, India is positioned securely in the highest echelons of countries that safeguard reproductive autonomy.

India's Constitutional ethos commits to the protection of personal liberty through Article 21. Abortion or termination of pregnancy is a woman's prerogative to self-determine. While women are exclusively fated to withstand child-bearing - purely on account of their biological predisposition- socio-cultural constructs also subject women to a disproportionate share of child-rearing.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021 is a step in the right direction. It ensures that expectant mothers ex-

ercise self-determination in welcoming new life to their homes. Under the aegis of the Act, abortions may be performed up to 24 gestational weeks on grounds of risk to the mother's life, mental anguish, rape, incest, contraception failure or the diagnosis of foetal abnormalities. The Act navigates the 20 weeks challenge posed by the MTP Act, 1971 and is a nod to advances in the field of health and reproductive science. It is a liberal achievement over countries where abortions are disallowed since conception, even in the most traumatising of circumstances of sexual abuse or incest.

The MTP Act, 2021 attests to the intuition and farsightedness of its crafters. Readiness for and desirability of children decisively shape the life trajectories of mothers, families and children alike. Unwanted pregnancies unexpectedly curtail the life choices of parents- especially mothers- and may limit their mental well-being and personal growth.

Further, children born unwanted may suffer reduced opportunities. Illustratively, WHO links the likelihood of children being born 'wanted' to greater parental investments in their education. The recent MTP Act therefore relieves mothers from the emotional and financial aftermath of unwanted pregnancies.

Incumbent law and policy-makers have skillfully given reproductive choice a lifecycle twist. Since fertility, child-bearing and child-rearing are unmistakably associated with marriage, by proposing to raise the

legal marriageable age for women, policy-makers are heralding welcome changes that delay pregnancy.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to push the marriage age for women from 18 years to 21 years. The Bill is well founded in the face of scholarship and evidence cited by WHO which holds that adolescent mothers aged 10 to 19 years are prone to higher risks of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, and systemic infections in comparison to women aged 20 to 24 years. Children born to such mothers additionally face higher risks of low birth weight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal conditions.

It is worthy to note that the unmet need for family planning in terms of limiting or spacing of child-bearing decreased from 12.9% to 9.4% between NFHS-4 (2014-15) to NFHS-5 (2019-21). However, on a standalone basis, nearly 7% of females aged 15-19 years were already mothers or pregnant at the time of NFHS-5, a marginal decline over NFHS-4's 7.8%. Such young mothers are poorly aware about feeding practices and baby-care, making them more likely to have stunted or wasted children. Together the MTP Act, 2021 and the PCMA Bill, 2021 - if enacted- can axe the vicious cycle of early marriages, consequent early pregnancies and poor maternal and child health outcomes.

Another underrated policy innovation that the government curated was the decimation of surrogacy bazaars that allowed 'renting a womb'. Given global inequali-

ties, India became a lucrative 'biomarket' for surrogate mothers. The bodies of poor Indian women became 'bioavailable' to the residents of the Global North, spurring a commercialisation of motherhood, commodification of women and their reduction to their reproductive capacity. India came to be condescendingly dubbed as a 'baby factory', with babies abandoned, exploitation of surrogates and non-payment of compensation. In a country with a long-standing cultural lineage of revering mothers, careless commercial surrogacy appeared to be in stark contrast with the cultural ethos.

Responding to this dissonance, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, replaced commercial surrogacy with ethical, altruistic surrogacy. The Act prohibits couples who are not of Indian origin to avail surrogacy in the country and allows only locals with certified, medical reasons necessitating gestational surrogacy to avail it. The MTP Act, the Surrogacy Act and the PCMA (Amendment) Bill, 2021, collectively give new meaning to *narishakti*.

Within this enabling politico-legal apparatus, the government has framed policies that readily coalesce to respect the choices and decisions made by women. Under the aegis of Ayushman Bharat- Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), a health cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per annum is provided and a wide range of packages pertaining to obstetrics and gynaecology are offered.

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# India records 14,506 news COVID cases, 30 deaths

Agency  
New Delhi, June 29:

With 14,506 new COVID infections in the last 24 hours, India's total tally of such cases rose to 4,34,33, 345, and that of the active cases to 99,602, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

India recorded 30 deaths

due to the coronavirus, and with it the death toll has climbed to 5,25,077, the data updated at 8 am stated.

Active cases comprise 0.23 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.56 per cent, the health ministry said.

An increase of 2,902 cases has been recorded in

the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 3.35 per cent, almost equal to the weekly positivity rate, which was recorded at 3.36 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease rose to

4,28,08,666, while the overall fatality rate was recorded at 1.21 per cent.

According to the ministry, 197.46 crore doses of COVID vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive.

India's COVID-19 tally surpassed the 1-crore mark on December 19, 2020.

The country crossed the grim milestone of 2 crore on May 4, 2021, and 4 crore on January 25 this year.

The 30 new fatalities were constituted by 12 from Kerala, five from Maharashtra, four from Delhi, three from Goa, two from Bihar, and one each from Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

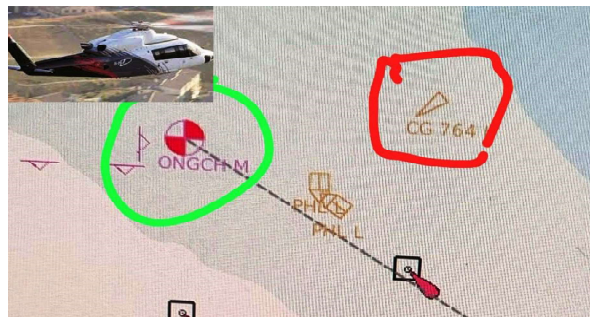
## Corrigendum

Sunday edition of this newspaper dated June 26, 2022, has misquoted the statement of Lt. Col. Nongpokganba while reporting a programme in connection with the International Day Against Drug and Illicit Trafficking held at Khngnabok in Thoubal district. The news report, appeared on the front page of this newspaper, under the heading "Involvement of Politicians rise the drug related cases in the state" should be read as "Increasing drug menace could be stopped with more active involvement of elected representatives and society as a whole". The inconveniences cause is regretted.

Editor

## Helicopter with 9 on board makes emergency landing in dea, four dead

The dead include three ONGC employees and one temporary ONGC worker



A diagram showing the emergency landing of an ONGC chopper off the Mumbai coast. (Inset: Sikorsky S 76 D chopper. (Photo credit: Multiple sources)

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, June 28:

Four persons died, while five others survived when a Pawan Hans helicopter operating for the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) ditched 50 nautical miles, about 100 km off Mumbai Coast on Tuesday.

"I am personally deeply saddened and mourn the loss of 4 hardworking members of the ONGC Limited family- Shri Mukesh Patel JIEE(E), Shri Vijay Mandloi Ji, EE(M), Shri Satyambad Patra Ji, Geologist & contract worker Shri Sanju Francis Ji in a tragic helicopter accident at Mumbai offshore today. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families for their irreparable loss. We stand with them in this hour of grief" Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted.

A Pawan Hans Sikorsky 76D helicopter ditched near the drill-

ing rig Sagar Kiran in Mumbai High off shore platform. Ditching is a controlled emergency landing carried out by helicopter pilots on water. Those on board were: engineers - M Shyamundar, Mukesh Patel, and Vijay Mandloi and others- Pradeep Vasudeo, chemist Ranajit Mal, geologist Satyambad Patra and room boy Sanju Francis and two crew members.

The helicopter VT PWI (S 76D) took off from Juhu at 10.54 am for the Sagar Kiran ONGC rig. The Pawan Hans operations room at Juhu airport was informed by operations room of ONGC at 11.45 am that the helicopter has ditched at sea. The helicopter was a brand new Sikorsky S 76D with the call sign VT- PWI. It crashed near the "Sagar Kiran" oil rig on Mumbai High Offshore platform.

Initially, in the rescue operations, all 09 passengers were res-

cued by the Indian Coast Guard. Of these, three ONGC employees and both crew members were saved. However three ONGC employees and one temporary ONGC worker, who were unconscious, were taken to BMC's Cooper Hospital located at Vile Parle West in northwest Mumbai. However, they were declared dead before admission. The Juhu airport Director (Airport Authority of India) A K Vema said.

The helicopter, was forced to land using the floaters that are attached to choppers that carry personnel and material from shore to offshore installations. The chopper was attempting to land at the rig, when the incident took place. The chopper fell into the sea, about 1.5 km from the landing zone on the rig.

Soon after the mishap, the Marine Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai of the Indian Coast guard, diverted the

Ocean Support vessel "Malviya 16". The MRCC also activated the International Safety Net. Similarly, the Indian Navy sent a "Sea King" helicopter, an advanced light helicopter with harness and divers. The vessel threw life rafts from helicopters for survivors, a Defence spokesman said.

"A helicopter carrying nine (9) persons on board, including two pilots made an emergency landing around 11.45 AM today on the Arabian Sea, one nautical mile away from ONGC offshore rig Sagar Kiran. The Regional Contingency Plan (west) (RCP) was immediately activated and Indian Navy and Coast Guard were informed of the incident" an ONGC statement said.

ONGC vessels near the location were mobilized for search and rescue operations. With prompt action, one person was rescued by a lifeboat launched from ONGC Rig Sagar Kiran, and four persons were rescued by ONGC stand-by vessel Malviya-16. Despite inclement weather conditions, the rescue operations were carried out very swiftly.

The Navy also deputized its vessels and chopper while Coast Guard diverted its vessels and an aircraft. Four persons rescued by a Navy chopper were brought to the base unconscious and taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, they could not survive. ONGC deeply mourns this tragic loss of lives. ONGC is reaching out to the affected families and extending all possible support. An inquiry has been instituted, the ONGC stated added.

ONGC has several rigs and installations in the Arabia Sea that are used to produce oil and gas from reservoirs lying below the seabed.

## Assam Floods: Situation worsens; death toll rises to 139

Agency  
Guwahati, June 29:

The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Tuesday. The death toll due to floods in the state rose to 139 after five more people lost their lives in the past 24 hours. Out of the five deaths, three were reported in the Cachar district and one each in Morigaon and Dhubri.

In the past 24 hours, 24.92 lakh people have been affected by the floods in 28 districts of Assam, reported PTI. On Monday, 21.52 lakh people were affected across 22 districts of the state.

Brahmaputra, Beki, Kopili, Barak and Kushiya are still flowing above the danger mark. However, waters are reportedly receding in most of the other rivers in Assam. On Tuesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the severely affected districts of Bajali and Barpeta.

The state government reportedly sanctioned Rs nine crore for strengthening the embankment of the Pahumara river and the construction of a road on it. State tourism minister Jayanta Malla Barua also reviewed the flood relief and rescue operations in Silchar.

A team of the National Health Mission (NHM) also visited Silchar to ensure that the affected people should get the proper medical facility. A total of 2,389 villages in 72 revenue circles have been affected across the state, reported the news agency.

Over 1.70 lakh people have taken shelter in 555 relief camps across the state. A total of 155 roads and five



bridges were damaged by flood water in the state. On Tuesday, two landslides were also reported from Karimganj and Lakhimpur. No casualty was reported. A crop area of 85,673.62 hectares is still under flood water in the state.

Rebel Shiv Sena MLAs from Maharashtra have contributed Rs 51 lakh for the flood relief work in Assam, where they have been camping since the last week, their spokesperson said on Wednesday.

The Sena legislators, led by senior minister Eknath Shinde, have raised the banner of revolt against their party.

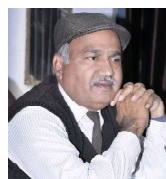
These MLAs had first come to Guwahati on June 22 and subsequently in several batches from Gujarat's Surat

in chartered flights.

Amid criticism that the Sena dissidents were staying at a luxury hotel in Guwahati even as parts of Assam were grappling with severe floods, Deepak Kesarkar, the spokesperson of the rebel MLAs told PTI, "Shinde has donated Rs 51 lakh to the Assam Chief Minister's Relief Fund as our contribution to their ongoing rescue work. We cannot ignore the plight of people here."

Kesarkar added that with Maharashtra Governor B S Koshiyari asking the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to face a floor test on Thursday, the rebel MLAs have decided to move out of Guwahati and shift to a place near Mumbai.

## Food from Air



By: Vijay GarG

Science and Technology are making tremendous strides behind the scenes laying the foundation for a new kind of growth which will dominate the 21st Century and take mankind towards a more constructive future and a less polluting one. Science has always struggled with ways to end out better methods to create and provide food for the teeming human population which has seen a phenomenal growth in the last hundred years.

Today new technologies capable of making water and

food out of thin air are making waves and for India they could prevent a looming crisis. The benefits of the Green Revolution and Operation Flood have more or less reached their peak in India as the country's population has grown in leaps and bounds. Today more than one and half billion Indians live and work and prosper in the country, but feeding them and taking care of their water needs amounts to feeding the population of more than 20 to 30 nations.

On an average a nation has a population of 10 million to 30 million persons. In India the population of Uttar Pradesh alone is over 25 crores which means 250 million or a little less than what the population was when India attained independence in 1947.

All attempts to feed this population have targeted ground water and polluted and poisoned it to a large extent. While people drink water from

the tap in western nations like Canada and USA as the water is safe to drink every middle-class Indian home has a water purifier. Fertilizers and large scale use of lethal pesticides has created a temporary food revolution that feeds the Indian people and allows India to be a food exporting nation. However new technologies like the Israeli based Water generation can now extract water from air. Another start-up in Finland called Solar Food has begun to make microbe based protein powder by consuming greenhouse gases like Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere rather than depending on land based agriculture which produces greenhouse gases. For India the time has come to explore these new technologies to prevent the crisis that could come from climate change and loss of agriculture production due to water pollution and land degradation

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## On women's rights, West takes a backward...

While Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) partially compensates wage loss before and after pregnancy, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyaan (PMSMA) provides free of cost antenatal care to pregnant women on every 9th day of the month, easing the financial burden of pregnant women.

Not only is the government making a concerted effort for reproductive choices to be easier on the pockets of women, it is also promoting safe motherhood through institutional deliveries under Janani Suraksha Yojana and quality, respectful care in labour rooms during deliveries under schemes like La Qshya. These efforts have culminated in a manifold increase

in institutional deliveries from 79% in NFHS-4 to nearly 89% in NFHS-5. The ultimate reward to the nation is the greater longevity of mothers as evidenced by declining Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) 167 per lakh live births in 2011-13 to 103 per lakh live births as of 2019.

The present government evinces the highest regard for its bahuroopi daughters who act -at various points in their life- not only as loving mothers but as sincere students, valuable employees and valorous entrepreneurs. The *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* campaign's call to ensure that girls are born and nurtured bore fruit in the form of an improved sex ratio of 1020 females per 1000 males. *Yojanas* such as *Ujjwala* and *Jal*

*Jeevan Mission* reduced the time poverty of the females of the household; it gave them much needed respite from the drudgery of collecting fuelwood or water so they could partake in other gainful activities. The *Mudra Yojana* has provided aspiring women entrepreneurs with loans sans collateral and yet another scheme, *Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme*, has advocated for higher subsidies for women.

While the West is curtailing abortion rights, India is extending the ceiling of permissible abortions. Where menstrual hygiene remains a conversation hushed in whispered tones in other parts of the world, Prime Minister Modi addressed the issue from the

ramparts of the Red Fort with 1.3 billion Indians listening intently. By outlawing Triple Talac, the government has comforted the constant state of insecurity faced by Muslim women. By proposing to revise the permissible marriageable age, the government has held men and women to the same, unbiased standards. The present government has ever so carefully instilled conscientiousness into the calculus of policy making- with a fervent hope that it will better the lives of the mothers and daughters of India for generations to come. Even as the West retrogresses, India progresses and shows the path for a progressive society.

(The writer is a Union Minister of Women and Child Development)

# BJP leadership planning regime change in jharkhand before 2024 polls Shinde model of Maharashtra can be applied to other states

By Sankar Ray

The Bharatiya Janata Party may apply the operation-dislodge model of breakaway Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde in capturing power in Rajasthan and Jharkhand. West Bengal is also in the defection antenna. The Opposition and BJP leader of West Bengal Suwendu Adhikari disclosed almost directly that after Maharashtra, BJP would form governments in Jharkhand and Rajasthan as also West Bengal by 2024.

At a meeting in Coochbehar, north Bengal, Adhikari said, "It has just started in Maharashtra. Now it will be followed by Jharkhand and Rajasthan. And immersion of this

(Trinamool Congress government) in 2024," He stated the same words in two meetings at Falakata, Coochbehar district and Alipurdar district town on the same day. Interestingly, the BJP leader made these statements after meeting the West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar who is accused by all non-BJP parties of functioning under the BJP diktat. Adhikari is also very close to the Home Minister Amit Shah.

The Shinde model is splitting of the ruling party with the BJP leadership sitting in the wings. Knowledgeable circles feel that several hundreds of crores of Indian rupee have been incurred to engineer the split. Nearly 40 Shiv Sena MLAs of

Maharashtra were hijacked in a chartered plane to Surat first and there from to Guwahati - both in BJP ruled states.

In Guwahati, they were lodged at the 5-star Hotel Radisson Blu whose 70 of total 190 rooms were booked by Shinde (read Sangh Parivar). The total weekly rent of these rooms is Rs 58 lakh, while the daily food expenses had been Rs 8 lakhs. Cost of travel by chartered plane is separate. The MLAs were virtually locked in. They were not allowed to meet with or speak to anyone, least of all media. The Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sharma of BJP went to the hotel and spoke with Shinde.

The West Bengal BJP president, Dr Sukanta Majumder, a member of Lok

Sabha, endorsed Adhikari. "The fall of TMC government may happen even before 2024. TMC is internally fractured and not at all well." But he, unlike Adhikari, pretends that BJP will have nothing to do with the impending cleavage in the TMC legislative party.

In the 200-member Rajasthan state assembly, there are 108 Congress MLAs, 20 CPI(M) MLAs and an MLA representing Rashtriya Lok Dal will support the Congress against BJP which has 71 MLAs. But there are 13

independent MLAs. The sabha aim is to ensure defection of 30 Congress MLAs to the BJP.

In Jharkhand, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Indian National Congress have 30 and 18 MLAs respectively in the 81-member legislature, while BJP group has 30 MLAs. The unusual haste with which the Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren announced support to the BJP's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu, who is an Adivasi, has shocked

opposition parties. Whether Soren will keep bending down further to unfriend INC and join hands with the BJP to form a JMM-BJP coalition-government as it did in the past, is a matter of guess. But the CBI and ED are sure to summon Soren's family members who are lessee of several mines in Jharkhand. To put further pressure, Once the JMM has been delinked from the opposition on the presidential elections issue, it will be easier for the BJP leadership to continue the

pressure to achieve their prime objective.

The BJP cashes in on the footloose unity of anti-BJP parties. Many of the legislators of the non-left opposition parties have connections with corrupt deals. It is easier for the Modi-Shah regime to influence them by making use of the central agencies. Since this method has paid dividends in Maharashtra, this might be applied with more vengeance in Jharkhand in the coming days. (IPA Service)

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## 50<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary .....

Stating that maintaining discipline is seen only in the field of art and culture, he said art and culture plays a big role in bringing a disciplined life among the youths. Westernization has somewhat degraded the life of the present generation and we need to inculcate the unique cultural and traditional values as a lesson among the youths. He further added that we should hope for the betterment of the cultural values and traditions handed down by the Guru among the students and others in the society.

It is worth mentioning that Padmashri Awardee Late Guru Maisnam Amubi Singh was the first winner of Sangeet Natak Akademi award from the state of Manipur in 1956. He was honoured by the Government of India in 1970 with Padma Shri, the



fourth highest Indian civilian award.

Artists from MJM, JNMMA, Meitei Jagoi, Kolkota; Panthoibijagoi Marup, New

Delhi taking part in cultural performances were also felicitated as part of the observance ceremony. Padmashri Awardee Smt.

Elam Indira Devi, Gurus of the institute, invitees and students attended the observance ceremony among others.

## Sports

### Nadal overcomes third set wobble to reach second round

Agency  
London, June 29:

Rafael Nadal made a stuttering but rousing return to the grass on Tuesday, beating 41st-ranked Argentine Francisco Cerundolo 6-4 6-3 3-6 6-4 in Wimbledon's first round to begin his campaign for a third Grand Slam title of the year.

The 36-year-old second seed, who has not played at Wimbledon since 2019 and stayed away from warm-up tournaments with a chronic foot problem, looked to be motoring through the match until a series of unforced

errors allowed Cerundolo back in. "It is not a surface that we play very often, especially in my case in the last three years I didn't put any foot on the grass," Nadal told the Centre Court crowd.

"Every day is a test and I am at the beginning of the tournament and the difficult circumstances (under which) I arrived here."

Nadal won the first set after uncharacteristically coming into the net and forcing Cerundolo to hit a forehand wide. A little skip and a fist pump and the Spaniard was on his way.

He won the second set after breaking serve in the sixth game and serving out to love.

But the 23-year-old Cerundolo, who broke into the top 100 only in February, upped the tempo in the third set and found the lines with his booming forehand to put the twice Wimbledon champion on the back foot.

Nadal, who has also won 20 other Grand Slam titles, looked tired in the face of the onslaught, losing the set under pressure with a backhand into the net. He then dropped his serve in the fourth as Cerundolo's confidence and energy

increased.

But Nadal, who won the Australian Open in January and the French Open earlier this month, is nothing if not a fighter. He regrouped and used all his experience to battle back.

Cheered on by a packed Centre Court he broke the serve of his now nervous opponent twice to seal the match and set up a second-round tie with Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania.

"Three years without being here ... it is amazing to be back and I can't thank (people) enough for the support," said Nadal.

### PV Sindhu wins, Saina Nehwal loses in Malaysia Open

Agency  
New Delhi, June 29:

Two stalwarts of Indian women's badminton, PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal, suffered contrasting fates at the Malaysia Open Super 750 tournament with the former progressing to the second round and the latter bowing out after losing her opener on Wednesday.

If Sindhu, a former world champion, dished out a fine performance to outwit Thailand's world number 10



Pompawee Chochuwong 21-13 21-17, London Olympics bronze medalist Saina went down fighting against American Iris

Wang, ranked 33rd in the world, 11-21 17-21 in 37 minutes.

Sindhu, seeded seventh, set up a clash with Phittayaporn

Chaiwan, a 21-year-old from Thailand, who held the number one ranking in world junior ranking and also was part of the bronze medal-winning team at the Uber Cup in Bangkok.

B Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa, who will be leading India's charge at the Commonwealth Games, also couldn't get past world number 21 pairing of Robin Tabeling and Selena Piek of the Netherlands. The Indian duo lost 15-21 21-19 17-21 after a 52-minute battle.

### Boxers Simranjit, Ananta off to winning starts in Elorda Cup



New Delhi, June 29:

Indian boxers Simranjit Kaur and Ananta Chopade kickstarted their campaigns with contrasting victories in the opening round at the inaugural edition of Elorda Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Wednesday.

The 2018 World Championships bronze medalists Simranjit lived up to favourite's tag with a dominating start in the tournament. She pulled off a comprehensive win against the local boxer Ischanova Nazym by unanimous decision in the women's 60kg encounter.

Whereas, in the country's first bout of the day, Ananta dealt with a stiff challenge from the Mongolian pugilist Dorjnyambuu Ganbold. However, the Indian kept his cool during an intensely fought men's 54kg thriller and eventually managed to tilt the result in his favour by a narrow 3-2 verdict.

Simranjit and Ananta will now square off against China's Xu Zichun and Kazakhstan's Altynbek Nursultan respectively in their quarter-finals matches.



Meanwhile, three other Indian pugilists suffered opening-round defeats. Muhammed Etash Khan (60kg), Kaisham Johnson Singh (63.5kg) and Manjeet Singh (+92kg) lost to their respective Kazakh opponents—Samchuk Vassily, Bazarbai Uulu Muhammedsabyr and Saparbay Nurlan, by a similar 0-5 margin in the men's category.

A 33-member Indian contingent, including 12 men, has been participating at the on-going event with two teams featuring in the women's section. Apart from India, the tournament has also been witnessing the presence of pugilists from other top boxing nations such as Uzbekistan, hosts Kazakhstan, Cuba, China

and Mongolia. World Championship medalists Simranjit, Sonia Lather and Jamuna Boro are leading the Indian challenge in the women's section alongside 2021 Youth World champions Gitika and Alfiya Pathan. While in the men's category, the reigning national champion Lakshya Chahar and Youth World champion Sachin are among the Indians.

Later on Day 1, another Indian boxer Kirti, representing the second Indian women team, will fight against Japan's Rinka Tanaka in the 60kg.

Finals will be played on July 4. The champion boxer will receive USD 700 while the silver and bronze medal winners will take home USD 400 and USD 200 respectively.