

## Bomb blast at Little Flower School: Condemnation pours, protest staged

### Please don't bomb at schools – LFS students

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

A powerful blast that occurred the 2<sup>nd</sup> gate of Little Flower School at Sangaipor, at early morning of Sunday, here in Imphal has created fear psychosis to both students and guardians compelling the school to shut down.

Academic atmosphere has been severely disturbed, as the panic students instead of attending classes staged sit-in-protest in front of the school at Tiddim Road.

"Please don't blast bomb at school", a class 10 student staging protest in front of the school told media persons to convey the message to whomever responsible for blasting of the bomb.

"How are we going to continue our studies if such bomb blast took place to school", another student told the media. The students urged the Chief Minister and the Education Minister to protect them.

Yesterday's blasts has created fear to many parents as well as the students, Head Mistress of the Little Flower School, Kaini said, while speaking to media persons at Manipur Press Club.

According to her, they heard a loud sound of bomb blast at around 3 am yesterday. When they went out to see, they found a bomb blasted in front



of the school 2<sup>nd</sup> gate.

"Portion of the gate had been damaged due to the impact of the blast", Kaini told media persons.

Kaini, however didn't disclosed on who are those

responsible for the blast. No individual or group has claimed responsibility of the blast so far.

President of the United Association of Recognised School of Manipur, L. Joy also

condemn the bomb blast at Little Flower School.

As per information, the students and teaching staffs of the Little Flower School is organising a protest rally tomorrow.

## NESO condemns the bomb attack at Little Flower School

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

The North East Students' Organisation (NESO) which comprises of the Khasi Students' Union (KSU), All Assam Students' Union (AASU), Naga Students' Federation (NSF), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Twipra Students' Federation (TSF), All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU), Garo Students' Union (GSU) and All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU)

representing eight major students movement in the seven North Eastern states expressed its deep shock on learning of the bomb attack that took place on the June 5, at around 3:15 am at the gate of Little Flower School, Sangaipor, Imphal, Manipur.

"NESO, condemns this dastardly act in the strongest term possible and demanded that the Government authorities should do everything possible to bring

the perpetrators to book. Violence in or around schools is never acceptable. Those responsible for the crime targeting schools and children must be brought to justice", a statement by Samuel B. Jyrwa, President, NESO and Sinam Prakash, General Secy, said.

NESO said it extend full support and solidarity to the Little Flower School to move forward in whatever it is trying to achieve for the larger interest of the indigenous peoples of the state.

## COSHEM result declares: Private schools dominates in both Arts and Science stream; EK School corners all top 10 in Arts stream

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

Government schools in the state once more received a thrashing blow once more as the result of the Class XII examination conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur has been declared today. None of the students from government schools except a student of the TG Higher Secondary School who shared 4<sup>th</sup> position with two other students of the Enlighten Knowledge Higher Secondary School, Sangakpham, could make in the top 10 position of both Arts and Science Stream.

Interestingly, the Enlighten Knowledge Higher Secondary School, Sangakpham corners all the top 10 positions in the Arts Stream. Golmei Gaihemmei of Enlighten Knowledge Higher Secondary, School, Sangakpham. D/o Gangmei Akashini Kabuini, G. Katapinpu of Langthabal Khoupum, Imphal West secured 459 marks in Arts stream and top the examination. Two other students of the same school Raniya Soibam, D/O Waikhom Pratima Devi and

Soibam Biramani Singh of Arapti Awang Leikai, Imphal East and Naorem Jessica Devi D/O Naorem Aruni Devi and Naorem Hemanta Singh Of Kakching Ningthou Leikai, Kakching District secured 457 and 456 marks to list in the 2<sup>nd</sup> top and 3<sup>rd</sup> top respectively.

All students in the top 10 are from the Enlighten Knowledge Higher Secondary School, Sangakpham. 3 students secured 450 marks each and among them is a student from TG Higher Secondary school while the two others are from the Enlighten Knowledge Higher Secondary School, Sangakpham.

In Science stream Rahul Naorem, of XTRA Edge School, Ghari, S/O Athokpam Shantibala Devi And Naorem Jibol Singh Of Arapti Mayai Leikai secured 478 marks to the examination. Kshetrimayum rajshree of Millennium Institute of Sciences, Sagolband, Kwakeithel Mayakoibi, D/o Tourangbam, SHHDBAL Kshetrimayum and Brojen Singh of Singjamei Wangma Kshetri Leikai, Imphal East scores 474 marks to become the Second position holder.

Wairokpm Anupriya Devi of Herbert School, Changangei, d/o Wairokpm Ongbi Anita Devi And Wairokpm Chandrakumar Singh of Thoubal Bazar Makha is the third position in Science stream. She scores 472 marks.

All the top 10 students are from private schools.

In Commerce stream, Abujam Anjali Devi of SDJM Higher Secondary School, Paona Bazar

D/O ABUJAM (O) Sarda Devi and Abujam Romen Singh of Langthabal Mantrikhong Makha Leikai,

Imphal West secured a total of 424 marks to top the examination.

Niangbiaklun of V.K. Tawna College, Lamka, Churachandpur, d/o Khualching Chinkhanlal of Sahei Road, V.Munhoi secured a total of 399 marks and become 2<sup>nd</sup> position.

Tongbram Luxmi Devi of SDJM Higher Secondary School, Paona Bazar D/O Tongbram Sobita Devi And Tongbram Dhaneshwara Singh of Tuliyaia Mani Urak Leikai Malom, Imphal - west, is the Third position holder in Commerce stream. She secured 397 marks.

## RPF clarifies

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

Reacting to news report about the arrest of one RPF cadre identified as Soibam Ronaldo @ Abungo @ Thoiba along with 95 (ninety five) numbers of Fake 500 currency note, the Revolutionary People's Front RPF says that those fake currency note were handed over to the member of the RPF by a non-local identified as Jai Singh Jain, owner of the Mamta Electronic located at Thangal bazaar.

A clarification by Bangkim, Assistant Secretary, Publicity, RPF, said that on June 1, 2022, the RO of the Finance Dept. (RPF) had requested the owner of the Mamta Electronic, Thangal Bazar for assistance to the revolutionary movement. The owner of the Mamta Electronic agreed to donate a sum of Rs. 50,000/- and that amount was collected by Soibam Ronaldo. The owner handed over the sum in 500 rupees denomination. The 500 notes denomination later turns out to be fake currency.

Bangkim said that such act is an attempt to malign the image of the RPF. The statement added that the incident shows that the non-local are bringing fake currency to the region and appealed people to be aware of this.

## Proud of our handloom and handicrafts: CM at Manipur Heritage Expo 2022

DIPR  
Imphal, June 6:

We are proud of our handloom and handicraft products, said Chief Minister N.Biren Singh attending the Manipur Heritage Expo, MoU Signing with Amazon 2022 and distribution of 4715 looms at City Convention Centre, Imphal today.

Speaking as the Chief Guest of the inaugural function, the Chief Minister thanked the Amazon team present at the inaugural function for acknowledging the importance and uniqueness of the State's handloom and handicraft.

He said that it is indeed very fortunate for the State to have a platform under Amazon and the interest shown by Amazon to our handloom and handicraft products shows not only the uniqueness, but also the quality of our products.

N. Biren Singh also spoke on the importance of Geographical Indications (GI) and said it is indeed necessary to GI tag the traditional dresses, craft items of the State's tribes.

He also appreciated the Department officials for their commitment and dedication. At the same time, there should be no compromise on quality,



the Chief Minister said, further explaining the need for zero tolerance against corruption. He said today the State's handloom and handicraft has a place in the world stage because of the hardwork of our weavers and artisans.

He also urged the weavers to inform him if there were any defects on the looms distributed today.

Now that the Amazon platform is available, weavers will not face the lack of marketing space for their finished products, he said, adding that already 250 handloom and handicraft items have been uploaded on the e-marketing platform.

The Chief Minister further

expressed the need to preserve and encourage our handicraft and traditional items. He appreciated the skill, talents of the people of the State and expressed pride in being a Manipuri and an Indian.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taught us a good lesson on self-reliance, he said adding that the rural economy depends on those working from the ground level and that without improving rural economy, we cannot improve our State's economy.

Further ensuring all assistance, the Chief Minister further wished the weavers and artisans success in their endeavours. Further stating

that weavers and artisans can also seek financial assistance under the Start-up Scheme, he informed that the budget for the Start-Up scheme has been increased to Rs. 100 crore from this financial year.

Minister Nemecha Kippen said that the expo will provide a platform to showcase the handloom and handicraft products of the State before the world.

Today, our handloom and handicraft is known internationally, she said, adding that according to the National Handloom Census Report, 2019, Manipur has around 2.12 lakh handloom weavers, around 2.11 lakh looms and around 2 lakh

handicraft artisans.

Our handloom and handicraft has helped in generating employment as well as income in our society, she added.

In his welcome address, Additional Chief Secretary Shri P. Vaiphei said joining hands with Amazon is an appropriate step as online shopping and online delivery has become a forte of all entrepreneurship and this is where all our handloom weavers and handicraft artisans need to be promoted to.

The inaugural function was also attended by MLA, S. Rajen Singh, MLA, S. Rameshwar Meetei, Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar and Secretary Michael Achom among others.

MoU was also signed between the Manipur Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation (MHDC) Ltd. represented by Managing Director, MHDC Ltd., Shri E. Jeeten Singh and Amazon Sellers Private Ltd, represented by the Shri Uday Mehta, Head, Public Policy (Ecommerce), Amazon.

MHDC has already been tied up with Amazon since 2020 and was taking a key responsibility in providing an e-market platform for the State's handloom and handicraft products during the

COVID-19 pandemic through its own e-market platform called [panthoibi.com](http://panthoibi.com).

Now, with the signing of the MoU, MHDC will take a leading role for marketing the State handloom and handicraft products through Amazon.

It may be mentioned that 2475 fly-shuttle looms were also distributed to weavers from across the State under Upgradation of Loom Scheme as part of the '100 Action Points For First 100 Days' of the new government. Dummy tokens for the looms were distributed to selected 16 weavers by the dignitaries during the inaugural function.

## Medical Camp

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

SajikTampak Battalion under the aegis of IGAR(South) conducted a Medical Camp at Aishi village, Chandel district on 06 Jun 22.

In continuation of its efforts to improve mutual trust and to maintain peace and harmony in the region, a Medical camp was organised for locals of Aishi village. Total 33 villagers were examined during the medical camp. Essential medicines were also distributed during the event.

## On professional ethics and the Selfie time with Chief Minister

Whether it is a politician, lawyer, Doctor, Engineer or the Journalist, all follows their professional ethics. A professional who fails to follow the profession ethics while rendering their service may be considered as a failed professional in any field.

In the Hindu Epic 'Mahabharata', there was an episode where Professional ethics had been well maintained. All knows it was a war between the Pandava brothers and the Duryadhona brothers. In the longest Epic, it was stated that Duryadhona, came to Sahadeva, who was an Astrology by profession, to tell him the best timing to start their journey of the war that was supposed to fight with the Pandava brothers. Sahadeva, despite the fact that Duryadhona is fighting with them told the right time to venture out for the war. Sahadeva, also calculated the best timing to start the war with Kourav by the Pandava. It was all about the ethics of Sahadeva Professions. He did compromise his profession.

Sunday evening show Chief Minister N. Biren Singh sparing some of his busy scheduled to be with the people at the newly inaugurated recreational park constructed at the eastern side of historic Kangla Fort. He picked the right place to meet with his fellow citizens irrespective of which community or which constituencies they belong to. What surprises people like me who are in news business is that, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh at his 60s was seen more athletic while he joined the people at the park. The gesture of the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, at which he never says 'no' to any people while asking for 'Selfie' by young and old or people of different communities who have been inhabiting the region for quite a long time like brothers and sisters showed that, N. Biren Singh understand the real meaning of being the public leaders.

People of the state as well as the watch dogs have seen the endeavour of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh with his desire to keep in touch with the common masses as much as he can. We had seen him introducing meeting with the public as well as leaders and representatives of almost all communities of the state soon after he became the chief minister in 2017.

The media had witnessed N. Biren personally visiting some of the needy and tried to collect as much information that the people are facing from the day he came to power. Besides, in order to keep in touch with the common people, N. Biren had also open many platforms using all internet connectivity where people in need can contact him any moment. He is also perhaps the only Chief Minister who had open his Cell Phone open 24x7 for all people. (Even after knowing that the intention of the Chief Minister is to make sure that people in need are not deprived of their rights ensured by the government, there are criticisms on the part of implementations).

In the annals of Manipur's political history N. Biren Singh perhaps is the only Chief Minister who spend more time with the fellow citizens of Manipur than any other Chief Minister we had seen before.

Yesterday evening episode, at which he himself visited the newly open recreational park at the Eastern side of Kangla Fort near the Imphal River bank and where he accepted and welcome every people on the request to take Selfie with Chief Minister was another appreciating gesture of N. Biren Singh. In around 1 hour walk at the park, the Chief Minister instead of disturbing the atmosphere allow all those who wish to take a selfie with him. Never in the political history of Manipur, no such friendly attitude of a person holding the top political post was notice. He seems to show no tiredness instead his smiling and supporting voice enralls the people.

It was a proud moment for those who had the opportunity to take a selfie with the Chief Minister yesterday evening.

N. Biren Singh, in his second term as Chief Minister finally is nearing his destination to become the 'favorite Chief Minister of the People'. Hopes the gesture continues for a better Manipur.

## Issue of Forest Conservation in Manipur

By - Dr. Sapam Dilipkumar Singh  
Assistant Professor  
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Human being is a part of nature which is the origin and end in-itself of all beings. The health of nature degenerates because of population growth and other human activities to establish material civilization. International community started responding to the urgent call for conservation environment in the early part of the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century and undertook various initiatives for in-depth deliberation on the issues relating to conservation of human environment by organizing international conferences in Stockholm and Rio de Janeiro. Forest is one of the important facets of the wide canvas of environment which has no exact definition. Forests harbour most of Earth's terrestrial biodiversity. The conservation of the world's biodiversity is thus utterly dependent on the way in which we interact with and use the world's forests. It is reported that forests provide habitats for 80 percent of amphibian species, 75 percent of bird species and 68 percent of mammal species. However, deforestation and forest degradation continue to take place at alarming rates, which contributes significantly to the ongoing loss of biodiversity. Agricultural expansion continues to be the main driver of deforestation and forest fragmentation and the associated loss of forest biodiversity. The adoption and opening for signature of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992 (supplemented by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, 2000 and the Nagoya Protocol on the Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992 at the conclusion of Earth Summit have also drawn a legal roadmap for conservation of forest across the globe. The conference on Environment and Development also adopted a non - legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest. Principle 1 (a) of the authoritative statement reiterated that State have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources

pursuant to their own environmental policies and have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources and state responsibility in case of environmental harm cause to another state have also been laid down in various human rights conventions and declarations of the UN. Sovereign and inalienable rights of a state to utilize, manage and develop their forests with their developmental needs and on the basis of national policies consistent with sustainable development and legislation is recognized by the authoritative statement. On top of it, the UN proclaimed the New York Declaration on Forest, 2017 which calls for action to halt global forest loss and comprises ten goals related to the protection and restoration of forest. The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) provides a global framework for actions at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation. The UNSPF also provides a framework for forest-related contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI), and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals.

The constitution of a country is the supreme law of the land and the governance of the country is also carried out in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. The Directive Principle of State Policy contained in the part IV of the constitution of India obligates the state to endeavour to protect and improve environment and to safeguard the forest and wild life of the country. The framers of the constitution could foresee that protection and improvement of environment would have no meaning if its citizens are obligated

to protect and improve environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures. Apart from the provisions of the Constitution especially article 48A and 51 A(g) the issue related to the protection and conservation of forest through the county was thoroughly discussed by the Supreme Court in *T.N. Godvarman Thirumullkapp v. Union of India* (1997) 2 SC 267. The Court gives general as well as special direction for the State of J&K which includes complete banning on the movement of cut trees and timber from any of the seven North-Eastern States to any other state of the country either by rail, road or waterways. Four specific laws such as the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, The Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 were enacted by the Parliament for regulation, protection and conservation of forest in Indian Subcontinent. The Government has also adopted the National Forest Policy, 1988 with the principle aim to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which is vital for sustenance of all lifeforms, human, animal and plant. The policy provides that diversion of forest land for any non - forest purpose should be subject to the most careful examinations by specialists from the standpoint of social and environmental costs and benefits. Construction of dams and reservoirs, mining and industrial development and expansion of agriculture should be consistent with needs for conservation of trees and forest.

Nature blessed the state of Manipur with rich biodiversity. It is reported that out of 126 species of bamboos in India, 53 species are found in Manipur. Nearly 1,200 species of medicinal plants are reported from Manipur. The state has 17,418 sq km forest land of which 1,467 sq km is Reserved Forest, 4,171 sq km is Protected Forest and 11,780 sq km is Unclassified Forests. The Indian Forest Act, 1927 empowered the state government to constitute any

forest land or waste land which is the property of Government, or over which the government has proprietary rights, or the whole or any part of the forest - produce of which the government is entitled, a reserved forest. In the same way, the state government is authorized to declare any forest land or waste land which is not included in a reserved forest as protected forest. It is reported that in Manipur, during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019, a total of 263.20 hectares of forest land was diverted for non-forestry purposes under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The main reason for loss of forest cover in the state is due to extensive felling of trees for poppy cultivation and other developmental works. It is reported that a total area of 3,015 acres of poppy and 18.51 acres of ganja plantation was destroyed in 2019 alone in Manipur.

Both centre and state have legitimate jurisdiction to enact law and policy for preservation and conservation of forest in India as forest is listed in the Concurrent List of the seventh schedule of the constitution. Many provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 have been amended by various states in order to protect and regulate forest produce in their respective state. However, amendment for the state of Manipur is not found. The colonial law which was enacted much before the merger of Manipur into Indian Union and India's Independence, has put many limitations on the states in conservation of forest in the sense that a large portion of forest in Manipur are "unclassified forest" which are under the control of communities. On top of it, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 provides only restrictions on the power of state regarding de-reservation of forests or use of forest land for non forest purpose. There are four main forest laws in India, however, losing of forest cover area still continue alarmingly in North-Eastern states of India particularly in Manipur. Hence, time has come for deliberation on either state amendment or repealing of the colonial legislation - the Indian Forest Act, 1927 replace with a new Act for effective conservation of Forest in Manipur.

## The Putative Poppy Politics: The Ironies of Mountain Economy

By- Mr. Paojakhup Guite@Saihenjang

The second dispensation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Manipur is moving into a novel politics of its own making. A supposedly new genre of politics has come out of the closet, with a conspicuous open-secret target. The state Chief Minister's pet project or drive of 'War on Drugs' is tacitly exclusively aimed at the allegedly illegal poppy cultivation. In the initial stage, the drive was like the proverbial 'better late than never' approach, that is, to nip the herb in the bud only.

### The Flower That Itches Sight

The poppy blooms and flowers, but not attracts tourists nor deserves a festival of itself like Shirui Lily does. In the 'better late than never approach', the CM relied on nipping the poppy plant in the bud. To wait for the bud is, but to give the practice of deforestation a chance to occur. This was a blunder he had committed. Realising this mistake, he made another ambitious attempt to rectify it. The WoDs 2.0

is rather aimed at nipping in the root, giving no chance for the bud to shoot out of the soil. This means no chance for forest clearing (jhuming/deforestation) and no cultivation of that particular herb. This will save the roots of so many other tress and the whole vegetation as a forest.

In the garb of environmental protection, the government has escalated the CM's pet project into a flagship programme of the government altogether. The government has hastily issued order after order for the eviction exercise on the alleged land encroachers across mountains or hill ranges of the state. The infamous 'Reserved Forest' and 'Protected Forest' policies of the forest and revenue departments of the government have surfaced to the disillusionment of tribals dwelling therein. The irate indigenous forest dwelling tribal communities are suspicious of the intent of WoDs on one hand and,

of dispossessing their lands on the other hand. Thankfully, reluctantly or willingly the poppy cultivating tribal communities taking note of this putative political manoeuvre of the state government, have taken a pledge to quit at all the allegedly illegal poppy cultivation, ostensibly in the hope of saving their land ownership.

### Participatory Rural Appraisal

Consequent upon the hill tribes realising their mistake and taking a steely resolve to quitting the allegedly illegal plantation, the same has to be reciprocated by the government in the mistake it had committed regarding the forest matters. The government had not consulted neither the forest dwellers nor the central government. Forest subject is in the Concurrent List as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

However, the government has still time to continue with its forest protection policy with a proviso of participations from the affected tribals. The stakeholder tribals have to be taken on board while

formulating a policy that affects their lives and this inability to participate in the decision making is called Voice Poverty, a term coined by Jo Tacchi (a development researcher in Loughborough University, London). I have cited and discussed about this concept in my last article published by the daily on 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 on the topic "The Semiotic Interpretations of Traffic Policing".

Not only is the lack of consultation to the Centre, but worse is a total absence of participation from the people on the ground. Not only is the lack of concern for the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule, but also of a procedural lapse, i.e., not following what is envisaged in the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. However, government should not lose faith in gaining the confidence of grassroots level stakeholders. This ground level consultation is called Participatory Rural Appraisal. PRA is a very democratic step of development initiatives. Thus, the government still stands a chance to get its policy

implemented efficiently and effectively with a democratic participation from the rural people. In short, PRA involves 4 stages: conceptual stage, monitoring phase, implementation stage and evaluation stage. In each stage, the stakeholder tribals have to be taken into considerations.

### The Question of Adulterated H2O

The trending narrative of mountain economy has both denotation and connotation of poppy and forest policy measures, unlike the dominant paradigm of mountain tourism - as a tourist hotspot or hill station. Miffed at the selective target nature of the most touted WoDs, the poppy cultivators have raised a comparative question and suspicion over the drive vis-à-vis other related intoxicants.

The liquor distilleries at Sekmai and Andro are cynosures of all doubts. The question is why is liquor not included under the ambit of WoDs. Is it because liquor is manufactured not in the mountain ranges that, it is excluded from the list of drugs or narcotics?

We do not need statistics to believe the harmful effects of liquor.

Alcoholism inflicts much more harms in life-family and society. We might have personally witnessed a number of alcohol induced broken families. We might have heard story of marriages being not on tract or last long. There are umpteen couples who have even taken an extreme step of divorce. Alcohol related mortality has been witnessed on a daily basis. In contrast, hardly would anyone see a case of someone dying of poppy consumption. Rather, the herbal plant has many medicinal values.

The government cannot justify its move of not including liquor under the ambit of WoDs on mere ground of legalisation. Liquor is gradually killing human race.

Until and unless liquor is included in the WoDs, the purpose of the drive will defeat by itself. Controversy will keep lingering on among communities on the question of the policy intent.

### Humanity over Legality

What is the rationale behind inclusion and exclusion policy of WoDs. It is of everyone's belief that poppy cultivation is being carried on the ground of humanity.

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# BJP Spokesperson, an office bearer, Suspended for Derogatory Remarks Against Prophet Muhammad

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, June 06

BJP Spokesperson Nupur Sharma who had racked up controversy due to her allegedly derogatory remarks against Prophet Muhammad in a recent TV debate, was suspended from the party by the BJP's Central Disciplinary Committee on Sunday.

Sharma has been suspended for expressing views contrary to the party's position on various matters, in violation of Rule 10(a) of the Constitution of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Om Pathak, Member Secretary, Central Disciplinary Committee said.

In a letter dated June 05, addressed to Sharma, Pathak stated that "You have expressed views contrary to party's position on various matters, which is in clear violation of Rule 10(a) of the Constitution of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I have been directed to convey to you that pending further inquiry, you are suspended from the party and your responsibilities / assignments if any, with immediate effect".

Besides Sharma, the BJP also removed Delhi BJP media in-charge, Naveenkumar Jindal, from the primary membership of the party, due to his tweet about the Prophet, which he later deleted amid rising outrage.

Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta expelled Jindal. Gupta in his letter said Jindal's opinion was contradictory to the party's original ideology. "You have worked against the party's ideology and policies," said the letter. Jindal's primary membership of the BJP has been terminated with immediate effect and he has been expelled from the party, Gupta said.

Jindal had come under attack on social media over his tweet referring to the Prophet Mohammad on June 01. He said he had tweeted asking a question to those attacking and insulting Hindu deities and it was not aimed at hurting the religious sentiments of any community.



BJP Spokesperson Nupur Sharma (Left) and Delhi BJP media in-charge, Naveenkumar Jindal (Right) have been suspended from the party

Whereas Arun Singh, National General Secretary, and Headquarters-in-Charge, in a statement issued on Sunday said that "During thousands of years of the history of India every religion has blossomed and flourished. The BJP respects all religions. The BJP strongly denounces insults of religious personalities of any religion".

The BJP is also strongly against any ideology which insults or demeans any sect or religion. The BJP does not promote such a person or philosophy. India's constitution gives the right to every citizen to practice any religion of his/her choice and to honour and respect every religion. As India celebrates the 75th year of its Independence, we are committed to making India a great country where all are equal and everyone lives with dignity, where all are committed to India's unity and integrity, and where all enjoy the fruits of growth and development".

Soon after Sharma's controversial remarks, Muslim groups across the country have been holding protests demanding action against Sharma. The first case was filed at the Pydhonie police station in South Mumbai by Raza Academy. Subsequently, the cases were filed against her in Hyderabad, Pune, and other

places accusing her of hurting religious sentiments.

The remarks triggered large-scale violence in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh on Friday, injuring around 40 people. The violence led to arson during the visit of President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to Kanpur rural for an official function in the native village of the President.

In another development, Qatar and Kuwait summoned India's envoys and gave them protest notes over the controversial remarks even as the envoys stated that the remarks were the "views of fringe elements." Besides some of the Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain called out for a boycott of Indian products from their superstores on social media, reports said.

**Sharma withdraws her remarks:**

After her suspension from the party, Sharma unconditionally withdrew the controversial statement made in a TV debate. In a tweet, Sharma said it was never her intention to hurt anyone's religious feelings. She claimed that her comments were a reaction to "continuous insult and disrespect towards our Mahadev" (Lord Shiva) as she could not tolerate it.

In a statement posted on Twitter, she said, "I have been attending TV debates for the past many days where our Mahadev was being insulted and disrespected continuously. It was mockingly being said that it is not Shivaling but a fountain. The Shivaling was also being ridiculed by comparing it to roadside signs and poles in Delhi".

She was referring to the recent discovery by Hindu groups claiming a Shivaling at the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. She added, "If my words have caused discomfort or hurt religious feelings of anyone whatsoever, I hereby unconditionally withdraw my statement. It was never my intention to hurt anyone's religious feelings."

However, some of the BJP workers described the action against Sharma and Jindal as harsh. Mumbai-based BJP activist Dayanand Nene in a FB post said that "This is called leaving karyakartas (party workers) in the lurch. I mean this is like abandoning her and making her more vulnerable to attacks from Islamist zealots. A most unfortunate and extremely harsh decision. Social media activists will have to be very careful henceforth".

# At least 25 People Died in a Road Accident in Uttarakhand The Passengers Were on a Pilgrimage Tour of Uttarkashi

IT Correspondent  
Mumbai, June 06

At least 25 people died and five others were injured, when a mini bus carrying Char Dham yatra pilgrims lost control and fell into about 500 mtr deep gorge near Rikhaun village, on Yamunotri highway in Uttarakhand a North Indian state on Sunday evening.

The bus carrying Char Dham yatra pilgrims had arrived from Panna (in Madhya Pradesh) and was on its way to Yamunotri. It fell into a gorge between Damta and Nagaon. The bus was carrying 30 people including 28 passengers, a cleaner, and a driver. Of these 25 persons died, Uttarakhand BJP MLA Durgesh Lal said.

The Prime Minister an-

nounced an ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh each from the Prime Minister National Relief Fund for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the accident in Uttarakhand. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000 each, PMO tweeted.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressed grief and said in a tweet in Hindi that he spoke to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and SDRF teams are already on the spot carrying out rescue operations. NDRF teams are also reaching the site, he added.

The SDRF team immediately arrived at the spot. Damta lies between Dehradun and Uttarkashi, and rescue from Dehradun is easier. Hospitals nearby have already been informed. All rescue efforts are underway. Madhya Pradesh

chief minister had called as well, we are in continuous touch," said the CMO, Uttarkhand in a tweet.

CM Pushkar Singh Dhami reached the disaster control room in Dehradun. He directed the district administration to carry out relief and rescue work expeditiously along with proper treatment of the injured, CMO, Uttarkhand added.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in a tweet that the MP administration is in touch with Uttarakhand Government and the arrangements have been made to bring the bodies of the deceased to Madhya Pradesh. The tragedy is sad and the MP government is with the victims and their families.

# Rotarians are a true mix of success and service- PM

PIB  
New Delhi, June 6:

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi addressed the Rotary International World Convention via a video message today. Calling the Rotarians a 'true mix of success and service', the Prime Minister said that "every Rotary gathering of this scale is like a mini-global assembly. There is diversity and vibrancy."

Noting the two Mottos of Rotary 'Service Above Self' and 'One Profits Most Who Serves Best' the Prime Minister said that these are important principles for the welfare of the entire humankind and resonate with the teachings of our saints and sages. "We are the land of Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi who showed in action what living for others is all about", he added.

Quoting Swami Vivekananda, the Prime Minister said "We all exist in an interdependent, inter-related

and inter-connected world. That is why, it is important that individuals, organisations and governments work together to make our planet more prosperous and sustainable." He praised Rotary International for work hard on several causes that have a positive impact on the earth.

India, he said, is leading in efforts for environmental protection. "Sustainable development is the need of the hour. Inspired by our centuries old ethos of staying in harmony with nature, the 1.4 billion Indians are making every possible effort to make our earth cleaner and greener" said the Prime Minister. He also listed India's initiatives like International Solar Alliance, 'One Sun, One World, One Grid', and LIFE - Lifestyle for Environment. He also informed that India's commitments on Net Zero by 2070 were also appreciated by the world community.

Appreciating Rotary

International's work on providing clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, the Prime Minister talked about the gains of Swachh Bharat Mission such as near total sanitation coverage in five years. He also talked about movements like water conservation and Atm Nirbhar Bharat that have taken shape due to new awareness and realities. He also talked about the vibrant startup sector in India.

He said as India is home to one seventh of humanity, at such a scale, any achievement of India will have a positive impact on the world. He cited Covid-19 vaccine story and efforts to achieve elimination of TB by 2025, 5 years before the global target of 2030, as an example.

Modi invited the Rotary family to support these efforts at the grassroots. And also asked them to observe Yoga Day all over the world in large numbers.

Contd. from Page 2

## The Putative Poppy Politics.....

Liquor is as much detrimental to humanity as poppy is. Then, why is poppy included, while liquor not?

Legality of alcohol won't do us any good any way. It is a gross violation of equal treatment and protection of law under Article 14 of the Constitution of the country.

Manipur should take or borrow a template of liquor ban of Bihar. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar took a bold step of liquor ban in 2016 by declaring Bihar a dry state under The Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016. Even with the stringent law on curbing alcohol consumption, the Act was not successful to an optimum level. In contrast, free production, distribution and consumption have legal protection in Manipur. For the sake of humanity, equal treatment has to be given to poppy and alcohol, both need to be fought simultaneously so that the menace of drugs in society will be eradicated, if not eliminated. Moreover, Rule of Law takes its precedence in

democratic countries like ours. Otherwise, inclusion and exclusion bias of WoDs will eventually meet its Waterloo!

As the state is reeling under the raging fire of communal tensions basically spurred by initiatives like WoDs, Forest policies, the government has to tread the path of consultation and equality. If WoDs is implemented in letter and spirit with community supports, then only will harmony and prosperity prevail in the state. The state government will keep its momentum in doing away with all anti-social or humanity elements like poppy, alcohol and other intoxicants. Elimination of all these harmful elements will restore the Jewelini as a Manipuri.

(The author is currently pursuing an MA in Media Studies at the Central University of Hyderabad, Telangana. Views expressed are personal. The writer can be reached at guitepaajakhup@gmail.com/6009962948)

# India rejects OIC's comments on India and terms them unwarranted and narrow-minded

Agency  
New Delhi, June 6:

New Delhi has categorically rejected Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Secretariat's comments on India and termed them unwarranted and narrow-minded. In response to media queries regarding the recent statement by General Secretariat of the OIC, External Affairs Ministry Spokesman Arindam Bagchi said, Government of India accords the highest respect to all religions.

He said, the offensive tweets and comments denigrating a religious personality were made by

certain individuals and do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the government.

The Spokesman pointed out that strong action has already been taken against these individuals by relevant bodies. He called it regrettable that OIC Secretariat has yet again chosen to make motivated, misleading and mischievous comments. He stressed that this only exposes OIC's divisive agenda being pursued at the behest of vested interests. India urged the OIC Secretariat to stop pursuing its communal approach and show due respect to all faiths and religions.

# Planted saplings distributed on World Environment Day

IT News  
Sirsa (Haryana), June 6:

International Environment Day was celebrated with pomp yesterday at Devi Lal Children's Park, Kanganpur Road, Sirsa, in the Yaga camp being run under the aegis of Bharat Vikas Parishad, Sirsa and Patanjali Yog Samiti, Sirsa in Haryana.

After getting yogic activities done by Chandrapal Yogi ji associated with Patanjali Yog Samiti at the national level, Ramesh Goyal ji, former National Minister of India Development Council and National President of

Environment Prerna, while talking about environment and water conservation, said that on World Environment Day Think on all the components of the program like tree plantation and tree protection, water-energy conservation, pollution control, single use plastic free India and cleanliness, and contribute in reducing these problems of the country and society. With small examples, he threw light on all these aspects and appealed to bring in mind the idea of what can I do, saying that if we do not wake up, then our life and that

of the future generation will be dark. After this, plantation was done under the leadership of Goyal, in which Pramod Mohan Gautam, Branch Vice President, Chhagan Sethi, former Secretary Surya Sharma, Dr. Rajkumar Nijat and Vishwa Bandhu Gupta and Prem Sharma, Virendra Nagpal of Yoga Committee were present. Environment Prerna's co-secretary Ranjit Singh Takkur told that the branch head Narendra Singh Dhingra gave detailed information about the organization's wasteful use campaign and leave the bag, hold the bag.

# IBSD observed world environment day

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Imphal observed the "World

Environment Day" with the theme "Only One Earth" on June 5, 2022. As an initiative to promote afforestation and rejuvenate the earth we live in, IBSD scientists, students and staffs from various

departments under the leadership of Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Director, IBSD planted around 150 fruit bearing plants in the Bioresources park of IBSD at Hararou.



# Centre writes to States to phase out Single-Use Plastic

Agency  
New Delhi, June 6:

The Centre has written to States to phase out Single-Use Plastics (SUP). On the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, States/UTs and Urban Local Bodies across the country carry out a campaign to phase out single-use plastic (SUP). It shall be noted that India is committed to ban SUP by June 30, 2022.

This will also contribute toward the "Clean and Green" mandate of the Government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 89th Mann Ki Baat address urged the nation to join together in efforts for cleanliness and tree plantation on the occasion of World Environment Day.

## Clean and Green

The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has issued a detailed advisory to States and UTs to take up a range of activities to fulfill the

"Clean and Green" mandates. These include large-scale cleaning and plogging drives, plastic waste collection drives, and tree-plantation drives, involving the participation of all citizens – students, voluntary organizations, self-help groups, local NGOs/CSOs, NSS, and NCC cadets, market associations, corporate entities, etc.

## The advisory suggested initiatives such as:

– Under the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban 2.0, every Urban Local Bodies (ULB) is required to adopt 100% source segregation of waste, and have access to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting the dry waste (including plastic waste) into further fractions for recycling and/or processing into value-added products. This is aimed to reduce plastic and dry waste ending up in dumpsites or waterbodies.

More, 2,591 ULBs (out of 4,704) have already reported

notification SUP ban as per the directions of the Central Pollution Control Board and MoEF&CC, States/UTs will need to ensure that the remaining 2,100-plus ULBs notify the same by June 30, 2022.

Further, the ULBs will need to identify SUP 'hotspots' and eliminate them, while parallelly leveraging the support of State Pollution Control Boards and forming special enforcement squads, conducting surprise inspections and imposing heavy fines and penalties on defaulters, for enforcing SUP bans.

## Ban on Single-Use Plastics

The Government has banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic less than seventy-five microns with effect from September 30, 2021 as per Plastic Waste Management (PWM) (Amended) Rules, 2021.

The ULBs will need to identify SUP alternatives (such as cloth/jute/plastic bags, degradable cutlery, etc.) readily available in the market and create awareness about such alternatives among citizens. Further, States and ULBs have also been advised to enter into MoUs with nearby cement plants or other industrial units as well to ensure that a part of the plastic waste generated is used either as an alternative fuel in cement plants or for road construction purposes.

The advisory also stresses people participation, where all citizen categories –elected representatives such as Mayors and ward councilors, voluntary organizations, local NGOs/CSOs, Residents' Welfare Associations, market associations, self-help groups, students and youth groups, etc., are to be identified and engaged with, to carry forward the message of SUP ban and enforcement.

# Nature v/s Development

By - Vijay GarG

Nature can be defined as everything excluding man-made things that surround us including trees, plants, animals, the environment and everything that is not man-made. Everything that is provided to us by nature means is included in nature. Nature, in the broadest sense, is equivalent to the natural world, physical world, or material world. "Nature" refers to the phenomena of the physical world, and also to life in general. It ranges in scale from the subatomic elements to the cosmic products. Nature plays an important role in human life and provides us with some essential elements of life such as food, water, air, etc. Today nature is classified in a broad sense of geology as well as wildlife around us. Nature also includes natural environment or wilderness-wild animals, rocks, forest, beaches, and in general things that have not been substantially altered by human intervention, or which persist despite human intervention i.e. human has no role in its existence in a simple manner.

The word nature is derived from the Latin word "Natura", or "essential qualities, innate disposition", and in ancient times, literally meant "birth". Nature is a Latin translation of the Greek word physis, which originally related to the intrinsic characteristics that plants, animals, and other features of the world that development of their own accord. A lot of things surrounding humans are included in nature. Within the various uses of the word today, "nature" often refers to geology and wildlife. Nature may refer to the general realm of various types of living plants and animals, and in some cases to the processes associated with inanimate objects – the way that particular types of things exist and change of their own accord, such as the weather and geology of the Earth, and the matter and energy of which all these things are composed.

## Development

Development can be defined as the systematic use of science and technology to meet specific human demands and objectives and also includes in the process of adding improvement and up gradation to the existing sources. The world's need for food, water, energy and minerals is growing day by day because of growing population and human greed. These demands combined with population growth, unchecked development and climate change are putting even more pressure on the natural environment. To meet our future needs, we have to make smarter decisions now about how we protect, manage, and develop our lands and waters.

Development is a natural phenomenon, even nature supports the development and every natural thing develops. Humans develop from a child to a grown man, small plants develop into big trees and so on, and the basic idea is that nature is not opposed to the developmental process, in fact in the favour of development provided the developmental process is carried out at a sustained level without harming other resources. Today humans have explored much of the available natural area in place our mountains, deserts, plains, oceans and rivers for the developmental purpose and constantly carrying out activities like mining, infrastructure

development, building and cutting forests which poses a great threat to our natural environment. Nature supports development but not at the cost of other resources, today human is recklessly depleting all the resources to carry out developmental process and there is an urgent need have a check on these activities before it gets too late.

## Nature and Development

Nature and development are two different branches but still linked to each other very closely. Our every developmental process is closely linked to our natural environment. Development and the environment have traditionally been managed separately, but from past few years, researchers are constantly working out on how these both can be reconciled to increase prosperity and protect the planet at the same time. Development and nature have traditionally been handled by separate academic disciplines, separate government agencies, and separate laws and policies but rapid developmental activities in the past few years and constant degradation of our natural environment have forced to find out a solution to carry out the developmental process in such a manner that it doesn't hamper our nature.

Development planners always assume that the natural assets that development depends upon are in-exhaustible and will always be there for use on the other hand conservationists are often preoccupied with minimizing the negative impacts of development on nature or putting it off-limits to people. Hence there was felt a need to combine both the aspects to find a natural way out so that there is a considerable amount of development without compromising on our nature.

It has been witnessed that the economic development often goes forward at the expense of nature's ability to provide people with goods and services. Twenty per cent of the forest area worldwide has been deforested by loggers, farmers, and ranchers, which are posing a great threat to the capacity of the lungs of our planet. It is getting really difficult to recycle carbon dioxide into oxygen, clean our air, and regulate regional and global climate. Major rivers these days are facing environmental challenges such as water pollution and toxic-laden sediments due to rapid industrialization and their unchecked disposing of their waste into rivers and this, in turn, jeopardize recreation activities for humans. Several other activities like mining, cutting of forest, burning of fuels etc. are posing a great threat to our environment and also leading to pollution and depletion of the natural resources.

## Creating a Balance between Nature and Development

With the rapid process of development, we are neglecting the harmful effects of our activities on nature. In order to increase profits a lot of industrialists are neglecting various environmental laws and are only concerned with making their profits. The need of the hour is to practice some nature-friendly techniques so that developmental process carries on without compromising our natural environment. Citizen's long-term vision and multi-generational values have created a high quality of life and livability in the towns that is remarkably unique and beautiful. But the matter of concern is that our region is changing. Due to rapid development and a lot of people moving from rural to urban area, this has created a lot of rush in

major cities as result the cities are coming up with new residents every day which is leading to axing of trees and overutilization of natural resources thus increasing pressure on natural areas, wildlife habitat, clean rivers, and streams. There is a major need to find out innovative ways to balance development and growth with conservation and livability.

Not only increasing urbanization poses a threat to our environment, but rapid industrialization is yet another major issue. Industries often discharge various waste in the form of smoke which is generally toxic in nature from their chimneys and also discharges their fluid waste into the rivers which are again toxic in nature and pollutes our river sources. Government have made policies for these industries to treat their waste but in order to maximize their profits these people neglect these laws and go on polluting the environment. There is a need to strictly adhere to these laws and concerned authorities should keep a regular check on the compliance of the laws and penalize those who are not following these laws and repeated defaulters should be banned from carrying on with their process.

People need to be made aware of the harmful effects of degrading the environment and should be encouraged to adopt environment-friendly techniques. Using nature-friendly development practices protects our natural assets as we grow by reducing the harmful impact of development on natural resources. Also called green or low impact development, nature-friendly development practices help to maintain the pace of environment without compromising the nature.

## Nature-Friendly Practices

It is very important to adopt nature-friendly practices to conserve the natural systems and hydrologic resources. It is very important to maintain our environment and it is the duty of each and every human to perform his duty towards environment protection. Our environment provides us with clean and fresh air, water, food and fruits etc. so it becomes our duty to act as its saviour. We all can contribute towards saving our nature in one way or the other, at the community level as well as personal level.

## Conclusion

Global climate is changing and, at the same time, our natural assets are dwindling. These two trends are on a collision course and it is high time to wake up. Our nature is providing us with major needs for sustenance and in turn, polluting and depleting it is unfair. It is our social duty to act towards conserving our nature and natural resources. Economic development often goes forward at the expense of nature's ability to provide people with goods and services but we have to find a way to strike a balance between the two. Nature is not opposed to development if carried out in a systematic manner. Need today is to realize that degrading our natural environment is our own loss and find ways to carry out the developmental process without harming our nature. It is important to make decisions that could change the way we develop important natural areas, and the nature conservation has to develop the science to enable governments, companies, and communities to use and share space, protect natural areas, improve resource management, and invest more wisely for a sustainable future.

# Art of Living marks Environment Day with plantation drive

IT News  
Imphal, June 6:

The Art of Living completed a month-long tree plantation drive in Manipur on the occasion of the 50th World Environment Day. The drive, which started on May 1, 2022 planted 3,000 saplings in 27 different locations in association with several like-minded organizations.

The drive was taken up as part of the Art of Living's global initiative Mission Green Earth. Under this mission, the international NGO founded by renowned spiritual guru and humanitarian Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, has planted nearly 80 million trees across 36 countries over the last 10 years.

"The plantation drive was taken up as part of the Art of Living's multi-pronged



approach to tackle today's global challenge of environment protection and climate change," explains Elangbam Anita, the Project Coordinator and faculty of the Art of Living Manipur. "Thanks to the support of so many like-minded organizations, Manipur could contribute substantially to this global mission which is the need of the hour," she adds.

The Art of Living is focused on reviving a green earth and

its volunteers around the world are striving to make this positive difference by planting and protecting indigenous trees. Along with planting the saplings, the Art of Living also highlighted the need for building a holistic society where Nature is revered and protected and people live with a happy and positive outlook.

The key addresses where the plantation was carried out included Manipur University

Campus, Canchipur; Kha Manipur College, Kakching; Institute of Social Welfare, Takley, Wakhallon Manaba Apunba Kangleipak (WAMA), Uyumok; Ima Laikhurembi Ground, Khurai; Shisu Nistha Niketan, Moirangkamp; Sri Sri Gyan Mandir, Phubala; Mahatma Seva Ashram, Kontoujam; Government Blind School, Takley; Deaf and Mute School, Takley; Recent Higher Secondary School, Sagoltonba; Eco Park, Kakching; Leima

Academy, Kongba; Laigee Heeden Lampak, Khaidem, etc.

Various organizations including All Manipur Student Union and WAMA supported the drive and their volunteers took the lead in planting the saplings at different locations.

## Sports

# Adani and GMR buy teams in Ultimate Kho Kho

Adani Sportsline acquires Gujarat franchise while GMR Sports owns Telangana franchise

IT News  
New Delhi, June 06:

In a massive boost for Ultimate Kho Kho, corporate giants Adani Group and GMR group have acquired the Gujarat and Telangana franchises respectively in the league, which is poised for a 2022 launch with an aim to promote the homegrown sport.

Promoted by Mr Amit Burman, Chairman of Dabur Group, in collaboration with Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI), the league aims to revolutionize the indigenous sport of Kho-Kho by adopting a modern-day professional structure, which would bring the fast-paced action to the living rooms of the fans in a new avatar.

Welcoming the two team owners, Mr. Tenzing Niyogi, CEO, Ultimate Kho Kho said, "I am delighted to welcome the Adani Group & GMR on-board on our Ultimate Kho Kho journey. We are committed to bring this

sporting spectacle to the masses of India and it's great pride to collaborate with corporates as stakeholders. This is certainly a strong foot forward for Ultimate Kho Kho becoming a sports movement"

Adani Sportsline, a part of the Adani Group, is already associated with many sporting leagues in the country and is determined to contribute to creating an ecosystem that props up future sports icons and inspires the youth of the country.

"At Adani Sportsline, we are delighted to be in a position to promote yet another exciting homegrown sport," said Mr. Pranav Adani, Director – Adani Enterprises. "We have always believed that the best way to promote homegrown sports and build engagement across the national audience is to adopt a professional, structured approach. Our experience with the Kabaddi and Boxing League gives us confidence that the Ultimate Kho Kho League will do wonders for

this much-loved traditional sport. Our decision to partner with this league is an extension of our aim to build a world-class ecosystem that nurtures sporting talent, accelerates the sports economy and plays the role of an enabler in India's journey to become a leading sporting nation."

After dabbling in cricket and kabaddi, the GMR Sports, part of Indian-based infrastructure powerhouse, GMR Group, has already created robust grassroots level sports development initiatives in the national capital and NCR region.

GMR Sports has picked up the Telangana team, to tap on the popularity of Kho-Kho in South India and promote it further.

Committed to developing and commercializing sports leagues, GMR is hoping that its association with UKK will help 'Kho-Kho' break the shackles and soar high in terms of popularity.

"At GMR Sports' our aim

is to promote sports amongst youth, connect with the community at large and build a supporting ecosystem. Since its inception, over 15 years ago, the company has done pioneering work in growing popular sports such as Cricket and other indigenous sports like Kabaddi and Wrestling across India and overseas. With a vision to nurture talent at the grass root level, it has invested in providing access to professional sports by setting up Sports Training Academies across India," said Mr. Kiran Kumar Grandhi, Corporate Chairman, GMR Group.

Ultimate Kho Kho has already roped in Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) as its official broadcasting partner in a multi-year deal. The high-octane games will be broadcast exclusively across SPNI's sports channels and their dedicated OTT platform SonyLIV which will enable viewers to watch the Ultimate Kho Kho 'on the go'.