

Ibobi Singh's government could only provide tap water connection to 5% households: Amit Shah

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Propelling the BJP's campaign for the second phase of the Manipur Legislative Assembly election, Union Home Minister Amit Shah criticized the Congress party, saying that Ibobi Singh-led government could only provide tap water connection to only 5% households.

Addressing a public meeting at Devi Mandap Lampak, Heirok Part-II, Mr. Shah said: "Mr. Ibobi, reply tomorrow if you listen to my speech today. During 15 years of Congress' rule in the state, only 5% households get tap water connections. However, the BJP government in the state has provided tap water connections to more than 57% households."

Before the BJP government, the Congress government



could provide electricity for barely 6 or 7 hours, Shah alleged. "With the BJP government coming to power, we have provided electricity to every household in the state. So now, people of the state enjoy 24/7 electricity. Moreover, for students, the Modi government has distributed 75000 solar-powered LED lamps to stu-

dents," he said.

Highlighting that the BJP government has ensured that Manipur produced 32 thousand metric tons of fish, Shah said the state used to import fish, thereby draining our resources to other states of the country.

"There will be no need to import fish to the state. It was

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji who took up the initiative to provide free LPG cylinders to 155000 mothers living across the state," Shah bragged.

Hitting back at Ibobi, who alleged that BJP government increased the price of gas, the union minister said: "I want to remind Ibobi that he imposed blockades resulting in shooting up of the price of gas to Rs 3000, petrol price was Rs 300 and atta (wheat flour) Rs 100 for a kilogram." Given all these, Shah said, Ibobi Singh must accept and concede that BJP has done a monumental amount of work to control the price rise.

Amid reports of incidents of violence, more than 78 percent of voters came out to exercise their franchise in the first phase of the election on Monday. The second phase of the election will be held on March 5 and the counting on March 10.

Congress promoting separatism in the Manipur: PM Modi

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday blamed the Congress party for 'encouraging separatism' in Manipur rather than focusing on the development of the northeastern state.

Addressing a virtual public meeting, Modi said: "Congress party did not work for the development of Manipur and encouraged separatism. The people of Manipur have to be aware of this. Bharatiya Janata Party works for the development of the Northeast, especially Manipur. This is destroying their (Congress) plans of divide and rule."

Modi went on to allege that the Congress party's only focus is looting Manipur.

"They were so involved



in looting the state that they never had time to work for people," Modi said.

Assuring the state's people of a '100-crore startup fund, Modi stressed that the BJP government would build AIIMS and a sports university.

"This is the time of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. This decade is the decade of development and progress, and Manipur is moving fast in this direction today," PM Modi said at a virtual rally.

"Manipur was waiting for its first train since independence. BJP started train services in the state and connected Manipur to India's railway network. New railway lines are also being built, furthering the layout and connectivity," he added.

The first phase of Manipur polls took place on Monday, while the second phase of this 60-member Assembly is scheduled for March 5. The counting of votes will take place on March 10.

No other party will save Manipur other than BJP: Th. Biswajit

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Cabinet Minister Th. Biswajit said Manipur would be saved only by the Bharatiya Janata Party and not other parties.

Addressing a public meeting at Heirok Part-II, Biswajit said: "No other party will save Manipur other than the Bharatiya Janata Party. I have been a part of the BJP during its rise and down period in Manipur. Therefore, I comprehend the rules and ideology of the party."

The leaders of BJP always believed that the dream of developed India would never be fulfilled without the development of northeast states, especially Manipur, Biswajit said.

"The notion of BJP is to improve Manipur and the entire northeastern region of the country," Biswajit added.

Noting that BJP always strives for the betterment of Manipur, Biswajit said BJP leaders and late Prime Minis-



ter Atal Bihari Vajpayee knew the significance of the northeastern region and took several initiatives for the region's progress, including the creation of the DoNER ministry.

Moreover, the BJP government had improved the road and connectivity across the state, the minister said.

"The erstwhile 'Look East' policy has now turned into an 'Act East' policy. In addition, the development of the trans highway will ensure socioeconomic growth.

Manipur has now become a gateway to Southeast Asian countries. The Act East Policy gives a new impetus to the development of Manipur and the nation," Biswajit highlighted.

Concluding his address, Biswajit urged the attendees to support Th. Radheshyam. "Heirok constituency will continue to scale new heights of development under the leadership of Th. Radheshyam, backed by the development ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party," Biswajit said.

Congress reacted to CEO's statement, Says yesterday's election was not free and fair

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Reacting in the strongest term to the press statement of the CEO Manipur at which he stated that the first phase election held yesterday at 38 assembly constituencies of five districts in Manipur was peaceful and conducted in a free and fair manner, MPCC spokespersons Devabarta said that when there are complaints of booth capturing and intimidations, such statement is condemnable in the strongest term.

AICC leader Jairam Ramesh, who is here in Imphal, monitoring the poll process in Manipur said that the election process has been murdered by the Home Minister Amit Shah and the Chief Minister



N. Biren Singh at Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts using banned outfit KNO. The Congress party has complained to the Chief Election officer for use of violence by armed groups at both districts. He said that complaints about booth capturing at 9 polling stations of Saikul Assembly constituencies have been lodged. And the MPCC had also filed complaint for not

posed to stay in the designated camp.

MPCC Spokesperson Devabarta, said that the Congress party has complained to the Chief Election officer for use of violence by armed groups at both districts. He said that complaints about booth capturing at 9 polling stations of Saikul Assembly constituencies have been lodged. And the MPCC had also filed complaint for not

allowing Congress agents in 11 polling stations of Heingang Assembly constituency, Devabarta said.

"How can the CEO leave out such complaint and issued press statement terming the election as peaceful," Devabarta said and added that the plea of the Congress party has not been addressed and before doing so, it is unfair to call the election free and fair.

PREPAK condole the demise of its cadre



IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Proscribed group People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) has condole the demise of its cadre - Ningthoujam Suraj (26) @ Laiba.

A statement by Mangal Khuman, Publicity officer, Dept. of Publicity and propaganda, PREPAK, said that Corporal Ningthoujam Suraj (Red Army) passed away on February 28, 2022 due to an illness. PREPAK and its Red army paid tribute to the departed soul.

The statement said that Corporal Ningthoujam Suraj is a resident of Bamon Kampu in Imphal East and is the son of Ningthoujam Then Singh and Ningthoujam Ongbi Manglembi Devi.

Human Rights defender's family allegedly attacked by ex-MLA's escorts

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

U. Robertson, the son of U. Nobokishore, Secretary of United NGOs Mission Manipur, was allegedly assaulted brutally on gun points by escort party of an ex-MLA.

A statement by Anthony Debberma, member of the North East Dialogue Forum (NEDF) said that Robertson was brutally assaulted on gun point by around 10 unknown person at around 10:14 pm near the Macha Leima School, Palace compound, Imphal on February 26.

The statement said that, the incident happened when Robertson was returning home. He was reportedly chased by a Red Color Civic and Maruti Gypsy.

"Robertson is seriously in-

jured on his head which was hit by the rifle bud and threaten him to get shot. It has been informed that he was taken in Maruti Gypsy and drove to some unknown location for about 30 minutes. Later at 10:50 pm he was handed over to Porompat Police Station without any document.

Nobokishore's son had to spend more than 30 minutes in the station with serious bleeding on his head without being attended for medical treatment. The Porompat police was informed by the persons who committed the crime that they are the escort of Mr. Prithibiraj, the candidate from Moirang for the election held on 28th February 2022. NEDF has the reason to believe that this unknown persons were instructed to monitor the movement of Mr. U. Nobokishore, his son and

other family member for quite some time and took the advantage of his son coming back alone on 26th February, 2022," said the statement.

It further added that the continuous attack on his family members could be observed on 20th February 2022, where two unknown person who came in Red Activa scooter bearing number MN01AC3426 (as Capture in CCTV camera) came at the office gate of M. Sobita, W/o. Nobokishore and Secretary of Women Action for Development (WAD) shouted several uncivilized word (which consist of H, K and S words) which challenges the integrity and modesty of women. The matter was reported to Porompat police on 23rd February 2022 but no action could be seen taken till date.

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EGM & AMWJU strongly condemns attack on media

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

The Editors Guild Manipur (EGM) and All Manipur Working Journalists Union (AMWJU) condemn and take strong exception at the manhandling and preventing of journalists covering 12 Manipur State Assembly at two different spots in Manipur yesterday. Supporters of a particular candidate manhandled a journalists of TOM TV while he was covering the election at the Naoriya Pakhanglakpa AC. According to the journalist Sagolsem Hemchandra some persons said to be workers of Naoriya Pakhanglakpa AC Candidate Subhaschandra

of NPP accosted him while he was doing his duty at Ningombam area and manhandled him and asked him to delete a footage he had taken. The team also snatched away his helmet and threatened him in spite of telling them that he was a journalist and showing his press card. They forcibly made him take off his mask and took photograph.

In another incident, a team of journalists from Churachandpur was stopped by a group of an armed person in uniform while they were on their way to cover an election-related crime in Teikot polling station under Singhat AC. The team was stopped just outside the Teikot village

by the armed people suspected to be militants under Suspension of Operation. The armed group prevented the media team from entering the village and was turned back.

The EGM, strongly condemned these actions and demanded that the state government and office of the Chief Election Officer of Manipur take appropriate action within a reasonable time frame, failing which stern action may be mounted by the media fraternity in Manipur. Both the incidents are attacks on the Media and freedom of expression.

EGM and the AMWJU are submitting complaint to the CEO, Manipur soon.

Russia is headed for a major economic crisis

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The Western countries have started to block select large Russian banks on the SWIFT banking system. Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) is a secure messaging system

that facilitates payments between thousands of different countries in the world, thereby facilitating international trade and financial transactions. The banks of the countries connected to the SWIFT system ensure payment by quick exchange of messages among themselves. Swift was founded in 1970 with the aim of making global trade easier. It is a cooperative system of 11,000 financial institutions from 200 countries, which operate mainly under European and Belgian rules. Through this, more than five billion financial messages are sent every year. Economic sanctions are being imposed on Russia's big banks in an effort to isolate them from international financial organizations and European countries, causing Russia's financial markets to falter. There the demand for cash has increased 58 times. However, the Russian government is trying to hide such ill-effects and the reality of the war from its citizens.

Not that the ban on the SWIFT system will leave Russian banks with no choice. They will be able to exchange financial messages with friendly countries through email, phone, messaging apps etc., but these measures are not proven to be very secure, so trade volume will definitely be affected. Russia can meanwhile use the China Interbank Payment System or the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), a payment system which offers clearing and settlement services for its participants in cross-border RMB payments and trade. It is a significant financial market infrastructure in China. Even India is likely to develop a new transaction system to deal with Russian banks to keep its business interests smooth. India is a major importer of Russian defense equipment, fertilizers, oil and natural gas. Buying fertilizers from Russia is a major compulsion for India to fulfill the needs of its vast agricultural sector. Russia's biggest source of income is the sale of oil and natural gas. The conflict with Ukraine is sure to have a huge impact on the sales of both the products. Many countries would not want to buy oil and gas from Russia. Due to global warming, the world is slowly turning to alternative sources of energy by abandoning fossil fuels anyway.

Russian airlines are forced to cancel flights to Europe after 27 EU countries barred Russian airlines from flying over their airspace. Russian airplanes will neither land nor take off in these countries nor will they be able to pass through their skies. The UK and Canada are also among the countries closing their airspace. In return, Russia has banned commercial flights from Britain, Poland, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. Retail prices of everyday consumer items are rising in Russia. The impact of this war in Russia will be felt for a long time. Income will decrease and the difficulties of the middle class will increase. Russia will also have to face a problem that all the exporters of the world will now shy away from sending goods to Russia considering trade with Russia as expensive, unsafe and risky. Whereas buying readymade goods is a compulsion of Russia. Its largest trading partners are China, the Netherlands and Germany.

When Diplomatic Allies Fight, It Is Unwise To Pick Sides India's Tightrope Walk On Ukraine Issue Is Desirable

By: Nantoo Banerjee

Indian diplomacy has shown a great character and maturity by not taking sides in the Ukraine crisis in the face of a warlike situation there involving the US-led NATO and Russia. All the key actors engaged in building a highly belligerent situation over Ukraine are some of India's best friends. They include Russia, the US, NATO members and, of course, Ukraine. India is trying its best to get the tension defused diplomatically. Prime Minister Narendra Modi already spoke with President Vladimir Putin. The high tension between Russia and Ukraine needs to be defused fast through diplomacy and discussion. Both sides must give up fire power and go for a lasting truce.

The Modi-Putin telephonic talk on February 24 came on a day when President Putin also had a meeting with Pakistan's visiting Prime Minister Imran Khan. An official press release from the government of India stated that "President Putin briefed the Prime Minister about the recent developments regarding Ukraine" and "Prime Minister reiterated his long-standing conviction that the differences between Russia and the NATO group can only be resolved through honest and sincere dialogue." Further, it added that "Prime Minister appealed for an immediate cessation of violence, and called for concerted efforts from all sides to return to the path of diplomatic negotiations and dialogue".

On another level, India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar spoke to Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, stressing the need for diplomacy and dialogue to ensure a lasting solution of the problem. India's permanent representative at the UN echoed the same at the UN Security Council emergency meeting, last week. Rightly, India abstained from voting alongside China and United Arab Emirates. India issued an "Explanation of Vote" (EoV) calling for "return to the path of diplomacy" and seeking immediate cessation of "violence and hostilities."

It may be noted that India has been consistent with its policy to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine crisis. In fact, India avoided taking sides despite provocation at a recent foreign ministers-level Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) at Melbourne in Australia on February 11, less than a fortnight before the Ukraine-Russia armed conflict exploded. India even managed to receive cooperation from the foreign ministers of the US, Australia and Japan on its principled independent line on the Ukraine conflict. While US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa took a sharp line on the build up of Russian troops along the border with Ukraine, India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar chose an independent stand that ultimately seemed to find a reasonable appreciation from all. As a result, the Russia-Ukraine situation did not find any mention in the joint statement.

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Lesson for Rest of the World from Russia-Ukraine Conflict

By: Kaustov Kashyap



both countries will avoid a full-scale war.

It's not only applicable for Indo-China or Indo-Pak situations. This is applicable to every country in the World. Let me give a couple of examples. Iran is not attacked by America or its allies just because Iran has the capacity to retaliate. It can go on bombing Saudi Arabia and its allies with large-scale destruction. Israel is surrounded by enemy countries yet it's safe because of its retaliatory capacity. America and NATO couldn't confront Russia militarily just because of its retaliatory activities. Forget about all other countries, even America couldn't dare to attack North Korea because North Korea's retaliation would have a destructive effect on Japan and South Korea. The bottom line is that countries having a retaliatory capacity won't be bullied by more powerful countries militarily. Yes, there could be economic sanctions that could

weaken a country despite having a retaliatory capacity.

The above brings some lessons for the rest of the World, especially in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Firstly, sovereignty and freedom is the fundamental right of every nation. Also, all should be desirably peace-loving. But then if you don't have enough retaliatory power, then try to cohabit in a friendly atmosphere along with your neighbours. Never ever be a pawn of another powerful country. Ukraine and Georgia are the best examples. Just build your retaliatory military power without threatening your powerful neighbour.

Secondly, no country is going to help you militarily when you are at war with another country. Despite all solidarity of the west and America, Ukraine is being decimated at the moment. So be prepared if you have a rough neighbouring country because, in case of war, it's your country alone that will fight alone. For

example, if China attacks India, then it's India that will counter the attack alone. Neither America nor NATO nor even a long-standing ally like Russia won't fight your war. This example applies to the Whole World.

Thirdly, militarily inferior countries despite their economic condition must learn to exhibit 'neutrality'. Just following superpowers sycophantically, may bring danger in the future.

Further, super-powers may compete economically but should avoid military conflicts directly or indirectly. In the Ukraine crisis, it's US and NATO who indulged in an indirect military conflict with Russia and Ukraine foolishly fell into the trap.

Finally, I would say that War is devastating. But a World War in the present scenario would result in a crisis of human survival.

(The writer is a HR & Career Consultant, Jail Road, Jorhat, Assam)

Reading on Paper Versus Screens: What's the Difference?

During the coronavirus pandemic, students worldwide shifted from the classroom to remote, online learning. Many swapped hard copy textbooks and worksheets for websites and other digital resources. Digital books have been with us for a decade — but how well are we absorbing it all?

Professor at the University of Stavanger in Norway. "And it's a whole different kind of immersion than responding to [digital] stimuli. I think it's healthy for us as human beings to sit down with something that doesn't move, ping, or call on our attention."

Print is visually less demanding than digital text. It provides spatial and tactile cues to help readers process words on a page. Mindset may also be a factor. If people associate screen time with casual web-surfing they may rush through without fully absorbing the text.

"We read digital [text] more quickly, [so] we think we must understand it better," explains Lauren Singer Trakhtman, who studies reading comprehension at the University of Maryland, College Park. "It's one of the best parts of our digital world — everything is at our fingertips and we can get the headlines in a second — but it may also be one of the pitfalls. Everything's so quick and accessible that we may not be truly digesting [what we read] anymore."

Both scientists agree digital is fine to scan news headlines for main ideas, but longer, complicated texts are best read in print, especially to retain the details.

In 2016, Singer Trakhtman examined undergraduates' reading comprehension after they read digital and print versions of articles. Format didn't af-

fect their grasp of the main idea, but students missed details when reading on screens.

Digital reading impairs comprehension, particularly for longer, more complex texts, says Mangan. This may be because of the shallowing hypothesis — constant exposure to fast-paced, digital media trains the brain to process information more rapidly and less thoroughly.

"There's not much [neuroscientific research] on the reading of actual texts," Mangan says. However, existing research does offer some clues. In a 2009 study, the marketing research company Millward Brown found the brain processes physical and digital materials differently. Participants viewed advertisements on a screen and on a printed card while undergoing an fMRI scan. Print materials were more likely to activate the medial prefrontal cortex and cingulate cortex, both involved in processing emotions. Reading print also generated more activity in the parietal cortex, which processes visual and spatial cues.

Scrolling through digital text may impair comprehension by creating spatial challenges. A 2017 study found participants' reading comprehension suffered when they scrolled through a comic book's individual panels instead of seeing them all at once. When we read, our brains construct a cognitive map of the text, like recalling that a piece of information appeared near the top, left-hand page of a book. But imagine drawing a map of something with constantly moving



By: Vijay GarG

landmarks, like a webpage. It's harder to map words that aren't in a fixed location, because we lose important "visual placeholders," says Singer Trakhtman.

Scrolling demands more from our working memory, she adds. "In our working memory, we can hold about seven items at a time, so the goal when reading is to take away as many demands as possible. When we have to remember what we just read and we don't have spatial [cues] to help, that's taking some of our bandwidth."

In addition, the LED screens' constant flickering glow creates more work for our eyes, causing visual and mental fatigue.

However, e-readers, like Kindles, don't require scrolling and reduce eyestrain with e-ink technology. Those are likely superior to other digital-text formats, Mangan says. But they lack an important aspect of the reading experience: turning the page.

In one of Mangan's studies, participants read a story either on a Kindle or in print and then underwent comprehension tests. The texts were identical, but Kindle readers pressed a button to progress through the book, while print readers turned pages. Print readers were more likely to accurately recall the story's chronological order. Mangan says this may be because print provides sensorimotor cues that enhance cognitive processing. When holding a book, we receive reminders of how many pages we've read and how many remain. We can flip pages to reread text as needed. Some research

suggests we process information more effectively when we recruit multiple senses, and multiple brain areas, during task learning — seeing the words, feeling the weight of the pages, and even smelling the paper.

What Happens Next?

Instead of getting better at digital reading, we may be getting worse. A study examining reading comprehension research between 2000 and 2017 indicates it's harder to comprehend digital text. The researchers found print's advantages are greater now than in 2000. In other words, this digital-reading problem isn't going away. "This [finding may] have to do with the shallowing hypothesis," Mangan says. "The habits that we acquire when we read on screens are spilling over, and we're trying to cope by reading faster and more superficially."

Mangan and Singer Trakhtman agree we shouldn't ditch digital reading; instead we should consider the situation when choosing our reading medium.

"I'll never say that everyone should be reading print all the time," says Singer Trakhtman. "People are always shocked to hear that I have a Kindle, and I love my Kindle. But I only use it when I'm reading for pleasure."

To retain on-screen text information, Singer Trakhtman and Mangan suggest slowing down and handwriting main takeaways. (Typing works, but handwriting is likely a superior memory tool.)

When you need a break from the digital world, don't underestimate the power of paper and ink. Consider turning off your electronic devices, getting a book, and curling up to turn the page.

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Manipur shows the way with an accessible, inclusive and participative polls in first phase voting held across 38 Assembly Constituencies

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Polling for First Phase of Manipur Assembly Elections ended peacefully today with 78.03 % of the total 12,09,439 voters in the state turned out to exercise their franchise as per report available from constituency upto 5pm yesterday.

Giving the final details here today, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manipur Rajesh Agrawal said that of total 38 constituencies of the state, Konhoujam AC remained at the top with highest polling percentage 90.10%, followed by Patsoi (90 %) and Wangoi AC (88.06%), while Tipaimukh (63.61%), Saikot (68.5%) constituencies have witnessed lowest voting percentage. The final voting percentage will be notified after arrival of all political parties.

A total of 38 Assembly Constituencies including 10 in Imphal East, 13 in Imphal West, 6 in Bishnupur, 6 in Churachandpur and 3 in Kangpokpi went for polls today. A total of 12,09,439 voters including 580607 male, 628657 female and 175 transgender

voters are in Phase-I. There are a total of 10041 PwD electors and 251 Centenarian voters. Out of a total of 1721 polling stations, 381 polling stations were completely manned by all women polling personnel. Interestingly, 4 Assembly Constituencies namely 13-Singjam, 14-Yaiskul, 15-Wangkhei and 58-Churachandpur were entirely manned by all women polling teams. It is also notable that 1 polling station in 59-Saikot was manned entirely by PwD polling personnel. All the polling stations were beautifully decorated with selfie booths, welcome gates including red carpet welcome especially in all women and model polling stations. People participated in big numbers and many shared their enriching experience of polling at the booth. The centenarian voters and PwD voters also came out in large numbers and exercised their franchise. The volunteers at the booth assisted them with wheel chairs etc for smooth voting experience. Many elderly, PwD and first-time voters were also felicitated by the polling teams at the booth.



The active participation of electors in this election has truly made these elections a festival of democracy.

Polling parties have started returning from their respective polling stations. EVMs are being deposited to the Strong Rooms and shall be guarded by three tier security system. He said that security forces have been keeping strict vigil round the clock at Strong Rooms. The scrutiny of Form 17 A and other documents will be conducted by the Return-

ing Officers in presence of General Observers on 1st March, 2022. Decisions on re-polls, if any, shall be decided accordingly.

To ensure COVID safe election, adequate arrangements have been made in all polling stations. All polling stations were sanitised. ASHA and Anganwadi workers at each polling station helped in thermal screening and queue management. Marking of circles with minimum distance was done to avoid crowding. Be-

sides, mask, glove, were provided to voters requiring the same.

The movement of EVMs was tracked with the help of e-Traccer App which was embedded in the mobile phones of Polling personnel and Sector Officers. Besides, eAtlas app was used by polling teams which enables a polling personnel to report any sort of EVM malfunctioning or any untoward incident happening in the polling station. This enabled the Returning Officer to

take immediate corrective actions. Arrangement for webcasting/videography were made in all Polling Stations. The voting at majority of the polling stations was monitored through the webcasting at the control rooms in Ros, DEOs and CEO office. The CAPF deployed at the polling stations ensured security of voters. In addition, micro observers were also deployed in all critical polling stations to monitor the overall poll process. On Law & Order situation, Rajesh Agrawal said that some poll related minor incidents were reported in few polling stations and appropriate action on same were taken.

In addition, a total of 32 observers deputed by the Election Commission of India for first phase of polls, including the Special Observers, were mobile throughout the day witnessing polling at hundreds of polling station. They were very satisfied with the arrangements at the polling stations and the participation of voters in a big way.

Divulging more details, he said that in the morning during mock poll 6 ballot units, 13

control units and 14 VVPAT machines were replaced, while 11 ballot units, 10 control units and 20 VVPATs were successfully replaced during the conduct of poll. The poll process was not vitiated at any polling station due to malfunctioning of EVM. There were complaints from certain political parties & candidates during the poll. However, majority of the issues were resolved and prompt actions taken. The scrutiny of Form 17 A and other documents will be conducted by the Returning Officers in presence of General Observers on 1st March, 2022. Decisions on re-polls, if any, shall be decided accordingly.

Rajesh Agrawal thanked people of Manipur for coming out in large numbers to exercise their democratic right in a peaceful in the festive environment. He also thanked all the Polling Personnel, Security Personnel, Booth Level Officers (BLO), PWD coordinators, ASHA Workers, Anganwadi workers for working day and night to ensure free, fair, peaceful, participative, accessible and inclusive polls in the State.

India reports 6,915 new Covid-19 cases, daily infections below 10,000 second day in a row

Agency
New Delhi, March 1:

India reported 6,915 new Covid-19 cases, less than 10,000 second day in a row, and 180 deaths in the last 24 hours ending 8 am Tuesday, according to data released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. On Monday, the country recorded 8,013 infections. With today's deaths, India's death toll rose to 5,14,023.

The active cases presently

stand at 92,472, comprising 0.22 per cent of the country's total caseload. The total number of recoveries rose to more than 4.23 crore or 42,32,45,550 after 16,864 Covid-19 patients recovered on Tuesday.

Across several private hospitals in Pune, a large stock of Covishield vaccine is lying unused and is likely to go waste with the expiry date — some on February 28 and others by March. "We have data of vaccines across 51 private vaccination centres where at

least more than one lakh doses of Covishield vaccine are set to expire," said Dr Sanjay Patil, chairman of Indian Medical Association's Hospital Board of India, Pune chapter.

Under the national Covid vaccination programme, almost 51 out of 110 hospitals and 192 members of the Indian Medical Association's Hospital Board of India Pune chapter had started private Covid vaccination centres. They had purchased vaccines and were helping citizens complete the

vaccination schedule. "We have urged the district collector to replace these vaccines with fresh stock," Dr Patil said.

The publication of a study protocol that aims to understand the potential of Ashwagandha — a traditional ayurvedic herbal drug for boosting immunity to improve Covid-19 vaccine response — in a top clinical research journal is being viewed as a landmark global recognition for ayurved and modern medicine integrative research.

Assam Rifles provides Medical Assistance at Ukhrul

IT News
Imphal, March 1:

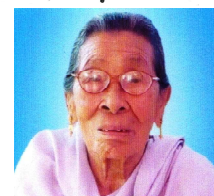
Somsai Battalion under the aegis of IGAR(S) extended life saving medical assistance to an individual who got injured due to gun shot in Ukhrul town yesterday.

The individual, who sustained an accidental gun shot wound while cleaning his personal air gun, was immediately taken to Assam Rifles Medical Center at Somsai and was rendered emergency medical aid.

On stabilising the condition, the injured person was referred for further medical treatment in Ukhrul.



শ্রীশ্রীগৌড়চন্দ্রায় নমঃ



পূৰ্বাপ্ৰমদা ঐশ্বৰ্য্য হাৰিহৰ কাননবিন্দী ক্ষেত্ৰিময়ম "মাইকেলিবা দেবী" না মাণী নুশিঞ্জৰা ইমং-মনুং, শাংগে-নাটো অমনি ঐশ্বৰ্য্য-ছাই পুন্মকপু খাংকোৰুগা হোঁবিৰা তাং ২৩ ১০২ ১২০২২ ইং, ফাইনেলী ২২ নি পানবা য়ুমশংকৈ নুমিতা শ্ৰীশ্ৰীকৃষ্ণী কৃপাদানী বেধে গুণ্ণা শ্ৰীচৈতন্য মাইকেলি গৌৰাঙ্গ দাসীনি হয়বা নাম স্বৰ্গদূতা বৃন্দাবন প্ৰাপ্তি ওহইহে।

লালিৰা তাং ২৮ ১০২ ১২০২২ ইং, ফাইনেলী ২৭ ১২৮ নি পানবা, নিশেইকাৰা নুমিতা অশ্ৰি-সঙ্ঘ লৌখংবংগা, তাং ০৮ ১০৩ ১২০২২ ইং, লমতাগী ৬ নি পানবা সৈৰাকপোকাৰা নুমিতা চিড়া উসৰ দিন থোৱে। নুমিৰ অসিলা লৈখিৰিকী আত্মা শান্তিদীক্ষক গুৰুজৰা কথু খৰাং হুৰি নাম স্বৰ্গদীক্ষনা লোয়ননা শ্ৰীশ্ৰী গৌৰাঙ্গ গুৰুদী চবদ কৰুগদৌৰি।

উপাৰ্শ্বক অসিলা ব্ৰাহ্মণ-বৈষ্ণৱ, অহল-লমন, মৰুণ-মণাং, শাংগে-নাটো হুই বিবিৰা মতন চায়া লেঙবীৰভূনা হাৰিমন প্ৰবন তৌবিননা পত্ৰনা নিমন্ত্ৰণ কৰুচি। পত্ৰনা নিমন্ত্ৰণ কৰুচিৰা অপৰাধ থিৰিক গুৰুপণি।

যৌৰম পত্ৰং :
অযুক পুং ৮:০০ ভেগ কংপা
অযুক পুং ৮:৩০ সৰ্ব্বগুৰু হোঁবা
অযুক পুং ১১:০০ যৌৰম লেখিহা

শিঞ্জৈম বাংমা ক্ষেত্ৰি লৈকাই, ইংফাল।

সেবা ফাংজিৰাবিঃ :

- ১। ক্ষেত্ৰিময়ম ৰাজেন্দ্ৰো সিংহ (মচানুপা)
- ২। ক্ষেত্ৰিময়ম লেঙ্গা সিংহ (মচানুপা)
- ৩। ক্ষেত্ৰিময়ম থেইনা সিংহ (মচানুপা)
- ৪। ক্ষেত্ৰিময়ম সাগৰ সিংহ (মচানুপা)

Last week, a Ukraine-Russia armed conflict looked inevitable after President Putin's public announcement of Russia's recognition of two separatist republics in eastern Ukraine - Donetsk and Lugansk - as "independent" putting NATO in a tight spot. Interestingly, Ukraine is still not a NATO member. Ukraine was promised membership by NATO in 2008 but none of the constituents worked towards that. Ukraine was merely accepted as an "enhanced opportunity partner" by NATO in 2020. NATO members did not seem to be ready to give a full membership status to Ukraine as it could invite permanent confrontation with Moscow, a major supplier of energy and food to a number of west European countries.

Under the collective defensive principle of NATO, if any member is attacked all other members would have to plunge into the fight whether they like it or not. Inducting Ukraine in the NATO grouping would require consensus from all its 30 members. Actually, some of the NATO members do recognise Ukraine's strife-torn history over the last several centuries and its strong Russian connect. While Putin says Russia was always part of Russia, it came completely

under Moscow's rule in the 18th century during the reign of Catherine the Great. With China having thrown its weight in favour of Russia — both permanent members at UNSC — the Ukraine crisis is proving to be a real test for countries in Europe, the US, the UN and even India, which has always maintained a good relationship with Ukraine alongside Russia over the years.

Both the US and Russia are among India's most important friends and allies. The two rival nuclear superpowers recognise India's position. Lately, India and the US are moving forward on a wide-ranging set of initiatives from cooperating to fight the pandemic, scaling up action to address climate change, working bilaterally and through the QUAD, expanding cooperation in trade and investment, cyber, and in new and emerging technologies. The US has been constantly critical about China's aggressive behaviour on the border with India and Pakistan-originated terror attacks on India. The strategic partnership between India and the US have deepened over the last 15 years. The US supports India's emergence as a leading global power and vital

partner in efforts to ensure that the Indo-Pacific is a region of peace, stability, and growing prosperity and economic inclusion. The two of the world's largest democracies are working on a wide range of diplomatic, economic and security issues.

On the other hand, the age-old India-Russia relationship continues to remain strong. This is despite divergent geopolitical and strategic drift in recent times with Russia embracing China and Pakistan, known as sworn adversaries of India. Both China and Pakistan are now major Russian arms importers. The closer China-Russia ties may also be linked possibly to China's seeking Russian support in case it decides to militarily overpower the Taiwanese regime to establish effective territorial control on the island.

Interestingly, Russia continues to be the largest military and nuclear ware supplier to India. Russia highly appreciates India's sticking to its procurement of the S-400 Russian missiles system despite the US threat of sanctions. Last year, India also signed a major AK-203 procurement deal with Russia and extended military-technical cooperation contract for another 10 years. Recently,

President Putin had said: "the relation between India and Russia is truly a unique and reliable model of interstate friendship... We perceive India as a great power, a friendly nation, and a time-tested friend. The relations between our nations are growing, and I am looking into the future." Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Russia this year to attend the 22nd annual Russian-Indian summit.

Notably, India is strongly pursuing a behind the door campaign to solve the Ukraine crisis diplomatically. It believes that war is no answer to the crisis. Violence alone can't establish lasting peace in the region. It may only complicate the matter. Diplomacy should be given a chance for reconciliation. India's stake in the Ukraine conflict is quite high if one considers its social, cultural, economic, educational, scientific and defence involvement with each of the countries engaged in the current military showdown. Taking sides will spoil India's multifaceted relationship built over the years with these countries, now engaged in the conflict. India strongly favours de-escalation of the situation and resolution of the crisis through diplomatic dialogue. (IPA Service)

Cuba to Strengthen the Interactions With Women's Associations in India

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, March 1:

Malena Rojas Medina, the new diplomat at the Cuban Embassy in India, recently paid a visit to the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), a women's organization in Mumbai, and interacted on wide-ranging issues of gender and women's movement in both the countries.

It was a friendly visit reflecting the long years of solidarity and fraternity between the Cuban people and progressive activists in India. Medina is in-charge of the Press and Cultural Affairs of the embassy in New Delhi.

AIDWA General Secretary Mariam Dhawale and other office bearers - S. Punyavathi, Asha Sharma, Maimoona Mollah, Archana Prasad, Sarbani Sarkar, and Ranjini Basu interacted with visiting diplomat. In the meeting, the role of women in the Cuban Revolution was fondly remembered, along with sharing AIDWA's struggles against gender violence and discrimination.

Speaking to the **Imphal Times**, Mariam Dhawale said that Medina gave them very interesting information about facilities made available to women in Cuba. She spoke about the institutional support that the Cuban women are provided in the form of public child-care facilities, they are given paid maternity leaves, accessible and round-the-clock public transport is made available to them and are provided a strong redressal system for cases of domestic violence.



Malena Rojas Medina (fifth from left), the new diplomat at the Cuban Embassy in India, with AIDWA office bearers in Mumbai.

The working women are provided a special crèche service from 7 am to 8 pm to take care of their children. The children are provided free education, food, and medicare. There is a 100 percent women's literacy in Cuba and they are well advanced and hold important positions like doctors, lawyers and some of them are also entrepreneurs.

Medina highlighted the exemplary role of Cuban women during the pandemic. Women have been in the frontline, including in science to develop indigenous Covid vaccines. Cuba has invented four vaccines and although the pandemic hardly affected the country, the government has ensured 100 percent Covid vaccination.

There is no unemployment in Cuba. The people are given special training to equip them to work on different projects and are absorbed in government service. Medina was surprised when asked whether any unemployment allowance is paid to the unemployed people in Cuba.

Medina expressed a desire to initiate certain measures to strengthen the interactions between Cuba and AIDWA through a series of cultural and other activities. There are plans of showcasing Cuban documentaries and films portraying women. Cuba has a huge collection of pre and post-revolution books and films, which it would like to share with India.

The Cuban Revolution was an armed revolt conducted by Fidel Castro and his fellow revolutionaries against the military dictatorship of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista during 1953-1956.

Anganwadi workers
In another development, AIFAWH has begun a district-wide agitation to demand settlement of demands of Anganwadi workers including a hike in remuneration, monthly pension and supply of new mobiles, etc. The agitation will be on till March 07. Besides a huge morchha will be organized at Azad Maidan in South Mumbai on March 09, to coincide with the budget session of the Maharashtra Legislature. Shubha Shamim, Vice-President, All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH) said. AIFAWH is an affiliate of AIDWA.

Anganwadis are the rural child care centres in India. They were started by the Union government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. Anganwadi means "courtyard shelter". There are around 13 lakh Anganwadi workers across India. Of these over one lakh Anganwadi workers are in Maharashtra. However, there is a variation in the remuneration paid to these workers from state to state.

Indian student killed in Ukraine: India calls in Russian, Ukrainian ambassadors

Agency
New Delhi, March 1:

The Russian and Ukrainian ambassadors have been called in by the government to reiterate India's demand for 'urgent safe passage for Indian nationals still in Kharkiv and other conflict zones', the External Affairs Ministry said Tuesday afternoon. The statement comes amid news an Indian student has died amid shelling in Kharkiv - Ukraine's second largest city and the site of fierce fighting.

"(The) Foreign Secretary is calling in Ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate our demand for urgent safe passage for Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and cities in other conflict zones. Similar action is also being undertaken by our Ambassadors in Russia and Ukraine," Bagchi tweeted.

Minutes earlier he posted: "With profound sorrow we confirm that an Indian student lost his life in shelling in Kharkiv this morning. The Ministry is in touch with his family. We convey our deepest condolences to the family."

Earlier today, several Indian students in Kharkiv took to social media to say a student - believed to be from Karnataka - had died while trying to find food.



Several videos posted on social media showed the shelling of different locations in Kharkiv, including an area near Kharkiv National Medical University (KNMU), which has numerous Indian students.

There were varying estimates of the total number of Indian students in Kharkiv, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000. Indian and other foreigners have been unable to leave most cities in eastern Ukraine, including Kharkiv and Sumy, since the country's airspace was closed on February 24. Rail and public transport services have also been disrupted in the eastern region.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Indian embassy in Kyiv advised all Indians in the Ukrainian capital to leave the city "urgently" by train or any other means against the backdrop of reports of a 64-km-long Russian military convoy moving towards the region.

"All Indian nationals including students are advised to leave Kyiv urgently today. Preferably by available trains or through any other means available," the embassy said in the brief advisory posted on Twitter.

Satellite imagery from Maxar Technologies of the Russian military convoy moving in on the Ukrainian capital showed that it stretched for almost 64 kms. The imagery from Monday showed that the convoy appears to include hundreds of armoured vehicles, tanks, towed artillery and logistics vehicles.

Govt Relaxes Import Requirements for Companion Dogs and Cats From Ukraine

IT News
New Delhi, March 1:

Following an appeal from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India to Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying issued an office memorandum stating that "considering unique and extraordinary situations in war-hit Ukraine wherein pre-export requisite formalities for export of pets into India may not be fulfilled, the import of pet dogs and/or pet cats along with stranded Indians being rescued by the Government of India is being facilitated as a one-time relaxation measure as under". PETA India approached the minister following an appeal for help on social media by Rishabh Kaushik, an Indian student who was refusing to leave war-hit Ukraine without his puppy Malibu.

The memorandum includes relaxed pre-import and post-import conditions and directs regional officers of all animal quarantine and certification services to coordinate with the respective state veterinary authorities to share details of each import with the central government's Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Assam Rifles busts terrorist cache



IT News
Imphal, March 1:

Moreh Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a well planned operation busted a terrorist cache close to the Indo-Myanmar border on 28 February.

Based on intelligence inputs, troops of Assam Rifles, unearthed a cache in the jungle close to Govajang village near Moreh. On thorough search one Heckler and Koch Assault Rifle, two Chinese hand grenades, 22 rounds of 7.62mm caliber, one dual band radio set and other warlike stores like combat uniforms were recovered.

The seized warlike stores were handed over to Moreh Police for further investigation.

Government invites applications for National Startup Awards 2022 across 17 sectors and 7 special categories

PIB
New Delhi, March 1:

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched the third edition of the National Startup Awards. In line with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the National Startup Awards 2022 will acknowledge startups and enablers who have been instrumental in revolutionising the development story of India and hold within them the power and potential to further fuel the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The first National Startup Awards were announced in 2020 and witnessed applications from over 1,600 startups and ecosystem enablers across India. The recently concluded National Startup Awards 2021 saw participation from over 2,200 startups and ecosystem enablers. After conducting two successful editions, the National Startup Awards 2022 are open for applications.

The awards for startups will be given in 17 sectors classified into 50 sub-sectors. The 17 sectors are Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Construction, Drinking Water, Education & Skill Development, Energy, Enterprise Technology, Environment, FinTech, Food Processing, Health and Wellness, Industry 4.0, Media & Entertainment, Security, Space, Transport, and Travel.

In addition, there are seven special categories of awards for startups:

- Women-led startups
- Impact in rural areas
- Campus startups
- Manufacturing excellence
- Innovation tackling the pandemic (preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, monitoring, digital connect, work from home solutions, etc.)
- Solution delivery or business operations in Indic languages
- Startups from North-East (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura) and Hilly States/

Union Territories (Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh)

The National Startup Awards 2022 will also reward exceptional incubators and accelerators as key building blocks of a robust startup ecosystem.

A cash prize of INR 5 lakh will be awarded to each winning startup. The winners and runners-up will also be given opportunities to present their solutions to relevant public authorities and corporates for potential pilot projects and work orders and pitching opportunities with investors. They will also be given priority for participation in various national and international startup events.

A cash prize of INR 15 lakh each will be awarded to one winning incubator and one winning accelerator.

The applications for the National Startup Awards 2022 are open till **15th March 2022**. For more details, visit www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/nsa2022.html.

Contd. from Page 1

Human Rights defender's family....

On 12th of August 2017, 6 unknown persons who are believed to have come with gun and threatened the office of WAD, however, beside being reported to the Porompat Police the police refused to register FIR by the 2nd OC Mr. Md. Ajmir who came to WAD office repeatedly and refused to register and inquired about the same. NEDF is not still clear the intention of the 2nd OC in charge.

On 4th of June 2019, Nobokishore's daughter was shot but luckily safe when she was travelling in a vehicle. The matter was reported to the Singma Police, however, the perpetrators could not be arrested till date beside informing the fact that they came in white color gypsy and shot at her.

On 29th of July 2019, one Biswanath, a member of Manipur police came at the office of WAD with a gun and asked whereabouts of Sobita. He threatened the care taker of her office by taking out the gun.

Earlier in March 2003, one of our NGO's consultant who

was invited by Nobokishore from Europe was kidnapped for 18 days.

Such series of attack on human right defender and NGO worker working in critical situation of threat, intimidation, harassment etc are refused by government to protect who are contributing to Government to improve human right situation in the state is very unfortunate.

The continuous attacked which could be observed being committed to Nobokishore's family and children by the suspected security forces are an act to hinder his work for human rights. The Government of Manipur has

failed to implement law and order situation to protect and safeguard the Human Rights Defenders which we strongly condemned of this kind of heinous act which threatened right to life.

The NEDF strongly appealed and urged to the Government of Manipur specially the police department to strictly check the operation of such criminals and unknown person who are suspected to be the members of police to stop misusing the power which are to protect its citizen and Stop Attack to Human Rights Defenders in Manipur and North East India.

Identity Card Lost

I have lost my Identity Card, bearing Adm. No. 3639, Class XII, Shivaji House, issued by Sainik School, Imphal in my name L. Bhavananda Sharma of Moirangkhom Loklaobung in the way between Moirangkhom Loklaobung and Manipur University Campus.

Anyone who found it kindly hand over to the following address.

Sd/-
L. Bhavananda Sharma
C/o L. Biswanath Sharma
Manipur University Campus