

BJP Parliamentary Committee likely to announce the name of Manipur's BJP legislature leader

N. Biren, Th. Biswajit, A. Sharda and Abhay Kumar Giri left Imphal for Delhi

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

The Parliamentary Board Committee of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is likely to announce the name of the BJP Legislature Wing Leader by today evening.

As per directives of the Committee, President of the BJP Manipur Pradesh, A Sharda Devi, General Secretary Organisation in-charge of Manipur Abhay Kumar Giri, Caretaker Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and former minister Th. Biswajit had left for New Delhi to meet the National BJP leaders at around 10 am today in a charter flight from Bir Tikendrajit Airport.

Earlier, yesterday evening, caretaker Chief Minister N. Biren Singh had invited all BJP elected members for a cup of



N. Biren Singh



Th. Biswajit Singh



A. Sharda Devi



Abhay Kumar Giri

tea at his Luwangsangbam residence in Heingang AC, Imphal East. A highly reliable source told Imphal Times that only one-third of the 32 elected members (i.e only 9 members) attended, whereas 22 of them restrained from the meeting. The Source further said N. Biren Singh invited the elected BJP MLAs of the BJP as the Parliamentary Board Commit-

tee had summoned him in connection with the election of the BJP legislature Wing leader of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly.

No camp has been organized after the declaration of the election result on March 10, for the race of the Chief Minister as per the statement of Th. Biswajit and A Sharda Devi reacting to news report,

while talking to media persons. Almost all elected members of the BJP also clarified that there was no camp organized as they are waiting to discharge the duty that the Party leadership has assigned to them.

A source from the New Delhi BJP office said that the Manipur BJP leaders may meet the central leaders by 2

pm today to have a thorough discussion to give a final decision on whom to be appointed as the legislature wing leader of the BJP in Manipur state Legislative Assembly.

Of the 32 elected members of the BJP in Manipur, more than 20 MLAs including almost all top profile leaders wanted to replace the legislature wing leadership.

AMMSO's general strike affect normalcy in Muslim dominated areas

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

The General strike called by the All Manipur Muslim Students' Organisation against the arrest of 11 workers of NPP candidate of Kshetrigao Assembly constituency Sheikh Noorul Hassan on Monday by Porompat police and demanding unconditional release of the arrested 11 workers, greatly affected Muslim dominated areas. In Hata, huge number of protestors came out into the street supporting the General Strike called by AMMSO. Police resorted to firing several rounds of Tear Gas Shell and Mock bombs to disperse the protestors. Similarly, huge number of protestors came out into the street in Porompat DC Road, and the police fired Tear Gas and Mock bomb to disperse the huge number of protestors.



As per source, on March 11 while carrying out a victory procession of the NPP candidate Sheikh Noorul Hassan, workers of the later allegedly brandished guns and other deadly weapons. A violent fight broke out between the workers of NPP and BJP, causing destruction of properties and injury to some workers. The incident reportedly took place at Khargao Sabal Leikai in Imphal East.

It was alleged that, the arrested 11 workers were

picked up without citing any reasons for their arrest, while the MLA Sheikh Noorul Hassan was taking oath at the State Assembly. It may be mention that, after the police arrested the workers without citing any reasons, huge number of people build up a mob and stormed Porompat Police Station. The mob damaged few vehicles and one woman head constable was injured.

KSO appreciates govt. decision to conduct physical classes

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters has appreciated the Commissioner of Education, Government of Manipur for taking up decision to conduct physical classes after a long break from the covid-19 pandemic which has lasted for a couple of years.

"With the announcement of the re-opening of schools, colleges, universities, coaching institutes, and also institutions under different ministries of the Government of India operating in the state dated 9th March 2022 by Commissioner (Education-S/ Hr. & Tech. Edn) Government of Manipur, the Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters as a concerned students body appreciate and endorse the government for

taking appropriate decision to conduct physical classes after a long break from the covid-19 pandemic which has lasted for a couple of years", a statement of the KSO (GHQ) said.

The Student body said that the resumption of physical class after a long hiatus is the need of hours and would be an excellent booster for the academic health of all students' communities.

The KSO GHQ appealed to the concerned students to refrain from unacademics practices, hooliganism and delinquent activities and give their undivided attention to their studies.

The KSO GHQ also reiterated the critical role of parents and teachers in setting a warm ambient for the students and those they must extend their unwavering support in this crucial time.

State Level Workshop Cum Exhibition of Yongchak

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

A State Level workshop cum Exhibition of Treebean (Yongchak) was kickstarted today at ICAR Complex, Lamphelpat.

The inaugural function of the workshop cum exhibition was attended by Dr. VK Mishra, Director, ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Umiam as Chief Guest, Prof. Pulok Kumar Mukherjee Director, IBSD, Imphal, Dr. S. Basanta Singh Director of Instruction, CAU, Imphal Dr. H. Birkumar Singh Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-NEIST, Imphal Shri Mayanglambam Khelendro President, AIMS, Manipur Prof. Amar Yumnam Former Vice-Chancellor,



Manipur University as Guests of Honour, Special Guest and President respectively.

The 2 days workshop cum exhibition is organized by Association For Protection And Promotion Of Treebean

[Appot]. As a part of the inaugural function, the dignitaries planted several saplings of Treebean.

Assam Rifles distributes Solar Lights

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

As part of Assam Rifles civic action programmes initiative, Chassad Battalion of IGAR (South) distributed Solar Lights to the villagers of Skeipeand Molvailup villages in Kamjong District, Manipur to provide an alternate medium of power source to litup the area and enhance security during hours of darkness in the region.

The villagers of the two villages expressed their gratitude and happiness for the useful initiative of Assam Rifles

The Editorial

A matter of Choice: But will there be a change in the leadership of state BJP legislatures?

It is expected the BJP Parliamentary Board Committee may announce the name of the leader of the BJP Legislature Wing for the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly, whose term is ending on March 19, 2022. With the announcement, the much-awaited news about who will be the Chief Minister in the upcoming Manipur Government will be known by each and every person.

With the BJP national leaders not disclosing the name of Manipur Chief Minister even after getting an absolute majority in the recently concluded election, speculations and dialogues on the possibility of changing the CM's face have escalated.

On various occasions, political experts have underlined that only a handful of leaders want caretaker Chief Minister N Biren Singh to retain the seat, while a majority of the BJP MLAs wish for a change. Given the current disposition and comprehension of the outgoing BJP-led government, it appears that the top guns of the saffron party in New Delhi are skeptical in deciding the candidate for the top job.

N Biren Singh, time and again in his election campaign, reminded people of internal challenges he had encountered. However, the confrontation mainly was among their BJP leaders eyeing for the CM's post. Ally-National People's Party's lawmakers even withdrew their support, citing Biren's high-headedness. Moreover, establishing two camps and flying to Delhi to confront leaders several times was no secret. Reports of organizing parleys to troubleshoot the differences had hit the headlines.

Given the five-year records under the leadership of N Biren Singh, the BJP leaders appear to be reluctant in announcing N Biren as Chief Minister and moreover skeptical as to which lawmakers to pick for the top post to ensure a stable government in the state.

The last leg of election campaigns saw Biren giving interviews to some national and local media channels, wherein he couldn't highlight the BJP-led Government's achievements accurately, inviting people's criticism on social media platforms regarding his 'baseless claims.' His statements, as per the Imphal Times sources, fumed state BJP leaders, prompting discreet discussions at the State's BJP head office.

Speculations erupted in local media implying N Biren Singh and Th Biswajit Singh to be the top contenders for the CM's chair, while the rumor mill has it that Congress turncoat Govindas Konhoujam and former speaker Yumnam Khemchand Singh vying for the top post.

N Biren Singh's inability to present a BJP-led government's unified picture among its legislators and former ally-NPP resorted to revolt against him, and he, as the chief minister then, couldn't prove his leadership, presents a high probability to coerce the BJP leaders to determine a new face for the Manipur Chief Minister post.

MCC lifted, DM orders to release license gun deposited to Police station

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

With the completion of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election, the Model Code of Conduct enforced for conducting a free and fair election has been lifted.

An order issued by the District Magistrate Imphal West, Th. Kirankumar dated 15th March, 2022 has stated

that the Model Code of Conduct in Connection with State Assembly General Election, 2022 has ceased to be in operation.

The District Magistrate Imphal West, Th. Kirankumar also orders all the concerned Police Station to release all the licensed arms deposited in connection with the State Assembly Election with immediate effect.

Groundwater level reaches to a worrying point

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



Groundwater is depleting at an alarming rate in India, which is expected to overtake China as the world's most populous country in less than a decade. More than a third of India's population lives in water-stressed areas and this number is set to increase due to depleting groundwater and increasing urbanization. According to a report by the World Resources Institute, India is one of the 17 countries in the world facing an extreme water crisis. India's water crisis has worsened over the past few decades as bore wells were dug to extract more and more groundwater for water consuming crops such as paddy and sugarcane. Ideally, surface water should be collected in ponds and other water bodies during monsoon season and this stored water should be used throughout the year for irrigation instead of ground water. Over 60 per cent of the wells in the country checked by the Central Groundwater Board have recorded a decline in the water level in the past decade.

Punjab is facing groundwater scarcity due to indiscriminate use of groundwater for agricultural purposes and 80 per cent of the state's area has come under red zone. In a workshop organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and Punjab Energy Development Agency, an expert informed that 16 lakh electric tube wells in Punjab continuously draw water from below ground, due to which the groundwater level has reached a worrying point. The condition is that the groundwater level is going down by one meter every year. The Punjab State Assembly Committee, set up to study the depletion of water tables, had said in its report that the state would turn into a desert in the next 25 years if the current trend of drawing groundwater continues. In simple words, we are drawing more water for our use than we are filling back into the ground. As a result the water level is going down. This has created a threat of desertification of Punjab.

The rate of pumping up the groundwater in Punjab is 1.66 times higher than the rate of replenishment. It is worth mentioning that paddy cultivation got a boost in Punjab during the Green Revolution in 1966-67, which consumes a lot of water. The trend continues nowadays also. In such a situation, it becomes necessary that the farmers, urban bodies and industrial units are made aware about the measures to save water and electricity and they should be warned about the dangers caused by the depleting level of ground water. The United Nations has also issued a warning on the water crisis looming on the earth in its new report. The UN report says that due to climate change, droughts, floods and drinking water related crises are increasing. According to this report titled The State of Climate Service 2021, in the year 2018, about 3.5 billion people had access to water for 11 months in a year. It is feared that if precautionary measures are not taken, by 2050, the number of people facing water crisis could be 5 billion. Experts recommend native plants for the garden. They look great, and don't need much water or fertilizer. Also choosing grass varieties for lawn that are adapted for local climate, reducing the need for extensive watering.

Modi Government Pushes Workers 45 Years Back

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

By the decision of the Centre to cut interest rate on workers' and employees' PF deposits, Modi government has just pushed workers 45 years back on social security at a time when the working class needed it most due to rising price rise and inflation with additional financial crises they have been facing for the last two years especially since the COVID-19 pandemic struck the country. The action to effect a cut on social security measures is sharply in contrast with the magnanimous speeches of our leadership to protect workers' interests.

The yearly inflation has been projected to 5.3 per cent and interest rates on PF deposits has been reduced to 8.1 per cent, and therefore the effective gain for workers will be only 2.8 per cent yearly on their deposits. Though the workers and employees are entitled to dearness allowance, and many of them have been getting it, many others have just lost their jobs during the pandemic. For out of job workers, and the workers who are re-employed on lower wages, likely to be the hardest hit by the present decision of reducing interest rates on PF deposits, and hence it is inhuman.

Employees Provident Fund is one of the social security schemes being implemented in India under Employees' Provident Fund Scheme 1952 along with Employees' Pension Scheme 1995. Both the schemes are retirement saving schemes under Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, meant for salaried employees. The workers who spend the prime and most productive time as workforce building and protecting the nation ensuring smile on the faces of the citizens deserved such social protection and much more in the old age after spending their whole life working for us. Their meagre deposits are their only hope for surviving with dignity, and therefore, interest rate cut will make them more miserably, which make us thankless in return for their life-time work. Whoever sees PF and Pension merely welfare schemes are therefore wrong, and cut in interest rate on their deposit is a cruel selfish return to the workforce.

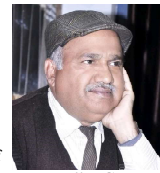
Since the Union Minister for Labour and Employment Bhupendra Yadav, who is PM Narendra Modi's top lieutenant for implementing the biggest labour reform in India vigorously pushing for implementation of the four controversial labour codes, presided over the meeting of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO's) top decision making body the Central Board of Trustees that approved the rate cut on March 12, 2022, it has unmasked the real face of the Modi government. Since the action is clearly against the workforce, the allegations of anti-worker and pro-corporate labelled against Modi government is too difficult to disbelieve.

The action is even astounding in the backdrop of the four labour codes that the Modi government is bent upon implement in the coming year 2022-23, one of which is the Code on Social Security, 2020, whose expressed objective is to amend and consolidate the existing labour law relating to social security with the wider goal of extending social security benefits to all employees and workers irrespective of belonging to organised and unorganised sector.

contd. on page 3

Nuclear is used for human welfare

While living in America, Einstein did a lot of work on the development of the atomic bomb. But when these atomic bombs were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they wept. He had not even dreamed of such destruction. After this nuclear attack, Einstein continued to teach about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy throughout his life.



By: Vijay Garg

science, the principles considered to be fixed are being improved (or even discarded if necessary) many times. But as was struck by the presentation of Newton's theories on physics and philosophy, Einstein's theory of relativity struck an even stronger blow. That is why he is counted among the greatest scientists of the world. The world celebrates his birthday as 'Genius Day'.

Albert Einstein was born on 14 March 1879 in the small town of Ulm, Germany. From childhood, Einstein had a keen interest in science. Einstein was very talented in mathematics, but not in other subjects. When they were fifteen years old, their family settled in Milan, Italy. From there he was sent to Switzerland for studies. He appeared in an examination to get admission in the University of Zurich in Switzerland, but failed. After preparing for one more year, he again appeared in the same examination, then he got admission. It was in Switzerland that the real development of his talent in mathematics and physics took place. In 1900, he completed his studies and took the citizenship of Switzerland. After this he started teaching, but due to no place being suitable for his ideas, he got a job in the Patent Office of Switzerland.

At the same time, he fell in love with a student named Mileva Marish from Yugoslavia and married her in 1903. It is in the year 1904. In those days Einstein used to take his younger son for a walk in Prague. He also had a diary with him. Regardless of where the car stopped, they would start solving maths and physics problems in it. Later on seeing this diary it was found that he had solved many problems in it

the world from these articles.

In one of these research papers, he had told that when light falls on metals like potassium, tungsten etc., electrons start emitting from these metals. These electrons are called photo electrons. This effect is called photoelectric effect. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery of the photoelectric effect of light. In the second research paper, he researched Brownian motion. According to this principle, the motion of freely moving particles in any fluid is due to continuous collisions with the molecules of the fluid. In the third article, he introduced the world famous theory of relativity.

In this article, he proved that physical quantities like mass, distance and time (which are assumed to be constant) also change with velocity. This theory created panic all over the world. In this article, he proved that there is no existence of a medium like ether. This theory was so complex that only a few scientists in the world could understand it at that time.

In the fourth article, he presented a revolutionary idea about the equivalence of mass and energy. According to this idea, if one pound of matter is converted into energy, it will produce energy equal to the energy produced by burning seven million tons of dynamite. On the basis of this principle, the atomic bomb was made, which mo-

mentarily ruined the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 in World War II. In the fifth article, he proved that light travels in the form of particles. These particles are called photons. In 1916, he published a paper on the general theory of relativity, which shed light on the gravitational properties of the universe.

By 1933, Hitler's dictatorial rule had been established over Germany. A lot of hatred was fueled against the people of the Jewish community. Jews were being crammed into concentration camps. On this Einstein stood in opposition to Hitler. Due to Hitler's displeasure, he finally decided to leave Germany. In those days Einstein went to America to give a speech. Then some of his friends wrote him a letter, warning him not to return to Germany, because a big indictment had been made against him. After this Einstein stayed in America and became a professor at Princeton University.

While living in America, Einstein did a lot of work on the development of the atomic bomb. When these atomic bombs were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Einstein wept. He had not even dreamed of such destruction. After this nuclear attack, Einstein continued to teach about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy throughout his life. Einstein was not only a scientist but also a great priest of peace. In one of his messages, he had prayed to mankind to end the war. A new element has been named einsteinium to honor him. Today, more than sixty-five years have passed since his death, but his brain is still preserved at Princeton Hospital. It has been studied in many hospitals and scientists are still trying to understand the mystery of Einstein's scholarship.

Several countries plan to step up military spending

India needs to vastly improve its defence capability

By: Nantoo Banerjee

The Russian attack on Ukraine seems to have given a wakeup call to countries in Europe and Asia to substantially step up their annual defence expenditure to protect themselves from possible external assault. Given the ominous security situation in Europe, a number of countries, including Germany, Sweden, Romania, Latvia, Finland, the Netherlands and Belgium have raised their defence expenditure for 2022. Germany heads the list with chancellor Olaf Scholz allocating an additional Euro 100 billion (US\$110.65 billion) for the country's armed forces, more than doubling its last budget of Euro 47 billion. He said the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a "turning point in the continent's history". Latvian President Egils Levits said that while the European Union (EU) remains one of the most important economic players globally, it is a "midget" in political terms. The EU has been significantly underspending on defence and the military.

Some are believed to be even considering the possibility of going nuclear as India and Pakistan did in the 1970s. Building nuclear weapons from scratch takes time. After testing its first nuclear bomb in 1974, India took over two decades to build a nuclear arsenal and delivery system capable of military deployment. Pakistan started its nuclear weapons programme in 1972 under the then energy minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who later became the country's president and prime minister. Interestingly, in 1993, South Africa surprised the world by announcing that it had built nuclear weapons in the 1980s, before dismantling its arsenal. For the first time, a country outside of the elite world powers had obtained nuclear capabilities while keeping matters a secret from almost everyone else. For countries such as Germany, Japan, Israel and Iran, it may not take long to develop weapons of mass destruction and their delivery system.

In Asia, several countries are plan-

ning to raise their defence budgets in the face of possible aggression by China, the world's third largest military power boasting a big stockpile of nuclear arms. Following the unchallenged invasion of Ukraine by Russia, countries in the Asia-Pacific region are fearing a similar attack on Taiwan by China to get the disputed island annexed in due course. Japan is highly concerned about such a development. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has already hinted at a large hike in defence spending. Former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe had repeatedly vowed to strengthen his country's defences as Japan feared China's unilateral attempt to change the status quo in the region — including Taiwan and the disputed Senkaku Islands. The uninhabited Senkakus are believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits. According to observers, a control of the islets by Beijing would give China a strategic foothold that could stymie US and Japanese military operations in the Western Pacific.

China, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia are already among the big Asian spenders in defence. Of them, both China and Pakistan — currently two strong military allies after Pakistan broke away from the US camp — are nuclear armed. It may be a matter of time before Shiite Iran too becomes a nuclear power to the chagrin of US-protected Saudi Arabia, the powerful propagator of Sunni religion, and Israel. Sunni-majority Pakistan state is close to Saudi Arabia. West Asia's power politics appear to be most complex with the US, Russia, China and Pakistan seen as dominant strategic policy influencers.

Lately, Saudi Arabia and the UAE refused to back the US against Russia in Ukraine. The Gulf Royals even declined to take calls from President Biden amid fears of oil price spike. Iran — a friend of China — has long enjoyed strategic relations with North Korea. After the Soviet Union's disintegration, Iran expanded its oil exports

to North Korea in exchange for technological assistance for its missile and nuclear programmes. Encouraged by the success of Scud-B attacks during the Iran-Iraq War, Iran collaborated with North Korea throughout the 1990s in the development and procurement of increasingly longer-range ballistic missiles. New-found ties between China and Pakistan, former US strategic partner and an original member of US-led security block called central treaty organisation (CENTO), could be the most confusing military alliance in the region, specially for India and Iran. All the countries in the region, except probably India, are spending huge sums to bolster their military fire power.

China's military spending in 2022 is expected to be over four times that of India's and nearly 3.5 times that of Russia. The annual defence expenditure of Russia is around US\$70 billion as per the Trading Economics global macro models and analysis projections. The Ukraine war is bound to raise Russia's defence spending. China officially announced its defence budget of Yuan 1.45 trillion (US\$229.5 billion) for the current year before its National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5. Janes, the trusted source of defence intelligence, estimates China's defence budget to be \$58 billion more than the official figure, making the total to US\$287.8 billion.

A 'work report' issued at the NPC by Premier Li Keqiang said the increase is aligned with China's military goals. These include the target to achieve 'military development' by 2027, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and 'military modernisation' by 2035. It is generally believed that China's actual military spending is substantially higher than what is announced in public. However, it may not be anywhere near the US, the world's biggest military spender. Last year, the US Senate passed a roughly \$770-billion defence expenditure bill for

2022. In contrast, India's military spending is really small considering its geographical size, population and growing challenges from China and Pakistan. Its defence budget for 2022-23 is only US\$54.20 billion, excluding the defence pensions. It is primarily focused towards the upkeep and modernisation of operational armed forces. India's total defence spending, including pensions, for 2022-23 is projected at US\$70.6 billion, representing a 9.8 per cent increase over last year. In 2018, India's parliamentary (Lok Sabha) standing committee on defence had recommended that the country's defence spending should be equivalent to three percent of its GDP. In reality, it is below two percent. Even smaller European countries spend around 2.5 percent of their GDP on defence. With belligerent China in the north along a 3,488km-long land border and malicious Pakistan in the west sharing 3,310-long border with India, the country needs to double its defence expenditure to reasonably protect itself against possible external aggression.

India must invest big in defence to match China's firepower. The Russia-Ukraine war once again proved that self help is the best help. Ukraine is fighting its own battle after its western allies refused to directly fight against Russia. Frustrated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelenskyy, who expected physical support from the US and other NATO powers, lashed out at western leaders for failing to come to his country's rescue from Russian 'atrocities.' The Ukrainian president blamed 'western politicians' for inaction after shelling killed fleeing civilians. India too has few dependable strategic allies which will fight for India in case of a full-blown war in the South Asian region. India certainly needs to build a strong defence for itself and will to win.

(IPA Service)

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Assam & Meghalaya to Sign Border Agreement on March 27 : Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma

Agency
Guwahati, March 15:

In an attempt to resolve a long-standing boundary dispute, the northeastern states of Assam & Meghalaya have agreed to sign a border agreement on March 27 in New Delhi, thereby demonstrating their greatest commitment to sort-out the conflict.

Responding to a budget discussion in the state Assembly, Sangma asserted that concerned measure will be implemented after a final round of discussions with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

"This agreement will be signed and the final conversation with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will happen this month. The preliminary date

that has come to me is March 27," - asserted Sangma.

"As a result, all cabinet colleagues and officials involved with the same, will travel to Delhi to commemorate this historic event, and I am optimistic that March 27 will be a historic day in which we will be able to reach a final agreement and sign the agreement on the six places," he added.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked by the Assam Chief Minister - Himanta Biswa Sarma, and his Meghalaya counterpart - Conrad Sangma on January 29, which was then presented to Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation - Amit Shah for review and consideration on January 31.

Sangma acknowledged

that the boundary dispute has been lingering for a long time, but claimed that the MDA administration has been firm in its determination that the problem must be resolved.

Its worthy to note that for settling the border disputes, Assam & Meghalaya government on the first phase had formed three regional committees each, which is led by Cabinet ministers and officials of the two northeastern states. These committees were directed to focus on 5 aspects - historical facts, ethnicity, administrative convenience, continuity of the land, willingness and people's sentiments.

Based on the same, the regional committees were tasked with the responsibility of making joint visits to "areas of differences" along the inter-state

border, thereby interacting with all stakeholders, village heads, record their views, and finally submit their reports.

Out of 12 disputed locations, in the first phase, 6 disputed locations were mutually studied - Tarabari, Gizang, Fahala, Baklapara, Khanapara (Pilingkata) and Ratacherra. These areas fall under Cachar, Kamrup and Kamrup Metropolitan districts of Assam and West Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and East Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya.

However, both the states have agreed on the villages in the border areas, and identified natural boundaries such as rivers and forests, he said. There are 36 villages in the six places of difference, covering an area of 36.79 sq kms which will be equally shared between the two northeastern states.

Assam Rifles apprehend UG

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

Keithelmanbi Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) in an joint operation with Manipur Police apprehended insurgent of proscribed group UNLF in SamaramLamkhai in Thoubal district on 13 March 22.

Based on specific inputs, troops of Assam Rifles along with Manipur Police launched an operation which led to the apprehension of an active cadre of UNLF.

The apprehended insurgent was handed over to Khongjom Police Station for further investigation.



AR recovers contraband items

IT News
Imphal, March 15:

Tengnoupal Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) recovers huge quantities of Urea bags in General Area Pine-apple farm near Khudengthabi Village, Tengnoupal on 13 Mar

2022. Based on a confirmed input, troops of Assam Rifles launched a search operation in the area of Pine-apple farm near Khudengthabi, and found 50 gunny bags hidden under a thick foliage. On thorough

search of the bags, huge quantity of Urea fertilizer was recovered which was dumped to be subsequently transported towards Moreh. The recovered items were handed over to Customs dept/Moreh for further legal action and investigation.

Corbevax – All About India's First Protein Sub-Unit Covid Vaccine Approved for Kids in 12-14 Age Bracket

Agency
New Delhi, March 15:

Starting this week, Biological E's Corbevax will be administered to children in 12-14 years age-group, the Centre announced on Monday. It has also removed the co-morbidity clause for precaution doses to senior citizens.

"Safe children means safe India. I am happy to inform that from March 16 Covid vaccination for children in the age group of 12 to 14 will begin. Also, everyone aged 60+ will now be able to get precaution doses. I urge the families of children and people in the age group of 60+ to get the third dosage," Union

health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said.

1. Corbevax, developed by the Hyderabad-based Biological E. Ltd in collaboration with the Texas Children's Hospital Centre for Vaccine Development and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, is "India's first indigenously developed protein subunit vaccine against Covid-19". Here is all you need to know about the vaccine:

2. The Centre will be administering the Corbevax vaccine to the 12 to 14 age group. It received the nod for rollout in the country in end-December 2021.

3. In February this year, Corbevax received emergency use authorisation (EUA) from India's drug regulator for the 12 to 18-year age group.

4. Labelled a "recombinant protein subunit vaccine", Corbevax stands on the same platform as the hepatitis shot, meaning it's a tried and tested vaccine, unlike the likes of mRNA (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) and non-replicating viral vector (Covishield, Sputnik V) vaccines, which were rolled out for public use for the first time

during the Covid-19 pandemic as vaccine development was pursued at an unprecedented scale to address the global crisis.

5. In Phase-II human trials, Corbevax "demonstrated superior immune response in comparison with Covishield... against the ancestral-Wuhan strain and the globally dominant Delta variant", Biological E said.

6. The vaccine had an effectiveness of over 90 per cent against the original Wuhan strain of the novel coronavirus and was more than 80 per cent effective in preventing symptomatic infections with the Delta variant. Reports said that its effectiveness is being assessed against the Omicron variant.

7. Corbevax uses a recombinant protein platform which is currently not being used by any other vaccine that is being distributed in the country. Like other vaccines, Corbevax targets the spike protein on the virus particle's surface. However, instead of instructing cells to replicate them, the vaccine injects a small volume of cloned spike proteins grown in a lab.

Contd. from Page 2

Modi Government Pushes....

The question is what benefit the workers will get after interest rate cut on their provident fund deposits? It is shocking that Modi government should resort to such a cruel act against workforce under cover of high sounding names of schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan (PM-SYM) or National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Person, at a time when the entire workforce in the country are undergoing an unprecedented crisis needing greater social security cover. Even the draft central rules on the Code on Social Security, 2020 mentions widening the ESI and PF schemes for entire workforce in the country, and more recently registration facility have been provided on e-shram portal linking both. It means the teeth to eat are different than the tusks to show.

The new approved rate of interest on PF deposit is 8.1 per cent for the financial year 2021-22 as against the last two financial years 2020-21 and 2019-20 when it stood at 8.5 per cent, thus making the interest rate the lowest since 1977-78 when it stood at 8 per cent. In 2015-16 the rate of interest was 8.8 per cent, which was highest 12 per cent between 1989 and 2000. The amount calculated on the new rate will be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2021-22, after the approved rate would be officially notified in the government gazette. It should also be noted that the Central Board of Trustees is the apex decision making body of the EPFO, which is a tripartite body

involving the government, workers, and employers' representative, but it is well known that it decides whatever the Central governmentatory want to. AITUC General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur said, "All employee representatives in the Central Board of Trustees demanded continuation of 8.5 percent."

It is "black initiative", criticized Mamata Banerjee the Chief Minister of West Bengal, while slamming the Centre's decision to slash interest rate on employees' PF deposits. "This is amidst the pandemic-hit financial stresses of middle and lower-middle-class workers and employees." And she was not incorrect. She rightly said that it must be thwarted by united protests. Central trade unions and several other leaders from opposition parties have also condemned the move. The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) called for widespread protest against this during the all-India strike on March 28 and March 29, 2022. AITUC argued that reducing the interest rate amounts to reducing the protection offered by PF accumulations in old age. This will affect all senior citizens who depend on the interest on their savings to support themselves. AITUC has also rejected the so-called actuarial calculations put forth by the Ministry to justify the reduced interest rate, which favours big players in financial market and corporate, about which Union labour minister Bhupendra Yadav was quoted saying "It feels good to announce" 8.1 per cent interest rate on EPF savings for 2021-22. (IPAService)

Mobile Phone Lost

I, Ahmed Ali have lost my Mobile Phone (NOKIA C2) bearing sim No. 8974965404 (Airtel) on the way between Babupara Jame Masjid to Jiribam Bazar on the 13th March, 2022.

Finders are requested to hand over the same to the undersigned.

Sd/-
Ahmed Ali
Lalpani Pt-II, Cachar
Assam

Name Change

I, the undersigned, Phirepa Loitongbam Meitei do hereby declare that I have relinquished, renounced and abandoned the use of my old name **Rajdip Loitongbam** as I have assumed my new name **Phirepa Loitongbam Meitei**.

Sd/-
Phirepa Loitongbam Meitei
S/o Loitongbam Samarendra Singh &
Khurajiam Radhabino Devi
Nagamapal Kangjabi Leirak
Imphal West



MANIPUR STATE POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED

(Regd. Office: Secure Office Complex, 3rd Floor, North AOC, A.T. Line Imphal West, Manipur – 795001)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Imphal, Dated the 14th March, 2022

No. 2/193(DW-RRBC/KMD/CDL)/2022-MSPDCL-TECH/8516-26: Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited (MSPDCL), a Government of Manipur enterprise, invites Sealed Tender from eligible Contractor/Firms for the work of "Supply, Erection & Stringing of 11 KV line (0.1 km), Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1x25 KVA Distribution Substation and Supply, Erection & Stringing of LT line (0.55 km) using AB Cable (3x50+1x35) sq.mm for power supply of **28-Rajput Regiment base camp at Khemdo Village**" on turnkey basis.

The tender details and documents shall be available from 15/03/2022 to 25/03/2022 during office hours at the office of the **Deputy General Manager (Purchase), MSPDCL, Secure Office Complex, 3rd Floor, North AOC, Imphal West** on payment of cost of tender of **Rs. 500/- (non-refundable)**.

Tender Specification No.: 206/2/2022

Last date of Submission of Tender: 26/03/2022 (upto 11.00 A.M.)

Date of Opening : 26/03/2022 (Time : 2.00 P.M.)

Venue : MSPDCL Conference Hall.

Sd/-
(Wangkheimayum Sonia)
Deputy General Manager (Purch.)
MSPDCL

Advt-IT-(B)-01



MANIPUR STATE POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED

(Regd. Office: Secure Office Complex, 3rd Floor, North AOC, A.T. Line Imphal West, Manipur – 795001)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Imphal, Dated the 14th March, 2022

No. 2/194(DW-RRBC/KJY/CDL)/2022-MSPDCL-TECH/8505-15: Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited (MSPDCL), a Government of Manipur enterprise, invites Sealed Tender from eligible Contractor/Firms for the work of "Supply, Erection & Stringing of 11 KV line (0.26 km), Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1x25 KVA Distribution Substation and Supply, Erection & Stringing of LT line (0.22 km) using AB Cable (3x50+1x35) sq.mm for power supply of **28-Rajput Regiment base camp at Khengjoy Village**" on turnkey basis.

The tender details and documents shall be available from 15/03/2022 to 25/03/2022 during office hours at the office of the **Deputy General Manager (Purchase), MSPDCL, Secure Office Complex, 3rd Floor, North AOC, Imphal West** on payment of cost of tender of **Rs. 500/- (non-refundable)**.

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Venue : MSPDCL Conference Hall.

Sd/-
(Wangkheimayum Sonia)
Deputy General Manager (Purch.)
MSPDCL

Advt-IT-(B)-02

No indication firing of missile from India into Pakistan 'anything other than accidental': US

Agency
Washington, Mar 15:

The United States has said that there is no indication that the recent firing of a missile from India which landed in Pakistan was "anything other than accidental." India on Friday said it accidentally fired a missile on March 9 that landed in Pakistan and that the "deeply regrettable" incident was caused by a technical malfunction in the course of its routine maintenance.

"We have no indication as you also heard from our Indian partners that this incident was anything other than an accident," State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in response to a question at his daily news conference on Monday.

"We refer you of course to the Indian Ministry of Defence for any follow up. They issued a statement on March 9th to explain precisely what had happened. We don't have a comment beyond that," Price added.

The defence ministry said



in New Delhi that the government has taken a serious view of the incident and ordered a 'Court of Enquiry' into it, a day after Pakistan said a high-speed projectile launched from India entered its airspace and fell near Mian Channu in Khanewal district in Pakistan's Punjab province.

On Thursday night, Pakistan summoned India's Charge d' Affaires at Islamabad and

conveyed its strong protest over the "unprovoked" violation of its airspace by the supersonic "projectile" of Indian origin.

The Pakistan foreign office has also called for a thorough joint investigation into the incident.

"On March 9, in the course of a routine maintenance, a technical malfunction led to the accidental firing of a mis-

sile. The government of India has taken a serious view and ordered a high-level Court of Enquiry," the defence ministry said in a statement in New Delhi on Friday.

"It is learnt that the missile landed in an area of Pakistan. While the incident is deeply regrettable, it is also a matter of relief that there has been no loss of life due to the accident," it said.

What Will Happen If You Do Not Link Your PAN-Aadhaar By March 31? Know Here

Agency
New Delhi, March 15:

PAN Aadhaar Link: The last date to link your PAN and Aadhaar Card has been fixed at March 31, 2022, by the government of India. If you do not link these cards by the last date, you may be subjected to a number of penalties. For one, your PAN Card will become inoperative.

PAN Card is necessary to conduct financial transactions like opening a new bank account, investing in the share market etc. Also, it is mandatory to quote your

PAN card while applying for an Income Tax return and for interest payment.

Advertisement
If you do not link your PAN and Aadhaar card, your PAN card cannot be furnished in any further transactions. However, you can link both the cards after the deadline by paying a penalty.

What Happens If You Do Not Link Your PAN-Aadhaar Card By March 31?

1. The PAN Card will become inoperative, you will not be able to use it for further transactions.

2. You may be liable to a

fine of Rs 10,000 under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

3. If you link the two cards after the deadline, you will have to pay a penalty. According to Economic Times, the penalty has not been fixed yet. However, the report also added that the penalty cannot be more than Rs 1,000.

4. You will not be able to file your Income Tax Return (ITR) without linking your PAN and Aadhaar card.

5. You will not be able to invest in the share market. It is mandatory to produce your PAN card while opening a Demat account.

India Logs 2,568 New Covid-19 Infections, 97 Fatalities

Agency
New Delhi, March 15:

India logged 2,568 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,29,96,062, while the active cases dipped to 33,917, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Tuesday. The death toll climbed to 5,15,974 with 97 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprise 0.08 per cent of the total infections, while the na-

tional COVID-19 recovery rate further improved to 98.72 per cent, the ministry said. A reduction of 2,251 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,24,46,171 and the case fatality rate was recorded as 1.20 per cent. The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded

180.40 crore. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

The country crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year.

Karnataka hijab ban to stay, high court says wearing it is not part of essential religious practice

Agency
Bengaluru, March 15:

The Karnataka HC has ruled that hijab does not form a part of the essential religious practice in Islam, in a huge setback to a section of Muslim students from the Government Pre-University Girls College in Udupi, seeking permission to wear hijab inside Karnataka institutions.

Dismissing all the petitions challenging the ban on hijab inside Karnataka schools, the Karnataka High Court also ruled that the restrictions on wearing of uniforms was reasonable and that the students

cannot oppose it.

The Karnataka hijab row emerged on January 1, 2022, when some Muslim students of a pre-university college in Karnataka's Udupi were not allowed to attend classes wearing a hijab, as the dress was against the prescribed norms of the college.

The protests soon spread to other colleges and districts in the state. A section of college students in Karnataka's Koppa district wore saffron scarves protesting against allowing Muslim girls to wear hijab inside the classroom. Similar protests erupted in Mangaluru colleges on Janu-

ary 6.

After multiple hearings in the Karnataka HC regarding the issue, the three-judge bench issued a verdict on Tuesday, March 15, that hijab was not part of the essential religious practice under Islam. They further said that the restrictions on wearing uniforms are a reasonable restriction and that students cannot object to this.

Taking a holistic view of the entire matter, the Karnataka HC came up with three questions and answered them accordingly:

Q.1 Whether wearing hijab is part of essential religious

practice under Islam?

Ans: Wearing Hijab does not form part of essential religious practice.

Q.2 Whether prescription of school uniform is legally permissible, keeping in mind the fundamental rights of the petitioners?

Ans: The restriction on wearing of uniform is a reasonable restriction that the students cannot object to.

Q.3 Whether the Govt order dated Feb 5 was done without application of mind and is arbitrary?

Ans: No case is made for the invalidation of the Govt order dated February 5.

Sports

I-League: Neroca FC look to continue unbeaten run against Real Kashmir

Agency
Kalyani (West Bengal) March 15:

Fresh from a win in their last match against TRAU, Neroca FC are aiming to continue their unbeaten run against Real Kashmir in an I-League 2021-22 encounter at the Kalyani Municipal Stadium here on Tuesday.

Neroca FC registered a comfortable win over TRAU while Real Kashmir had to settle for a point against Sreenidi Deccan FC.

Real Kashmir head coach David Robertson wants to keep going in the next games as he said, "Our performance was really good. I think neither team deserved to lose. As a team, we were disappointed but it's football. We are not looking too far ahead. We want to go match by match and keep collecting points."

Experienced midfielder Pradeep Shirodkar accompanied the coach in the pre-match press conference, said, "We



worked hard in the last match and played well. Unfortunately, we didn't get the result we wanted. Neroca FC is a good team and we have to play well and be positive to get all three points.

"Neroca FC is a difficult team. As I told you before, any team can defeat the other on any given day. Neroca FC is performing well. We will look to execute our plans to get a positive result. I believe in my players. They have been fantastic in the

last few matches on and off the field," Robertson concluded.

On the other hand, Neroca FC had a break in the last round of fixtures and head coach Khogen Singh is confident this will benefit his team a lot. "We had a four to the five-day gap. So, we had a few tactical training sessions. The boys are fresh and want to win all three points."

The star forward Sergio Mendigutxia has his sights set on another three points in the next game for his team. "I am

very happy at the club and would like to continue. Our boys will fight to get all three points. I am very comfortable here and want to keep working," Sergio added.

On the opponents, coach Khogen Singh said, "They are a good team who play long balls over the top of the defence. We have to make sure that we win the second ball. Players need to press accordingly to find spaces. We have to be clinical to get all three points."

4 killed, 14 Injured in Scrap Shop Blaze in Jammu, Short-Circuit Suspected Cause of Fire

Agency
Jammu, March 15:

Four persons were killed and 14 others injured on Monday in a massive blaze inside a scrap shop and surrounding 'jhuggies' (shanties) in Jammu city, police said.

Locals said the fire broke out in the evening initially in the scrap shop and engulfed the surrounding 'jhuggies' in the Residency Road area.

SSP, Jammu, Chandan

Kohli, also said that the fire broke out in the scrap shop located in the Residency Road area this evening and some gas cylinders also exploded, spreading the blaze to the surrounding shanties.

"Electric short circuit is suspected to be the cause of the fire as per preliminary reports," he said.

Police, fire and emergency services, and the locals worked hard to rescue the injured.

Police said 4 persons died in this blaze and 14 are injured. The injured were being treated in the hospital.

Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha has sanctioned ex gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh each for the families of the killed persons.

A sum of Rs 1 lakh each has been sanctioned to the families of those severely injured while those with minor injuries will get Rs 25,000 each.

GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT THOUBAL CIRCLE NO. II

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Dated, the 14th March, 2022

On behalf of the Governor of Manipur, the Superintending Engineer, Thoubal Circle No. II, Water Resources Department, Manipur, invites item rate tender through open tender from eligible contractor for 5 (five) nos. of works at a total estimated cost of Rs. 440.15 lakhs under Thoubal Project Division VI jurisdiction.

The tendering officer is Superintending Engineer, Thoubal Circle No. II, Water Resources Department, Manipur. The Tender details and documents shall be available from 15th March, 2022 to 30th March, 2022 at the office of the Superintending Engineer, Thoubal Circle No. II, Lamphel, W.R.D, Manipur.

Bid Submission Start date 16th March, 2022
Bid Submission End date 31st March, 2022
Date of opening of Bid 4th April, 2022 Till the end.
Time 11:00 am.

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Thoubal Circle No. II, Water Resources Department, Manipur.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Thoubal Circle No. II
Water Resources Deptt., Manipur