

State Cabinet holds its first meeting; First session of 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly on March 24

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

The State Cabinet held its first meeting yesterday, after the formation of new Government, with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh taking the chair. The meeting was attended by newly sworn in Ministers Thongam Biswajit, Yumnam Khemchand, Govindas Konhoujam, Nemcha Kipgen and Awangbow Newmai.

During the meeting, the State Cabinet approved to recommend to the Governor of Manipur for fixing the date and time of election of Speaker for the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly on 24th March, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. The cabinet also decided to request the Governor to summon the first session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly on 24th March, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. and to deliver the Governor's Address in the Legislative Assembly on the same day at 11:00 a.m.

The Cabinet approved '100 tasks in 100 days' programme, which consists of various targets set before the Government for achieving the

same within first 100 days of new Government. This included policy decisions, construction works as well as systemic improvements.

The Cabinet decided that there will be a 5-day week for government offices, without affecting essential services. Working hours will be increased on working days. There will be change in office timings. Office will start at 9 a.m. To sync with school timings and enable proper home management as well as ease traffic congestion, school timings will also change with classes starting early at 8 a.m. The new system will improve output and productivity of government servants by providing much needed rest & rejuvenation on weekends. It will also enable adequate time for school children to productively use afternoon hours.

The Cabinet resolved to Make Manipur Corruption Free. Anti Corruption Cell in Chief Minister's Office will be revived and strengthened, headed by an officer of rank of Additional SP. 'CM da Haisi Initiative' will be transformed

Election for speaker of Manipur Assembly on March 24

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

The Governor of Manipur La Ganesan fixed March 24 as the date for holding election to the office of the Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly.

MLA of Yaikul Assembly Constituency

Thokchom Satyabrata Singh has been nominated for the Speaker post of BJP.

On March 14, BJP MLA S Rajen Singh, who was appointed as the pro-tem speaker by the governor administered oath to the newly elected members of the state assembly.

Even though the results

of the elections to the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly were declared on March 10 with BJP securing absolute majority, the government was formed only on March 21 with N Biren Singh taking oath as Chief Minister of the state on March 22 for the second consecutive term.

as part of Anti Corruption Cell, with toll free numbers made available for public to send complaints. Vigilance & Anti-Corruption Department will act on actionable complaints received in the Anti-Corruption Cell within a deadline. No person, including any member of the public, will be spared if found to be giving or taking bribe money.

The Cabinet also resolved to Make Manipur Drug Free. An IGP Rank police officer will lead Anti Narcotics Task Force. Anti Narcotics Division

will be strengthened by posting manpower of integrity. Poppy plantation areas will be identified through satellite mapping and drone surveys.

The Cabinet resolved to pursue lasting peace for the State by reaching out to various armed groups operating in the region.

With a view to reduce the hardship faced by beneficiaries of housing schemes of PMAY in urban and rural areas on account of Central scheme guidelines, the Cabinet also decided to set up a

Corpus Fund for releasing advance money to beneficiaries to enable beneficiaries to start housing construction without waiting for release of 1st instalment from the Centre.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister also convened a conference with all administrative secretaries to review some of the new government's main policy initiatives and has issued the appropriate directives to combat corruption, the drug scourge, and the execution of welfare policies at the grassroots.

2400 children (12-14yrs) vaccinated against Covid 19

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

A total of 2400 children aged 12-14 years were vaccinated against Covid 19 in Manipur till date even though the nationwide vaccination program for these age group of children was formally launched on March 16, according to official sources. Thus only about two percent of the targetted children (12-14 years) population of the state were vaccinated.

An official of the state health department when contacted said that the state's

vaccination target for children aged 12-14 years is 1,20,000.

Meanwhile the state on Wednesday reported 6 new Covid 19 positive cases, when 841 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, it said. Thus the state's total infection tally increased to 1,37,057. The total number of active cases stands at 80. The state reported no Covid death in the last 24 hours, official sources said.

The state's Covid 19 death toll increased to 2,120. On the other hand with just 7 new recoveries in the last 24 hours the total num-

ber of recovered COVID 19 cases in Manipur reached 1,34,851. Thus the state's recovery rate increases to 98.39 %. Presently only 8 Covid 19 positive cases are under home isolation. Till date 1,59,601 persons were tested for COVID 19 at the various testing centres in the state, the source said.

As per latest official reports, the state has so far given 27,68,428 doses of Covid vaccines including 15,28,372 first and 11,75,523 second doses besides 64,533 precautionary doses to the residents.

Ukhrul bodies demand a ministerial berth

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Civil Society Organisations of Ukhrul district has demanded a ministerial berth from the newly elected 3 MLAs from Ukhrul district.

A press release by Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), an apex body of Tangkhul communities said the Naga People's Front (NPF) got a total of 5 seats beating 2017 elections record of 4 MLAs in the recently concluded assembly election. The increase in the number came from Ukhrul district with all 3 elected NPF MLAs.

The elected MLAs are Ram Muivah of Ukhrul AC, Khashim Vashum of Chingai AC and Leishyo Keishing of Phungyar.

The press release further

said, "At this juncture, we earnestly request the concerned authority to consider the sentiments and hopes of the people for holistic development. For the last two decades, the district has been denied a Ministerial berth"

In a letter to Himanta Biswa Sarma of North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), the Tangkhul Katamnoo Saklong (Tangkhul student body) said the people of Ukhrul, feel deeply saddened, disappointed and betrayed by the state government of Manipur for ignoring Ukhrul District by not selecting a Cabinet Minister for the past 20 years.

TKS also urged the NEDA convenor to suitably advise the state government to select an MLA from Ukhrul as a Cabinet Minister in the Council of Ministers.

Moirangthem Munan appointed Finance Secretary of UNLF

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Moirangthem Munan has been appointed as the UNLF's Finance Secretary by the party's 9th General Assembly. In a news release, the UNLF's Secretary of Publicity, Central Committee, also announced that all work linked to finance will be signed by the new finance secretary.

The Secretary of Publicity went on to say that the 9 stars in the party logo will match the silver hue star in the party flag.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked for second day in a row

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Imphal's petrol price is now Rs. 101.43 per litre, while diesel costs Rs. 85.77 per litre. In the last seven days, the price of petrol in Imphal has risen from Rs. 99.70 to Rs. 101.36, while diesel prices have risen from Rs. 84.15 to Rs. 85.71. Every day at 6 a.m., the price of petrol and diesel fluctuates.

The Editorial Cleaning education sector: The curious case of former education minister

Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh. This name must be familiar, right? Well, everyone in Manipur must have known him for the last few years. If not, at least his name. The former education minister is, by far, the most famous education minister Manipur has ever seen. But, unfortunately, not by his good initiatives and deeds. The reason, everyone knows.

He shot to fame during the last term of the BJP-led coalition government the Chief Minister N Biren Singh headed, with his speeches that drew controversies and criticisms from all sections of the society sans his die-hard disciples. Curiosity, the people have, is: how and why former BJP decision-makers chose him to be the torchbearer of the state's education system? A dire need to ponder this statement.

In one of his controversial statements regarding the recruitment of around 923 graduate teachers at the education department, Mr. Rajen announced that the government would set an example, unlike previous governments, by declaring the results within three days after the exam. It didn't happen. But, it was no surprise. A lot of promises and announcements did not happen. History is the proof. The controversial part was when Rajen said: "We will try to recruitment on merit basis partially." Let's note: Not all, just partly. In Manipuri, he said, "Merit-basis ta eikhoi khara adum, khara sengna tounaba hotnagani." The statement comes at a time when Mr. Biren kept promising and boasting about a corruption-free government and the overhyped "School Fagathansi Mission."

The controversy didn't end right there. In one of the victory speeches at Awang Wabagai on March 11, Mr. Rajen declared that 14785 electorates who voted for National Peoples Party contender Pukhrabam Sumati Devi have sold out their rights and therefore, they will be deprived of all the government entitlements for the next five years. What was more astonishing is that the people gathered there gave him rousing applause. Who would have expected this undemocratic assertion from a seasoned politician, a representative of the state, who was given the education portfolio twice?

Soon after filing his nomination papers, Congress candidate Likmabam Manibabu pointed out discrepancies in Rajen's educational qualifications. Setting aside their differences, his four rival candidates joined hands to accuse him of "dubious education records and even more dubious 'age history'." The former education minister had different claims. His 2007 affidavit said he graduated in 1985 from Manipur University. In the 2012 election, Rajen claimed to have passed BA in 1992. In 2022, Rajen said that he got his BA degree from YK College at Wangjing, which is under Manipur University, in 1998. In his clarification, he asked rival candidates to file an RTI to know the information, and he never mentioned the two BA degrees he said in the 2007 and 2012 affidavits. The clarification is still due to whether he got three degrees or not. People are still reeling under this suspense. As affidavits sway people's opinions and choices, clarity is still demanded.

Leveling criticism on his English language knowledge and speaking ability won't be a good topic. Still, people hope for at least some English reading and speaking skills from the person handling the education sector shaping the future of our students and society. Leaving everything aside, the former minister did not even have the audacity to speak in the Manipuri language, one of the country's official languages, and his first language. Voluminous mockeries and memes came as replies to his speeches on social media sites by netizens, and people waited to watch his mouth.

The choice of the people is varied. Not everyone is wrong or right in a democratic setup. The majority wins the vote, and people are compelled to respect the result. Some people make decisions contemplating a candidate's merits and demerits to being a lawmaker before pressing the button at the EVM. In contrast, many joined the mass in choosing a candidate depending on what near and dear ones and political leaders say. The *Spiral of Silence* theory of Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann perfectly fits here. The theory states that an individual's perception of the distribution of public opinion influences that individual's willingness to express their own political opinions. Therefore, blaming the constituents of Lamsang for electing Rajen to be their representative merited another editorial or a discussion.

People have lofty expectations from Education Minister to revamp the state's education system. Now that N Biren Singh has won the race to be the state's chief minister for the second term, the priority should be on who would bolster the education sector of the state? Here, the BJP needs to pull up its sock and assign the education minister's role to somebody who will not put the people of the state to shame through his unfounded and shocking comments.

All six Ministers crorepatis – ADR report

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms, all six ministers of the present N Biren Singh led government are crorepatis. The average net worth of the six ministers examined is Rs 4.04 crores. Konhoujam Govindas Singh

of Bishenpur constituency has the highest disclosed total assets, totaling Rs. 8.32 crores. Nongthombam Biren Singh of the Heingang constituency has the smallest disclosed total assets, worth Rs. 1.47 crores only. Yumnam Khemchand Singh of the Singjamei constituency has the most liabilities, with Rs. 59 lakhs.

Six ministers (100%) have reported their age to be between 45 and 65 years old. According to the article, one of the six ministers is a woman. Also, there are no pending criminal cases against any of the ministers in the current Manipur cabinet as per the information provided on their nominations.

One Day Media Sensitisation Program on newly enacted HIV/AIDS Act 2017

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Khelen Thokchom Trust in collaboration with the Manipur State Aids Control Society is hosting a "One Day Media Sensitization Program

on the newly enacted HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017" on March 25 at 10.30 a.m., at the Meetei Council Moreh conference hall.

K. Rabei, Advocate, Manipur High Court, K

Joymati Devi, (FSW&FIDU) New Generation, Moreh, L Lucky Singh, Project Manager, DPU Moreh, and Heledro Maibam, Editor ISTV News will deliver important speeches as a part of the programme.

Delhi won't be able to blame Punjab for smog!

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



There is no doubt that India is certainly on the way to become the world's largest economy and one of the superpowers, but the situation is not satisfactory in terms of environment and air pollution. The condition is that among the top 100 places which have been found to be most polluted on the earth, 63 Indian cities are included in the list. Not only this, some of our cities are leading the tally. For example, Delhi is the world's most polluted capital for four consecutive years. Pollution in the national capital has increased 15 times as compared to previous year. The condition of North India is worse in terms of air pollution. Delhi's air pollution ranks fourth in the world, while the most polluted city is Bhiwadi in Rajasthan. After this comes the city adjacent to the national capital is Ghaziabad of Uttar Pradesh. Ten of the 15 most polluted cities in the country are around Delhi, half of which are in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

A recent report of IQAir, a Swiss environmental firm, reveals that stubble burning in paddy fields in Haryana and Punjab is responsible for 45 percent of air pollution in Delhi. Now that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) governments are ruling in both Punjab and Delhi, it will be interesting to know that in the coming winter season whether the stubble smoke from Punjab will reach Delhi or not? As per the World Air Quality Report released by IQAir, no city in India has met the World Health Organization (WHO) air quality criteria. Smoke from motor vehicles, coal-fired power stations and industrial plants plays a major role in deteriorating our air quality. It is not just a matter of statistics, but this situation is directly affecting the health of the people in our country. Air pollution causes many heart and lung diseases, for which the country has to spend a huge amount for its treatment. For India, this amount is estimated to be more than \$ 150 billion. IQAir uses data from ground sensors and government agencies to prepare the world air quality report.

It is also said that air traffic causes a lot of pollution. However, all the blame is put on the trucks. When all the VIPs travel by air, hardly any agency or country will think of banning airplanes. The condition of domestic air travel has been improving gradually. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said in Parliament that in December, 3.8 lakh passengers traveled by air every day, whereas before Covid, 4 lakh people traveled by air on a daily basis. That is, the civil aviation industry of the country is rapidly returning to the previous level. Also, international flights are also going to start with 100% capacity from March 27. When the cases of Covid started in the country, then on 23 March 2020, international flights were suspended for a week, and later the ban remained in force for two years. However, in July 2020 a limited number of flights continued with the air bubble arrangement with 37 countries. Under the air bubble system, passengers going abroad were strictly prohibited from going anywhere other than the designated places from the hotels.

Why is it so hot over north and northwest India in March?



B. Vijay GarG

As winter transitions to spring with the northward march of the Sun past the winter solstice, maximum temperatures in India show a rising trend, starting from southern parts followed by central and northern India.

March is the beginning of the summer season over India. During this month, the maximum heating zone runs along central India regions between Odisha and Gujarat. Here, hotter conditions start building up in March.

Hot winds from the deserts of northwest India also contribute to the soaring temperatures in central India regions.

Many places in the northwest and cities along the southeastern coast report up to eight heatwave days per season. However, the regions in the extreme north, northeast and southwestern India are lesser prone to heatwaves.

This year, the geographical expanse of the latest heatwave spell was unusually large.

North and northwest India including Jammu, Kutch-Saurashtra, Rajasthan along with parts Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand experienced heatwave last week.

In addition to such a large area being under the influence of heatwaves, the latest spell was a prolonged one too. It later spread to Gujarat, north Maharashtra and extended all the way to interior Odisha.

"During the past few days, the southerly winds from Gujarat, south Pakistan took the heat to southern and southwest Rajasthan. There were no active western disturbances, which otherwise brings colder winds. As a result, temperatures in Jammu, Rajasthan and neighbourhood areas remained higher than normal," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general, IMD.

Missing rain and thunderstorms

Along with seasonal transition, the lack of pre-monsoon showers has contributed to the overall heating.

"There has not been significant thunderstorm activity and associated rainfall over most parts of the country in March," said Dr Mohapatra.

Heatwave in Antarctica

On March 18, surface air temperature recorded along eastern Antarctica were historic — up to 40 degrees Celsius above normal.

Normally, the temperatures around this time of the year should have been around minus 45 to minus 50 degrees Celsius. However, the southern pole recorded somewhere between minus 18 and minus 12 degrees, which climate scientists are terming unprecedented.

Last week, Concordia, a station located on the Antarctica plateau and at a distance of 1,670 km from the Geographic South, reported temperatures 50 degrees above normal. The situation has arisen due to warm westerly winds surging the Southern Ocean and reaching the interior parts of Antarctica.

Bottled Water: A boon or a bane?

By: Sanjenbam Jugheswar Singh
Asst. Prof. JCRC Global College, Babupara, Imphal

For many years now, bottled water has been growing in popularity. People seem to favor the taste and convenience that this product can offer. It is water that is purified, is made safe to drink, is put into glass or plastic containers and is sealed. Bottled water seems like a silly product to consider using thanks to the reliability and safety of tap water around the world, but there are still many locations that need this product for basic life essentials. It is also very common to use a bottle of water as a way to stay hydrated while working, participating in athletics, going to the gym and other physical activities of life. One of the reasons why it is such a common product is that it is highly affordable. For about 50% of the cost of a soda, juice product or tea, you can purchase a zero-calorie option that can leave you feeling afresh. It has been a good choice of beverage for hydration and many other health purposes. But while water is undeniably great for you, what about other factors such as the whole bottle part?

Bottled water offers you the option to drink water anywhere. It is highly portable, durable and can be sealed. These reasons make it ideal for working out, travelling or doing virtually any activity where you may need to drink water. Bottled water is very convenient to transport or carry, especially in places where drinkable water is not guaranteed, hard to find, found at a great distance or not available at all. This is certainly one of the top benefits of bottled water, where you can just purchase it anytime and anywhere conveniently. Convenience is definitely its main selling point. Due to the fact that it does not expire and can easily be stored, bottled water is ideal for emergency and disaster situations. It is really always a good idea to keep some of this product stored in safe place at home just in case. Most of us would agree that bottled water taste exponentially better than tap water. This is because of the purification process that it goes through before it is made available for drinking, unlike tap water. Production of bottled water is strictly regulated and monitored to make sure that it is clean and free of contaminants. This puts the product highly in demand because clean and safe tap water is not always available. After a natural disaster, water lines might be disrupted, leading to contamination of water supplied to households. In situation like this, bottled water can be life-savers because it is clean and safe to drink. Bottled water is safe to drink due to the test for all sorts of chemicals and bacteria it would undergo before being bottled. For tap water, it can easily become contaminated, leading to severe illness especially in developing countries. Bottled water is readily available in supermarkets and grocery stores and comes in various sizes and content per bottle, giving consumers more choices depending on their needs.

However the cost of purifying, bottling, advertising, transporting and storing bottled water can trickle down to the cost of water itself. This means the product is significantly more expensive than the tap water. Buying bottled water is even more expensive if you are doing it very often. The cost will still depend on its size and brand. Remember that its price usually covers packaging, advertising, shipping and administrative operations. Experts even revealed that it is more costly than milk. Though you are drinking bottled water with a water-filtering system, you can still save more

money in the end by filling your own water bottles if you like to drink bottled water every day. Mostly bottled water product contains chemicals such as biphenyl-A (BPA) in the plastic container. This compound can seep into the water which means you are most probably consuming them. This risk is greatly increased if the content is stored in hot areas like those where direct sunlight is present. Truth is—many bottled water products are just filtered tap water. This has been a troubling fact for many of us, but it has been proven time and again. **The same is reported in media recently in Manipur in which a product of bottled water (Silver Dew of Loktak Industry) found contaminated substances.** Most bottled water is produced by the same factories that are making soft drinks, using the same water. Considering that you may not even be getting better quality water when you buy bottled water, it can be a plain common sense to fill your own instead. You just need clean water and a good water bottle. Government supposedly adds fluoride to tap water to help protect our teeth from decay and other dental problems. On the other hand bottled water is produced without the substance. Production of bottled water increases the use of fossil fuels. With this in mind, you will be avoiding this by filling your own water bottles. Also the manufacture of the plastic for the bottle actually utilizes more water than it takes to fill your own bottle. It poses many unfavorable environmental hazards. The problem can start when empty bottles are not properly disposed, which contributes greatly to the whole pollution problem. Huge percentage of bottles are ending up in trash cans and land fillings, having harmful effects on the environment.

According to a report, Americans buy more than 30 billion liters of water per year, most of which are contained in polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles. This means nearly 9000,000 tons of plastics which also take 17 million barrels of oil to produce what's worse; it is found that only 20% of these bottles make it to the recycling bin. The bottled water trend might be doing more for good health, but it is affecting the environment negatively big time. In fact, bottled water certainly has its place in today's society. Bottled water is an effective way to stay hydrated throughout the day. The overall availability of this product makes it easy to get something that should be healthy to drink whenever and wherever you happen to be. The only problem is that you're paying hundreds if not thousands of extra money each year to take the advantage of this convenience. When you purchase this item, most of your cost goes to plastic manufacturing instead of the liquid you consumed. Testing from NRDC found that 30% of bottled water samples showed sign of contamination. That means, it may not be safer than some tap water options that are available around the world. The best solution is to purchase a filtering product or even a reverse osmosis system that you can use at home with your current water supply. Then you can invest in reusable water bottles that will help you to stay hydrated at a fraction of the cost of the individual bottles you might be purchasing thereby reducing environmental problem too. And people should start lessening their dependency on it and again become accustomed to the taste and simplicity of tap water.

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India-Bangladesh Must Always Stand With Each Other

By: John Rozario

Thanking the Indian government for cooperating in rescuing Bangladeshi nationals from Ukraine during the war, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the two countries would always stand by each other. It is absolutely true. As friendly neighbouring country, India was, is and will be stand with Bangladesh. India and Bangladesh are eternal friends. India should stand in support of Bangladesh that embodies values that emerge from the Liberation Movement of the country. On the other hands, Bangladesh should with Bangladesh as India always stands with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and India are common members of SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, and the Commonwealth. The two countries share many cultural ties. In particular, Bangladesh and the East Indian state of West Bengal are Bengali-speaking. In 1971, the Bangladesh Liberation War broke out between East Pakistan and West Pakistan; India intervened in December 1971 in support of East Pakistan and helped secure its independence from Pakistan as the country of Bangladesh. Since the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in 2015 and round back visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in 2017, the notable developments that have taken place include resolution of long-pending land and maritime boundaries asserting the issue of enclaves, the conclusion of over ninety instruments comprising in the hi-tech areas, i.e., electronics, cyber-security, space, information

technology, and civil nuclear energy and observed increase in bilateral trade from US\$9 billion to US\$10.46 billion in the fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, preceded by US\$7 billion to US\$9 billion in FY 2017-18, an increase of 28.5 percent.

On 6 December, Bangladesh and India celebrate Friendship commemorating India's recognition of Bangladesh and the continued friendship between the two countries.

However, The Prime Minister expressed this hope in a letter to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. Sheikh Hasina wrote, "Over the last few years, our bilateral relations have been further strengthened through effective dialogue at all levels." "I firmly believe that Bangladesh and India will always stand by each other and reflect the shared aspirations of the people of both countries." "India is conducting a rescue operation called 'Operation Ganga' to evacuate civilians from Ukraine during the war.

Under the initiative, India has promised to rescue 23,000 people from the Eastern European country by March 15. Besides, 147 foreign nationals from 18 countries including Bangladesh have also been rescued. According to a March 10 report in the Times of India, 13 Bangladeshis were rescued from the northeastern Sami city of Ukraine and taken to another city during the fierce fighting.

Expressing gratitude for rescuing Bangladeshis from the battlefield, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wrote in the letter, "I am writing this

letter to express my sincere gratitude to you and your government for their assistance and cooperation in rescuing and evacuating Bangladeshis along with Indian nationals from Sami Oblast, Ukraine."

"The sincere cooperation of your government in this regard bears witness to the rare and lasting relationship that has existed between our two countries year after year." In the letter, Bangabandhu Kanya also recalled the arrival of the Indian Prime Minister on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman last year. Wishing Prime Minister Modi good health, Sheikh Hasina wished him a happy Holi.

India remains committed to assisting Bangladesh in its journey towards a strong economy, partnering with Bangladesh as Bangladesh proceeds to greater prosperity. The business communities of the two countries should seize the opportunity to enhance trade and economic linkages to new heights especially between Bangladesh and India's northeastern region.

India and Bangladesh have same developmental visions as the ties between the two nations remain strong. The relations between the two countries have been characterised as a special relationship. Bangladesh started mass COVID-19 vaccinations with India's Serum Institute Covishield vaccines on 7 February 2021. Bangladesh procured 7 million doses and India had meant to gift a further 3.3 million doses. Due to the

second wave of COVID-19 in India, the vaccine export was halted.

In April 2021, Bangladesh sent medicines and medical equipment to India following the deteriorating COVID-19 situation in India. The relief package consisted of approximately 10,000 vials of Remdesivir, (produced in Bangladesh by Beximco) anti-viral infections, oral anti-viral, 30,000 PPE kits, and several thousand zinc, calcium, vitamin C and other necessary tablets. In May 2021, the government of Bangladesh sent a second consignment of COVID-19 relief consisting of antibiotics, paracetamol, protective equipment and hand sanitiser.

Operation Ganga was conducted to rescue Indian nationals stranded in war-torn Ukraine. So far, thousands of Indian nationals were repatriated under the scheme. Significantly, the Indian government has rescued citizens of several other countries besides Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal through this operation.

It is India that stood by Bangladesh always. Even during the Ukraine crisis, India helped Bangladesh to evacuate Bangladeshi people. India's helping hand to Bangladesh is time-tested. A friend in need is a friend indeed. According to the media reports, 9 Bangladeshi nationals have been rescued from Ukraine recently under Operation Ganga. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has already thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for rescuing the citizens of Bangladesh. India and Bangladesh should stand with each other.

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India reports 1,778 new Covid cases, 62 fatalities

Agency
New Delhi, March 23:

With 1,778 new coronavirus infections, India's total tally of Covid-19 cases rose to 4,30,12,749, while the number of active cases declined by over 800 to 23,087, according to the government data updated on Wednesday.

The death toll has climbed to 5,16,605 with 62 new fatalities being reported in the last 24 hours, the data updated at

8 am showed.

The active cases constitute 0.05 per cent of the total infections, while the country's Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.75 per cent, the health ministry said.

A reduction of 826 cases has been recorded in the active Covid-19 caseload in the last 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.26 per cent and weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 0.36 per cent, according to the health ministry.

try.

The latest 24 hours saw a total of 6,77,218 Covid-19 tests being conducted. India has so far cumulatively conducted over 78.42 crore tests.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease rose to 4,24,73,057, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.20 per cent.

The cumulative doses of in the country so far under the nationwide Covid vaccination drive has exceeded 181.89 crore.

A 13-Year-Old Autistic Girl Swims Across Palk Strait in Record Time

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, March 23:

A 13-year-old Miss Jiya Rai, daughter of a senior sailor of the Indian Navy, Madan Rai of INS Kunjali, and a student of Navy Children School, colaba, Mumbai, brought laurels to India by swimming across the Palk Strait from Talaimannar (Sri Lanka) to Dhanuskodi (Tamil Nadu, India), a distance of 29 km, in 13 hours and 10 minutes on Sunday, March 20.

The swimming commenced at 4.22 am on Sunday from Talaimannar and concluded at Dhanuskodi at 5.32 pm. She covered the stretch filled with water snakes, jellyfish, facing rapidly changing currents. A child with Autism Spectrum Disorder became the youngest and fastest female swimmer in the world to swim across the Palk Strait. The record was earlier held by Ms. Bula Chowdhary who swam the distance in 13 hours 52 minutes in 2004, an official statement said.

The event was conducted by the Para-Swimming Federation of India (PSFI) with cooperation from many agencies including the Swimming Federation of India, Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu, and the Autism Society of India. The Goa Shipyard Ltd. provided the swimmer financial sponsorship for the event.

During the event, the Sri Lankan Navy provided search and rescue cover in Sri Lankan waters while the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard provided similar support in Indian waters. Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command congratulated



lated Jiya Rai and her parents on this stupendous achievement.

When about two years old, she was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. A few months later her doctor noticed that her repetitive knocking could be purposefully applied in water sport as therapy. This advice proved to be a panacea as Jiya found herself comfortable and subsequently developed a passion for swimming.

Recipient of many awards, including the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar - 2022. She is the youngest and the first autistic girl to swim from Worli sea link to Gateway of India, in Mumbai, covering a distance of 36 km in February 2021. She is now on a mission to swim in all oceans of the world.

NDA gears up for inducting the first batch of girl cadets

In another development, the National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakwasla, the prestigious Tri-Services military training institute of the

country, located at Lonawala near Pune in Maharashtra, is geared up for training the first batch of girl cadets with effect from June 2022.

Akin to their male counterparts, girls of the age group 16½ to 19 years will undergo three years of military training after successfully clearing the UPSC NDA written exam, Services Selection Board (SSB) interviews, and medicals. A total of 19 vacancies namely, 10 for the Army, 06 for the Air Force, and 03 for the Navy have been allotted by the respective Service HQs for the first batch of girls at NDA.

The training objective at NDA shall continue to remain as the centre of excellence for producing military leaders equipped with professional, moral, and physical attributes required for leading the troops to victory in the future battlefields. With minimum changes to the existing curriculum the training in Academics, Drill, Outdoor Training, etc. will be conducted in a gender-neutral manner. However, owing to physiological differences be-

tween male and female cadets, the aspect of Physical Training may entail certain changes in the training of girl cadets.

The dedicated support staff will be provided for facilitating the training of girl cadets. The majority of training activities shall be conducted jointly keeping their employability in mind, wherein the women officers are required to command the troops of men. A similar training methodology already exists in other Pre-Commissioning Training Academies like OTA Chennai, INA Ezhimala, and AFA Hyderabad.

For the stay of girl cadets, one of the squadrons has been identified and is being refurbished with amenities and requirements specific for their training. Actions are underway to augment the existing infrastructure. Requisite modifications will also be undertaken to conform to gender-specific lifestyle requirements. Whereas, in the long term, a separate squadron is being envisaged exclusively for girl cadets, a Defence spokesman said.

Covid-19 containment measures to end on March 31, says Centre, face masks, social distancing to continue

Agency
New Delhi, March 23:

In view of a decline in coronavirus cases across the country, the Home Ministry has decided to revoke the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, for Covid containment measures. However, wearing a face mask and following social distancing norms will continue as earlier.

In a letter to the chief secretaries of all states, Home Secretary of India Ajay Bhalla stated, "After the expiry of the existing MHA Order dated 25th February, 2022, no further Order may be issued by MHA."

The letter specified that the advisories issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) on containment

measures, including on the use of face masks and hand hygiene, "will continue to guide the overall national response to the pandemic".

The central government had issued orders and guidelines under the Disaster Management Act upon direction from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for the containment of the virus in the country since March 24, 2020, when the pandemic first hit.

The February 25 order is set to expire on March 31, 2022. It had directed states to open up economic and social activities after assessing the risk of infection. It defined the parameters to identify areas where restrictions are needed as: Over 10% Test Positivity Rate in the last week and a bed

occupancy of over 40 per cent (including oxygen supported or ICU beds).

Further, Bhalla in his letter stated that given the nature of the disease, "we still need to remain watchful of the situation". "Wherever any surge in the number of cases is observed, the States/UTs may consider taking prompt and proactive action at a local level, as advised by MoHFW from time to time," the letter said.

The total caseload in the country stands at 23,91,3 only (on March 22) and the daily positivity rate has declined to 0.28 per cent, he said. It is also worth mentioning that with the combined efforts, a total of 181.56 crore vaccine doses have been administered, Bhalla added.

Assets worth Rs 19,111.20 cr of Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi attached

Agency
New Delhi, March 23:

The government on Tuesday said assets worth Rs 19,111.20 crore relating to fugitives Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, have been attached so far.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said that the three fugitives have defaulted public sector banks by siphoning off funds through their companies resulting in total loss of Rs 22,585.83 crore to the lenders.

"... as on March 15, 2022,

assets worth Rs 19,111.20 crore have been attached under the provisions of PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act)," he said.

Out of Rs 19,111.20 crore, assets worth Rs 15,113.91 crore has been restituted to the public sector banks.

In addition, the minister said assets worth Rs 335.06 crore have been confiscated to Government of India.

"As on March 15, 2022, 84.61 per cent of the total defaulted funds in these cases have been attached/seized and 66.91 per cent of total loss to the banks has been handed over to banks/confiscated to

Government of India," Chaudhary said.

The minister further said that it is pertinent to mention here that as on March 15, 2022, the consortium of banks led by SBI has realised Rs 7,975.27 crore by sale of assets handed over to them by the Directorate of Enforcement.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) and Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA) provide that the Special Court trying the offence may restore any property/assets involved in money laundering to a third party claimant with legitimate interest, including banks.

Occasion for amending Lokpal Act has not arisen: Govt

Agency
New Delhi, March 23:

The occasion for changes in the Lokpal Act, to confer the anti-corruption ombudsman with the powers to reconsider and review its orders, has not arisen, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

"Amendments to laws are considered as per necessity from time to time, if so required in public interest. The occasion for such an amend-

ment has not arisen at this stage," Singh said in a written reply to a question whether the government aims to amend the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, to confer upon the Lokpal powers to reconsider and review its orders.

As per section 20(10) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, the website of the Lokpal shall, from time to time, display to the public, the status of number of complaints pending before it or disposed of by it, he said.

"Details of complaints are available on the website of the Lokpal," the minister said, when asked whether the Lokpal will make public the details of the prosecution in the corruption cases received by it in 2021.

To a separate question on the appointment of Director of Inquiry for conducting preliminary inquiry into graft complaints, Singh said, "As per the provisions of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, Director of Inquiry is to be appointed by the Lokpal".

AR recovers contraband items

IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Tengnoupal Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) recovers contraband items smuggled from Myanmar in General Area Kwathana Junction, Tengnoupal on 21 Mar 2022.

Based on a specific input a search operation was launched in which several packages concealed in the jungle were found.

The seized contraband items worth approximately Rs 12.51 lakhs was handed over to Customs Dept/Morch for further investigation.

SFs distribute it equipment in Ramva, Ukhrul, Manipur

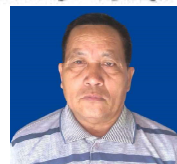
IT News
Imphal, March 23:

Shangshak Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) of Spear Corps distributed Computers in Ramva Village, Ukhrul District, Manipur on 21 March.

As part of Op Sadbhavna project, five Computers along with two Printers and accessories were handed over to the village authorities.

The villagers conveyed sincere thanks to the security forces.

শ্রীশ্রী গৌরচন্দ্রায় নমঃ



পূর্বব্রহ্মা ঐশ্বর্যে স্বাই ইরজা তিরিহা শাখাদুরাম" খোয়া শিংহনা মাসী নংজিরাবা ইমুং মনুং শাংগে নাইতে অমদি মরুপ মপাং ঐশ্বর্যে স্বাই পুয়াকপু খাদোকপু হোইবা তাং ১৬/০৩/২০২২ ইং, লমতাসী ১৩ নি পানবা যুমশ্কেপা নুমিংতা শ্রীশ্রীকৃষ্ণ কৃপাদী বৈবে ওন্দুনা শ্রীকৃষ্ণ তৈনো দাশ হায়বা নাম ফংজুনা বৃন্দাবন প্রাপ্তি ওইস্ত্রে, লাক্সিবা তাং ২১/০৩/২০২২ ইং, লমতাসী ১৮ নি পানবা নিংখোকাবা নুমিংতা অষ্ট সন্ধর্য খোইখংবোবা, লাক্সিবা তাং ২৯/০৩/২০২২ ইং, লমতাসী ২৭ নি পানবা লৈবাকপোকপা নুমিংতা চিরা উৎসব দিন খোস্ত্রে। নুমিং অসিনা লৈখিহবাগী অগ্না শান্তিদায়ক ডমজবা বস্তু বরং হরি সঙ্কটনাগা লোয়ননা শ্রীশ্রী গৌরচন্দ্রা মহাপ্রভু চরণদ্বয় কর্ণদৌরি।

উপলব্ধ অসিনা ব্রাহ্মণ বৈষ্ণব, অহল লামন মরুপ মপাং স্বাই বিবিক্তা মত চ্যো লেউবিরজুনা হরি নাম শ্রবন তৌবিরনবা পত্রনা নিমন্ত্রণ কর্ণদৌরি। পত্রনা নিমন্ত্রণ কর্ণদৌরি অপরায় বিবিক্ত উকপিননি।

বিনিতগণঃ
শাখাদুরাম ওংহী সলাস্বতী দেবী (লোইলবি)
খোংমন জোন ৪।।

STATE HANDLOOM EXPO 2021-22

NOTICE
The 23rd March, 2022

No. 16/AWAS/NOTICE/2010-11: Applications are invited from the Primary Weavers Cooperative Societies /Awardees /Individual Weavers /SHGs /Handloom Entrepreneurs /Producer Company /NGOs who have already registered to Handloom Mark or India Handloom Brand or undergoing for registration to either of the above that the Manipur Apex Handloom Weavers & Handicrafts Artisans C.S. Ltd. (AWAS), Governor's crossing, Paona Bazar, is organising a State Handloom Expo 2021-22 under the sponsorship of the office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India from 31st March 2022 to 13th April 2022 at Manipur Public Library, Imphal West, Manipur. Eligible and interested ones are informed to submit the filled in application forms on or before 29th March 2022 to the office of the undersigned during office hour. Forms are available at the AWAS office during office hour.

Sd/-
(L. Ojit Singh)
Business Manager, AWAS
#8787313141

Early resolution of Indo-Naga political issue a priority, says Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio

Agency
Kohima, March 23:

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday presented the final budget of the 13th Nagaland Legislative Assembly for the year 2022-23 and stated that early resolution of the Indo-Naga political issue would be the government's top priority.

The August House has passed a number of resolutions over the years and consultative meetings were held with all stakeholders on 15th October 2021 and again on 9th March 2022, the CM said as per a press release of the Department of Information & Public Relations, Nagaland. On 18th September 2021, all the political parties represented in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly came together to form the UDA and all the 60 Members of the August House are united with the single objective of working for a solution to the Naga issue, the CM said.

While appreciating the constant contributions of the mass based Civil Societies, Tribal Hohos, Church organisations and NGOs in the



search for peace, Rio appealed to all sections to rededicate to the cause of unity, oneness, understanding and true peace.

Rio said that the State Government has recently created the new districts of Chumoukedima, Nuland, Tsemnyu and Shamator. Earlier Noklak was also created, he said and hoped this will go a long way in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people from these areas, and bring the functioning and

activities of the Government closer to their doorsteps for better delivery of services.

The chief minister said his government is also actively pursuing for setting up a separate High Court for the State at the earliest. The Parliament is expected to enact the Act to set up a separate High Court for the State this year, the CM said.

On March 26, 2022, Nagaland will be hosting its biggest ever sporting event in

the form of the South Asian Cross-Country Championships, hosted by India with Kohima as the Host City. Athletes and officials from all over South Asia and every State and Union Territory of the Indian Union will be participating. This will be a landmark event for our State, the CM stated adding that in April 2022, the next edition of the Nagaland Olympics will also be conducted where sportspersons and youth from every corner of Nagaland will exhibit their talents and strive towards reaching the highest standards. Dr. T. Ao Tournament at Mokokchung will also be organised during April 2022.

CM Rio presented the Budget estimating the gross receipts at Rs 24,389.80 crore and gross expenditure at Rs. 24,239.50 crore for the financial year 2022-23. He added that the current year's transaction for the year 2022-23 are estimated to result in a positive balance of Rs. 150.30 crore. However, because of the negative opening balance of Rs. 2363.04 crore, the year 2022-23 is estimated to close with a negative balance of Rs. 2212.74 crore.

PRISM 2022 held



IT News
Imphal, March 23:

The North-East Students Welfare Committee of Rajdhani College, a constituent college of the University of Delhi, organized its Annual Festival "PRISM 2022" on Tuesday, March 22. The Chief-Guest on the occasion was Prof. Yaruang Awungshi, Department of African Studies, University of Delhi. Prof. Rajesh Giri, Principal, Prof. Suman Kumar, Bursar, Dr. Meenakshi Sridhar, Secretary, Staff Council, Rajdhani College, faculty members and students from the North-East were present on the occasion.

Dr. S. Santinath Singh,

Convener, NESWC, appraised the gathering of the students and faculty members about the purpose and objective of the committee and the activities which the committee organizes from time to time for the overall welfare of the students.

Prof. Suman Kumar, Bursar, Rajdhani College mentioned the cleanliness and discipline practiced in the north-east region of the country, highlighting the need to emulate and practice across the country.

The Principal Prof. Rajesh Giri spoke about the uniqueness of the North East with good mannerism as one of the characteristics of the students along with sincerity and hard work. The Principal also as-

sured the students from NE a congenial and cordial atmosphere in the college for the overall growth and development of the students.

The Chief Guest Prof. Awungshi, in his address, narrated his journey from a remote area of NE to Delhi which highlighted his strive from no-one to someone. He motivated the students not to remain static but follow their dreams taking advantages of the resources available to them and work hard to succeed in life.

Students performed many programmes such as Ladakhi Dance, Traditional Attire Show, Solo Songs, etc. which highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the northeast region of India.

NSCN (I-M) Castigates Security Forces for killing its cadres at Arunachal Pradesh

Agency
Itanagar, March 23:

The Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muiwah) has sharply condemned the security forces for killing 2 of its cadres in the Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh.

NSCN (I-M) through its Ministry of Information & Publicity (MIP) claimed that

what transpired in Tirap has gotten on its nerves, and "this time round" it won't take the things lying down."

Responding to the incident, the NSCN (I-M) has asked the Indian government for a "clear answer" on the status of the "Indo-Naga ceasefire" in Arunachal Pradesh.

The AR had "gone too aggressive" on several oc-

casions to get the best of Cease Fire Ground Rules (CFGRs) in order to fit its "devilish design against NSCN, which exercised a gentleman attitude all the way to honour the CFGRs," according to the NSCN (I-M).

According to the MIP, Assam Rifles seems disinterested about the CFGRs, no matter "how abusive it

appears from the political standpoint that goes into signing the historic Indo-Naga ceasefire in 1997." If the "mindless campaign against NSCN" continues unabated, the NSCN (I-M) has warned that it will unleash "unrestrained anger" to give the AR in Arunachal Pradesh "sleepless nights."

The NSCN (I-M) further asserted that Arunachal

Pradesh has been on its radar for a long time, since the state's Chief Minister - Pema Khandu, and Deputy Chief Minister - Chowna Mein engaged in "a political conspiracy to destroy the Nagas' ethnic identity in the state."

NSCN (I-M) affirmed that no stone would be left unturned to disallow "any Naga MLAs/ministers to

walk away scot-free on charges of supporting anti-Naga socio-political stand."

The NSCN (I-M) has stated that its forces have not been dispatched to Arunachal to "cause trouble or provoke the trigger-happy AR." The group claimed that exercising prerogative was "our right."

Stating that it was its right to contribute building

peace in "our land" to fulfil the purpose of signing the ceasefire 25 years ago, the NSCN (I-M), however, said that if the Ministry of Home Affairs "thinks that there is no ceasefire in Arunachal Pradesh, let it be so."

The NSCN (I-M) warned that it would not waste time "unbinding" itself from the CFGRs, which it believes cover Arunachal Pradesh.

Sports

ISL final 2022: Hyderabad FC hold nerve to clinch maiden title, beat Kerala Blasters on penalty shoot-out

Agency
Goa, March 23:

Laxmikant Kattimani saved three penalties as Hyderabad FC rose above the din with a 3-1 victory in a nerve-racking penalty shootout over Kerala Blasters FC and their sea of yellow supporters, in a rip-roaring 2021-22 Hero Indian Super League final at the packed P.J.N Stadium in Fatorda on Sunday.

Hyderabad FC became champions for the first time, vindicating Manolo Marquez's vision of a well-rounded team with the perfect blend of youth and experience, but it took a lottery to decide the winners in an evenly-contested summit clash that ended 1-1 after extra time as the two teams could not be separated in 90 minutes.

Rahul KP (68th) opened the scoring for Kerala, Kattimani failing to get his hands to a long-ranger before Sahil Tavora (88th) scored a stunning goal to equalise and take the game to extra time. After the outfits cancelled each other out over 30 minutes, it had to be a shootout to decide the champions.

Marko Leskovic, Nishu Kumar and Jeakson Singh saw their efforts saved brilliantly by Kattimani, the 32-year-old veteran goalkeeper even saving twice from Nishu after his first



was ruled out due to him stepping out of his line. For Hyderabad, skipper Joao Victor, Khassa Camara and Halicharan Narzary found the back of the net as Javier Siverio shot over the bar. Ayush Adhikari scored Kerala's only goal from the spot.

It was heartbreak for Kerala as they reached the final for the third time, only to finish second best when it mattered the most. The thousands of Kerala fans, many of whom travelled all the way from home by road, were left high and dry as their team fell at the last hurdle after displaying a spirited performance.

Kerala, missing Sahal Abdul Samad to injury, started the brighter side from the first minute and it remained so

throughout the first half barring a Siverio effort at the cusp of halftime.

Jorge Diaz could have helped Kerala take an early lead but the Argentine forward could not connect well to a Hamanjoit Khabra floater inside the area that caught Ashish Rai napping.

Diaz looked in fine form as he ran Hyderabad defence ragged and made those off-the-ball runs that kept the opposition defence on tenterhooks. At the half-hour mark, Luna tried his trademark dipping effort but the ball was collected with ease by Laxmikant Kattimani in Hyderabad's goal.

The game got off to a lively start with Kerala dominating proceedings but the tempo ta-

pered off a bit after the initial exchanges with both teams not really showing teeth upfront. Kerala were successful in keeping Ogbeche quiet but the likes of Luna and Vazquez too struggled to really burst to life.

Hyderabad were dealt a blow when Joel Chianese had to be replaced by Javier Siverio as the former picked up an injury in the 39th minute, and almost immediately Vazquez found the woodwork after Luna put in a delightful ball inside the box for Khabra to chest it down and Vazquez charging in to have a crack at goal first time. The missile of a strike cannonned off the crossbar as Hyderabad heaved a sigh of relief.

I-League: Punjab, NEROCA share points after 1-1 draw

Agency
Kalyani, March 23:

Round Glass Punjab FC and NEROCA FC shared the spoils as their contest ended in a 1-1 draw at the Kalyani Stadium on Sunday. After Sergio Mendigutxia headed NEROCA FC in front in the 57th minute, Aphaoba Singh came off the bench to level the match in the 77th minute with a well taken goal.

NEROCA FC made the early running in the encounter, looking assured of themselves in possession and playing with a higher intensity than their opposition from Punjab. However, despite being in the ascendancy, NEROCA had little more than a few half chances to show for their efforts.

The first half remained a cagey affair for the most part, with both teams sizing each other up in the first 45 minutes. Neither team was able to strike a decisive blow in the first period, as the contest remained 0-0 at halftime.

Both teams had bright sparks in terms of individual performances, with Juan Mera at the centre of NEROCA's creative output, while Joseba Beitia pulled the strings for RoundGlass Punjab FC in midfield.

The game burst into life in the 57th minute, as Mendigutxia broke the deadlock for



NEROCA FC. It was the Spanish maestro Juan Mera on set piece duty for NEROCA, as he delivered an in-swinging corner from the right. Mendigutxia timed his run to perfection and dashed into the front post, making ideal contact to send a glancing header into the unguarded far post. After almost an hour of play, NEROCA FC finally had the lead they threatened to take since the first whistle.

NEROCA FC were on the break again seven minutes later in the 64th minute. Khaminhang Lungdung got on the end of a slide rule pass that was played inside the backtracking Sumeet Passi. As Khaminhang bore down on goal, he was caught up by Sumeet Passi right as he was about to apply the finish. The NEROCA camp appealed for a penalty to be awarded for the challenge, but the referee viewed the incident differently.

NEROCA had another opportunity to increase the deficit

in the 73rd minute. Sweden Fernandes played substitute Vicky Meitei through on goal, but after comfortable breaking away from the backline, Meitei made a mess of the finish in a one versus one situation.

NEROCA FC were left to rue their opportunities, when RoundGlass Punjab substitute Aphaoba Singh equalised in the 77th minute of the contest. After finding ample time and space inside the box, Aphaoba crossed his finish into the bottom corner, proving yet again that RoundGlass Punjab is a side with immense resilience in their ranks.

With just under a quarter of the game remaining, there were to be no further clear cut chances for either team. NEROCA FC may have shaded the contest on the balance of play, but there was to be no separating the two teams on the score sheet as RoundGlass Punjab FC held out for a hard fought point.