

Manipur turn out records over 89%, all arrangements for counting in place – CEO Manipur

IT News
Imphal, March 9:

The polls for 12th General Elections to Manipur Legislative State Assembly concluded with a record turnout of over 89.3%. The poll percentages during the 10th and 11th General Elections were 79.5% and 86.4% respectively.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manipur Rajesh Agrawal stated that the polls went in two phases on 28th February, 2022 and 5th March, 2022. Of the total 60 constituencies, 36 Assembly Constituencies recorded 90% or more voter turnout. Among 60 Assembly Constituencies, Wangoi recorded the highest voter turnout of 94.8% followed by Chandel (94.3%), Mayang Imphal (94.1%), Lamlai 93.7%, Tengnoupal (93.5%), Lamsang (93.4%), Hiyanglam (93.4%), Heirok (93.1%). The voter turnout of female voters is as high as 90.5% while male turnout is recorded as 87.9%.

Overwhelming participation by PwD electors have been witnessed in the General Elections with over 90% turnout of a total of 14565 PwD electors. Out of this, 1235 PwD voters have exercised their franchise from the comfort of their respective homes through postal ballots. Out of a total of 41881 electors of 80 and above, 7361 have voted through postal ballots. Interestingly, 95% of the Centenarian voters have exercised their

franchise through postal ballots or at the polling stations.

To make the PwD electors vote with ease, the volunteers at the booth assisted them with wheelchairs for smooth voting experience. Many elderly, PwD and first-time voters were also facilitated by the polling teams at the booth. The active participation of electors in this election has truly made these elections a festival of democracy completely in tune with Commission's mandate of inclusive, accessible and participative election. Transportation and wheelchair facilities were also made available to all the PwD and elderly electors. Prioritise voting facilities were extended to PwD, 80+, transgender and lactating mothers.

It is worth mentioning that out of a total of 2968 polling stations, 604 polling stations were completely manned by all women polling personnel. Notably, 5 Assembly Constituencies including 13-Singjamei, 14-Yaiskul, 15-Wangkhei, 31-Thoubal and 58-Churachandpur Assembly Constituencies were completely manned by all women polling teams. This is the highest percentage of all women booth in a State in the country. There were 113 model polling stations spread across the State wherein Selfie booth and Photo Booth were also set up.

Extensive awareness on the importance of electoral participation has resulted in a record voter turnout of 89.24%

as against 86.36% in 2017. Targeted SVEEP interventions at 333 pre identified polling stations with low voter turnout in 2017 Elections under Mission 300 was overwhelmingly successful and has resulted in massive increase in voter turnout in these polling stations with an average increase in voter turnout by more than 10% in these elections.

A total of 4251 BUs, 4181 CUs and 4576 VVPATs were commissioned for use in these elections. A total of 47 ECIL engineers were also deployed to oversee the polling process through EVMs.

To ensure COVID safe election, adequate arrangements were made in all polling stations. All polling stations were sanitised one day before poll. Over 5936 ASHA and Anganwadi workers were utilised at all polling stations to perform thermal screening and queue management. Two volunteers were also detailed for every polling station to assist the BLO and queue management. Marking of circles with minimum distance was also done to avoid crowding. Besides, mask, glove, were provided to voters requiring the same.

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JD(U) urges ECI to direct videography using CCTV in counting center

IT News
Imphal, March 9:

General Secretary, Janata Dal (United) and incharge North East, Afaq Ahmad Khan in a statement said that the Janata Dal (United) has written to the Election Commission of India to direct the District Election Officers, RO/AROs to strictly ensure that complete videography is done in counting centres by CCTV, counting of postal ballots are done before the counting of EVM votes, new round of counting be taken up only after the announce-

ment of each round of counting and adequate security be provided to the counting agents.

"If the party gets any complaints from the JD(U) candidates about any foul play during counting, the Members of Parliament shall sit in Dhama in front of respective counting centres", the statement cautions.

To keep vigil in the counting process in Manipur Assembly elections, five of the Janata Dal (United) Members of Parliament shall be camping in Imphal, the statement added.

Post Election Manipur: BJP is preparing to form a new govt.; Congress still is not losing hopes

IT Desk
Imphal, March 9:

With just a day left for the counting of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election that was held in two phases, political players now started looking forward to form a new government.

The BJP which is expecting to get the largest seat in the 60 assembly constituencies is also reported to have been looking for partner political parties or candidates which they may get support in the formation of the next government. The party believes to get more than 25 seats and some of its leaders still believe that their number may reach 35 as per the performance of its candidates in all the Assembly constituencies. However, there are scepticisms of BJP reaching 25 numbers to some of the dedicated party leaders and candidates, for that, there is reason to believe that report based on sources about the BJP looking for partner party to form the next government maybe not an assumption.

The same is for the main opposition party Congress which is still claiming to get the required number of seats to form a new government. 4 top leaders of the AICC had arrived in the state yesterday as observers of the post-poll and the source said that the Congress party is also started looking for partner political parties to form the next government. The Congress already has a pre-poll alliance

with 5 other left-wing parties including the CPI, CPI(M), Forward Block, RJD among others. Among these partner political parties, CPI had fielded two candidates – one at Khurai Assembly constituency and the other at Kakching Assembly constituency.

The NPP too which has been expecting double-digit numbers is also firm in playing a major role to the formation of the next government. Unlike the JD(U) and the NPF, the NPP does not stick to going along with a particular political party. That might be a reason for the Congress Party to start communicating with the NPP as they believe that a combination of both the party may get the magic numbers to stake claims for the formation of the new government.

It is natural for each and every political party to prepare strategy for the formation of government as the election held in the state showed no political party winning single majority seats in the 60 member house.

The post-election political theatre may be considered a tough one. Not because the BJP after getting even 21 seats have the advantage of forming the next government, but because there are talks going around about the probability of changing their leadership if the number of BJP seats fails to get over 31 seat. If BJP fails to get the magic number then there are signs of incumbent Chief Minister N. Biren Singh falling in trouble water. How-

ever, such a decision without placing a better position for N. Biren Singh may also put the BJP in deep trouble water.

As for Congress, depending on the number of seats they get, they might even consider sacrificing of the top post. But still, there seems no trouble in the party in re-electing former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi as the Chief Ministerial candidate. If in case, NPP makes a surprise by winning nearly 20 seats, (which is not expected based on the constituency-wise analysis), there are possibilities of its party legislature wing leader claiming the Chief Ministerial seat. Congress may accept the condition just because their plan is to wipe out a BJP led government.

However, there is strong reason to believe - a comeback of a BJP led government in the state. Already the NPF which may win at least in 3 seats or even more and the JD(U) which is expected to reach near 2 digit numbers have declared openly that their party will form a government with the BJP.

It is just a day now, to know the fate of the candidates. Tomorrow the result will be declared and people will know who will be in the power.

The BJP may return back with a landslide victory or may be left with no choice to form a government with the support of other political parties which are partners of the NDA Alliance. It depends on the number of seats they secure in the election, which is all set to declare on March 10.



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World leaders must try to stop the Ukraine war

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



India has so far remained neutral in the current war between Russia and Ukraine. However, the war that has been going on for two weeks is now taking a devastating form.

In such a situation, the world leaders should take the initiative to promote peace and talks between the two conflicting countries. It is a matter of relief that India has started thinking in this direction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has talked about mediating between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. It is expected that India's good relations with both the countries will be effective in establishing peace. Since the beginning of the war, the prime minister has spoken to Putin three times and to Zelensky twice over the phone. Modi's suggestion that Putin and Zelensky should hold direct talks can certainly help in averting the war. However, it is a worrying situation that the world's biggest leaders have been unable to stop this inhuman war even after so much destruction and loss of precious lives of innocent people.

Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena, a world-renowned Buddhist guru from Ladakh, says that such a passion for war is humanity's greatest folly. Humanity needs compassion, not war. Through compassion this beautiful world can become a heaven and one can experience divine life on this earth. Caught in the web of greed and driven by selfishness, man has turned this beautiful heavenly earth into a battlefield. Demons and ghosts are only in stories to scare children, the real devils and ghosts are people who have strayed from the path of mercy and righteousness. If we look around us, the world seems like a madhouse. In three thousand years humanity fought five thousand wars. If this is not a madhouse, then what else can we call it? The escalating war between Ukraine and Russia is extremely serious and dangerous, and the top world leaders need to address this crisis urgently. This is not an Olympic sport; it is a question of life and death - not only for the people of Ukraine and Russia, but for the whole world and the whole of mankind.

World leaders should think seriously about how to stop Putin from using nuclear weapons against the people of Ukraine. They should understand that just as darkness does not dispel darkness, similarly hatred is never quelled by hatred. Due to the war between Ukraine and Russia, a large number of innocent people, including about half a million children and one million women, have taken refuge in neighboring countries. The men of these displaced families are trapped in Ukraine in the midst of war. The destruction of property and infrastructure is beyond imagination. The global economy has been badly affected and the fear of the third world war or the nuclear war is being felt everywhere. World leaders and the United Nations have failed to stop this most dangerous war. The supply of arms and ammunition to Ukraine from the US and NATO to continue the war is also a big question. Is this a solution? Wouldn't this further fuel the fire of war? Instead of adding fuel, leaders must come to the negotiating table, listen to each other and find the middle way.

Water is one of the most indispensable natural resources for sustaining life and its development and its management plays a vital role in agriculture and horticulture production. Integrated water management is vital for poverty reduction, environmental sustenance and sustainable economic development. In view of rapid change in economy due to many factors, the demand for water for meeting various requirements will increase double-fold. In fact Manipur will face numerous challenges in the water sector. Rapid increased in urbanization and rise in population has already initiated the challenge for water demand and have resulted in reducing the per capita water availability. The quality of surface water and ground water is also deteriorating because of increasing pollutants loads from various sources. Climate change is also adversely affecting the availability and distribution of water resources with erratic rainfall. Conserving water has become a prime environmental concern. Clean water is becoming increasingly scarce globally. With deforestation surface run-off increases and the sub-surface water table drops as water has no time to seep slowly into the ground once the vegetation is cleared. In order to meet the challenges of overall water scarcity scenario in the state of Manipur, various measures can be taken such as the construction of water harvesting structures, mass awareness among citizens for various conservation, interlink age of rivers, renovation and repair/rejuvenation of existing water bodies etc.

Along with water resource management, the focus also lies in watershed management of water bodies like rivers, streams, lakes, ponds etc. Watershed is not simply the hydrological unit but also socio-

The need of Watershed Management

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh
Asst. Prof. JCIRE Global College, Babupara, Imphal

political-ecological entity which plays a crucial role in determining food, social and economic security and provides life support services to rural people. The criterion for selecting watershed size also depends on the objectives of development and terrain slope. A large watershed can be managed in plain valley areas or where forest or pastures development is the main objective. In hilly areas or where intensive agriculture development is planned, the size of watershed relatively preferred is small. The rain-fed agriculture contributes 58% to world's food basket from 80% agricultural land. As a consequence of global population increase, water for food production is becoming an increasingly scarce resource and the situation is further aggravated by climate change. The rain-fed areas are the hotspots of poverty, malnutrition, food insecurity, prone to severe land degradation, water security and poor social and institutional infrastructures. Watershed development program is therefore considered as an effective tool for addressing many of these problems and recognized as potential engine for agricultural growth and development in fragile and marginal rain-fed areas. Management of natural resources at watershed scale produces multiple benefits in terms of increasing food production, improving livelihoods, protecting environment, addressing gender and equity issues along with bio-diversity concern.

About 60% of total arable land (142 million ha) in India is rainfed characterized by low productivity, low income, low employment with high incidence of poverty and a bulk of fragile and marginal land. Rainfall pattern in these areas are highly variable both in terms of total amount and its distribution,

which leads to moisture stress during critical stage of crop production and makes agriculture production vulnerable to pre and post production risk. Watershed development in the country has been sponsored and implemented by the Government of India from early 1970s onwards. A watershed also called a drainage basin or catchment area is defined as an area in which all water flows into it goes to a common outlet. Rivers originate in streams that flow down mountain and hillslopes. A group of small streams flow downhill side to meet larger streams in the valley which forms the tributaries of major rivers. Hydrologically, watershed is an area from which the run-off flows to a common point on the drainage system. Every stream, tributary or river has an associated watershed and small watershed aggregate together to become large watershed. Water travels from head water to the downward location and meets with similar strength of stream then it forms one order higher stream. The management of a single unit of land with its water drainage system is called watershed management. This is a technique that has several components including soil and water management and developing vegetation cover. The natural drainage pattern of a watershed unit, if managed properly can bring about local prosperity by providing year-round supply of water thus improving the quality of life in the area. People and livestock are the integral part of watershed and their activities affect the productive status of watershed and vice-versa. From the hydrological point of view, the different phases of hydrological cycle in a watershed are dependent on the various natural features and human activities. The major objectives of watershed management are:

(i) conservation, up-gradation and utilization of natural endowments such as land, water, plant, animals and human resources in a harmonious and integrated manner with low cost, simple, effective and replicable technology (ii) generation of massive employment (iii) reduction of inequalities between irrigated and rain-fed areas and poverty alleviation.

Watershed development requires multiple interventions that jointly enhance the resource base livelihood of the rural people. This requires capacity building of all the stakeholders from farmers to policy makers. Capacity building is a process to strengthen the abilities of people to make effective and efficient use of resource in order to achieve their own goals on a sustained basis. Unawareness and ignorance of the stakeholders about the objectives, approach and activities are the reason that affect the performance of the watershed. Capacity building program focuses on construction of low cost soil and water conservation method production and use of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides, income generating activities, livestock based activities, waste land development, market linkage for primary stakeholders. Clear understanding of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanism and other expertise in the field of science and management is essential for government officials and policy makers. The stakeholders should be aware about the importance of various activities, their benefits in terms of economics, social and environmental factors. Therefore organizing various training at different scales are important for watershed development.

(Writer can be reached to: sjugeshwor7@gmail.com)

Savitri Bai Phule : Pioneer of women's education

India is the land where women have a glorious place in the society and were treated as Devi. But later on many exploitative systems and customs developed and their position deteriorated day by day. They faced discrimination at every step. Many social reformers devoted their lives to fighting against the prevalent exploitative practices and prominent among them was the Kranti-jyoti Savitri Bai Phule, a feminist and social reformer, who fought for women's empowerment and education in India.

Born on January 3, 1831 in the village Naigaon in the Satara district of Maharashtra, Savitri Bai Phule is considered one of the foremost pioneers of the feminist movement in India. Savitri herself was a victim of child marriage and was married to Jyoti Rao Phule, when she was just 9-years old. She was illiterate at the time of marriage and was educated by her husband at home along with working at their farm. She later enrolled herself in teacher training programmes and after completion of her training Savitri Bai became first Indian female teacher and headmistress.

Savitri Bai started the first ever school for girls in the country in 1848 at Bhide Wada, Pune. By 1851 Savitri Bai Phule had set up 3 schools and was a teacher of 150 students. Together with her husband, she had opened 18 schools in the country. She and her husband set up schools for Dalits and depressed caste women as well. The Phule couple encouraged women to attend school by offering them a stipend. Phule's method of teaching was so popular that the num-



By: Er. Prabhat Kishore

ber of girls enrolled in their school outnumbered the boys in government schools.

Savitri Bai travelled to school carrying a spare sari, as she was often assaulted with dung, stone and vulgar abuses by the local conservative minded people. Fortunately her husband was one of the pillars of support to her in her journey to spread awareness about the importance of women's education and uplift the status of women in India. The couple was even forced to leave their home as educating girls was a highly unthinkable act at that time. However such threats could not deter them from their mission of social upliftment.

Women's education was not the only motto Savitri wanted Indians to take up. She also fought against the social injustices of the time such as child marriage, Sati Pratha and still prevalent caste system and was one of the advocates for women's right in the country.

She opened a well for untouchables at her residence in a defiant act against the caste system and also started a care centre for pregnant rape-victims called

Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha. She set up a Mahila Seva Mandal where women would gather and raise awareness about women's rights.

Apart from being a pioneer of Indian feminism, Savitri Bai was a plague warrior. In 1897 a third pandemic of bubonic plague appeared worldwide in the vicinity of Nalasopara. She helped many people by opening a clinic with her adopted son Yashwant. In course of service she came in physical contact with a patient infected with the plague. As a result she also contracted the plague, which became the reason of her sudden demise on March 10, 1897.

Savitri Bai was also a hard-hitting radical writer and poet who questioned Brahminical hegemony. She published "Kavya Phule" in 1854 and "Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar" in 1892. She wrote a poem entitled "Go, Get Education" in which she appealed to the oppressed section of the society to free themselves by getting education.

She dedicated her whole life for the betterment and upliftment of the society. Her contribution to the past, present and future of the country is immeasurable. Being India's first female teacher, her birthday should have been celebrated as "National Teacher's Day" or "National Education Day", but unfortunately such events were shadowed by political heavyweights. Savitri Bai Phule is one of those eminent personalities whose memory illuminates the path of our nation. Nation honours her on her birth days as well as death anniversary with hope that her actions & thoughts will guide our path for years to come.

(The author is a technocrat & academician. He holds Master in Engineering from M.N. Regional Engineering College, Allahabad/Prayagraj)

What is the mentality of the people about women?

Often I have heard men say that nothing is digested in the stomach of women. If you want to promote something, then tell the women, you will get the publicity without spending any money. Often we women also laugh with fun on these things. But recently while traveling by train saw that this privilege is not only for women. From the time the two gentlemen sat in front of us till they reached their station, the women of their workplace were the center of their conversation. Sometimes their language was crossing the limits of civilization. There was such a feeling in his commentaries that it was as if women were the root of all turmoil.

Formerly I asked - what do you guys do? It was felt that his illiteracy would be behind his language and vision. But this illusion was completely shattered when it came to know that both of them get education from a reputed university and teach in a reputed college. Then it seemed that all those whose tales are being narrated with so much love, they are either his students or colleagues. Honestly, I bowed my head in shame at the time. This is the mentality of people associated with education about women? He is the Guru and with these qualities we are dreaming of becoming a Vishwa Guru. I bowed to the gurus of both the gurus with a calm heart and felt reverence for the women who must be facing the frustration of these frustrated great men.

After returning to my hometown, I came across a post in which the word 'feminist' was used for feminists. After seeing



By: Vijay Garg

these two incidents together, my illusion was shattered that the mentality of those who were brought up and educated in the cities is not anti-women. It seemed that even in today's educated society, if a woman would speak about any subject, she would be called a feminist. If the words of that 'feminist' cannot be deduced by logic, then abuse can also be used to destroy it. And this disease is not of any particular region, caste or religion. It is a cancer that affects every organ equally.

On the other hand it is also true that a different kind of extremism is seen in women criticizing patriarchal society. Extremism, wherever it is, is fatal, whether from the side of women or from the side of men. I always dream of a society where women not only look at their father, brother with confidence, but also do not have fear or ill-will towards other men. Especially educated women should at least be free from such prejudice.

But when I hear such things about women from the mouths of great men, who carry the burden of great degrees to show the way to the society, then it seems that

in reality women have never a fear free society will be found. Will they be able to feel safe from them when the teacher talks about reprimanding girls after narrating their love affairs in a full class?

When a man teases, chases or takes a dig at a woman, what is the state of mind of that woman, men cannot understand. Will any girl in such a situation be able to fearlessly tell her fear or pain to a teacher with the hope of helping her? An educational institution, where a family sends their daughter with a desire to raise her head and make her move in the society, will she be able to fulfill her dream.

I came from a small town, educated and wrote, where feminism did not have a voice or rather was not aware of it. Therefore, people's comments were considered to be the mentality of small towns. I used to feel the backwardness there. It used to be that the people of big cities would have big ideas. This is the problem of small towns. The people here do not like the freedom of women, because this is a world of uneducated, illiterate. And then fortunately I got interviews from big cities, then it was understood that every corner of the world is the same for women.

Whether it is a small town or a city, people want to maintain women as a second class. The most easily available in the market is the character certificate of any woman. Just a word of two or four people is needed and this certificate is ready. The world was never made educated for women. That education system is probably a dream, which should change the mindset of men.

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Durex India's 'The Birds and the Bees' programme celebrates International Women's Day with 'Break The Bias' in the states of North-East India

Promotes a gender- equal World amongst school children and youth in the region

IT News
Imphal, March 9:

Reckitt, the global leading consumer health and hygiene company with Durex India's 'The Birds and Bees Talk' programme, celebrated International Women's Day in select states of North-East India. With this celebration, the programme aims to initiate conversations on the theme 'Break The Bias' to promote a gender-equal world amongst school children, youth and adolescents.

Focusing on the five pillars of the programme- Awareness, Consent, Protection, Equity and Inclusion, the Durex India and Plan India backed programme hosted multiple workshops in Northeast India on 'Gender Equality towards the Sustainable Tomorrow'.

Ravi Bhatnagar, Director External Affairs and Partner-

ships SOA, Reckitt said, "Women play an important role in breaking the biases that are formed in the formative years of youth and adolescents. With Durex India's The Birds and The Bees Talk programme we aim to educate the future of India to create a safe space, gender equal world, a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination and a world which is equal for all."

These safe environment 'Gender Equality' workshops address key issues like Sexual Development, Social Relationships, Self-Care, and Diversity & Inclusion. These free-flowing interactive sessions and conversations aim to create an impact on breaking gender biases and exclusion in line with the theme of #BreakTheBias.

These workshops will be conducted in partnership with Ya_All in the presence of Chief Guest Mrs. Sucheta

Khumukcham, Zonal Education Officer, Dept of Education, Government of Manipur at Pari Imom Sindam Shang Girls Higher Secondary School in Imphal.

Sucheta Khumukcham, Zonal Education Officer, Dept of Education, Government of Manipur said, "International Women's Day is a global day on which we celebrate not only the achievements of women in different fields of life but also pledge to create a world free from gender bias and a world in which there is an equal voice of both men and women. In educational institutions, boys and girls must feel welcome in an inclusive environment. Teachers and students all have a part to play in ensuring that schools are free of discrimination and provide a gender-sensitive and good quality education."

Mohammed Asif, Executive Director, Plan India stated, "On the occasion of International Women's Day, through a series of workshops in different States of North-East India we aim to create a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination by raising awareness and encouraging the youth, adolescents to take responsible actions towards gender equality. TBET enables us to exchange dialogues with adolescents, teachers and the education system to initiate conversations on important issues like sexual and reproductive and breaking the cycle that enables children to grow into well-informed, responsible and healthy adults."

The celebrations and 'Break the Bias' workshop will also be held at Deorali Girls Senior Secondary School in Sikkim in the presence of dignitaries and celebrities from Sikkim.

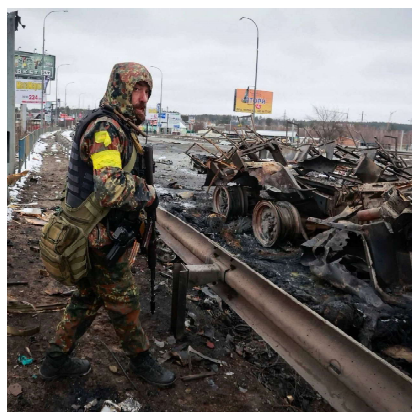
10 dead in strikes in Eastern Ukraine, Says Official; Russian default on debt payment 'Imminent', Notes fitch

Agency
Kyiv, March 9:

Moscow has announced a humanitarian ceasefire in Ukraine for Wednesday morning to carry out the evacuation of the civilian population, Russian news agencies reported. "From 10:00 MSK (0700 GMT) on March 9, 2022, the Russian Federation is declaring a 'regime of silence' and is ready to provide humanitarian corridors," a cell of the Russian defence ministry charged with humanitarian operations in Ukraine said Tuesday.

It added that Russia proposes to agree the routes and start time of the humanitarian corridors with Ukraine "before 03:00 MSK on March 9". Civilian evacuations took place on Tuesday morning, in particular from the town of Sumy, where two convoys left during the day.

Evacuations also took place outside the capital Kyiv. But attempted evacuations from the port town of Mariupol have failed on several occasions in recent days, with both



Kyiv and Moscow blaming the other side for the failures.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said he is no longer pressing for NATO membership for Ukraine, a delicate issue that was one of Russia's stated reasons for invading its pro-Western neighbour. In another apparent nod aimed at placating Moscow, Zelensky

said he is open to "compromise" on the status of two breakaway pro-Russian territories that President Vladimir Putin recognized as independent just before unleashing the invasion on February 24.

"I have cooled down regarding this question a long time ago after we understood that ... NATO is not prepared to accept

Ukraine," Zelensky said in an interview aired Monday night on ABC News. "The alliance is afraid of controversial things, and confrontation with Russia," the president added.

Referring to NATO membership, Zelensky said through an interpreter that he does not want to be president of a "country which is begging something on its knees." Russia has said it does not want neighboring Ukraine to join NATO, the transatlantic alliance created at the start of the Cold War to protect Europe from the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the United States led a Western assault on Moscow's economic lifeline Tuesday, banning imports of Russian oil as civilians fled besieged Ukrainian cities in a desperate evacuation push blighted by Russian shelling.

President Joe Biden heralded the US embargo as a hit on "the main artery of Russia's economy" targeting President Vladimir Putin's most crucial source of revenue — and vowed Ukraine would "never be a victory" for Putin.

PEC condoles demise of Hedayat Abdel Nabi, demands justice to India's murdered scribe

IT Correspondent
Geneva, March 9:

Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), the global media safety and rights body, has mourned the death of its president Hedayat Abdel Nabi (73) who passed away on Monday in Cairo. Meanwhile, the international media forum expressed shock over the murder of another Indian scribe named Juned Khan Pathan (37) from Surat locality of Gujarat recently and it demanded justice for the bereaved family.

"We extend our most sincere condolences to Hedayat Abdel Nabi's family, her friends and colleagues who appreciated her availability, dynamism and convictions. Born on 10 November 1948 in Cairo, Hedayat co-founded PEC in 2004 with other correspondents at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Indefatigable, she supported the struggle for better protection of journalists when covering conflicts and crises," said Blaise Lempem, secretary-general of PEC.

He also added, "Our struggle continues, beyond our sorrow after her sudden



Hedayat Abdel Nabi

Juned Khan Pathan

death. The greatest tribute that we can pay to her is to show that the cause she defended with passion survives and that we are ready and willing to pursue it as long as necessary so that impartial, independent and dispassionate information may emerge in all circumstances and that the machinations of dictators and criminal gangs will never muzzle the press."

The Gujarati scribe was stabbed to death by four miscreants on 13 February. Working for a local weekly newspaper, Pathan was killed in front of his wife and three minor daughters at Jilani bridge area in broad daylight. He was riding a two-wheeler with fam-

ily members and had a collision with a car where the culprits were traveling. They stabbed him to death with a sharp knife and fled from the spot.

PEC's India representative Nava Thakuria reveals that Pathan is the third Indian scribe, who has been murdered this year. Earlier Odisha's Kalahandi-based journalist Rohit Kumar Biswal and Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur-based journalist Sudhir Saini lost their lives to assassins. South Indian photojournalist T Kumar killed himself after the employer news agency (UNI) denied him full salaries for the last consecutive five years.

AR distributes relief material and conducts awareness programme at several places on International Women's Day



IT News
Imphal, March 9:

Various events were organised to celebrate International Women's day by various Assam Rifles Battalions under the aegis of IGAR (South) including Distribution of rations & essential commodities to children, and widows belonging to Below Poverty Line segment of society and conduct of awareness programme meant for girl child by Sajik Tampak Battalion, Moreh Battalion and Chassad Battalion of Assam Rifles in their respective areas of responsibility yesterday.

Sajik Tampak Battalion carried out the event to address the adolescent girls belonging to impoverished families, badly constrained financially due to COVID-19 and not being able to go to school. The essential ration was distributed to St Mary's School, Khollen and Primary School, Aigejang, meant for economically weaker section. The campaign also highlighted the importance of women in today's world and gender equality in society through lectures conducted by the Battalion which was attended by the school's children, staff and teachers. The event culminated with tea

and refreshments with schoolgirls and staff.

Moreh Battalion distributed a total of 100 packages containing Rice, Flour, Sugar and fresh vegetables among widows and BPL ladies of all communities. Since Covid-19 pandemic and closure of the International border, Assam Rifles has been continuously undertaking measures to alleviate the agony of the people of Moreh. These measures are primarily focused on creating infrastructure and encouraging the youth towards sports and skill development and also providing relief material to the needy families and orphanage homes.

Chassad Battalion conducted Awareness Programme at Aishi and Nampisha village of Kamjong district to spread awareness about improved and efficient of welfare services intended for girls in India under "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" scheme, information about various women achievers, benefits of several Govt Schemes like Sukanya Samruddhi Bank Account, Janani Suraksha Scheme and so on for the benefit of the attendees.

All the events conducted

by the battalions met with great enthusiasm and gratitude by the local populace. The expressed their happiness and acknowledgement towards the earnest efforts being made by Assam Rifles in bringing positive changes in their lives through such events, which makes the Force not just the sentinels of the NE for also true friends of the people.

Meanwhile, Keithelmanbi Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) conducted an inspirational event remembering the role of women in independence struggle by organising Lecture on women freedom fighters followed by lec on Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (by SBI executive) and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao lec for families/children of Keithelmanbi Grn.

The lec were conducted to increase awareness among the families/children of Grn about the glorious role of Women in Independence struggle and their importance in present society.

The families and children appreciated the informative lectures conducted by Assam Rifles which would be a right step towards inculcating spirit of patriotism and pride in women of our society.

Dharma Guardian Joint Military Exercise to Conclude on Thursday

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, March 9:

The 12-day joint exercise "Dharma Guardian" between Indian and Japanese Army being held at Maratha light infantry regimental centre, Foreign Training Node, in Belgaum in Karnataka will conclude on Thursday.

15th Maratha Light Infantry regimental centre and 30th infantry regiment of Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) are participating in the exercise which began on February 27. The exercise included house interventions drills, raids on terrorist hideouts in

semi-urban terrain, combat first aid, unnamed combat, and close quarter combat firing where both sides jointly executed a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats.

The exercise also included an insertion by helicopter into the area of operation, swift combat actions of the soldiers, induction through helicopters, slithering, house clearing drills, and the use of new technology equipment in various combat situations. These joint field training exercises will culminate in a final validation exercise on Wednesday. Special emphasis

was laid on enhancing tactical skills to fight global terrorism and on enhancing inter-operability, forestry, and reconnaissance security operations, a Defence spokesman said.

The exercise is crucial and significant in terms of security challenges faced by both nations in the backdrop of the current global situation. The scope of this exercise covered platoon-level joint training and promotion of Army to Army relations.

Dharma Guardian is an annual military training event being conducted in India since 2018. Earlier exercises took

place between Indian and Japanese Armies at Vairengte, Mizoram. This year is the third edition of the exercise.

Other important Indian bilateral army exercises are Sampriti (India and Bangladesh), Mitra Shakti (India and Sri Lanka), Maitree Exercise (India and Thailand), Vaira Prahar (India and US), Yudh Abhyas (India and US), Nomadic Elephant (India and Mongolia), Garuda Shakti (India and Indonesia), Shakti Exercise (India and France), Surya Kiran (India and Nepal), SIMBEX (India and Singapore) and CORPAT (India and Thailand).

Arrangement for counting in full swing: DEOs

Counting for IW at two separate venues, for IE at five venues

IT News
Imphal, March 9:

All arrangements for the counting of votes on March 10 is in full swing, said District Election Officer, Th. Kirankumar, highlighting that counting for the 13 Assembly Constituencies of the district will be held at two separate venues on Tuesday.

As for the 10 Assembly constituencies in Imphal East district counting of votes will be held at 5 venues, as per a statement by the DEO Khumanthem Diania.

A notification by the DEO Imphal East, the counting which will begin tomorrow at 8 am will be held at 5 halls. For the Khundrakpam and Lamlai Assembly Constituencies counting will be held at Hall No 1 which will be arranged at Panchayat Bhavan DC, Office Complex, Imphal East. For Heingang and Khurai ACs, the counting will be held at Hall No. 2 of Panchayat Bhavan DC, Office Complex, Imphal East. For Kshetrigao and Thongju ACs and the Yaikul and Wangkhlei ACs counting will be held at Hall No. 3 and 4 of Gymnasium

Hall , D.C. Office Complex Imphal East. While for Andro and the Keirao ACs the counting of vote will be held at SIRD Canteen, DC Office Complex Imphal East.

In each Hall, the sequence for counting of the votes by the respective Returning Officers will be as per ascending AC members. In other words Khundrakpam, Heingang, Kshetrigao, Keirao and Yaikul ACs will be counting first in their respective Halls followed by Lamlai, Khurai, Thongju, Andro and Wangkhlei ACs.

Briefing media persons, the DEO said that counting for the 13 ACs will take place at the Imphal West DC Office Complex and DM College of Teachers' Education. He stressed that there will be 4+1 counting halls at the DC Office Complex for Keishamthong AC, Singamei AC, Sekmai AC, Lamsang AC, Konthoujam AC, Patsoi AC, Wangoi AC, Mayang Imphal AC and a separate hall for ETPBS/PB. Another 3 counting halls (with EVMS) at the DMCTE for Thangmeiband AC, Sagolband AC, Uripok AC, Langthabal AC and Naoriya Pakhanglakpa AC.

The DEO further explained that counting will start at 8am of March 10 onwards for Postal ballots and counting on EVM will start at 8:30 am onwards. Returning Officers having two ACs will take up counting in sequential manner, one after completion of another. There will be seven tables per counting hall for EVMs; he said adding that one table will be designated as VVPAT Counting Booth (VCB). ETPBS Counting will start with scanning process and counting process for Ballot Papers.

DEO Kirankumar said that 3,45,481 votes were casted on EVM at Polling Stations out of a total of 3,80,480. Out of 3280 Postal Ballots for Absentee voters 3215 votes were casted, he added.

He continued that Imphal West has 4554 voters on election duty, out of which 229 votes were casted at facilitation centres and another 2711 votes have been received through post as on March 7, 2022. Altogether 1400 Service votes have also been received till March 7, 2022, out of 3194 Service Voters in the district, he added.

He continued that one PB voters on election duty whose

AC is not identified in Cover B or 13C shall be taken up to decide the AC or validity at 8AM on counting day in Kombirei Hall of the DC office complex in the presence of DEO and Nodal/ Postal Ballot (Officer in charge) and other ROs and candidates/ agents.

There are another three at the DMCTE for Thangmeiband AC, Sagolband AC, Uripok AC, Langthabal AC and Naoriya Pakhanglakpa AC, he added. The strong rooms have 24x7 CCTV coverage and there is regular inspection on a daily basis, he said adding that CAPF are on guard 24x7. Candidates and their agents can visit according to official norms and inspect, he added.

For the counting agents, the DEO said that all counting agents should carry their I-Cards issued by the concerned ROs and COVID double-dose Vaccination certificate or 72-hour RTPCR Test Report. He said no mobile phones or camera are allowed inside the hall and all mobiles will be deposited with the concerned ROs. He continued that agents should not move around unnecessarily.

RCWA observes

International Women's Day

IT News
Imphal, March 9:

RCWA (Regional CRPF Family Welfare Association) GC, CRPF, Langjing, Imphal celebrated "International Women's Day" yesterday with great enthusiasm and devotion. On the occasion many cultural programmes like Manipur Laiharaoba and Leichal thirakye Jagao Dance, Kuki Dance, Thabal Chongba dance, Song competition and dance competition etc. A lecture also delivered by Pianu Chanu, NGO on International Women's Day. Sita Devi, Head of RCWA, GC CRPF, Langjing, Imphal was the Chief Guest of the Cultural Programme. All ICWA members families of



Jawans, invited eminent ladies personality were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Guest Sita Devi, Head of RCWA, GC CRPF, Langjing, Imphal addressed the gathering and shared regarding actions being taken for

women empowerment by RCWA with all and also delivered her valuable message to all women on the International Women's Day. She told about empowerment and upliftment of women and enhanced their courage.

Contd. from Page 1

Manipur turn out records over 89%...

Adequate man and machineries were also put into place to oversee COVID-19 related arrangement and preventive measures during the entire election process. There were 11 District RRT Teams and 60 AC level RRTs who have been deployed for attending to health-related exigencies.

Three helicopters including one ALH of Global Vectra and one Mi17 of IAF were deployed for airlifting of casualties and polled EVMs and polling teams. A total of 18 injured including 4 deceased were air lifted during the election period. Cashless treatment was given to all the injured, security forces and other election machineries. A total of 25 polling teams along with polled EVMs were airlifted in both the phase out of which 17 teams were airlifted in Tipaimukh AC and 8 from Tamei AC.

Adequate emphasis was also laid on ensuring proper arrangements at the polling stations. Voters set an example of COVID appropriate behaviours. Besides, all the polling stations

across the State were declared as no smoking zone.

The 12th General Elections also witnessed record seizures worth Rs.170 crore as against about Rs. 5 crore in 2017. A total cash of 6.14 crore, 143 crore worth drugs and narcotics, 12 crore worth of gold and other precious metals and 7.4 crore worth of other items and freebies were seized during the General Elections-2022 by the enforcement agencies including police, Flying Squad, Income Tax and Excise.

Adequate preventive measures were also taken to ensure free, fair and secure voting by the voters. The General Elections witnessed a record deposition of licensed arms of 80.98% as against 59.76% in 2017. Besides, 7245 persons were bound down under Cr.P.C. in 2022 as against 1854 in 2017. Further, 3117 persons were also identified as trouble mongers as against 673 in 2017.

Arrangements for webcasting/videography were successfully made in majority of the Polling Stations. The voting at majority of the polling stations was monitored through the webcasting at the control rooms in ROs, DEOs and CEO office. Safe and secured atmosphere was created in the polling stations through deployment of over 300 Coys of CAPF over and above the state police. A total of 763 Micro Observers were also employed to supervise the poll proceedings at the polling stations.

20 General Observers, 11 Police Observers and 20 Expenditure Observers were deployed to oversee the poll process during the entire period of elections. Besides, three Special Observers were also deployed to oversee the overall arrangement.

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

The EVMs are now under safe custody at the respective strong rooms guarded under three tier security deployment. All strong rooms are placed under 24x7 CCTV surveillance. Separate TV Screens outside the strong rooms displaying

the CCTV coverage are placed for constant monitoring by representatives of candidates. 41 counting halls spread in 12 counting centres have been put in place where counting of votes will be taken up on 10th March, 2022. The Counting process will start at 8 am on 10th March with the counting of postal ballots. Thereafter, counting of votes polled in EVM will also start at 8.30 am in all the 41 counting halls notified for the purpose. The counting of 19 ACs will be taken up after completion of counting of first AC in the 19 counting halls where votes for two ACs are to be counted.

The DEOs and Superintendent of Police in each district has been directed to make elaborate security arrangement for counting including a minimum of three tier security comprising of CAPF and the State Police. The entire process of counting in addition to the Returning Officer, will also be supervised by the 41 General Observers appointed by the Election Commission of India, one each for each Counting Hall. The process of counting will also be webcasted to the district control rooms and also the State Control room at the CEO Office. The trends and final results of the counting will be available in public domain on the Voter Helpline App and the website www.results.eci.gov.in. Further, the results will also be displayed centrally at western gate of Kangla. The results and updates will also be available to press from the media cell at the CEO Office.

Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur expresses gratitude to all stake holders especially the voters for their enthusiastic and fearless participation in the electoral process and repose faith in the democratic set up. He also thanks PwD, senior citizens, Transgenderers for their proactive participation in electoral process. He also recognises the relentless services of the entire electoral officials including polling officers, security personnel, ASHA, Anganwadi workers, supervisory staff, observers, special observers, enforcement agencies, state nodal officers, health authorities as also the air lifting teams of Indian Air Force and Global Vectra for making comprehensive arrangement and dedicatedly working towards successful conduct of free, fair and transparent and safe elections.

CEC Sushil Chandra refutes claims of EVM tampering ahead of election results 2022

Courtesy: Times Now
New Delhi, March 9:

A day before votes for the recently concluded multi-state Assembly elections are counted, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra assured that nobody could hack an electronic voter machine. The remarks came even as Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party leaders allege foul play and keep vigil near an EVM strong room.

Counting day, Chandra noted, was the last phase of

the Election Commission's job. "All preparations have been undertaken and I'm confident of unbiased counting tomorrow," he told Times Now's Navika Kumar.

Addressing recent allegations of tampering, Chandra insisted that anything that had been polled was "strongly secured, safe, transparent" and in front of each political party. "Nobody can hack an EVM. It is absolutely safe machine. Every citizen should feel pride that India has taken a lead and leap in the direction of EVMs," he said.

The CEC He also countered SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's claims, asserting that there was no bias or manipulation taking place. The former Chief Minister had alleged earlier today that the state election commission officials were tampering with EVMs and the Varanasi district magistrate was transporting them without informing the local candidates.

"This is just an attempt to mislead voters and spread misconceptions. The EVMs in Varanasi were out for training purposes. The EVM used for

polling is secured by a 3-tier structure," Chandra countered.

All political parties have to accept the results given by the EVM as it is the result by the voters of this country, the CEC added.

The counting of votes for the Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur Assembly elections is set to take place on March 10. Thousands of workers have been given round wise training for the counting of votes and the EC has issued a counting schedule.

Sports

I League: Rajasthan United down 9-man Aizawl FC, Punjab FC thrash Kenkre

Agency
Kolkata, March 9:

Punjab FC jumped to top-four with their second win from three matches, while debutants Rajasthan United FC secured their maiden victory in the I-League on Tuesday.

At the Naihati Stadium, former I-League champions Aizawl FC showed late urgency and were down to nine players in the second-half injury time as RUFC rode on Aman Thapa's 37th minute strike to open their account with three points after two matches.

At Kalyani, Punjab skipper Gurtej Singh (15th) opened the gate before British forward Kurtis Guthrie struck a double (20th and 42nd), while Robin Singh (72nd) came off the bench to seal a 4-0 rout of the Mumbai debutants.

The win lifted Punjab FC to fourth place with seven points from three matches, while Rajasthan remained on eighth place with three points from two outings.

Up against the 2016-17 I-



Punjab FC (left) jumped to top-four with their second win from three matches, while debutants Rajasthan United FC (right) secured their maiden victory in the I-League.

League champions, RUFC began on a positive note and held the possession.

Defender Mauro dos Santos kept threatening the Aizawl defence with long passes to the front line but the Northeast side kept averting the danger.

After missing a flurry of opportunities, Thapa finally broke the resistance, heading in the only goal of the match.

Aizawl started the second half with attacking intent, looking to quickly cover up the deficit.

Mauro Javier was booked for a challenge on Lalremnga within two minutes of the second half.

The resulting free-kick provided a chance to Aizawl FC, but the intended shot by Shaiza from outside the box went above the post.

Aizawl missed a sitter in the 55th minute when Rajasthan goalkeeper Bhaskar Roy made an error as he spilled the ball after a free-kick from Malsawmtluanga.

But Lalremnga's half-volley went above the bar.

Thapa had a chance to score a double but his 65th minute strike soared above the bar.

As the clock started ticking down, Aizawl FC started showcasing urgency and things became heated in injury time.

Robert Primus was sent off for dissent and a minute later, R Malsawmtluanga was also sent off for a rash tackle on Anil Chawan.

RC Book Lost

I, the undersigned have lost my Registration Certificate issued by the Department of Transport, Govt. of Manipur, for my two wheeler vehicle (Activa) bearing RC No. MN01N-4449 in between Keishamthong and Khurai on March 5, 2022.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned. Sd/-

Oinam Jibon Singh
S/o (L) Oinam Mikhu Singh
Kongpal Chingangbam Leikai
Imphal East - 795010