

Poor alternative bridge arrangement at Lamsang irks Uripok-Kangchup residents

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Poor alternative arrangement by Hindustan Construction Company Limited while constructing the main bridge of Lamsang Bazar renders numerous inconveniences to the people residing in the locality and neighboring areas as water flows over the culvert, which was supposed to be a temporary bridge. Moreover, the road link was cut off for more than four days, causing problems for traffic movements and affecting the local economy.

An irate local says: "Without appropriate planning, the Hindustan Construction Company Limited assembled a culvert as an alternative route around 10 feet below the previous main bridge. The company didn't plan for such capabilities. If the heavy downpour persists, we will be facing the same trouble again."

As the road was cut off due to the high water level, the road from Taothong Lamkhai to Lamsang Thong Maning



via Taothong was operated as an alternative route to reach the neighborhoods on the western side of the bridge. But, as massive traffic jams continued due to the narrow roads, locals came out to ban traffic movement occasionally.

When asked why a culvert was constructed instead of a temporary bridge at Lamsang Bazar, Venkata Ramana, who claimed to be working as the Project Construction Head at

the Hindustan Construction Company Limited, told Imphal Times that the culvert was constructed with due approval from the government and added that the main bridge would be completed within three months. But the official failed to give a copy of the approval order when the residents of Lamsang Bazar requested it, the Imphal Times learned.

A local also vented his an-

ger, saying that the HCC keeps giving false commitments to people living in the area. "They have not even blacktopped the road near the bridge, which would be around 100 meters, causing multiple road accidents and dust-related issues," he said, adding that the road will be blocked by the localities if there is no government intervention within the next few days.

Manipur High Court directs Lokayukta to stop proceedings on case related to MSPCL

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

The High Court of Manipur has directed the Lokayukta to stop proceeding in connection with the complaint case no. 2 of 2020 related to the MSPCL until the next high court hearing.

On February 7, 2022, the Manipur Lokayukta recommended the state government not to allow MSPCL Managing Director to continue his official position. It was recommended that the function and duties of the said post be delegated to an official designated by the state government until the investigation was completed.

The MSPCL Managing Director has challenged the Lokayukta Manipur's recommendation dated 7.02.2022 in Manipur's high court (under the writ petition no. 168 of 2022).

When the case is still on the court, various attempts to mislead the MSPCL as well as the Lokayukta were traced. As a result, the MSPCL had filed

an additional case in the High Court, challenging the recommendation. Even the petitioner's signatures have been discovered to be faked. Thiyam Niros's signature in the complaint letter to the Manipur Lokayukta differs from his signature in the RTI application he filed with the MSPCL earlier. A mobile number 8974002604 identified by truecaller as belonging to one Manihar Sarangthem was written in a complaint application to the Manipur Lokayukta, which differed from the mobile number 9862206077 written in an RTI application.

Earlier on 28.04.2022 the Manipur Cabinet also decided that the present Managing Director of MSPCL will not be removed until the Manipur High Court rules on the pending writ petitions.

Surprisingly, the Manipur Lokayukta questioned the Manipur Cabinet's decision. It should be noted that the Lokayukta cannot question the Manipur Cabinet's decision because cabinet decisions are the highest decision

of a state government. The Lokayukta has no authority to question Cabinet decisions.

The Manipur Lokayukta has also used delaying tactics in the hearing of the writ petitions by raising questions about whether a petition challenging a Lokayukta order should be heard by a single or double bench.

The Manipur High Court stated on its hearing dated 17.05.2022 that whether these batches of writ petitions will be heard by a Single Bench or by a Division Bench has been considered by the Division Bench today and that the Division Bench's decision will be announced on 19-05-2022. On May 19, 2022, the Manipur High Court decided that the writ petitions could also be heard by a single bench.

During yesterday's hearing, Justice Ahanthem Bimol of the Manipur High Court ordered the Lokayukta not to proceed with any proceedings relating to its complaint case no. 2 of 2020 until the next high court hearing.

Minister Nemcha Kipgen inaugurates NEDFi's Branch Office

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Textiles, Commerce and Industry Minister, Nemcha Kipgen today inaugurated the Churachandpur Branch Office of North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi) at Radiant Complex, Churachandpur.

While addressing the gatherings as Chief Guest, Minister Nemcha Kipgen stated that public financial institutions like NEDFi plays a significant role in the economic development and as a



source of low interest capital to entrepreneurs in the North East.

While highlighting the engagement of the Department of Commerce and Industry, Manipur in streamlining the industrial policies with an eye on improving the ease of doing business, Minister ex-

pressed that the opening of such branch office will bring a change in the socio-economy of the state in infrastructure, healthcare, tourism, education, micro and small enterprises.

It may be noted that NEDFi is committed to ensure the improvement of income

levels of common man of the region by bringing innovative schemes for the benefit of first-generation entrepreneurs as well as competitive rate for productive purposes. It aims to bring down the cost of funds to micro, medium units and also to artisans by meaningful intervention. NEDFi has launched schemes in this direction and is committed to implement them by opening branches at strategic locations so as to cover even far-flung areas through technology and Business Correspondence model. NEDFi has opened 20 branch offices all across the North East.

The inaugural function was also graced by CMD, NEDFi, PVSLN Murty and the concerned officials.

CBI books Lalu Prasad Yadav in fresh corruption case, searches begin

Agency
Patna, May 20:

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday booked former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav in a fresh case of corruption and launched search operations at 17 locations linked to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president and his family members, including daughter Misa Bharti, among others.

CBI sources said the locations were spread across Delhi, Patna and Gopalganj. The fresh case is based on allegations that Yadav accepted plots of land as bribes to give jobs to people

while he was the Union railways minister in the UPA government.

The development comes weeks after Yadav got bail in a fodder scam case. Yadav has been convicted in four fodder scam cases and is facing trial in one.

Yadav and his family members are also facing trial in another alleged corruption case where he is accused of favouring a private company in lieu of prime land in Patna while he was the railway minister. Known as the IRTC scam, Yadav has already been charge-sheeted in the case. The CBI in 2018 charge-sheeted Yadav, his wife Rabri and

son Tejashwi in the case.

The agency has alleged that as railways minister during the UPA government, Lalu favoured a company while awarding operation and maintenance contracts of two IRTC hotels. As quid pro quo, his family received a prime piece of land in Patna at a throwaway price from the owners of the company that bagged the contract.

The agency had booked the three along with five others in July 2017 and even searched 12 locations, including the former Bihar chief minister's residence in Patna.

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Orientation Workshop on Sub-Division Development Monitoring Mission held



IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh today encouraged Prabhari Officers to visit and identify the problems faced by the general public, their grievances, shortages of potable water, food grains, etc in their blocks and report to the State government, so that action may be taken up on priority basis.

The Chief Minister was addressing an orientation Workshop on Sub-Division Development Monitoring Mission at Hotel Imphal today. The Chief Minister also released a booklet "Sub-Divisional Development Monitoring Mission" as part of the workshop. Following the launching of the 'Sub Divisional Monitoring Mission', a Prabhari was assigned for each of the 68 Sub-Divisions to identify the shortcomings in the sub-division, such as infrastructure, health, education etc.

Today, we are just beginning to build a new Manipur, and we have to take risks together, the Chief Minister said, appealing to the prabhari to take their time, to be patient and not to be hasty. We have

to ensure success of the Mission, he said, adding that we could make Manipur within the next five years.

N. Biren Singh further urged the prabhari to include the need to set up retail shops in interior parts of the State in their proposals, so that villagers may get at least rice grains. He also highlighted the need to conduct sub-division-wise house to house surveys.

There will be no discrimination or inconveniences during their services due to irregularity in promotion or political influences, the Chief Minister assured the officers. Every officer will be where he or she deserves to be, as per the rules and norms, he said, stressing further that the cabinet has also taken a decision for a proper Posting and Transfer policy to be strictly implemented by June. Further to root out corruption, the State cabinet has also approved the establishment of a State Staff Selection Board at the earliest, he added.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the need for proper monitoring of biometrics attendance, improved internet and mobile connectivity in the interior parts, provi-

sion of sustainable livelihood, etc.

The government has plans to make up the vehicle shortage for officials, the Chief Minister said before adding that not only the SDOs and other officers but their staff also need to reach their offices. He said that bus services along different routes have already started and that if required more buses can be added. He further observed the need to take up road construction and repairing works to improve connectivity.

Regarding marketing for one product in one sub-division, the Chief Minister also said marketing is not a problem, but we need to co-ordinate amongst the different departments.

Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar said the mission is a historic and path-breaking mission and will help eliminate low income in the interiors and in providing jobs to every household.

Additional Chief Secretary Vunlunmang Vualnam said that the Sub-Division Development Monitoring Mission is an innovative and ambitious mission.

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MGHSLWA expresses gratitude towards Manipur CM N. Biren Singh

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Manipur Government Higher Secondary Lecturers Welfare Association (MGHSLWA) expressed gratitude to Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh for the modification of the 7th Pay, ROP 2019 which has been demanded by the Association for a long time.

As per the press release, State Cabinet Committee which chaired by the Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has been arrived at an agreement to modification of 7th Pay, ROP 2019 of Higher Secondary Lecturers.

The Association also urged to approve a new order for the ROP 2019 which has been modified by the BJP led Government.

Musk wants to investigate bots before Twitter deal

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The blue bird of Twitter is in trouble once again. The question has arisen whether Tesla CEO Elon Musk will confirm the deal or not. Twitter says it has

hardly five percent of fake accounts or bots on its system, while Musk suspects that the number of such fake accounts could be something around 20 to 90 percent. Musk absolutely doesn't want a fake account on the microblogging platform. Because of this, his proposed \$44 billion deal with Twitter is stuck in the middle. Let me explain here that the bots or fake accounts are mechanical in nature and they copy humans in terms of following someone, liking, or retweeting a tweet. Bots are used to give the desired momentum to political and fraudulent activities. Such accounts spread instability in society and the world. Musk wants the fake accounts on Twitter to be thoroughly investigated and removed permanently. In the absence of this, he has made up his mind to back out of Twitter's deal. If all of these bots are removed after proper investigation, then the number of Twitter users will come down drastically. The income of social media companies is based on the number of their users.

The dilemma also abounds in the electric vehicle (EV) industry, especially the battery-operated two-wheelers. In the struggle to save the environment and bring down the level of global warming, the government started a campaign to promote Electric Vehicles at a mass level. The governments (center and states) accelerated work towards setting up of battery replacement and charging stations at many places and highways across the country. But in the past, incidents of fire and blast in battery-operated two-wheelers have occurred in many places. These incidents have taken a toll on EV manufacturers. After the batteries caught fire one after the other, the government became vigilant and instructed the EV manufacturers to improve the quality of the batteries and recall all the faulty EVs. Till now, the batteries received from China were being used indiscriminately, which were made according to the cold climate, however, in India hot weather is the norm. These batteries started exploding in the hot weather. Companies making electric two-wheelers will now have to spend more money to improve the quality, as well as improve the technology of the batteries. On the other hand, the supply of raw materials is already being disrupted due to the Ukraine war waged by Russia. As a result, the price of EVs is bound to increase in the coming months.

In order to protect the Himalayan environment, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has been taking various measures in the hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and elsewhere. As per the order of the NGT, only 1200 vehicles per day can be given permits for passing through the Rohtang pass. This high pass, located near Manali in Himachal Pradesh, was getting a lot of air pollution due to diesel and petrol operated motor vehicles. That's why the Tribunal had to impose such a ban. When the heat rises in the plains, people turn towards Manali, Rohtang, and Atal Tunnel. Advance booking is going on for the Rohtang permit. Electric buses are also being operated by the district administration to go to Rohtang, as the diesel-powered vehicles cause pollution which damages the delicate ecology of the Himalayas.

Air pollution is the single largest killer in India



By: Vijay GarG

India has been hit by a double whammy: Climate change impact and spiralling pollution levels. Though the country has made significant strides against household air pollution, most notably through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana programme, it hasn't been enough to prevent it from the ignominy of having the world's largest estimated number of air pollution-related deaths. Rising temperatures and untimely rain are linked to climate change, which led to a manifold rise in vector-borne diseases in 2021. With last year recording the

number of dengue infections at 1,93,245 and the number of deaths at 306, the figure was the highest since 2018. But that's not all — the country is likely to witness erratic and excess rainfall in various pockets towards the end of September, which might lead to a surge in dengue infections. Already, States receiving rains have started reporting an increase in vector-borne infections. For its part, the ICMR has attributed the rise in dengue cases to climate crisis, besides rapid urbanisation. Several global scientists and medical journals had earlier warned about the link between global warming and climate change, with the spread of diseases such as dengue and malaria. And it goes downhill: A rise in temperatures of nearly 3.7 degrees Celsius over the next 80 years may lead to the 'worst case scenario'.

As for the rising pollution levels, more than 6.6 million premature deaths were recorded across the globe due to air pollution in 2019, with India accounting for the highest share of these fatalities at 1.67 million, or 17.8 per cent. Overall, the various types of pollution wiped off nine million people though, if there's a macabre consolation, it's that the number has remained unchanged since the last analysis in 2015. Unfortunately, the nine million fatalities correspond to one in six reported deaths worldwide to various reasons. Besides air, water pollution was responsible for 1.36 million premature deaths while lead exposure claimed another nine lakh lives. However, alarm bells should ring as regards the ambient air pollution, which refers to air under the normal circumstances and which was responsible for 4.5 million deaths in 2019. The rising threat from ambient air pollution can be gauged from the fact that it had claimed a relatively lower 4.2 million lives in 2015 and 2.9 million way back in 2000.

Why Myanmar Should Have 'Friendship and Neighbourhood policy to Bangladesh'?

By: Fumiko Yamada

Bangladesh and Myanmar share a land boundary of 271 kilometers. Prior to their establishment as contemporary nation states, both countries had a long history of exchanging political, cultural, and economic concerns. They also share a common history of British colonialism. The relationship between these two countries is based on demography rather than geography. Since Bangladesh's 1971 independence from West Pakistan, the two countries have had "cordial" relations. One of the first countries to acknowledge Bangladesh was Myanmar. However, due to the Rohingya crisis and border disturbances, Bangladesh-Myanmar ties have turned tense at times.

Despite the persistence of certain topics of contention and the resulting Luke-Warm bilateral ties, Bangladesh and Myanmar had a fairly active co-operation process. Aside from bilateral collaboration, the two countries are strengthening cooperative links through a number of regional and sub-regional organizations and initiatives.

Bangladesh and Myanmar are founding members of the Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, a sub-regional association (BIMSTEC). Both countries are also part of the Track-II Kunming effort, often known as BCIM, which comprises Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar.

Bangladesh is also working to strengthen its formal connection with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Myanmar is a member of. Bangladesh has already joined the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and is pursuing an ASEAN dialogue relationship. Despite both nations' consistent efforts, the progress of Bangladesh-Myanmar ties has been clouded at times by controversial problems. The following are the main issues of bilateral relations in this context:

Though political and economic ties between countries in the Eastern South Asia subregion have improved since the 1990s, the Rohingya issue has frequently disrupted ties between Burma (Myanmar) and Bangladesh. The Rohingyas are a Muslim ethnic minority who live in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships in the

Arakan State of Burma's northwestern region. The Mayu region is located near to the Naaf River, which serves as a border with Bangladesh. They make up the majority of the population, together with Buddhist Arakanese and Burmese. The number of the Rohingyas is unclear because no proper census has ever been done.

Their citizenship was officially denied by the Ne Win government in 1974. Due to Myanmar army's Operation Dragon King in 1978, over 200,000 members of this ethnic group fled the country. Bangladesh and Myanmar resolved to resolve the issue in 1978 via a 1978 accord. However, the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh has always been a point of contention between Bangladesh and Myanmar. According to the various open sources, there have been living more than 1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh temporarily. The region could see the holistic sustainable solution of this long pending crisis between Myanmar and Bangladesh if Myanmar accommodates a sophisticated holistic and pragmatic 'Bangladesh policy' based on friendship and neighborhood.

Myanmar, with the help of the international community, was able to return almost all of the Rohingya refugees who had fled to Bangladesh in 1978-79. However, about 250,000 Rohingyas migrated to Bangladesh to escape persecution in 1991 and 1992. 5 After disturbances pitting Buddhists against Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine province, a huge number of Rohingyas attempted to enter Bangladesh in June 2012. More than 0.7 million Rohingya Muslims have been living in Bangladesh since 2017, causing the situation to deteriorate. The crisis forced over Rohingyas to flee to other countries. Most fled to Bangladesh, resulting in the creation of the South Asia and Southeast Asia's largest refugee crisis.

It is vital to note that the Rohingya problem remains the most contentious political issue between the two countries. In this regard, Bangladesh's approach should be to link up the Rohingya situation to regional security concerns, as well as how a peaceful border can boost bilateral friendship and goodwill.

After the ruling of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea on March 14, 2012, the long-running maritime dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar came to a conclusion. In the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh got 111000 square kilometers of exclusive economic zone. Bangladesh was also given a 12-mile territorial sea around St. Martins Island by the Tribunal. It's a win-win situation for both countries. Order can boost bilateral friendship and goodwill.

Bangladesh and Myanmar share a land boundary of 271 kilometers. An effective and cooperative management of the common border is required to achieve a stable bilateral relationship. When the Myanmar government began fencing 40 kilometers of border in 2009, the Bangladesh government expressed reservations about the project. Following that, both countries agreed that "the erection of the barbed wire barrier will have no impact on bilateral relations." Myanmar constructed 40 kilometers of fencing in 2011.

The Bangladesh Department of Narcotics Control has identified the Myanmar border region as a major entry site for illegal drugs into Bangladesh. The Rohingyas are used as transporters, middlemen, and traffickers. Bangladesh's security is threatened by some armed organizations led by Rohingyas Muslims. The Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF), Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), Rohingya National Alliance (RNA), and Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO) are among the prominent groups posing a security danger to Bangladesh. Myanmar has also same security threat. Both states can work together in combating those non-traditional security threat.

In the depths of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, somegroups frequently coerced local communities into planting poppy. Arms and drug trafficking have now become major concerns along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. For border stability and peace, the countries must preserve this unlawful networking.

The bilateral trade between the two countries is also improving. During the fiscal year of 2011-2012, Bangladesh exported goods to

Myanmar worth US\$ 13.45 million and imported goods worth \$65 million. In the 2012-2013 fiscal years, the average amount of border trade was US\$ 6.3 million.

The export value was \$6.2 million, while the import value was \$87 million. Despite the limited amount of trading, the potential is enormous. Despite the fact that the trade balance between the two countries favors Myanmar because Bangladesh imports many food items from the neighboring country, the trade gap is expected to narrow as Myanmar begins to import new materials from Bangladesh in early 2012, following Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Yangon in late 2011.

Connectivity is generally regarded as a crucial aspect of bilateral collaboration. Since 1988, the Myanmar government has prioritized physical infrastructure development to bolster the economy through state monopoly. The situation has evolved over time due to a lack of foreign exchange reserves. The power and communication sectors remained state monopolies, but road transport was given to private enterprise.

The current state of Bangladesh-Myanmar ties is extremely delicate. There is no doubt that bilateral issues arise out of national interest and national security considerations. The Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, in particular, has become a national security danger. Myanmar is to blame for the influx of Rohingya IDPs and refugees. As a result, it is Myanmar's responsibility to make appropriate decisions in accordance with international law and standards in order to mitigate this issue. Bangladesh is not obligated to bear the brunt of the Rohingya refugee crisis. To tackle this challenge and enrich bilateral relations with Myanmar, Bangladesh requires a robust diplomatic movement. Myanmar also Should Have 'Friendship and Neighbourhood policy to Bangladesh.

(The writer is a specialist in 'Bangladesh Affairs'. She is a research fellow in 'Bangladesh Studies' at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is a graduate of South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, Canada. She can be contacted at fuyamada14@gmail.com)

Can Hindu Marriage Act allow same sex marriage in India

By: Tanish Arora

The Madras High Court, in the case of Arun Kumar versus Inspector General of Registration (2019), analysed the legitimacy of cis-trans marriage with regards to the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 specifically and held that the same would be legally sound. For the purposes of this, the court had taken into consideration Section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act, and analysed whether the term 'bride' would include a transgendered woman or not.

While the judgement mostly focuses on whether a transgendered person can marry a cis-gender person, it can also help us understand whether same sex marriages would be valid under the Hindu Marriage Act or not.

While homosexuality, which had been considered a sin and hence deemed an offence under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code [IPC], was decriminalized by the Supreme Court in the landmark Navtej Singh Johar case in 2018, the question of whether two homosexual individuals can marry each other or not is being considered by the Delhi High Court in the case of Abhijeet Iyer Mitra versus Union of India. It has been argued by the Centre that marriage is only permissible between a biological

man and a biological woman. It further averred that the institution of marriage comes under larger State interest and not merely whether two individuals can rightfully exercise their choice or not. Adding to the same, it also argued no codified law or uncodified practice allows for same sex marriage.

In light of these factors, it is important to take into consideration that while marriage may be a subject that involves State interest, the directly concerned parties are the individuals seeking to get married. They must not be deprived of their choice, as the same would directly go against the fundamental right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. This "freedom of choice" in marriage was recognised by the Supreme Court in the case of Re: Indian Woman says gang-raped on orders of Village Court published in Business & Financial News dated 23.01.2014.

For the purposes of this, it is also important to actually understand sexual orientation of individuals and focus on the wider topic of sexuality, rather than viewing it from a binary approach. It should be emphasised that the terms 'gender' and 'sex' are not interchangeable. 'Sex' refers to one's

biological sex, which can be male or female, whereas 'gender' relates to psychological sex, which is one's own sense of self, emotions, psychology, and what they personally identify as. The Supreme Court's landmark NALSA judgement in 2014 clarified that sex also includes gender.

The Madras High Court delved into section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act in Arun Kumar. Brief facts of the case entail that the first petitioner, a cis-gendered male, entered into a marriage with the second petitioner, a transgender woman. This marriage followed all the rituals and traditions of a Hindu Marriage, and the couple decided to register their marriage in accordance with the Hindu Marriage Act. The joint registrar, who was the third respondent in the case, did not register this marriage, stating that the second petitioner, being a transgender woman, could not be considered a 'bride' for the purposes of Section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act.

This argument essentially means that the term 'bride', which had to be a 'woman' as per the Hindu Marriage Act, could only be a cis-gendered woman. This follows a restrictive approach, and the matter was taken to the high court, where the condition was re-

jected. The court upheld the right to self-determination of gender as laid down in the NALSA judgement.

The court went on to clarify that the term 'bride' as mentioned in section 5 of the Act could not be interpreted in a manner so as the meaning of the provision is rendered "static or immutable". Reliance was also placed on Justice G.P. Singh's book 'Principles of Statutory Interpretation', which states that the court is free to apply the current meaning of a statute to present day conditions. "A statute must be interpreted in light of the legal system as exists today", the court concluded.

In light of this, the court held that the interpretation of section 5 must be such that trans-genders are also included within the ambit of the provision, and can legally marry in India.

Now the question that arises here is whether same-sex people can marry under the Hindu Marriage Act or not, considering that the mandate of section 5 requires a bridegroom and a bride. If two individuals who are biologically of the same sex and identify as the same gender, will their marriage be valid under the statute?

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Death toll rises to 9 as Assam floods claim another life; Army, NDRF, Assam Rifles mobilised to provide aid



Agency
Guwahati, May 20:

The flood situation in Assam worsened on Wednesday, with one more person killed in the Darrang district. The death toll in the current pre-monsoon floods and landslides in Assam has risen to nine, officials said, with more than 6.62 lakh people affected in 27 of the state's 34 districts.

According to the officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, at least 6,62,385 people, including 1,25,491 children and 2,44,216 women, have been affected and nearly 8,260 houses have been either partially or completely damaged in 1,414 villages across 27 districts.

Over 46,160-hectare crop areas have been affected in the flood-hit districts while more than 48,304 people have taken shelter in 135 relief camps.

The worst-affected districts include Cachar, Dima Hasao, Hojai, Nagaon, Charaideo, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Bajali, Baksa,

Biswanath and Lakhimpur.

The situation in the hill section of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) in the Dima Hasao district remained critical on Wednesday as the rain continued to batter the hilly region, affecting the Lumding-Badarpur single line railway route, which connects Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and the southern part of Assam with the rest of the country.

"Out of the 56 affected locations, in around 12 locations restoration work has been completed but the work in major affected areas is yet to start due to the inclement weather," an NFR official told IANS from the NFR headquarters in Maligaon.

The officials said uninterrupted rains coupled with the difficult terrain severely affected the restoration and repair work, which might take several weeks. This rail link has been cut off for the past five days.

Several Assam Ministers, including Health Minister Keshab Mahanta, Water Re-

sources Minister Pijush Hazarika and Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya, are supervising the rescue and relief operations camping in the flood-ravaged areas.

The Army, Assam Rifles, National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force along with the district administrations are working round the clock to rescue the stranded people to provide relief to them.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday discussed the overall flood situation in Assam with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over the phone and assured all possible help from the Central government.

According to Defence Spokesman Lt. Colonel Angom Bobin Singh, two columns of Army and Assam Rifles men from Masimpur Garrison hurried for flood rescue operations in various parts of the district after receiving an urgent request from Cachar's Deputy Commissioner Keerthi Jalli.

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Income Tax Department, North East Region, Imphal yesterday organised an Outreach Programme for Tax Payers at INA Hall, Moirang in Bishnupur. The outreach programme was held under the aegis of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and North East Region Converses" on the topic - 'Importance of Paying Taxes and Ease of Tax Compliance'.

Ng. Joseph Gangte, IRS, Addl. Commissioner of Income Tax, Range - Imphal stressing on the importance of paying taxes stated that the development of a country is determined by the number of tax payers. It is through the taxes collected that the government is able to provide basic facilities for the citizen of the country. He also said that the achievement in collection of 100 Crores income tax in the State during the last financial year is an indication that the State is able to contribute towards the cause of nation building.

Joseph Gangte while informing the new provisions under Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) mentioned that income from transfer of virtual digital assets or crypto currencies is taxable at 30 percent from April 2022. He urged the gathering to be ambassadors in contributing to the development of the country by regularly paying tax.

Laishram Ramcharan Singh, Income Tax Officer, Ward-1, Imphal gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'Importance of Paying Taxes and Ease of Tax Compliance' for salaried as well as non-sala-

Outreach Programme for Taxpayers held in Bishnupur



ried tax payers. During the presentation on duties of tax payers and DDOs, he stated that it is the duty of the tax payer to extend full cooperation to IT department and comply with tax laws and regulations by paying tax timely and accurately.

Speaking on the occasion, L. Ratankumar Singh, Treasury Officer, Bishnupur highlighted the importance of paying in-

come taxes and timely filing of return. He opined that the outreach program will be immensely useful for creating awareness among the officials and DDOs of the district on filing of income tax returns.

During the programme, recipient of Dr. Ambedkar National Award 2021 for Art & Culture, Neha Yumkhaibam; septuagenarian Landuanlung Kamei, who single handedly

planted marigold flower in more than 2 kms along the Old Cachar road in Bishnupur to Khoopum area and Cyclist and Social Activist Philem Rohan Singh, were among the 11 distinguished personalities felicitated for their contributions in various fields.

Government and PSU Officials, entrepreneurs and students participated in the programme.

IBSD organized interactive programme for researchers on various R&D initiatives of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Imphal organized an interactive programme for researchers about various research & development initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India yesterday.

During the programme, Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Director IBSD, Imphal. He highlighted various advances in electronics sector for the development of aquaponics systems, micro-

quality evaluation of different bioresources. Sh. Om Krishan Singh, Scientist, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India highlighted various activities and initiatives of Ministry in electronics sector for the development of products, processes and technologies. He emphasized on creating R&D ecosystems for societal development and start-ups in this region of the country. He highlighted various advances in electronics sector for the development of aquaponics systems, micro-

electronics and nanotechnology.

IBSD has organized this event under the programme on Bioeconomy from Bioresources with special reference to North Eastern Region of India with the guidance and leadership of Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Director, IBSD, Imphal. He advised all the students to develop innovative proposals under various schemes of the Ministry for initiating their own start-ups. The programme was attended by scientists, scholars, staff of IBSD, Imphal.

Contd. from Page 2

Can Hindu Marriage Act allow same sex....

Before interpreting the provisions of the Hindu Marriage Act, it is important to understand whether same sex marriages can be considered to flow from the tenets of Hinduism or not. The Madras High Court in the Arun Kumar case discussed certain mythological tales which clearly indicate that same sex unions are not against the tenets of Hinduism. While there are multiple instances, one of the most relevant that the court made note of was the birth of Lord Ayyappa, which is believed to have been formed out of a union of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu (in the form of Mohini).

Same-sex or sexual interaction apart from strict heterosexual aspects is also valid under the law. The penal provision that rendered such engagements illegal has been read down by the Supreme Court in Navtej Singh Johar. In addition to this, marrying a person of one's choice is considered as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Can the Hindu Marriage Act can be interpreted so as to include same-sex marriages within its scope? In order to answer this, certain rules of interpretation will be applied to the statute.

This is the first and most direct rule of interpretation. It is necessary to present or interpret the terms used in a statute in their natural or usual sense in accordance with this rule. If, following the interpretation, the meaning is absolutely apparent

and unambiguous, then the effect of a statutory provision should be supplied regardless of the consequences that may result. Basically, the fundamental rule is that whatever the objective of the legislature was when it passed a law, it was represented via words, which must be read in accordance with the principles of grammar.

In statutory interpretation, it is the most reliable rule since it allows us to determine what legislators intended from the words and the language they chose to express themselves.

If the literal rule of interpretation is applied to the word 'bride' in section 5, then same-sex marriages cannot be allowed. This is because the provision in its raw terms requires that a bridegroom and a bride be involved in a marriage. As the word 'bride' refers to women in its literal English definition, if two individuals who identify as men wish to marry each other, then the same would fall outside this provision, as such marriage would lack a bride. The same hypothesis would be applicable to a case where two females who also identify as women wish to marry each other because then, the 'bridegroom' would not be present.

Therefore, section 5 cannot be interpreted in a manner so as to allow same sex marriages, as per the literal rule of interpretation.

While the literal rule of interpretation does not provide an affirmative answer to the ques-

tion of validity of same-sex marriages under the Act, it must be noted that the literal rule is not the only valid rule of interpretation. If it were to be so, then various statutory provisions would have a meaning different from what they were actually intended as.

For example, Section 397 of the IPC, which prescribes the punishment for robbery, states that the culprit must have used a deadly weapon. If the raw terms of the provision is taken into consideration and only the literal rule is applied, then merely carrying a gun and committing theft would not amount to robbery as the gun was never used per se. However, courts have time and again clarified that the word 'use' as provided in section 397 does not mean literal usage of the weapon (as recently held by the Supreme Court in the case of Ram Ratan versus State of Madhya Pradesh). Even if a weapon has been carried by the culprit, the same instigates fear in the mind of the victim, and this would amount to robbery and attract the applicability of section 397.

Considering that section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act reads as "the bridegroom has completed the age of [twenty-one years] and the bride, the age of [eighteen years] at the time of the marriage." It must be firstly taken into consideration that the provision is restrictive in terms of age, and its main essence is age and not gender. While it was

drafted with the assumption that the two individuals marrying each other would be of the same gender, no other provision of the Act or any other statute having an overriding effect on the Act lays down a restriction where only individuals of different genders can marry each other.

There are two interpretations available on this. One leads to the result that two individuals can only marry if they are of different sexes. The other interpretation would result in same-sex marriage being considered valid.

As per the golden rule of interpretation, that the interpretation which is narrower in nature and may be a means of injustice, should not be given preference over an interpretation which is wider in nature and also remedies some absurdity or injustice. In addition to this, the golden rule of interpretation can deviate from the exact literal and grammatical meaning of the statute as well, as long as the conditions mentioned above are fulfilled.

For the purposes of this, it must also be taken into account that the courts must interpret a provision that has a valid meaning in today's society, as Justice Singh has written in his book on statutory interpretation, referred to earlier.

Considering all these factors, same-sex marriage should be considered valid under section 5. (IPAService)
Courtesy: The Leaflet

IN THE COURT OF SPECIAL JUDGE (ND&PS)(FTC), MANIPUR AT CHEIRAP COURT COMPLEX

ANNEXURE-I

Schedule I VIII, Form No. 100
High Court Criminal Process No. 4

CASE NO. :- SPECIAL TRIAL NO. 57 OF 2020

FIR No. 76(7)1990MRH-PS
U/S 21 ND & PS Act.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF THE ACCUSED (Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure)

1) Name, Description and address of the accused:

Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang) (22 years) now aged about 53 years S/o Lunkhojam of Moreh Ward No. 6.

2) Name of the accused:

Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang)

3) Place:
Imphal

Whereas complaint has been made before me **Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang)** has committed the offence punishable Under Section 21 ND & PS Act (FIR, No. 76(7)1990 MRH-PS) and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon stating that **Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang)** cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang)** has absconded to avoid the execution of the said warrant.

Proclamation is thereby made that the said **Shri Thenkholal Kuki (Touhang)** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on the **20th day of June, 2022.**

Dated this 9th day of May, 2022.

Sd/-
(Kh. Ajit Singh)
Special Judge (ND&PS)(FTC),
Manipur

India logs 2,259 new COVID-19 cases, 20 deaths in last 24 hours

Agency
New Delhi, May 20:

India recorded 2,259 new cases of COVID-19 and 20 deaths in the last 24 hours, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) informed on Friday morning.

The fresh infections reported were 4.44 per cent lower than 2,582 cases logged on Thursday.

With the new cases reported on Friday, the total tally of COVID-19 cases in India has now risen to 4,31,31,822 (4 crore 31 lakh 31 thousand 8 hundred and 22).

The daily COVID-19 positivity rate was at 0.50 per cent on Friday, while the weekly positivity rate was at 0.53 per cent.

The country now has 15,044 active cases of

COVID-19. There was a decrease of 375 cases in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The active cases comprise 0.03 per cent of the total infections, the health ministry informed.

So far, 5,24,323 (5 lakh 24 thousand 3 hundred and 23) people have died of COVID-19 in India.

In the last 24 hours, 2,614 patients got recuperated from COVID-19, increasing total coronavirus recoveries in the country to 4,25,92,455 (4 crore 25 lakh 92 thousand 4 hundred and 55).

The national COVID-19 recovery rate was 98.75 per cent, the health ministry data stated.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 191.96 crore.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 4,51,179 (4 lakh 51 thousand 1 hundred and 79) samples were tested for COVID-19 in the country in the last 24 hours.

Since the start of the pandemic, 84,58,55,351 (84 crore 58 lakh 55 thousand 3 hundred and 51) samples have been tested for coronavirus in India.

The nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive in India was started on 16 January, 2021, and since then more than 191.96 crore vaccine doses have been administered.

As per the health ministry, 15,12,766 (15 lakh 12 thousand 7 hundred and 66) doses of COVID-19 vaccines were given to people in the country in the last 24 hours.

The COVID-19 vaccination drive in India has been

ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and Union Territories for enabling better planning by them, and streamlining the vaccine supply chain.

As part of the nationwide vaccination drive, Government of India has been supporting the states and UTs by providing them COVID Vaccines free of cost.

According to the latest data by the health ministry, more than 193.53 crore vaccine doses have been provided to states/UTs so far through the Indian government (free of cost channel) and through direct state procurement category.

Over 16.72 crore balance and unutilised COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states/UTs to be administered.

CADA, TDUWDO, KWAD organize meeting on drug abuse



IT News
Imphal, May 20:

Coalition Against Drugs & Alcohol (CADA), Thoubal District Women's Development Organization (Thoubal Ima) & Khekman Women

Anti Drugs Organized a meeting at Khekman Laibung, Thoubal District today on the Topic "Impact of drug abuse to the society and peoples' responsibility to ban it".

According to a release, the

meeting was graced by Moirangthem (o) Sanatombi as Secretary, Thoubal Ima; Asem Jibanlata as President, Khekman Women Anti Drugs & Alcohol, Hijam Priyokumar, President CADA as a presidium members.

Speaking as resource person, Sintha Laishram, Executive Member, CADA highlighted the importance of Women Community in fighting the menace of drugs. He said that since 1971, Manipuri women has been taking major role in the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse however, such participation is declining day after another.

Contd. from Page 1

Orientation Workshop on Sub-Division.....

He said the key focus areas for the mission include re-activating government offices and public facilities in the sub-divisions, time bound implementation of schemes like Lairik Tamhalasi, MGNREGA, Har Ghar Jal, etc; One Division, One Product, sustainable livelihood for each household and identification of innovative and sustainable projects to be taken up.

An interactive session attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Additional Chief Secretaries, Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners, Dis-

trict Nodal Officers, Prabharis of all sub-divisions, Local Representatives of sub-divisions was also conducted as part of the Orientation Workshop on Sub-Division Development Monitoring Mission. The DCs, Prabharis and the Nodal Officers shared their on-field experiences, problems faced so far, suggestions and ideas during the session. Major issues highlighted by the officials include the issue of mobility for the officers, due to lack of official vehicles, lack of infrastructure especially for the new districts,

need for training for those required to collect data to ensure data accuracy, need to focus on certain priority sectors, etc. The officials also highlighted One Sub-division, one product component of the mission and suggested the feasibility of linking the provision of sustainable livelihood with One Sub-division, one product.

Hon'ble Minister Health & Family Welfare Dr Sapam Ranjan Singh, Mayang Imphal MLA K Robindro, Keirao MLA L. Rameshwor Meetei also attended the function.

CBI books Lalu Prasad Yadav.....

The CBI also charge-sheeted Sujata Hotels, which won the contract for the maintenance of IRCTC hotels, its owners Vijay and Vinay Kochhar, former Union minister and close Lalu aide Prem Chand Gupta and his wife Sarla, then IRCTC group general managers V K Asthana and R K Gogia, then IRCTC managing director P K Goel and

director Rakesh Saxena, and Lara Projects, a company through which the quid pro quo was allegedly arranged.

According to CBI, in 2006, Lalu Yadav as railways minister allegedly favoured Sujata Hotels for maintenance of two IRCTC hotels in Ranchi and Puri. As a quid pro quo, the CBI alleged, Rabri and Tejashwi were given prime

property in Patna at throw-away prices.

The CBI has said that between 2004 and 2014, a conspiracy was hatched in pursuance of which BNR Hotels of Indian Railways located at Puri and Ranchi were first transferred to the IRCTC and later on given on lease to Patna-based Sujata Hotel Pvt Ltd for operations, maintenance and upkeep.

Orientation Training programme concluded at Examination Hall, RIMS

IT News
Imphal, May 20:

National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (Divyangjan) is organizing "One Day Orientation Training Programme on "Prevention, Early Identification and Early Intervention of Developmental Disabilities" at Examination Hall, RIMS, Imphal in collaboration with Relief Centre for the Welfare of Differently Aabled Persons, Community Medicine Department, RIMS, Imphal and State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Manipur.

Rajendra Kumar, Praveen, Assistant Professor, Special Education, CRC

Rajnandgoan, NIEPID, Manipur State Coordinator, (Resource Persons) has explained NIEPID as an autonomous body that operates under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and its headquarters is located at Manovikasnagar Secunderabad. She said that with the objective of empowering persons with mental retardation NIEPID is extending various training programmes and services in many parts of India from the past 34 years. As a part of it the services are reaching all North East States. The hardest thing for any parent to hear is that their child has a physical or mental disability. It may come as a complete shock; you may have

thought that your child was just a little slower than others their age. After the fear subsides and you realize you are not alone and your talk it out in counselling and with your partner, the guilt and confusion is likely to set in. You wonder if it's caused by something you did while you were pregnant and you wonder why on earth this has happened to your child.

Yaseen Shareef, (Resource Persons) Assistant Professor in Psychology "CRC Davanagere, Manipur State Coordinator, NIEPID RC, elaborated on various topics such as types of disabilities, causes, prevention, inclusiveness of persons with disabilities in the classroom, society and home,

etc. There are also many causes and volunteer works done to promote greater awareness of disability situations all over the world. Every year, celebrities, athletes, philanthropic organizations, civic groups and many others stage events to bring the limelight to various disabilities. Talking to other parents who have children with disabilities and joining a support group is the easiest way to deal with the news. These are great places to find out about programs you can enroll your child into and how to care for someone with a disability. The three sessions went with audio and video presentations with interactive sessions in between and the programme.

Sports

Nikhat strikes gold at 12th IBA Women's World Boxing Championships

The boxer from Telangana becomes the only fifth Indian woman to clinch yellow metal at the prestigious event

IT Correspondent
Istanbul, May 20:

Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen clinched the gold medal at the 12th edition of the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships after registering a dominating 5-0 victory in Istanbul on Thursday.

Living up to the expectations, Nikhat thrashed Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas without breaking the sweat in the 52kg final with judges scoring the bout 30-27, 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 29-28 in the Indian's favour.

The Nizamabad (Telangana)-born boxer became the only fifth Indian woman to secure gold medal at the World Boxing Championships after record six-time champion Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006) and Lekha KC (2006).

It was also India's first gold medal since boxing great Mary Kom won in 2018.

Nikhat got off to a lively

start and hit some sharp punches to quickly take the upper hand in the opening three minutes against confident Jutamas, who came into the match defeating the three-time World Championships medalist Kazakhstan's Zhaina Shekerbekova.

The 25-year-old Indian took full advantage of her long reach and maintained her dominance against the Thai boxer, whom she had beaten in the 2019 Thailand Open semi-final—the only meeting between the two, enroute her silver medal finish.

However, Jutamas tried to fight back in the second round with a counter-attacking display but hardly managed to cause any trouble for the swift-moving Nikhat, who looked in complete control.

Hitting straight and clear punches, strength proved to be a key factor as Nikhat threw caution to the wind in the final round and kept attacking relentlessly before securing the gold quite comfortably.



"Winning a medal at the world's is always a dream and Nikhat could achieve it so early is extremely commendable. We, at BFI, are proud that our boxers have not only made all of us proud but each of their boxing journeys is inspiring for

the upcoming generations," Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh said.

"On behalf of the Boxing Federation of India, I congratulate Nikhat and bronze medal winners Parveen and Manisha as well as the coaches and sup-

port staff for this achievement. Our eight boxers qualified for the quarter-finals which was joint most and shows the strength of Indian boxing," he added.

With Manisha (57kg) and Parveen (63kg) signing off with bronze medals after their semi-finals finish, Indian contingent concluded its campaign with three medals at the world's biggest boxing event, which witnessed exciting competition in presence of record 310 boxers from 73 countries and also marked the 20th anniversary of the Women's World Championships.

Out of 12 participating Indian boxers, eight made it to the quarter-finals in this year's tournament—the joint highest alongside Turkey.

With the addition of three medals in Istanbul, India's overall medal tally has gone up to 39, including 10 gold, eight silver and 21 bronze, in the 12 editions of the prestigious event—third highest after Russia (60) and China (50).

FIFA picks 6 female referees, assistants for men's World Cup

Agency
Qatar, May 20:

Female referees will make World Cup history this year by working games at a major men's tournament for the first time in Qatar.

Three female referees and three female assistant referees were announced Thursday by FIFA among 129 officials selected for World Cup duty, including one man who caused controversy when refereeing a chaotic African Cup of Nations game in January while suffering with heatstroke.

French referee Stéphanie

Frappart already worked men's games in World Cup qualifying and the Champions League, after handling the 2019 Women's World Cup final. She also refereed the final of the men's French Cup this month.

"As always, the criteria we have used is 'quality first' and the selected match officials represent the highest level of refereeing worldwide," said FIFA Referees Committee chairman Pierluigi Collina, who worked the 2002 World Cup final. "In this way, we clearly emphasize that it is quality that counts for us and not gender."

Name Correction

I, the undersigned Mayanglangbam Shanta Singh, do hereby declare that my wife Mayanglangbam Bineshwori Devi's name has been wrongly recorded as Elangbam Bineshwori Devi in my service record and that I would like to record the name of my wife as Mayanglangbam Bineshwori Devi as it is the correct name.

Sd/-
Mayanglangbam Shanta Singh
HAV (GD), 28 Assam Rifle, No. 5009543
Kakching Sumang Leikai,
Kakching District, Manipur