

## 4th Edition of State-Level Shirui Lily Festival 2022 begins today



IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

The 4th Edition of State-Level Shirui Lily Festival 2022 begins today at Ukhrul district of Manipur. This annual festival is organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Manipur not only aim to create and raise awareness on Shirui Lily flower which is also the State

Flower of Manipur but also to bridge the essence of brotherhoods among the diverse people of the country.

The four-day long festival was inaugurated by the Governor of Manipur La. Ganesan and the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh at Shirui Village Ground in Ukhrul district.

Speaking on the occasion Chief Minister N. Biren Singh

appreciated the Tangkhul community for making the Shirui festival a great success. The Chief Minister thanks to those ancestors who had made Shirui Lily as the state flowers.

"The Shirui Lily festival not only raise awareness for the Shirui flowers but it showcase the culture, traditions and beauty of the Tangkhul community", N.

Biren said and added that the festival will give a platform to showcase the rare art of Nungbi Potteries, and also will give an opportunities to preserve and protect the Tangkhul Hui (Dog) and Meethun.

Different events including traditional dances, songs and music, trekking, beauty contests, indigenous games and sports will be organised during this festival. The festival is held around April and May as it is the blooming season of Shirui Lily. The flower is found in Ukhrul district of Manipur only and cannot be replanted anywhere in the world.

This year, some of the international rock bands will perform in the festival. Every year, tourists both domestic and international attend the function.

However, the festival could not be organised in the last two years due to the Corona virus pandemic. The roads connecting to the festival sites have been upgraded and one fooding and lodging facility has also been developed in the area.

## Minister Nemcha Kipgen graces Workshop on Food Processing Opportunities in Manipur



IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

Commerce and Industry Minister, Nemcha Kipgen today graced a Workshop on Food Processing Opportunities in Manipur & Buyer Seller Meet held today at City Convention Centre, Imphal.

It is organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in partnership with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India to focus on the Central and State Government schemes and food processing opportunities. The program also focused on linking entrepreneurs with partners for forward-linkages and to promote the state's economic vibrancy in terms of trade and commerce, buyer-seller interactions, logistics, thus enabling sustainable and inclusive development.

Addressing the gatherings as Chief Guest, Minister Nemcha Kipgen expressed that the food processing industry significantly helps in improving the socio-economic status of the people. She pointed out that

India's growing food processing industry is already one of the largest in the world, without output expected to touch Fifty Thousand (50,000) Crore Rupees by 2025. Manipur needs this sunrise sector to take off in a big way, to make agriculture more profitable and to increase the per capita income of the state overall as more than 70 percent of State's population is still engaged in the agricultural sector, the Minister said.

Industry Minister Nemcha stressed on the necessity for developing the food processing industry in the State as Manipur has favourable agro-climatic conditions for horticultural crops. While highlighting the advantage of the inherent strength, Nemcha urged the entrepreneurs and business owners to familiarise themselves and avail the opportunities of the various government schemes under Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of Manipur. She also informed to avail the services of Nilakuthi Food Park and other upcoming Food Parks and make use of the food labs for quality

control and rent the factory spaces.

Indigenous food products like Black Rice Laddoo, black rice fruit and nut cookies, Kabok (puffed rice) mixture, Manipuri Casava Burfi, Bamboo Shoot Muraba and Fig Laddoo were developed under the incubation lab project of Manipur Food Industries Corporation Limited (MFICL), Minister informed.

Minister Nemcha Kipgen said that the government always plays the part of enablers and facilitators in the best possible way. Government is in the process of reforming the industrial and investment policies to improve the ease of doing business in Manipur, Smt Nemcha asserted.

The workshop was also graced by Shri Ranjan D. Sen, Chairman ASSOCHAM Agriculture Council, Y. Robita, Director Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry, Govt. of Manipur. Dr. N. Joykumar Singh, Dean, College of Food Technology, Central Agricultural University, Imphal and members from Self Help Groups, concerned stakeholders.

## Absconded murder accused of Bihar arrested from Kakching district



IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

A team of Bihar Police led by SI Rajesh Kumar of Police

Lines, Sitamarhi, Bihar have arrested a murdered accused who have been absconding after getting bail from Patna High Court, from Kakching

district here in Manipur today.

The arrested accused, identified as Alok Kumar Singh Alias Bambam Singh s/o

Laliteswar Singh, resident of Rampuri Parori (west), Police Station - Punaura, District - Sitamarhi, Bihar, allegedly murdered his wife Anu Kumari in March 2019. He has been charge-sheeted in Sitamarhi and was absconding after getting bail from Patna High Court. The person was apprehended due to cooperation between Sitamarhi Police and Kakching Police. The accused person was tracked due to the joint efforts of Augustine Khongsai, Addl SP (LO) Kakching, Ch. Sanjoy Kha Ngangba, OC Waikhong and SI Jiban of Waikhong PS.

## Protest galore in Kangpokpi and Churachanpur district over arrest of Mark T Haokip

IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

Amidst rainfall and unpleasant weather, hundreds of folks gather in Chingdai Khullen, Kangpokpi District and at Churachandpur demonstrating Sit-in-in Protest and mass rally against the arrest of International Human right Association (IHRA) Manipur Chapter, President Dr. Mark T Haokip today at Chingdai Khullen by Manipur Police on 24 May 2022 at New Delhi under 153A IPC.

"Release Dr. Mark Haokip", "where is the Law", "We want Justice for Kukis", "Where is Equality", "Save Kukis from Biren?", placard were displayed.

The charge of Dr. Mark T Haokip under IPC 153A is un-



acceptable, if the Government is willing to maintain peace and Harmony, everyone should be treated according to the law of the Land. It is unfortunate that the government is attacking or arresting one from particular community and act as blind and deaf with one Community. While Haomee Federation and some valley

base organization verbally abused Kukis, terming Kukis as refugee, foreigner, etc., the Government is silent about this and no one from this organisation has been arrested so far. The current unrest in the state is clear evidence of Government's failure. If the Government fails to deliver Justice, peace and Com-

munal Harmony let them surrender. We the Kukis are really tired of BJPs reign", said Boypu Khongsai, General Secretary CAKYO.

"We want immediate and unconditional release of Mark T Haokip, if mark is not release in time the consequences will be of government responsibility" it added.

## UCM organizes workshop on Farm Economy and Environment

IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

United Committee Manipur, (UCM) today organized a one day workshop on rejuvenation of Farm Economy and Environment through Afforestation at its head office at Lamphel.

The inaugural function of the workshop was attended by H. Ibotombi Khuman, Consultant, UCM, Joychandra Konthoujam, President UCM,

Khomdran Ratan, Consultant UCM and Dr. Ksh Lal Bihari, Professor, dept. of Life Science Manipur University as dignitaries on the dais.

The workshop discussed in depth about the impact of poppy plantation to the day today life of the people of the state. The deforestation taking place for plantation of poppy plants has been discussed.

The resource persons of the workshop highlighted the

importance of supporting alternation corps for the poppy planters as the pesticides and other chemicals is ruining the water that has been coming down from the hills to the plains. Planting of Lichi, Betel nuts, Kesu nuts and bamboo will improve the economy of the people in hill areas, said a resource person.

The workshop was organized with aims to improve the environment and also the economy of the people.

## Campaign for Mass Bamboo Plantation

IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

"Campaign for Mass Bamboo Plantation" was organised by the South Asia Bamboo Foundation (SABF), Guwahati, Assam and the Apunba Imagi Machasing (AIMS), Manipur today at Mapao Zingtum, Kangpokpi District, Manipur.

Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of (Education and Ex-

ternal Affairs), Government of India graced the inaugural function of the campaign as the Chief Guest. He joined the gathering online from New Delhi. The Guests of Honour included Dr. S. Manikanta Singh, Additional Director (Retd.), Health Service, Government of Manipur, Kamesh Salam, Founder and Executive Director, SABF, former President of World Bamboo Organization & Founder, World Bamboo Day Celebrations, Dr.

Homen Thangjam, faculty of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Babloo Loitongbam, Director of Human Rights Alert and Sorei Raman, Chairman Sorshia Christian College, Mapao Zingtum.

Chitra Haobam, social worker was the Special Invitee of the function and Prof. Amar Yumnam, former Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University presided the function.

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# Presence of Women in Administrative Service



By: Vijay Garg

In all the states and union territories of the country, only two women were chief secretaries. Till date, not a single woman has reached the post of Cabinet Secretary, the most senior administrative officer of the country. Statistics show that most women retire after completing their tenure, yet they are expected to retire more voluntarily than men.

Last year, a report on gender equality in public administration was prepared under the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It clarified that gender equality is at the core of an inclusive and accountable public administration. The report also indicated that maintaining equal representation of women in bureaucracy and public administration leads to major improvements in government functioning.

After such a long journey of independence, this natural question cannot be avoided that if India has to become a superpower and at the same time bring the concept of New India and self-reliance, then the new bureaucracy and equality of women should not be kept on the margins. Can. During a statement in Parliament in March 2020, the government clarified that it seeks to create a workforce that reflects and reflects gender balance. But the truth is that the ground reality regarding this is different.

This is the era of globalization. In this, the scenario of public service will also have to be given a new look. For this, reducing gender inequality in the administrative service should be a priority. With the increase in the presence of women in administrative services, such services will not only strengthen the workforce, but will also reflect sensitivity. All the work like creating capacity for development, taking the stream of development to the masses and curbing corruption can be made easy to a great extent by increasing the participation of women. The principle of nurturing also says that within a democracy everything should be directed towards the people, this is also the highest of good governance. This will also give an opportunity to the administrative services for gender equality.

The investigation reveals that for the first time in the year 1951, it was decided to include women in the Indian Administrative Service. In the same year, only one woman Anna Rajam was selected for this service for the IAS. After coming a long way of seven decades, in the year 2020, the total number of women in the IAS is 13 percent. If we go deeper, according to a recent study, the number of women among the eleven thousand five hundred and seventy nine IAS officers who entered the civil services between 1951 and 2020 was barely one thousand five hundred and twenty seven.

Although this figure gives witness to gender inequality, but it is also a relief that the number of women administrative officers starting from the unit is more than one and a half thousand today. Gender inequality is not only in the numbers in the administrative service, but there were also different views on the entry of women into this service. The study also revealed that Anna Rajam, who cleared the IAS exam, was asked to consider foreign or central services instead of administrative service when she went for an interview.

After her selection in the administrative service, there was a condition in the appointment letter that this service would be terminated in the event of marriage. This restriction suggests that for women to set foot in the administrative service was like passing through the middle of male power. However, it was later amended and the first woman IAS Anna Rajam married in 1985. Significantly, her husband was RN Malhotra, the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Obviously, the path of women in the Indian Administrative Service was not so easy.

The road to becoming an IAS is getting tougher day by day. However, resources have increased rapidly and access to it has become easier due to internet etc. At present, there are more than one million applicants in the Civil Services Examination and only a few hundred are selected, in which the number of IAS is only between one and a half to two hundred. Even more number of men remain in this. If we look at the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) data, in the year 2017 civil services examination, thirty percent of the total applicants were women.

As of January 3, 2022, out of the ninety-nine secretaries of the Government of India, only fourteen percent, ie, only thirteen, can be seen by women. Not only this, till December 2021, only two women were chief secretaries in the total thirty-six states and union territories of the country. Till date, not a single woman has reached the post of Cabinet Secretary, the most senior administrative officer of the country. Statistics show that most women retire after completing their tenure, yet they are expected to retire more voluntarily than men.

It is worth mentioning that in any service women are in, the responsibility is dual. Apart from office work, it is their responsibility to take care of the house and play the role properly as well as maintain balance, which is no less challenging. The Civil Services Committee was set up in the year 2004 under the chairmanship of former Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) chairman PC Hota. The committee's report highlighted domestic responsibilities as an additional burden on women officers. It is another matter that there was not a single woman member in this committee. In 2008, on the recommendation of the Sixth Pay Commission, the Central Government extended the maternity leave for women employees by one hundred and eighty days and child care leave by two years.

Whether to make the country a superpower or to make India great, for this the development of citizens has to be kept in the priority. For this the administration of development is needed and to get the administration of development, good administrative officers are needed. In this it is not possible to fulfill it only with male officers. Increasing women's participation while reducing gender inequality is morally justified and will also be justified from the point of view of the new work culture. India is also at the top of the ranks of the world in the matter of corruption.

Access to women as administrative officers is also a sign of social equality along with gender balance and if said, it can be possible to curb corruption to some extent. Data from the National Informatics Center shows that Karnataka and Telangana are the two state cadres where thirty per cent of officers are women, while in Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Bihar, Tripura and Jharkhand this figure is less than 15 per cent. It would be appropriate to mention here that statement of the World Bank that if the woman of India makes herself fertile, then the country's GDP will increase by 4.22 percent.

Although here only the women working in the IAS are being talked about, but from the point of view of women empowerment, it would be right to cover all the work areas. The presence of women in the administrative service is definitely low, but its graph is increasing every year. Obviously, to give an edge to good governance, gender inequality in administration will have to be eliminated, as well as it will be easy to solve problems by making their utility productive.

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# Lai Haraoba-the fertility rites of the Meitei

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

Manipur is home to more than 33 ethnic groups. Encircled by ranges of high hills, Manipur valley, dotted with ponds and lakes, lies at the Centre. The Meiteis, the largest group, live in the valley where a few sacred groves are the only forests left untouched by humans. These sacred groves are intertwined with socio-cultural and religious practices and are zealously protected and preserved by the people living in the surrounding areas. It is believed that many pre-Hindu deities reside in the groves. Meitei religion is centered on the veneration of deities, and centuries after the coming of Hinduism, the tradition of worshipping the pre-Hindu deities continues. **Lai Haraoba** or the performance of ceremonial rites to appease these deities is an important festival of Manipur. By February-March each year, the magical touch of spring awakens the dormant buds of trees from their deep winter slumber. April enters with intermittent light showers of rain causing plants and trees to flower profusely. Butterflies, bees, and other insects get busy sucking nectar, unwittingly helping in pollination. May and June bring along dark nimbus clouds and the sky rumbles with the roar of thunder. Flowers fertilized develop into fruits and trees are laden with these.

Manipur is a state which is well known for its rich tradition and ethnicity is considered one of the beautiful places with beautiful natural beauty and great tourist spots. The state is also known as the land of festivals as there is hardly any month where there is no festival celebrated by the local residents. There are a number of festivals that are celebrated in the state, which is a way to bring happiness, peace and harmony among the family, relatives and community people. They celebrate every festival with lots of happiness and this way they try to preserve and maintain their tradition and culture even in today's modern world. In tune with the changes taking place in nature, May-June also heralds in the celebration of **Lai Haraoba** at many localities of Manipur. The **Lai Haraoba** festival is celebrated with great joy as a remembrance of the Almighty's creation of the Universe and is an important traditional festival for the people of Manipur. According to the legends, **Guru Sidaba** was the greatest lord who resided in a dark vacuum which once got illuminated and gave him a sign to create the World. So, the whole purpose of this process is not to forget the creation of the Universe. Also, according to some belief, the festival was first celebrated in **Koubrou Ching (Hill Range)**.

**Lai Haraoba** is one of the important festivals of Manipur and it is celebrated to pay respect and honour to the local traditional deities and ancestors. The festival is usually celebrated by the Meitei community and is also referred to as the "**Festivity of Gods**". In this festival, the people worship **Sanamah, Pakhangba, Nongpok Ningthou, Leimarel** and around 364 Umang Lais (Jungle deities). This festival is organized as a piece of memory of the contribution of God in creating the Universe and also it is celebrated in the memory of the development of plants, animals and human beings. During this festival, the local people dance in front of the idols which is a part of their custom and they also bow to the spirits of their ancestors in order to seek blessings from Gods, Goddesses and ancestors. Both the old and young people perform colourful and traditional dance and songs as a part of the celebration. They also perform dramas, where the people enact the lives of **Khangba** and **Thoibi** who are the hero and heroine of a popular folklore.

During the evening the deity is carried in a palanquin and moved around the locality for people to seek blessings. **Lai Haraoba** is celebrated in honour of the deities of a particular locality, though it honours and calls upon other Lais as well. The main religious functionaries of the traditional Meitei religion are the **Maiba (male)** and **Maibis (female)**. The word **Maiba**, when used without the association of religion, may mean a shaman, a witch doctor, or a traditional medical practitioner. Similarly the term **Maibi**, when used outside the context of religion, simply means a midwife. The **Maibi** of

Meitei religion is a priestess as well as a dancer, a songstress, a medium through whom a **Lai** delivers oracles, and an occultist sans its pejorative overtones. In **Lai Haraoba**, the **Maibi** plays a more prominent role. Unlike the colourful traditional dress worn by a Meitei woman, the **phanek** (lower ankle-length garment wrapped around the waist) of a **Maibi** is white. An additional waist-cloth of half the length is wrapped over the **phanek**. She wears a long sleeved blouse and a white enaphi (chaddar) completes the dress.

**Maibi Jagol** or the **Maibi dance** has become a very popular form of Manipuri performing arts. As visual performance demands, the additional waist-cloth and the enaphi of **Maibi** now have colorful borders. **Lai Haraoba** has evolved over a long period of time and incorporated the traditions of all the people of Manipur's original seven principalities, including the **Chakpas**. There are variations in **Lai Haraoba** since certain rituals inherent in the original local form of worship have been retained in their respective areas. Each form of **Lai Haraoba** has its own liturgical prayers. Depending on the variations in the vast complex rituals, dance, prayer and song, the many version of **Lai Haraoba** may be brought under four groups viz: (i) **Kanglei Haraoba** (ii) **Chakpa Haraoba** (iii) **Moirang Haraoba** (iv) **Kachhing Haraoba**.

Important rituals of **Lai Haraoba** include **Lai Phi Setpa** (adoring the deities with dress), **Lai Kouba** (invoking the deities to come out of water), **Lai Themgata** (implore the deities to come to their shrines), **Yakairol Lshei Shakpa** (singing of awakening songs), **lei langba** (offering flowers), **Naoshum Eshai Shakpa** (singing of lullabies) and **Laimang Phamba** (communication with deities or seeking of prophecies). All the rituals and performances of **Lai Haraoba** other than those with **Lai Kouba** and **Lai Themgata** are performed in the **laibung**, (the empty space in front of the shrine of **Lai**). There is another episode of **Lai Haraoba** called **Lai Lam Thokpa** or **Lai taking a stroll**. **Lais** are put in **dolai** (palanquin) and taken out in procession to any suitable place where rituals

can be performed in the presence of a great number of people. Songs are sung during the **Lairol** (conclusion of **Lai Haraoba**): these include **Ougri hangen** (a song to pacify the mind) **Khencho** (a song illustrating the union of male and female) and **Hijan Hiraol** (a song describing the woes of a mother tree when she learns that her son will be felled to make a large boat).

After the **Maiba** and **Maibi**, the **Pena-khongba** or **Pena player** performs the most important role in **Lai Haraoba**. The **Pena**, a small one-stringed fiddle, is a traditional bow and string instrument. **Pena Khongbas** have to be present at all the rituals associated with the deities. They take a major part in chanting and singing prayers to the accompaniment of the **Pena**. At the conclusion of the sacred liturgical prayers and rituals of **Lai Haraoba**, many traditional games such as **lamjel** (flat race), **Thouri Chingbi** (tug of war), **Mukna** (wrestling), **Khong Kangjei** (a novel form of hockey), **Yubi Lakpi** (snatching of coconut/ rugby) and **Sagol Kangjei** (polo) are played. In a way, **Lai Haraoba** is also a "**fertility rite**" for in the olden days it was celebrated to appease the deities, to replenish the sacred potency of the earth depleted by the harvesting of the crops, as well as to increase the human population. In those days when the infant mortality rate was high, it was important to keep the birth rate high. **Lai Haraoba** gave opportunities to marriageable boys and girls to meet, show off their talents and get acquainted.

Creation myths, belief and superstitions, the concept of birth and rebirth according to the Meitei philosophy, are ingrained in the rituals of **Lai Haraoba**. Despite the fact that it is a pre-Hindu festival, the Hindu Meitei still celebrate it with traditional pomp and fanfare, for **Lais**, continues to be worshipped by the Hindu Meiteis and **Sanamah** in particular is still worshipped in every Meitei's households irrespective of the faith they follow. To conclude **Lai Haraoba** may be said to reflect the culture of Meitei's in totality, irrespective of cast, creed or faith.

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# Cementing Pakistan-Nepal's ties for better bilateral understanding

By: Dr. Malika-e-Abida Khattak

Most bilateral relations in the region, including those between Kathmandu and Islamabad, are dominated about India's massive influence in the region. Both countries have a long history of diplomatic and political ties, and India has played an important role in both countries' considerations.

After India's independence in 1947, Nepal maintained diplomatic relations with India, but not with Pakistan. Nepal and India signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950, establishing a broad economic, strategic, and defense partnership. Nepal and Pakistan established diplomatic ties on March 20, 1960. Following the establishing of diplomatic relations, the friendship and cordiality between these two countries has grown stronger, spurred by understanding and cooperation. The current status of bilateral ties is one of friendliness and mutual benefit.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Nepal took place on March 20, 1962, following a lengthy period of indifference from Pakistan towards Nepal. Various factors increased Nepal's strategic importance in Pakistan's calculations. In 1960, as Indo-US ties grew stronger, Pakistan began engaging more with South Asia's smaller neighbors. During this time, both Nepal and Sri Lanka saw growing involvement with Pakistan. Another

key aspect was geography; East Pakistan was surrounded on three sides by Indian territory and shared a tiny portion of its border with Nepal, thus good relations with Nepal were critical for Pakistan. Former Pakistani Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto put it this way: "Nepal is to Pakistan what Afghanistan is to India; Nepal's proximity to East Pakistan and the crucial states of Sikkim and Bhutan, as well as the province of Assam with its Naga and Mizo freedom fighters, places Nepal high on Pakistan's foreign policy calculations."

Pakistan was concerned about its internal and domestic difficulties after independence. Furthermore, because to Nepal's King Tribhuvan's devotion to India, Pakistan's previous attempts to engage with Nepal were unsuccessful. King Mahendra, Nepal's successor to King Tribhuvan, was likewise determined to establish ties with neighboring neighbors in order to minimize Nepal's reliance on India.

As a result, under his leadership, Pakistan-Nepal diplomatic ties improved significantly. Although Nepal remained neutral throughout the Indo-Pak war of 1971, it soon recognized the newly independent Bangladesh, prompting Pakistan to break diplomatic ties with Kathmandu, which were later re-established.

Political talks between the two countries are largely held at SAARC summits; bilateral trips are uncommon. The most recent visit was on March 5, 2018, when Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi paid a bilateral visit to Nepal after a two-decade hiatus. During this visit, Pakistan's Prime Minister spoke extensively about China's BRI and CPEC projects, as well as Nepal and Pakistan's relations. The most recent Foreign Secretary-level Nepal-Pakistan bilateral political consultation took place in Islamabad on February 25, 2020. The conference was originally set for 2019, but Nepal cancelled it due to escalating India-Pakistan tensions.

Along with plans for collaboration in numerous industries, the nations also exchanged opinions on how to commemorate 60 years of diplomatic relations with various programs. As tensions between India and Nepal grow over a variety of issues, Pakistan and China are using the opportunity to strengthen their connections with Nepal. India must tread carefully in engaging Nepal, whose growing ties with China and Pakistan do not auger well for India's interests in the region. Anti-Indian sentiment has long been used by Nepal to boost its domestic position.

It was utilized to strengthen Nepal's identity under King Birendra's reign, and a similar connection may be drawn under the current

system, when India's influence on smaller neighboring countries is seen with distrust and concern, drawing on the Gujral Doctrine. K.P. Oli, Nepal's current Prime Minister, is noted for his pro-China stance. As the China-Pakistan connection grows, India must earn the trust and cooperation of its smaller neighbors in order to dissuade China in its traditional region of influence.

In 1962, the countries struck a trade deal. In 1983, the Nepal-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission was formed to improve commercial and economic cooperation between the two nations. There is a lot of room to improve trade and commerce partnerships. Pakistan has made significant investments in Nepal's textile, hotel, and banking industries through joint ventures. In 1996, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry formed a joint business council. In 2009, a tourism cooperation agreement was struck. In both countries, information is shared and tourism is pushed. Inter-university collaboration is also being used to improve cultural linkages between the two countries. After the MFN trade protocol was signed in 1962, both nations inked Trade Agreements in 1982. Both countries support SAFTA and the South Asian Economic Union.

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# India logs 2,124 Covid cases in a day; active tally at 14,971

Agency  
New Delhi, May 25:

India saw a single day rise of 2,124 new coronavirus infections, taking the infection tally to 4,31,42,192, while the active cases rose to 14,971, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The COVID-19 death toll has climbed to 5,24,507 with 17 more fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The active cases comprised 0.03 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.75 per cent,

the health ministry said.

An increase of 130 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.46 per cent and weekly positivity rate was 0.49 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,26,02,714, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.22 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 192.67 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.

It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore mark on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 17 new fatalities include 13 from Kerala, 2 from Delhi and 1 each from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

A total of 5,24,507 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,47,857 from Maharashtra, 69,630 from Kerala, 40,106 from Karnataka, 38,025 from Tamil Nadu, 26,203 from Delhi, 23,519 from Uttar Pradesh and 21,203 from West Bengal.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

# AR foils Narcotics Smuggling



IT News  
Imphal, May 25:

Tengnoupal Battalion under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a joint operation with Manipur Police foiled narcotics smuggling in Tengnoupal on 23 May

2022.

Based on a specific input, a joint team of Assam Rifles and Manipur Police launched an operation and intercepted a vehicle at Tengnoupal Police Check Post. On thorough checking of the vehicle, 2 lakhs

WTY tablets sealed in 20 packages were recovered.

The seized narcotics are assessed to be worth Rs 10 crores.

The seized narcotics were handed over to Tengnoupal Police Station for further investigation.

# PEC condemns murder of Bihar scribe, demands punishment to perpetrators

IT Correspondent  
Geneva, May 25:

Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) has strongly condemned the murder of journalist Subhash Kumar Mahato, who hailed from Begusarai locality of Bihar in central India on 20 May 2022. The global media safety and rights body also demanded punishments under the law to all four identified gunmen who targeted Subhash (27) outside his residence in Sankhu village.

Local media outlets in Patna reveal that Subhash used to report on sand, land and liquor mafias in his locality for a cable news channel. On the fateful night he was returning home from a friend's house along with some relatives. The culprits shot at him in front of dome



family members who immediately took the scribe to a nearby health centre where he was declared dead. The victim's family has named four persons in the police complaint.

"We urge the Bihar gov-

ernment chief Nitish Kumar for a high level probe in to the scribe's murder. As the State police claim that all four perpetrators have been identified, we expect they will be brought to justice under law of the land," said Blaise Lempen,

president of PEC (www.presseemblem.ch).

Subhash becomes the 59th media-worker to be killed in 2022 and the fourth victim (after Rohit Kumar Biswal from Odisha, Sudhir Saini from Uttar Pradesh and Juned Khan Pathan from Gujarat) in India. Ukraine and Mexico are the most dangerous countries in the globe so far, reveals the PEC figure.

Describing about Subhash, PEC's India representative Nava Thakuria informs that he studied journalism at a Darbhanga university and worked for a number of Hindi daily newspapers like Rashtriya Sahara, Dainik Bihar, etc. lately he was working for City News Begusarai. Moreover he ran his own YouTube channel Aap Tak which enjoyed visible audience supports.

# A LeT Recruiter Arrested by Maharashtra ATS on Charges of Terror Funding

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, May 25:

The Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) arrested Junaid Mohammed (28) from Dapodi in Pune, on charges of receiving money from the terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir to recruit youth to carry out terror activities, on Monday and remanded him to police custody till June 03 on Tuesday.

The ATS stated that the accused was working for the banned Pakistan-based outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and was involved in recruiting youth for terror activities. Based on the pleadings by Additional Public Prosecutor Vijay Phargade, Additional Sessions Judge SR Navandar granted 10 days police custody. Advocate Yashpal Purohit, provided by the Legal Aid Committee as a defence lawyer, argued that the accused was laydial.

Based on specific information, the Kalachowky ATS unit in Mumbai had begun a probe against four persons in connection with a case related to the alleged recruitment of new members for the LeT and sending them to Jammu and Kashmir for training in subversive activities.

An FIR was registered by assistant police inspector Swapnil Chavan on December 30, 2021, under IPC sections 121A (conspiracy to commit offenses), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 116 (abetment of an offense), and also the IT Act was. During the investigation, one of the sus-

pects was identified as Junaid Mohammed, an ATS official said.

Junaid was apprehended by an ATS team led by Police Inspector Manjusha Bhosle on Monday. The three others wanted in the case are still at large.

The accused originally from Khamgaon in the Buldhana district in the Vidarbha region was residing with relatives in Dapodi and was working at the shop of a scrap dealer for the last few years. He had also visited Jammu and Kashmir on 6 occasions in the last two years.

The ATS in its remand application told the court that the accused was in contact with terror operatives through phone messenger groups and social media platforms and had also received money for terror-related activities. He came in contact with active LeT members through a Whatsapp group named 'Ansar Gazwat Ul Hind/ Tawheed' between 2021 and April 2022, set up by Hamidulla Zargar.

The accused was tasked to misguide, brainwash and create anti-national feelings among selected youth and recruit them as a member of the LeT. He used to receive money from his handlers for completing the given task.

Police inspector Manjusha Bhosale told the court that Junaid was in contact with Hamidulla Zargar of Kulgao, Aftab Shah of Kishitwad, and Umar-all from Jammu and Kashmir. These three persons are now wanted in the case.

During interrogation, the

investigating agencies came to know that accused had received Rs 10,000 from a Jammu and Kashmir-based bank account. He was using different SIM cards to establish contacts with his handlers and after every communication used to destroy the SIM card. The ATS is also probing whether he had done recce of sensitive locations including places of religious significance, vital installations, and defence establishments in the country.

The ATS is also probing his role in the explosives found at Pune railway station last week, as well as the conspiracy plot to assassinate a prominent political leader expected to address a rally in Pune to trigger communal riots.

Junaid is also suspected to have links with another accused Ramesh Shah, arrested by the Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh ATS in February 2019 from Pune for allegedly providing terror funding from Pakistan for terrorist activities in India. Shah, a native of Gopalganj, Bihar, operating from Uttar Pradesh, had fled and settled in Pune in Maharashtra.

Speaking to the Imphal Times, Defence lawyer Yashpal Purohit said that "As per the remand report, the accused was supposed to get arms and recruit more people with the funds he received. He travelled to Kashmir many times, but the purpose of these trips was unknown and that is why custody has been given. He was been brainwashed by LeT recruiters.

# Coming biennial Elections for 57 Rajya Sabha seats significant

Regional parties will gain at the cost of both BJP and Congress

By Kalyani Shankar

The Composition of Rajya Sabha will soon mirror Lok Sabha giving an advantage to the ruling BJP. Though it might reach double digits, it will not gain the majority yet. Stakes are high for the BJP and the opposition parties because of the upcoming Presidential and vice-presidential polls in June - July. Obviously, any changes in the composition of state assemblies will impact the Rajya Sabha, called the House of Elders.

The House will witness several changes after the upcoming Biennial elections for 57 Rajya Sabha seats and two bye-elections on June 10. Some retiring members might come back, and others may not. The oscillating strength of the parties is striking as the regional parties may gain more than the two national parties - the ruling BJP and the Congress after the biennial polls.

The regional satraps rule several states like West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Delhi, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu. The last three states are coalition governments. The young Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ruling Delhi and Punjab has been the biggest gainer in the Rajya Sabha biennial elections. It won five seats, with which its

strength in the House has gone up to eight. The regional parties might increase their tally to 27 from 25 seats out of the 57.

Secondly, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first term (2014-2019), the Congress-led opposition was strong and created hurdles for most bills. The BJP, which had just 47 members in 2012, has touched three digits. The numbers changed in Modi- 2-0, enabling the government to push through many contentious bills, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Of 59 retiring, the BJP has 25, while its allies, the Janata Dal-United, had two and AIADMK three. The shrinking National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has 31 seats out of the 59. It will be challenging for the NDA as it will likely lose 7 to 9. As far as other parties are concerned, the Samajwadi Party has three, the Biju Janata Dal four, the Bahujan Samaj Party two, and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti three. In contrast, the YSR Congress, the Akali Dal, and the Rashtriya Janata Dal have one each.

In Andhra Pradesh, the BJP will lose the three it currently holds out of the four

seats going to the polls. The YSRCP's sweeping victory in 2019 means it will gain all four seats. Similarly, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) will gain both seats going to the polls. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will continue to hold all three seats. In Bihar, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) will improve its tally from one seat to two, and AAP will win both the seats in Punjab that Congress and Akali Dal previously held. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has offered one seat to Congress, held by the BJP.

Thirdly, the Congress Party, the main opposition since 2014, could shrink further. Electorally, the Congress Party has not recovered from the jolt it received in 2014 and 2019 and has lost one state after the other since then. Its tally in Rajya Sabha will dip further after the forthcoming biennial elections to the Upper House. The party will get zero seats in Andhra Pradesh, come down in Rajasthan from 4 to 2, and lose one seat each from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Moreover, between now and 2024, there will be elections for 65 seats, but Congress's chances are bleak as its strength will decrease further.

Fourthly, some senior Congress leaders might not

get a Rajya Sabha berth due to the recent Udaipur resolution giving a 50 percent share to the youth in all positions. The tenure of senior Congress leaders, like P Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal, Jairam Ramesh and Ambika Soni are set to end. On the contrary, Some Union ministers - including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi - will retire. However, they are all likely to come back. The party will be able to accommodate almost all of them after its recent massive win in four of the five state Assembly elections.

On the contrary, Congress's footprint has shrunk geographically. The party is ruling in only four states - in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh on its own and in Maharashtra and Jharkhand as a junior partner in the ruling alliance. The party will have zero representation in Rajya Sabha from 17 states and Union Territories.

Above all, the Rajya Sabha is likely to have a new Chairman if the incumbent, M. Venkaiah Naidu, is either elevated as President or does not get a second term. (IPA Service)

Contd. from Page 2

# Cementing Pakistan-Nepal's...

The two countries' total trade volume is estimated to be around US\$ 4.8 million. Pakistan exports \$1.631 million worth of commodities to Nepal, whereas Nepal exports \$3.166 million worth of goods to Pakistan.

Pakistan and Nepal can work together to revive SAARC as SAARC is now inactive. This is an open secret that the detrimental effects of the Indo-Pak conflicts have threatened the effectiveness of SAARC.

Pakistan also provides financial aid to Nepalese students seeking higher study at

Pakistani institutions. Both countries' economic collaboration is extensive, including a wide range of industries.

Both countries have begun to deepen military ties in recent years, with Nepal acquiring guns from Pakistan. Between 2004 and 2006, the Nepalese monarchy was condemned and isolated by India, the United Kingdom, and the United States for repressing democracy. In order to stay in power and fight the Maoist insurgency, the monarchy developed military cooperation with China and Pakistan, which provided exten-

sive military support, arms, and military equipment to Nepal. Nepal has received medium-tech weapons from both Pakistan and China. However, Cementing Pakistan-Nepal's ties has immense potential for both parties.

(The writer is based in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan and is an educator, and researcher. Her areas of interest are foreign relations of Afghanistan, Pakistan-India-Bangladesh-Nepal-Bhutan and Sri Lanka. She can be contacted at [dramalikabidkhattak@gmail.com](mailto:dramalikabidkhattak@gmail.com))



# PM Modi Holds Cabinet Meeting Immediately On Return From Japan

Agency  
New Delhi, May 25:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who arrived in Delhi early morning after participating in the Quad Leaders' Summit as part of his two-day Japan visit, immediately held a cabinet meeting after reaching the national capital.

Senior Cabinet ministers including Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, S Jaishankar, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Kiren Rijiju, Anurag Thakur, and Smriti Irani, among others were present in the meeting.

PM Modi arrived at the Air Force Station, Palam today after participating in the Quad Leaders' Summit.

The Summit in Tokyo was the fourth interaction of Quad



Leaders since their first virtual meeting in March 2021, in-person summit in Washington D.C. in September 2021 and a virtual meeting in March 2022.

At the Quad Summit, PM Modi highlighted India's consistent and principled position on the need for cessation of hostilities, resumption of dialogue and diplomacy.

PM Modi, along with the leaders of the Quad nations, took part in the fourth interaction of the leaders, which saw criticism of Russian military ac-

tion in Ukraine, from Australia, Japan and the United States.

During the summit, the leaders reiterated their shared commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and the importance of upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of disputes.

They exchanged perspectives on developments in the Indo-Pacific and the conflict in Europe.

On the sidelines of the Quad Summit, PM Modi on Tuesday

had bilateral meetings with US President Joe Biden and new Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. He also had a bilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

On the first day of his visit to Japan on Monday, the Prime Minister had a series of engagements. He participated in an event to launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity and chaired a business roundtable in Tokyo. He also interacted with members of the Indian community.

# Assam Floods: Death toll jumps to 26, 5.8 lakh people still reeling

Agency  
Guwahati, May 25:

The death toll in the Assam floods reached 26 as two more people from Nagaon and Cachar districts lost their lives despite the situation improving slightly on Tuesday.

As per the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), due to the floods over 5.8 lakh, people have been affected across 17 districts.

These seventeen districts are Cachar, Darrang, Dima Hasao, Goalpara, Golaghat, Hailakandi, Hojai, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karbi-Anglong West, Karimganj, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari,

and Sonitpur.

According to ASDMA data, of these 17 districts, Nagaon is the worst hit with over 3.46 lakh people affected by the deluge, followed by Cachar with nearly 1.78 lakh persons and Morigaon with more than 40,900 people.

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma on Tuesday visited the flood-affected areas to take stock of the prevailing situation in Haflong and Dima Hasao.

Notably, during the past few days, Haflong has been severely affected due to heavy rains and landslides.

Sarma visited various parts of Haflong that have been affected by floods and saw the relief camp at lower

Haflong LP School where as many as 17 people have been affected.

Later, the Assam CM also visited the affected family members who lost their lives in the landslide that occurred in the Hokai Puchi village area.

Following the devastation caused by floods, Sarma also assured people of rehabilitating them by building their houses and also set up meetings for the purpose with the high government officials.

"A central government agency will visit the place to study and analyze the damages that happened by the bad climatic condition," he told while speaking to media persons.

Contd. from Page 1

## Campaign for Mass Bamboo .....

The Inaugural Function started with a prayer by Pastor Rev. Angamlei Zimik.

While delivering the Welcome cum Keynote Address, Dr. Atom Sunil Singh, Director of AIMS, emphasized that we are bamboo people as our culture is intrinsically link with bamboo culture. The versatile plant is used right from birth rituals to the death rituals. It is widely used as construction materials, musical instruments, cuisine and various others. However, changing times and new technology have infused new usage of bamboo such as charcoal, fabric, energy drinks and others. From the scientific angle, Dr. Sunil emphasized that bamboo being the fastest growing plant absorbs carbon dioxide the fastest. So there has to be concerted effort on the part of the citizens to plant bamboo and create a sustainable environment for the present and future generation.

Kamesh Salam started with

the dual policy confusion that prevails over bamboo in India. He remarked that on one hand, it is treated a forest product like timber. On the other hand, it is treated as a horticultural product like paddy. Therefore, India has not been able to push forward to develop bamboo and associated products in an intelligent manner while the rest of the world has taken enormous benefits out of the "green gold". Further, he lamented the utter disregard that prevails in Manipur as far as bamboo plantation and value addition of bamboo. Although the Government of Manipur receives handsome amount of money for bamboo & allied venture development, none knows how the money has been utilized by successive governments. Finally, Salam talked about bamboo value chain, without which Manipur or India cannot leap forward in bamboo technology and production of bamboo based products.

Babloo Loitongbam in his

short speech remarked that bamboo plantation can be taken up as a part of the Sustainable Development Goals taken up by the United Nations. He added that what the world needs today is a healthy society. And the most important factor needed for a healthy society is the availability of fresh air and clean environment.

Manipur During the function, Dr. RK Ranjan Singh remarked, "Climate change and pollution in every form is a reality today. In fact, the whole world is gasping for oxygen and talking about oxygen bank". Thus, he appreciated the "Campaign for Mass Bamboo Plantation" organized by the South Asia Bamboo Foundation (SABF), Guwahati, Assam and Apunba Imagi Machasing (AIMS), Manipur at Mapao Zingun, Kangpokpi District of Manipur, as bamboo is the best absorber of carbon dioxide. However, he underscored that while the plantation is being

carried out, a proper landscaping must be undertaken to make sure that the bamboos so planted are in a spot that absorb maximum emission. He also advised the organisers and bamboo enthusiasts to be careful while using exogenous bamboo species but instead promote and conserve the existing more than 52 bamboo species of Manipur. He further added that the Manipur civilization is based on bamboo. However, the traditional forms of uses of bamboo need to be boost up taking into consideration various modern applications of the versatile plant.

Dr. S. Manikanta Singh emphasized that Manipur's need education and awareness regarding poppy plantation in the state. According to him, first of all, poppy plantation destroys the environment as there is mass use of weedicides, insecticides, pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. He also believes that the opium thus manufactured in

Manipur does not leave the state but circulates within it creating health havoc. Therefore, he emphasised on the need of bamboo plantation as an alternative to poppy cultivation. It is not as labour intensive as poppy cultivation. However, the benefits one can reap from bamboo is huge as has been demonstrated by the forward looking states in India as well as other countries.

Sorei Raman recollected how in his childhood days they cooked rice and fish in bamboo stems. He also admitted that although he had personally used bamboo for various purposes he never delved into the cultural and philosophical aspect of bamboo. He added we are throwing away the precious plant that is in abundance around us for cheap plastic and other harmful materials. He concluded by stating that we need to cultivate, conserve and promote bamboo in a sustainable manner.

Dr. Homen Thangjam pointed out that rows of bam-

boos that separated one Meitei neighborhood from another is slowly disappearing on account of population pressure and land scarcity. There has also crept into our development-loving psyche that cement and steel are the ultimate building materials. Therefore, in the name of development and modernization, bamboo has to be uprooted. Such a mentality and practice has harmed our nature, Thangjam added. He recommended planting bamboos as village boundaries in the hills and where land is available. This will go a long way to make a sustainable environment.

Chitra Haobam, the Special Invitee of the function, recollected how in her childhood they used bamboo-twig toothbrush and powdered various plants with bamboo ash as nutrient. She therefore stressed that a plant that is used right from birth till death needs to be conserved.

In his Presidential Speech,

Prof. Amar Yumnam appreciated the beauty of Mapao Zingun and aspired to make the place a renowned academic hub. As far as bamboo is concerned, he expressed that we are bamboo people. However, it is difficult to come across bamboo products in the Northeast region. In fact, one gets more bamboo products in other tourist places like Mumbai. Perhaps, the problem is on account of absence of a bamboo-loving government either in Manipur or India. Development has to be linked with available resources and culture of the place. Otherwise, there are chances of mis-match between "desire" and "reality" and the development venture bound to be a failure. Therefore, he emphasised that the Government must tap the abundantly available bamboo resource and add it as a valuable component of development chart for income generation and employment creation.

## Sports

# 'No victory is complete without your idol's blessings': Nikhat Zareen celebrates World Championship win with Mary Kom

Agency  
New Delhi, May 25:

World champion boxer Nikhat Zareen on Wednesday celebrated her medal with idol Mary Kom.

"No victory is complete without your idol's blessings," tweeted Zareen.

Earlier this week, Mary Kom too had congratulated Nikhat after she won the World Women's Boxing Championships in Istanbul.

"Congratulations Nikhat for winning Gold medal. So proud of you on your historic performances and all the best for your future endeavors," Mary Kom wrote on Twitter.

Nikhat Zareen won the Women's World Boxing Championships in Turkey, becoming only the fifth Indian woman to be crowned world champion. The boxer beat Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas 5-0 in the fly-weight division of the championship. It was India's first gold medal at the championship since Olympic boxer Mary Kom won here in 2018.



At Indian Express Idea Exchange spoke on her rivalry with Mary Kom. She said: "When two boxers enter the ring, only the one who's technically sounder wins. Because of that, when our trials took place, she won and was selected for the Tokyo Olympic qualifiers. I congratulated her on qualifying but unfortunately, she couldn't win a medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

"When I lost in the trials, I decided to move on from Tokyo and focus on the Paris

Olympic Games. With regard to the Commonwealth Games trials, I heard she's going for the trials in the 48-kg category, so I don't think we'll face each other.

"In 2019, when two boxers enter the ring, only the one who's technically sounder wins. Because of that, when our trials took place, she won and was selected for the Tokyo Olympic qualifiers. I congratulated her on qualifying but unfortunately, she couldn't win a medal at the To-

kyo Olympics.

"When I lost in the trials, I decided to move on from Tokyo and focus on the Paris Olympic Games. With regard to the Commonwealth Games trials, I heard she's going for the trials in the 48-kg category, so I don't think we'll face each other."

In 2019, Mary Kom defeated Nikhat Zareen in the 51 kg category trial to qualify for next year's Olympic qualifiers in China.

Mary Kom won bout 9-1 to make it to the squad. However, the tension inside the arena was palpable owing to the bitter row triggered by Zareen's public demand for a trial.

"I was a bit angry. There is no doubt. But it's all done now. I have moved on. All I say is that talk once you perform not before that. Everyone can see what you do in the ring," Mary Kom had said the bout. After the match, Zareen attempted to hug her but Mary Kom did not respond. "They call it clinching in our sport," she said on being asked about it.

# Asia Cup: Sloppy India lose to Japan 5-2

Agency  
New Delhi, May 25:

Profligacy in front of the goal, disciplinary issues right through the 60 minutes and defensive blunders cost India dear as the experimental side lost 5-2 to Japan in their second game of the Asia Cup in Jakarta on Tuesday.

The defeat severely dents India's hopes of qualifying for the second round as their fate is no longer in their hands. Even if they beat Indonesia in their final group game on Thursday, India - currently placed third in the four-team pool with one point - will have to hope that Japan (6 points) beat Pakistan (4) in the other match to finish second.

The two group winners and runner-ups will advance to the second round, where each team will play one another in a round-robin format, with the top two teams advancing to the finals while the third and fourth place teams competing for the bronze medal.

More importantly, however, the four teams that advance to the next round will qualify for next January's World Cup.

For India, that does not matter. As hosts - the World Cup will be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela - the team has earned a direct spot. So, Hockey India used this tournament to test the bench strength.

However, coached by BJ Kariappa and Sardar Singh, the inexperienced side - which saw 10 players making their debuts in the 1-1 draw against Pakistan on Monday - has lacked coordination and discipline.

This was evident against Japan on Tuesday. While India played within their structure in the opening quarter,

barely giving Japan any space, the wheels started to come off in the second period onwards.

Ken Nagayoshi (242), Kosei Kawabe (402, 562), Ryomi Ooka (492) and Koji Yamasaki (542) scored for Japan while Pawan Rajbhar (452) and Uttam Singh (502) were on the target for India.

The young Indian side showed character by trying to stage a comeback twice - once after going 2-0 down to make it 2-1 and then after Japan restored their two-goal lead again by going 3-1 up, Uttam scored a fine goal to reduce the deficit.

## NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD BILAL ALI, Date of Birth 13/08/1982 S/o ZAFAR ALI a permanent residing of H.No.-18 BANGLAZAD KHAN DOMEHALA Road, RAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH-224901 at present residing at B.T. ROAD PO-IMPHAL, PS-CITY, Imphal West District, Manipur hereby inform that, I have change my name from MOHAMMAD BILAL to MOHAMMAD BILAL ALI from purposes and for all records in future vide Affidavit date 24th May, 2022 before the Oath commissioner Imphal West, Manipur.

Sd/-

MD. BILAL ALI  
B.T. ROAD, IMPHAL WEST  
MANIPUR