

Office of the Registrar of Societies, Manipur violates its own laws;

IT News,
Imphal, May 26:

In an investigation by the Imphal Times, the Manipur Registrar of Societies has been found violating its own guidelines by registering two associations with the same name. During Imphal Times' investigation, two associations with the same name and style as Imphal East District Wushu Association were discovered registered in 2016 and 2019, which is against the law.

The registration number of Imphal East District Wushu Association, which was registered in 2016, is 561/SR (IE/2016) and the registration

Registration of two associations with the same name and style Imphal East District Wushu Association discovered in Imphal Times investigation.

number of another Imphal East District Wushu Association, which was registered in 2019, is 159/SR (IE/2019).

No society shall be registered under a name that is identical to or too nearly resembles the name of any other society or body corporate that has been previously registered or incorporated under the Act or

any other law for the time being in force, as the case may be, or is deemed to have been registered under the Act, according to Section 10 of the Manipur Societies Registration Act, 1989. In addition, Rule 13 of the Manipur Societies Registration Rules, 2004 stipulates that when an application for registration is

received, it must be investigated in the office of the Registrar of Societies to see if societies with similar or nearly similar names have already been registered.

In the present case, the registrar of societies failed to comply with the provisions of the laws by registering the two same name associations.

President Kovind inaugurates national conference of woman legislators

Agency
Thiruvananthapuram, May 26:

President Ram Nath Kovind has recalled the inspiring contributions of women who made relentless fight for liberation from colonialism and said that India's freedom struggle has laid the foundation for gender equality in the country.

The President was addressing the national conference of woman legislators in Thiruvananthapuram today.

He said, women are entering more challenging spheres of life and as a powerful force, women have shown their might in help fighting out the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

Hailing Kerala's women empowerment initiatives Mr. Ram Nath Kovind noted that of the 15 women the Constituent Assembly had, three were from Kerala.

He contended that women have always participated in the freedom struggle of the country starting from the 19th

century.

He said that the Non-Cooperation Movement and Quit India movement have had remarkable participation by women under the able guidance of Gandhiji.

He spoke in length about the contribution made by Kasturba Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay.

He said that there are many inspiring women who have participated in the freedom movement and went on to speak of the contribution made by Bhikaji Cama and Lakshmi Saigal.

He spoke of the contribution of Hansaben Jivraj Mehta to the cause of women's empowerment and how she taught the world the first lesson in gender equality.

He also said that India accomplished a rare distinction of offering universal adult franchise to all its adult citizens including women. Women not only voted in elections but also contested and 24 of them were elected to the first Lok Sabha in 1952.

in 1952.

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan presided over the inaugural function held at the Kerala Legislative Complex. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Ministers, Speaker M.B. Rajesh, Opposition Leader V.D. Satheesan, Members of Parliament, Legislative Councils and prominent woman personalities were among those present.

The two-day conference hosted by the Kerala Legislative Assembly is the first national event of this kind to be held in the country. It will have various sessions on themes vital to woman legislators.

Women legislators from the Parliament, Speakers and Legislators from different States are participating.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will address the valedictory function tomorrow.

The President who arrived in Thiruvananthapuram yesterday on a two-day visit will leave for Pune this evening.

Mao declares support to CM'S War on Drugs

DIPR
Imphal, May 26:

The War on Drugs mission of the Government under the initiative of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh continues to garner more public support as people of Mao declared their support to the mission today. Leaders of Mao Council, Mao Students' Association, Mao Naga Women's Welfare Organisation, village chiefs, Senapati District Contractors' Association today led by Mao MLA and former Minister Losii Dikho met Chief Minister N. Biren and declared their solidarity and support to the War on Drugs mission.

Accompanied by Minister Letpao Haokip, MLAL Dikho and the civil leaders, the Chief Minister conducted a press conference in this regard at the Durbar Hall, Chief Minister's Secretariat, today. Expressing gratitude to the huge public support for the war on drugs mission, the Chief Minister said it is a positive sign for the whole State and not just for the war on drugs mission that we can feel an emotional attachment, oneness among the people of the State irrespective of community.

The Chief Minister also expressed his utmost happiness to receive voluntary support from Mao



Council and others against poppy plantation, illegal drug business and drug abuse. He also said we are certain of the mission's success as the involvement of the public is very important.

N. Biren Singh also lauded the Mao Students' Union and Mao Youth Organisation for their initiative to organize Cherry tree plantation drive for Green Highway & Road Safety Mission from Makhhan Khuman to Mao Gate along the AH-2.

Stressing further that only when people are united, we can face any challenge, the Chief Minister also said that there seems to be some interference from outsiders trying to create divide among the indigenous communities of the State. He further appealed to the people of the

State not to be influenced by such external influences. Meanwhile, the civil leaders also declared their support to the government and further welcomed the War on Drugs initiative for a drug free society.

Mao Students' Union president Marikho O' Leriina, showing support to the government, the union along with others is conducting a "Plant a tree with us" mission, with the main objective to reduce the impact of air pollution and dust by planting trees along the National Highway. He said this will act as a natural sink for air pollutants and arrest soil erosion at the embankment slopes and serve as a road safety measure and crash barrier for accidents. It may be mentioned that the

Mao Council and others also submitted its resolution to the Chief Minister. The resolution says that the Mao Council and its sub-ordinate organisations convened a consultative meeting on May 20, 2022 in solidarity with the CM's declaration for War on Drugs and further resolved to vigorously extend logistic support to the leadership of Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh in his endeavour to eradicate drugs from the State and to completely ban any form of drugs within the jurisdiction of Mao. The House had also resolved to penalize defaulters including for poppy plantation, opium smuggling, trafficking, etc and that village to village mobilization shall be initiated and regular monitoring of the same to be conducted.

Fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms under Centre's radar

PIB
New Delhi, May 26:

To gauge the magnitude of fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms which mislead consumers into buying online services or products and to prepare a roadmap ahead, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) in association with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) will be holding a virtual meeting on Friday, 27th May, 2022 along with various stakeholders.

The discussions will be broadly based on the impact of fake and misleading reviews on consumers and possible measures to prevent such anomaly. In this regard, Secretary DoCA, Shri Rohit Kumar Singh has written to all stakeholders: E-Commerce entities like Flipkart, Amazon, Tata Sons, Reliance Retail and others besides, Consumer Forums, Law Universities, Lawyers, FICCI, CII,

Consumer Rights Activists etc. to participate in the meeting.

Along with the letter, Shri Singh has also shared a Press Release of European Commission dated January 20th, 2022 highlighting results of an EU-wide screening on online consumer reviews across 223 major websites. The screening results underline that at least 55% of the websites violate the unfair commercial Practices Directive of the E.U. which requires truthful information to be presented to consumers to make an informed choice. Further, in 144 out of the 223 websites checked, the authorities could not confirm that traders were doing enough to ensure that reviews were authentic, i.e., if they were posted by consumers who had actually used the product or service that was reviewed.

The letter states that 'It is relevant to mention that with

growing internet and smartphone use, consumers are increasingly shopping online to purchase goods and services. Given that e-commerce involves a virtual shopping experience without any opportunity to physically view or examine the product, consumers heavily rely on reviews posted on e-commerce platforms to see the opinion and experience of user who have already purchased the goods or service. As a result, due to fake and misleading reviews, the right to be informed, which is a consumer right under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is violated.'

'Since the issue impacts people shopping online on a daily basis and has a significant impact on their rights as a consumer, it is important that it is examined with greater scrutiny and detail,' the letter states.

Modi's sensitivity and the 'Game' Petroleum Companies Play

By K Raveendran

Petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Singh Puri has attributed the excise cut in petroleum products to Prime Minister Modi's 'considered and very well thought through assessment that the burden on the common man, the Aam Aadmi, needed to be addressed. He was speaking to television channel in the wake of the latest announcement by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman of a cut of Rs 8 in the excise duty on petrol and Rs 7 per litre of diesel. Puri further praised the

prime minister saying he was very sensitive.

Puri was not just echoing the sentiments of a 'bhakt'. Modi himself seems to have been much in agreement. "It is always people first for us! Today's decisions, especially the one relating to a significant drop in petrol and diesel prices will positively impact various sectors, provide relief to our citizens and further 'Ease of Living'," the prime minister said in his tweet after Nirmala Sitharaman announced the excise cut.

There is nothing wrong with both remarks. If the

decision is attributable to Modi's 'sensitivity', the corollary is that the prime minister can be accused of insensitivity when he preferred to look the other way when there were so many burning issues - whether it was the suffering of millions of migrant labourers during their trek back home after the ill-timed lockdown, or the turmoil in the wake of the vexing farmers agitation or even the destruction of the economy as a result of the misadventure of demonetisation.

It was the efforts of the

judiciary, though after a period of initial reluctance, that retrieved the situation to some extent, whether it was the great reverse migration, or the fight against covid and the world's biggest vaccination drive that prevented even a greater pandemic tragedy.

Now getting back to Puri and his faux pas. He described the oil companies as 'responsible citizens' and responsible entities in controlling petrol and diesel prices. "They are very strong stakeholders in our system and clearly, they do their own decision making." He went on

to point out that since over a month, oil marketing companies have not made any changes in petrol and diesel prices even as the global crude oil prices have remained high and extremely volatile amid the ongoing geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine.

Puri says it is not for him as the minister for petroleum and natural gas 'to have to tell them what they can do and what they can't do'. Fair enough. This brings into question the price behaviour of petroleum products ahead of crucial elections in the country, which has over time fallen into a

pattern. As soon as elections are announced, the petroleum companies apply a freeze on their price hikes and the day the results are out, they resume the hikes. This has been happening consistently over many elections.

If, as Puri suggests, the petroleum companies are volunteering to do the price cuts in time of elections without a direction to the effect from the government, the companies must be held responsible for trying to influence the voting, not to mention in favour of the ruling party. If petroleum companies

can rig the elections, like Facebook and other social media platforms have been accused of doing in various countries, it is one of the biggest threats to democracy.

Facebook has been on the mat for helping to influence public opinion - from the 2016 Trump campaign and Brexit to helping influence elections in third world countries. Even Indian political parties have faced criticism for engaging organizations like Cambridge Analytica to target individuals and groups into moulding their attitude towards the party in question.

Contd. on page 4.

'Bangabandhu Corner' in India: An Aesthetic Initiative of Mujib's Practice

By- Bashudeb Dhar

Bangabandhu Corner-A new attempt to practice 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' in Bangladesh. Going to the father of the nation for a while in the busiest life. This initiative has recently expanded beyond the borders of Bangladesh and reached new heights in the international arena. Bangabandhu Corners have been set up in Bangladesh missions in different countries, most recently Mujib Corners have been inaugurated at Press Clubs in New Delhi and Kolkata.

What is Bangabandhu Corner? In a word, the aim of Bangabandhu's practice is to present Bangabandhu with various materials including books and pictures in one place. Going to Bangabandhu in leisure time on the way or in the gap of work. To put it more clearly, spending some time with the father of the nation of Bangladesh. And this initiative was started by a banker named Shams-ul-Islam.

In this context, the history of Bangabandhu practice in Bangladesh needs to be highlighted. After the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family in 1975, the occupiers of power conspired to take the country towards Pakistan and even tried to form a confederation with Pakistan. The history of the war of liberation was changed and Bangabandhu was exiled. Naming is also considered a heinous crime. The democratic secular constitution drafted in the spirit of the war of liberation was Islamized by military decree. Secularism, one of the four basic principles of the constitution, was abolished, and Islam was later made the state religion.

The idea was also propagated that it was not Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman but Ziaur Rahman who declared independence, Major of Pakistan Army in 1971 and later General, Chief of Army Staff. Neither Mujib nor his party Bangladesh Awami League has any role in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. The slogan of the liberation war 'Joy Bangla' was banned. Military dictators also destroyed the blood ties that Bangladesh had with India during the war of liberation. In a word, the conspiracy was to wipe out Bangabandhu and Bangladesh from the war of liberation.

After the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family in 1975, the Awami League led by Bangabandhu was kept out of power for 21 long years. The architect of Bangladesh too. After the Awami League came to power with the people in the 1996 elections, Sheikh Hasina started trying to bring the country back to the line of the liberation war. Though the planned conspiracy to keep the new generation away from the war of liberation and Bangabandhu came to an end, the defeated Pakistani trend was not completely eradicated. However, opportunities arose for the war of liberation and the practice of Bangabandhu. Apart from the BNP-Jamaat rule from 2001 to 2006 and the covert military rule of 2006-2007, the nation was reborn in 2009 and the Awami League returned to power. The new journey started on the path of liberation war consciousness.

By removing all obstacles, the way to rediscover Bangabandhu became easy. I began to research and write. Various books on the liberation war and Bangabandhu were published. Bangabandhu came up anew in the seminar discussion. Bangabandhu Corner is an exceptional initiative in its continuity.

While Mohammad Shams-ul-Islam was the General Manager of Sylhet Circle of the state-owned Agrani Bank, Bangabandhu Corner was started on a limited scale. He himself said he was sceptical of success. But from the beginning, he got a positive response. His idea later spread to the head office of Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank, when he was the managing director of the bank. This initiative took a more aesthetic form at the head office of Agrani Bank. After Shams-ul-Islam took over as the managing director and chief executive of the bank, Bangabandhu Corner was set up on the seventh floor of the bank building. There are more than 400 books written about Bangabandhu and the liberation war, three albums of Bangabandhu's pictures, a big picture, magazine, CD and a bronze sculpture weighing 118 kg. If you stand beside this sculpture, it seems that Bangabandhu is beside you.

Shams-ul-Islam said, "I showed the picture of Bangabandhu Corner to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on one occasion. She looked at the pictures attentively and praised them." It serves as motivation. And in an effort to expand the initiative.

Mr Islam, the inventor of Bangabandhu Corner, told the story behind the initiative. After independence, Bangabandhu merged Habib Bank and Commerce Bank of Pakistan and established Agrani Bank. If there was Pakistan, I could be a junior officer in any bank. Pakistan's 23-year history testifies, not more. With the rise of independent Bangladesh under the leadership of Bangabandhu, I have become the highest official of a bank today. Bengalis are getting a chance to stand with their heads held high. Being able to utilize talent and skills. He said that great efforts were made to erase Bangabandhu and the war of liberation from the minds of the people of Bangladesh, but it was not possible. After the assassination of Bangabandhu, a vacuum was naturally created. After 21 years, when the forces of the liberation war came to power, the country started its journey in the right direction under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. In this great work, I have tried to join with a new thought. My initiative is very small, but I am proud to be able to inspire busy people to spend some time with Bangabandhu. I think this is a step towards making Bangabandhu our companion in our busy time.

Bangabandhu Corner has already been set up in almost all corporate offices, educational institutions and embassies and press clubs in the country. The government has decided to set up Bangabandhu Corners in libraries in all educational institutions of the country. In this way, interest is being created to know Bangabandhu. The practice is growing. (**Bashudeb Dhar is the President, Indian Media Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (IMCAB))

Unjustly marginalised



By - Yambem Laba

In strife-torn Manipur transpeople are facing a harsh battle for survival And recognition

When Thangjam Santa Singh was born, his parents rejoiced with the thought that yet another son had been added to their family. But as he grew up, he felt different and began behaving more like a girl than a boy. Eventually, he realised that he was a girl trapped in a boy's body. And as she stepped into adulthood, she decided to shun all social prejudices against people like her. She soon assumed the name of Santa Khurai, Khurai being the area she was born in, and began mobilising more people under similar circumstances. And she publicly declared that she is a "woman without a womb".

Likewise, when Indira Thokchom was born about 48 years ago as the older of twin sisters, she began to realise by the time she was in Class VIII that she was different from her sister. She understood that she was a boy trapped inside a girl's body. So did Diana Potshangbam, the seventh of eight sisters, who had worked with a television channel in Delhi, but returned home to become the public relations officer at the Loktak Development Authority, Imphal. After her realisation, she began providing leadership to persons who have faced similar circumstances.

According to a survey by the department of social welfare, Government of Manipur, in 2015, there were more than 4,000 transgenders in the state. Out of that, 1,764 were transwomen, while the rest were transmen or queers. Khurai went on to form the All Manipur Nupi Manbi Association, or Amana, an apex body of transwomen, and began canvassing for their rights. Likewise, Potshangbam and Thokchom teamed up to form the All Transman Association, Manipur, or Atma. With Potshangbam as its founder-president, the organisation brought all transmen under one umbrella, seeking space and recognition in society. The Amana has 130 registered members, while the Atma has 200. The former is functioning under the Solidarity and Action Against the HIV Infection in India group, or Saathi.

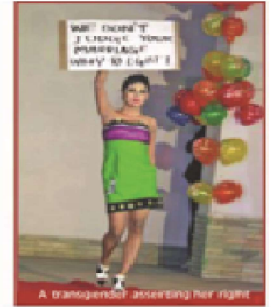
Khurai led her crusade against discrimination at various forums and platforms at the state, national and international levels. For instance, she has addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva at its sessions on water and sanitation, and indigenous people's rights. She became a fellow of the Asia Pacific Transgender Network and has earned a fellowship from Sweden as well.

Khurai has assisted in the publication of the first-hand document of Nupi Amaibis, or transwomen shamans, who play a pivotal role in conducting the indigenous socialisation process of Meiteis in a festival called "Lai Haraoba", or merry-making of the gods. In the festival, the creation of the universe and mankind is depicted through symbols.

But Khurai's woes are manifold as she has to fight an indifferent state government. After much struggle, the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences has introduced a separate queue for them in the outpatient department. The government has also provided separate toilets for them during the annual Sangai festival.

Khurai had even gone to the Supreme Court of India, challenging a standing order of the central government that no transgender, men who have sex with men, or MSM, and sex workers could donate blood. The Centre was eventually served with a notice from the apex court. During the pandemic, she had organised separate quarantine centres for transgenders. She had also interacted effectively with the state's Women Commission and been successful in making it fight the cases against them.

But having been to Bangkok to get herself surgically transformed into a woman, Khurai laments that many "dogooders" of society have been issuing diktats. For instance, a civil society group called the Enat Yohat Lup has issued a diktat that no Nupi Manbi (male) shamans can participate in the Lai Haraoba ceremonies of the state, a practice that has been going on for centuries. She asserted that it is akin to



mainland India's many caste prejudices, like viewing a group of people as profane and not allowing them inside places of worship or even drawing water from village ponds and wells.

Khurai stated that they are very different from the Hijra community of mainland India, where body mutilation is performed and they go about harassing passengers on trains and buses, asking for money. Today, in Manipur, transgenders (Nupi Manbi) dominate the beauty industry as makeup artists. Many of them are also employed in metropolises across the country. They hold beauty pageants and perform the indigenous Thabal Chongba dance during spring, in which straight people also participate.

A few years ago, two Manipuri beauticians were raped in Bangalore by three hoodlums at knifepoint inside their apartment. Khurai immediately flew down, contacted a Bangalore-based Manipuri social activist Urmi la Chanam, and got the assailants arrested from a place near Chennai.

On the other hand, Potshangbam, who is also a filmmaker, decided to start her organisation in 2016, after watching boisterous Nupa Manbis or transmen indulging in drinking bouts. She said that they come from diversified backgrounds. There are tractor mechanics, mason workers, retailers etc.

Potshangbam said that the vision of the Atma is to "live as a responsible person in a society where equal rights and opportunities should be given". Its mission is to congregate and empower the transmen community by creating a society conducive for them. The chief goal of the organisation is to "facilitate entitlement and enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender identity in society". The Atma had also organised relief work during the Covid-19 pandemic, besides other social outreach programmes.

Some of them have also performed extraordinary feats. For instance, Thokchom

participated in a motorcycle rally, which started from New Delhi, covered Manali, Leh, Kargil, Srinagar and back, during the height of the Kargil conflict. It was organised by the first Indian woman who climbed the summit of Mount Everest, Bachendri Pal. A primary school teacher by profession, Thokchom initially wanted to join the Manipur Police commandos upon recollecting the sound of the Bofors guns reverberating across the mountains in Kargil.

Acting almost alone among the LGBTQ+ community is Sagolsheem Pavan, a programmer by profession. He said that as he grew up, he began to realise his queer status. He was not attracted to girls or even transwomen. His parents once admonished him for his queer preferences and now, his mother has started asking him to get a "husband". Once, a same sex marriage was conducted in Manipur with full pomp and gaiety. It was before the Supreme Court's historic judgment on gay rights, and the police promptly came and arrested the duo after the wedding ceremony was over.

I was a judge at a transwomen's beauty pageant, and my last question to the person who stood first was, "If given a chance, will you marry a transman or an actual man?" She said that having grown up thinking of herself as a woman, she would prefer to be married to an actual man. And there have been cases where actual men have eloped with transwomen before they were traced and separated by their parents.

According to social activist Nandini Thokchom, who has mentored Khurai and others, religion also plays a big role in discouraging transpeople from coming out. For instance, among the tribal communities that follow Christianity, there are almost no transpeople who would venture out in the open.

In strife-torn Manipur, transpeople are living at the margins, facing a harsh battle for survival and recognition.

The writer is the Imphal-based Special Representative of The Statesman

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Please, Don't Forget the Rohingya Refugees

By - Kyaw Min

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, escalating the Russo-Ukrainian War, which had started in 2014. With more than 6.5 million Ukrainians fleeing the country and a third of the population displaced, the invasion has triggered Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II.

While the Bangladesh's Rohingya's plight has been overshadowed by the Covid-19 outbreak, Myanmar's military coup in February, Afghan refugee crisis, now the Ukraine crisis, the community remains in limbo, with many of its members missing citizenship and the rights that come with it. Around a million Rohingya refugees have been living in Bangladesh since 2017, while others have sought sanctuary in nations all over the world.

When the Myanmar military began a clearance operation against them in 2017, several members of the community were forced to flee. Rakhine state was particularly tense, with tales of rape and murder against Rohingyas abounding. The International Court of Justice has charged Myanmar with genocide over these atrocities. Meanwhile, the community's living conditions in refugee camps are deteriorating.

Due to the extended ambiguity surrounding their repatriation to Myanmar, Rohingyas refugees in Bangladesh are becoming frustrated. Such ambiguity poses a significant risk because it tempts many people to engage in illicit activity.

Bangladesh confronts increasing difficulty in managing the displaced people as foreign support for the Rohingyas dwindle, with little hope of repatriation in the near future.

Following the ongoing Ukraine crisis, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, which has already displaced millions of Afghans both inside and outside the nation, another humanitarian crisis has emerged.

While many in the world community have correctly condemned Myanmar's junta for deposing an elected government, the Rohingya's situation must not be overlooked. The international community must demand justice for the Rohingya in addition to a restoration to representative rule in Myanmar. Despite the fact that members of the Muslim Rohingya population claim generations of roots in the country formerly known as Burma, Myanmar's ruling generals have long promoted the xenophobic stereotype that they are "outsiders" in the Buddhist-majority country.

Bangladesh is home to nearly 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas, the majority of whom arrived on August 25, 2017, following a murderous crackdown by Myanmar's army described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing." International community should have always taken the safe repatriation of refugees seriously. Bangladesh's administration began diplomatic attempts to return them and negotiated

agreements with Myanmar. However, even five years later, not a single Rohingya has returned to their homeland for fear of persecution. It appears that Bangladeshis paying the price for expressing sympathy for a persecuted minority community in another country.

Bangladesh wants to resolve the Rohingya situation through peaceful negotiations, and Myanmar and the international community should do the same. Myanmar has been attempting to mislead the international community in order to avoid fulfilling its duties for the repatriation and reintegration of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas.

The host country has done everything. It wants ensure Rohingyas return through peaceful means, but nothing has worked out so far. It goes without saying that voluntary repatriation of Rohingyas is the most sustainable and long-term solution to the situation. However, because to the Rohingyas' lack of faith in the Myanmar government, repatriation attempts failed twice in November 2018 and August 2019.

Myanmar must ensure that Rohingyas refugees are not persecuted upon their return in order to facilitate voluntary repatriations. To this aim, the international community and the United Nations should increase pressure on Myanmar to create a safe, secure, and dignified environment for the Rohingyas refugees to return home. World anticipate the international community should play a more assertive diplomatic role in pressuring Myanmar to return the Rohingyas.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has stated recently during his visit to Bangladesh that while focusing on the "catastrophic disaster" in Ukraine, they must not forget about other challenging situations across the world, such as the Rohingyas crisis, which require attention and resources.

Despite new financing to Ukraine in response to an "exceptional humanitarian situation," the US is committed to continuing to support Bangladesh in the Rohingya crisis, according to a top USAID official who visited Rohingyas camps in Bangladesh in May 11, 2021.

"We are dedicated to maintaining our support for the Rohingya response," USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman told a small group of journalists at an American Centre press conference in the capital before ending off her 5-day visit to Bangladesh. She continued, "We have a very fundamental approach to humanitarian response, and ensuring that the refugees (Rohingyas) who are here receive the basic necessities to meet is a priority for us."

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas refugees and host communities in Bangladesh, as well as Rohingya and other conflict-affected persons in Myanmar, will benefit from an additional £22 million in humanitarian help from the European Commission. Protection services, food aid, nutrition, health, and shelter will all benefit from the investment.

Since 2002, the EU has been

actively assisting people in Bangladesh (since 2002) and Myanmar (since 1994), with a particular focus on disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, providing life-saving assistance to Rohingyas refugees, and funding emergency aid to people affected by natural disasters.

Rohingyas need more assistance of the international community. They've spent the last five years telling the world about their situation and repeating the same stories. They've gotten nothing but compassion and hollow promises in exchange.

With the world's attention focused on the migrants in Ukraine, we hope the world should not overlook the misery of 1 million Rohingyas refugees in Bangladesh.

The international community's plea for repatriation to Myanmar must be louder, more visible, and more frequent. Bangladesh's government must continue to ensure that any transfers are entirely voluntary. Any long-term solution must take into account the local and national context. But flow of humanitarian assistance must be ensured till then because they need to fulfill their basic needs. They have right to survive with dignity because they are also human being. But peaceful and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas in Myanmar is the final solution. But till then, they need to survive! survive! survive! Please don't forget them.

(The writer is an activist, educator, freelance writer, and researcher, originally from Mandalay, Myanmar and presently based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Taxpayers outreach programme held

DIPR Chandel, May 26:

A Taxpayers Outreach Programme on the "Importance of Paying Tax & Ease of Tax compliance," an initiative under the "NER Converse," was organised by the District Administration Chandel in collaboration of the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax Range-Imphal under the aegis of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and North Eastern Region converses at the Limkhu Inn, Japhou Bazar yesterday. The programme was specially organised to bring awareness and better coordination with the different stakeholders of the district like the Contractors, Entrepreneurs, MSMEs, Hoteliers, DDOS, Traders, other Potential Taxpayers etc. Speaking at the function the Deputy Commissioner Chandel, Mayanglam Rajkumar appreciated the initiatives taken up by the Income Tax Department and



urged all the stakeholders to take full advantage of the awareness programme being conducted. He said that income tax is of the major source of income for the government which in turn helps the government to take up different developmental works for the public. He cautioned, specially the DDOS of different departments in the district to comply with the Income Tax rules in time to avoid complications in future and also asked all the taxpayers not to hesitate to take

help and guidance from the Income Tax department. He also urged the Income Tax department to have a dedicated officials for different sectors of districts so that it will be more convenient for the taxpayers while approaching for tax related guidance. While giving his opening remark the Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Imphal, Moirangthem Joychandra Singh, IRS, elaborated the usefulness of paying income tax and specially mandatory of filling

Income Tax return and its usefulness for the tribal people who are exempted from paying Income tax. As part of today's programme many Achievers of the Chandel District were felicitated for their works and inspiring the youth of the society and their role in national building. The programme was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Chandel Md. Firoj Khan, SDOs, DLOs, and other stakeholders of the district in large numbers.

Security forces recovers cache of weapons and stores in Bishnupur, Manipur

IT News Imphal, May 26: Keithelmanbi Battalion of IGAR(South) under Spear Corps in a joint operation with Manipur Police recovered cache of weapons and stores in Bishnupur district, Manipur on 25 May 2022.

Based on specific input, Security forces along with Manipur Police launched an operation which led to the recovery of arms and ammunitions. The haul included one assault Rifle along with three magazines and 54 live rounds of 5.56mm calibre, one 32mm Pistol and four live rounds, one hand grenade and four Kenwood hand held radio set.



Indian people being crushed between inflation & Unemployment

By - Vijay GarG

Workforce in India is being crushed between inflation and joblessness chiefly on account of wrong policy stance of the centre government and the pandemic may be just an additional excuse. Retail inflation in April soared to a 8-year high, ie the entire period of Modi Raj, and touched 7.79 per cent as against 8.3 per cent in May 2014, which he had strongly criticized during his election campaign. In place of the promise of providing one crore job every year, his government actually delivered unprecedented level of joblessness in decades, further exacerbated by the pandemic. High taxes on petrol and diesel, high administered prices, and high GST rates have all along fuelling the rise of inflation, apart from the rising food prices, the downturn in labour market started with the policy experiment of demonetization in November 2016, could never been stopped. Job situation has never been worse. Both unemployment and labour force participation suffered historical decline during Modi Raj. The pandemic and other domestic and external factors did have it impact and the government seemed to be stupefied. Rethinking on its old wrong priorities was required

but the centre continued with them, and in several cases vigorously followed them. The worsening market condition with price rise and inflation and labour market deterioration with large number of job loss, declining opportunity of jobs, and rising unemployment has become the characteristic features of the entire Modi rule. No money in hand and little opportunity of getting jobs have made the life of our workforce miserable. The month of April 2022 though witnessed substantially increased activities in the labour market, the additional jobs that became available were inadequate compared to the demand. A large number of the frustrated people who have left the labour market and had stopped even searching for jobs resumed their search, though the search has become costly, the unemployment rate has increased compared to 7.88 per cent in April compared to 7.57 per cent in March, according to the latest CMIE assessment. The labour force increased by 8.8 million from 428.4 million in March to 437.2 million in April. It was a substantial increase in the recent months, especially after a fall of 12 million in the preceding three months. This increase was far below the loss which should be taken into consideration. Employment

expanded by only 7 million in April, which was less by 1.8 million increase in the labour force. The increase in employment had also come after three consecutive months of decline in employment, according to CMIE data, which also reveals that employment had fallen by 10 million from 406 million in December 2021 to 396 million in March 2022. In April, it reached to 403 million, only to recover a part of the fall. Thus the number of unemployed persons rose to 34.2 million, which includes the 1.8 million increase (increase in labour force minus expansion in employment) in the count of the unemployed in April 2022. April 2022 also saw a 2.3 million increase in the count of those who stated that they were unemployed and were willing to work if work was made available to them but were not actively looking for employment. The count of these rose to 19.5 million in April 2022. The agriculture sector shed 5.2 million jobs in April. Part of this decline in labour force was due to winding of rabi harvesting season, shrivelling of the wheat crop, and the consequent decline in wheat production. Wheat production is expected to have fallen by between 10 and 20 per cent this year because of intense heat

wave. It is a very serious concern, and the Centre has already banned exports of wheat to avoid food insecurity of the country. Since the recent rise in CPI inflation was chiefly due to rise in prices of food articles, the wheat production fall indicates that its prices will increase in near future which may push up the prices of rice also due to shift in demand. The further rise in inflation can thus not be ruled out. Increase in employment in April was chiefly in industry and services. Industry added 5.5 million jobs while services added another 6.7 million. Within industry, 3 million jobs were added in manufacturing and nearly 4 million in construction. However, mining and utilities reported sharp decline in employment which coincided with the coal shortage and the consequent power sector crisis, which again impacting overall performance of the business, industry and agriculture. Within manufacturing, it was heavy industries such as metals, chemicals and cement that added jobs. Within services sector, the increases were in the retail trade, hotels and restaurants industries. A matter of more serious concern is that the increase in employment in industry and services was of low quality jobs. The CMIE

says that it indicated the fact that the increase in employment was largely among daily wage labourers and small traders. This type of occupation saw an increase of 7.9 million jobs. Entrepreneurs increase by 4 million and farmers fell by 5.1 million. There was almost no change in salaried jobs which were close to 79 million during March and April 2020, much below 87 million before the pandemic in 2019-20. Big increase of 12 million was reported in non-farm jobs, two-thirds of which were daily wage labourers and small traders. In this scenario, Modi government needs to urgently redress the twin evil of inflation and joblessness by reviewing its entire set of policies that have been fuelling both. Alibi is a bad defence, and bad politics. Good governance with better policies may help reverse the trend. Relying solely on RBI intervention, such as raising interest rates, will not be sufficient. With factory output in terms of IIP remaining subdued, further interest rate hike may slow even economic growth which in turn will deteriorate inflation and labour market. The jumping of food price inflation to 17 months high to 8.38 per cent is too serious a matter in the face of disquieting levels of joblessness and unemployment.

Haryana's Capt Abhilasha Barak creates history; becomes first woman army pilot

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, May 26

Captain Abhilasha Barak became the first woman officer to join the Army Aviation Corps as Combat Aviator when she was awarded the Coveted Wings along with 36 Army Pilots by Director General and Colonel Commandant Army Aviation at a valedictory ceremony held at the Combat Army Aviation Training School in Nashik in Maharashtra on Wednesday.

Director General of Army Aviation, Lt Gen A K Suri, was the chief guest at the event. Captain Barak's achievement was described as a "Golden Letter Day" in the history of Indian Army Aviation. Upon successful completion of her training, Captain Barak was awarded the Coveted Wings along with 36 Army pilots, by Director-General and Colonel Commandant Army Aviation. Young Aviators are now ready to spread their wings in Combat Aviation Squadrons, the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGP) Indian Army said in a tweet.

She was commissioned into the Indian Army from the Officers Training Academy, Chennai, Tamil Nadu in 2018. She was placed in the Army Air Defence Corps in September 2018.

During her attachment with the Corps of Army Air Defence, she was selected as a Contingent Commander for Presentation of Colours to Army Air Defence by President Ram Nath Kovind. She attained an 'A' grading in the Army Air Defence Young officers course, 75.70 percent in Air Traffic



Captain Abhilasha Barak was awarded coveted wings at a valedictory ceremony held in Nashik on Wednesday.

Management and Air Laws course, and passed the promotional exam, Part B, in her first attempt.

She is an alumnus of The Lawrence School, Sanawar (Himachal Pradesh). She completed her graduation with B Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Delhi Technological University in 2016. Before joining the Army, she worked as a Business Technology Analyst for Deloitte, US.

"While growing up in military Cantonments, and being surrounded by people in uniform, it always seemed like an ordinary affair. I never realized that it was different until my father retired in 2011. The feeling only grew stronger after seeing my elder brother's passing out

parade at Indian Military Academy in 2013. That was the moment I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," Captain Barak said in an in-house interview shared recently by the Indian Army.

Capt Barak's family is settled in Panchkula, Haryana. Her father Col S Om Singh (ret'd) served in the J&K Light Infantry.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has had women copter pilots for almost 30 years, the Coast Guard also has women copter pilots. The Navy has pilots flying surveillance planes like the drones but does not have copter pilots. The Indian Army did not have women officers in the flying branch, so far.

Set up in November 1986, the Army Aviation Corps

(AAC) was first deployed in India's 1987 fight with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Jaffna (Sri Lanka), known as 'Operation Pawan'. They flew the HAL-developed Chetak and Cheetah helicopters.

Now the Corps and their helicopters operate at high altitudes above areas like the Siachen glacier located in Himalayas where the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan ends. The AAC operates a fleet of Chetak, Cheetah, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv, and Rudra helicopters. Their duty includes observation, reconnaissance, casualty evacuations, load drops as well as search and rescue operations in addition to attack.

Fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms under Centre's radar

PB
New Delhi, May 26:

To gauge the magnitude of fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms which mislead consumers into buying online services or products and to prepare a roadmap ahead, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) in association with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) will be holding a virtual meeting on Friday, 27th May, 2022 along with various stakeholders.

The discussions will be broadly based on the impact of fake and misleading reviews on consumers and possible measures to prevent such anomaly. In this regard, Secretary DoCA, Shri Rohit Kumar Singh has written to all stakeholders: E-Commerce entities like Flipkart, Amazon, Tata Sons, Reliance Retail and others besides, Consumer Forums, Law Universities,

Lawyers, FICCI, CII, Consumer Rights Activists etc. to participate in the meeting.

Along with the letter, Shri Singh has also shared a Press Release of European Commission dated January 20th, 2022 highlighting results of an EU-wide screening on online consumer reviews across 223 major websites. The screening results underlines that at least 55% of the websites violate the unfair commercial Practices Directive of the E.U. which requires truthful information to be presented to consumers to make an informed choice. Further, in 144 out of the 223 websites checked, the authorities could not confirm that traders were doing enough to ensure that reviews were authentic, i.e., if they were posted by consumers who had actually used the product or service that was reviewed.

The letter states that 'It is

relevant to mention that with growing internet and smartphone use, consumers are increasingly shopping online to purchase goods and services. Given that e-commerce involves a virtual shopping experience without any opportunity to physically view or examine the product, consumers heavily rely on reviews posted on e-commerce platforms to see the opinion and experience of user who have already purchased the goods or service. As a result, due to fake and misleading reviews, the right to be informed, which is a consumer right under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is violated.'

'Since the issue impacts people shopping online on a daily basis and has a significant impact on their rights as a consumer, it is important that it is examined with greater scrutiny and detail,' the letter states.

Defence Pensioners Requested to Complete Annual Identification by June 25, 2022

PB
New Delhi, May 26:

The Ministry of Defence has extended the timeline for completing the annual identification/life certification by those defence pensioners who are yet to complete the same, until 25th June 2022.

Upon verification of data received as of 25th May 2022, it is noticed that 34,636 Pensioners who have been migrated to SPARSH have not completed their annual identification - neither online nor through their respective banks by November 2021. The April 2022 Monthly Pension was credited through a special one-time waiver for 58,275 Pensioners (out of 4.47 lakh Migrated Pensioners on SPARSH), as their annual identification details could not be verified by their respective banks by month-

closing. The process of Annual Identification/Life Certification is a statutory requirement for continued and timely credit of monthly pension. In the absence of Annual Identification/Life Certification, the initial waiver was given till 25 May 2022 and the same has now been extended by MoD till June 25, 2022.

Annual Identification/Life Certification can be done via the following means:
1. Via the Digital Jeevan Pramaan online/Jeevan Pramaan Face App for Android Users
a. Details of installation & usage may be found here: https://jeevanpramaan.gov.in/package/document/download/JeevanPramaan_FaceApp_pp_3.6_Installation
b. PARSH Pensioner: Please choose Sanctioning Authority as "Defence -

PCDA (P) Allahabad" & Disbursing Authority as "SPARSH - PCDA (Pensions) Allahabad c. Legacy Pensioner (pre-2016 Retiree): Please choose your respective Sanctioning Authority as "Defence - Jt.CDA(Af) Subroto Park" or Defence - PCDA (P) Allahabad" or "Defence - PCDA (Navy) Mumbai & Disbursing Authority as your respective pension disbursing bank/DPDO etc.
2. Pensioners may also visit Common Service Centres (CSCs) for completion of Annual Identification. Find your nearest CSC here: <https://findmycsc.nic.in/>
3. Pensioners may also visit their nearest DPDO for updation of Life Certification. Legacy Pensioners may continue to update their Life Certification with their respective banks.

Manipur, the sunrise state for food processing industry in India Workshop & buyers sellers meet on food processing industry - a initiative of ASSOCHAM

Imphal, May 26:

Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) organized a workshop on Food Processing Opportunities in Manipur followed by Buyers Sellers Meet at Imphal in partnership with Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India and supported by Department of Trade, Commerce & Industry, Govt. of Manipur. The seminar aimed to create the platform for a robust food processing sector. The program was focused on the Govt. schemes and food processing opportunities and on linking entrepreneurs with partners for food - linkage. The program also discussed about ways to promote the state's economic vibrancy in terms of trade & commerce, logistics, exports etc. thus enabling sustainable and inclusive development.

The program attracted participation from State agencies, financial

institutions (NEDFI/NABARD), FPOs, Local entrepreneurs, Invest India Desk, etc. Smt. Nemcha Kipgen, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Textile, Commerce & Industry and Cooperation, Govt. of Manipur and Y. Robita, Director, Department of Trade, Commerce & Industries, Govt. of Manipur, SRanjan D Sen, Chairman, ASSOCHAM Agriculture Sub Council - East, Dr. Ng. Joy Kumar Singh, Dean, College of Food Technology, Central Agriculture University, Imphal, were present to inaugurate the workshop & buyer-seller meet.

Nemcha Kipgen, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Textile, Commerce & Industry and Cooperation, Govt. of Manipur said "India's growing food processing industry is already one of the largest in the world, without expected to touch Fifty Thousand (50,000) Crore Rupees by 2025. I want Manipur to have a large slice of that pie. 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. The food processing industry is probably the best bet we have towards lifting the maximum number of people out of poverty because more than 70 percent of Manipur's population is still engaged in the agriculture sector. And presently, there are no other sectors of industry within the state, such as manufacturing, that can absorb this huge workforce".

The sessions key objective were to augment the capacity of food processors working to upscale their operations through capital infusion, technology transfer, skill upgradation and handholding support to established self-help groups by providing a better support system to the units in the food processing sector. It also aimed to provide a platform for exploring business

prospects/opportunities under the MoFPI Schemes for the food processing sector for local industry in the region and linking entrepreneurs with the knowledge centres and processing units to strengthen access to domestic markets.

As per the Techno-feasibility Report conducted under the aegis of the National Horticultural Board and NABARD in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Manipur, the potential area identified for horticultural crops is 2,77,064 Ha. Out of this, about 62,200 hectares is covered under horticulture crops and an area of 2,14,864 hectares still remains uncovered; giving ample opportunity for expansion. Manipur is endowed with various sorts of fruits, vegetables, and other agro-products, and has the potential to be a sunrise zone for food processing and other agri-businesses.

Haryana boxers confirm 18 medals at 2022 Sub-Junior National Boxing Championships

Bellary (Karnataka), May 25:

Extending their sensational show, 18 Haryana boxers stormed into the semi-finals and confirmed themselves at least bronze medals at the 2022 Sub-Junior Girls and Boys National Boxing Championships at the Inspire Institute of Sports in Bellary, Karnataka.

Out of 14 weight categories,

Haryana girls managed to seal the semi-final berth in 10 categories and eight in the boys' section.

Sonika and Anshu led the domination for Haryana when they thrashed Delhi's Mahek Verma and Madhya Pradesh's Himani by identical 5-0 margins in the girls' 38kg and 40kg quarter-finals respectively. Arju (42kg),

Joni (44kg) and Payal (46kg) also notched up victories by unanimous decisions while Deepti (48kg), Bhoomika (50kg), Hanshikha (60kg) and Lakshu (63kg) recorded powerful RSC wins.

Sakshi had to work hard against Delhi's Khyati Panwar during the girls 36kg quarter-final before winning it by a narrow 3-2 margin.

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Modi's sensitivity and the 'Game'

Recent developments in Sri Lanka have shown how fuel prices and availability are critical in sensitive situations. It was the fuel crisis that turned the scale finally against the Rajapaksa, though the Lankan situation

owed much more to the faulty policies followed by successive governments which got the island nation into a debt trap set by the Chinese.

The Indian ruling establishment would have

clearly picked up clues from the Lankan development and the newly-found 'sensitivity' may have been an offshoot of this realisation, especially with another round of crucial elections ahead. (IPA Service)