

MSPDCL officials swindle over Rs 200 crores from Prime Minister Modi's SAUBHAGYA scheme (1)

Bill withdrawn without passing MB; Saubhagya scheme turns out to be a gold mine for some officials at MSPDCL

IT Exclusive
Imphal, Oct 21:

In the continuous probe regarding the misuse of funds in various State government departments, an Imphal Times' special investigation has unmasked large-scale irregularities, manipulation, and misappropriation of the fund while implementing the Center's flagship program, "Saubhagya" to the tune of over Rs 200 crores in Manipur.

Team Imphal Times has been investigating the alleged irregularities in implementing PM Modi's ambitious scheme SAUBHAGYA and the alleged misappropriation of funds by the MSPDCL (Manipur State Power Distribution Company Ltd.) using sources from various authorities and finally by seeking information under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

As per our sources and the documents procured through the RTI Act 2005, it is learned that the work orders for implementing the schemes under SAUBHAGYA have been awarded to 4 (four) firms for the 9 districts of Manipur.

An amount of Rs. 9,13,18,081 (Nine crores thirteen lakhs eighteen thousand

and eighty-one) had been sanctioned for Imphal West district; Rs. 9,01,70,931 (Nine Crore one lakh seventy thousand nine hundred and thirty one) had been sanctioned for Imphal East and Rs. 8,91,33,490 (Eight Crore ninety-one lakhs thirty-three thousand four hundred and ninety) for Bishnupur district. Work orders for the three districts were awarded to M/S Industrial System LLP based in Guwahati on 8th March 2019.

To a Gurgaon based firm identified as M/S Shyama Power India Limited, work orders for implementation of the scheme at Thoubal district (amount Rs. 11,53,07,738 (Eleven Crore fifty-three lakhs seven thousand seven hundred and thirty eight), Churachandpur district (Amount Rs. 40,03,54,246 (Forty crore three lakhs fifty four thousand two hundred and forty-six), Ukhrul districts (Amount Rs. 21,57,26,495 (Twenty-one Crore Fifty seven Lakhs twenty six thousand four hundred and ninety-five)) and Senapati District (Amount Rs. 42,87,16,187 (Forty two crore eighty seven lakhs sixteen thousand one hundred eighty seven) were

awarded. That means the Gurgaon based firm had been awarded for implementation of the SAUBHAGYA scheme at four districts.

Work order for implementation of the SAUBHAGYA scheme at Tamenglong district was awarded to a Imphal based firm called M/S Khagemba Transmission and Construction. The total amount for the district was Rs. 20,11,91,551 (Rs. Twenty crore eleven lakhs ninety one thousand five hundred and fifty one).

As for the implementation of SAUBHAGYA at Chandel district, the work order was awarded to another Guwahati based firm called M/S T & T Project Limited. The total cost was Rs. 40,67,43,500 (Rs. Forty Crore sixty seven lakhs forty three thousand and five hundred).

As per documents the total amount sanction was Rs. 203,86,62,219/- (Two hundred and three crore eighty six lakhs sixty two thousand two hundred and nineteen).

How Team Imphal Times found the various irregularities and misappropriation of SAUBHAGYA Scheme?

As mentioned earlier, according to information pro-

cured through RTI Act 2005, the implementation of the Saubhagya Scheme for Imphal West District was awarded to M/S Industrial Systems LLP, Kay M Plaza, 3rd Floor, Near KAR Bhawan, Ganeshguri, Guwahati-781 006 vide No.2/201(SAUBH-IW)/2019-MSPDCL-TECH/3797-811 dt. 81st March, 2019 at the cost of Rs. 9,13,18,081/-.

The scope of work among other include stringing of 16.78 km 11 kV line with ACSR weasel conductor, installation of 31 numbers of distribution transformer, laying of three half core AB Cable for 20.4 km, laying of single phase AB Cable for 23.01 km with provision for supply of 1252 nos of 8 mtr steel tubular pole, supply of 31 number distribution transformer (100KVA-3, 63 KVA-22, 25 KVA-6), supply of AB Cable 3phase-20.4 km and single phase-23.01 etc.

On verification of the Transport documents and factory invoices furnished by the MSPDCL through the MIP under the RTI Act, the authority didn't attached Annexure-A as mention to the document While furnishing copy of the LOA.

Further study of the documents provided also reveals

that for 8 mtr STP factory invoice for 991 numbers is available and paper for 261 numbers is not furnished. However receipt of 1252 nos of 8mtr STP is recorded in the MB. D. For Weasel Conductor and Ariel Bunch Cable, no factory invoice support the transport Challan for transportation of 52.86 km of ACSR weasel conductor and AB Cable. MB record receipt of exact 52.86 km (M B Supply Page No 19, SI.No.95-4.1 km and SI. No 96.48.76 km) as in the estimation. Generally ACSR Conductors are dispatched in Packed Drum with an average length of about 3 km. Receive of the exact quantity as in the estimation is very much doubt full length of conductor as summation of the length of the drums will never tally with the estimated figure. Likewise record receipt of A B Cable as in the estimation suggests table measurement.

Thus in the absence of documentary proof there is scope for manipulation in the supply for the above items.

When team Imphal Times analyses the M B (Measurement book) Erection Page No. 3, SI. No.9 records erection of 0.54 circuit km 11 kV line and Page 44, SI.No 11 records erec-

tion of 0.8 circuit km 11 kV line for Urban areas. M B Erection Page No.16, SI.No 48 records 8.32 circuit km of 11 kV line and page No. 51, SI.No. 56 records erection of 15.98km of 11 kV line for Rural areas. Total length of ACSR Weasel conductor as per erection record is (0.54+0.8+8.32+15.98)km i.e 25.64 circuit km which is equivalent to 25.64x3km i.e 76.92 km of conductor against the supply of 52.86 km. The source of additional requirement of (76.92-52.86) km i.e 24.06 km of ACSR weasel conductor is not reflected in the MBs.

Moreover the Measurement Books submitted does not follow CPWD manuals and no record of payment is reflected in the MBs. No insurance policy for the materials on transit is attached in the transport challan and claim for insurance should have been sent out rightly rejected. The LOA does not have scope for supply consumer service materials. Hence claim for single phase service connection as per REC Specification cannot be verified.

Team Imphal Times also managed to procure the official survey report for implementation of "Saubhagya"

and additional infra for "Saubhagya" under DDUGJY (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana) in Thoubal district. The approved survey report was sent to M/S Shyama Power India Limited on 7th August, 2019. As per the approved survey report (vide no. DGM (TBL)/4(27)/MSPDCL/2018-19/622-26 dated 29th July 2019) the M/S Shyama Power India Limited was asked to start implementation of SAUBHAGYA Scheme at various villages in Thoubal district under phase 1.

As per the approved survey report, a total length of 28.174 km HT line, total length of 36.264 km LT 1 Phase, total length of 23.862 Km. LT 3 phase, total number of 21 - 25KVA DTR, a total number of 7 - 63 KVA 1787 number of 8m STP and 56 number of 9m STP should be installed and erected.

Work completion report have been submitted by the M/S Shyama Power India Limited for the said district and the bill amount of Rs. 11,53,07,738 (Eleven Crore fifty-three lakhs seven thousand seven hundred and thirty eight) has been withdrawn.

contd. on page 4

Ex-MLA Radhakishore suspended from BJP

IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

L. Radhakishore Singh, ex-MLA of Oinam Assembly Constituency, has been suspended from the primary membership of the BJP party for six years for violating party norms.

A. Sharda Devi, BJP Manipur unit president, in an order issued, said that L. Radhakishore Singh was suspended from the primary membership of the party "for violating the party's rules and regulations under Article XXV, Breach of Discipline Clause (c) and (f)."

It may be mentioned that, L. Radhakishore Singh contested a BJP candidate from Oinam constituency, but was defeated by an NPP candidate in the 2022 general election.

Eye test

IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

Lions Club of Imphal, District 322D is organizing the 2nd Eye OPD for the month of October at Lions Eye Hospital, Sangaiapou, Airport Road on October 23, 2022 (Sunday) from 10AM to 12 Noon. A statement my Lion Manas Maisnam said that persons who are desirous to have eye check-up/ screening may come to the Lions Eye Hospital and avail the facility during the stipulated timing.

Chief Minister N. Biren seeks people's support to root out corruption



IT News
Imphal Oct 21:

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh today called on the people of the state in the state government effort to root out corruption from the state.

"I request the people of Senapati to support the government effort to root out corruption from the state", Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said while inaugurating 5 project and laying of foundation for 3 projects at Senapati district head quarter.

The Chief Minister also assured to complete the

newly taken up project before the coming of code of conduct for 2024 Lok Sabha Election.

While inaugurating an Open Gym at Senapati Public Ground today, N. Biren Singh along with his cabinet colleague including Govindas Konthoujam, Letpao Haokip, Kongkham Robindro, Karam Shyam among others share some moment of joy with the people of Senapati.

"Let's make our state a healthy state. We are currently working on to open these gyms at different corners of the state now", N. Biren said.

The Chief Minister along with his team also attended the District Hill Leaders' Day & Meeyam gi Nunit for Senapati District today.

"Our effort to reach out to the people, address their grievances & hand out schemes and other benefits is in full swing. We will continue to work towards delivering a citizen centric governance", The CM tweeted.

He further said that our hill districts will now witness true development and grow in leaps and bounds under the several initiatives undertaken by the state government.

State Police continues to monitor non-local entering Manipur without ILP



IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

Days after Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh made an earnest appeal to the people of the state for their full support and cooperation in identifying illegal immigrants who are staying illegally in the state by violating the Inner Line Permit System (ILPS), Team Imphal Times visited Mao Gate yesterday to assess how law enforcers are dealing with outsiders.

The inner line permit regime was extended to Manipur on December 11, 2019, two days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah

announced it in parliament. The state government declared 1961 as the base year for the ILP Act on June 22, 2022.

The State Police strictly monitor non-locals who enter the state while issuing the permit at Mao Gate. After non-locals were issued ILP passes, they were individually questioned to confirm the authenticity of the card they provided during the ILP pass acquisition process. Anyone found in possession of a forged identification card is barred from entering the state.

As per information from the Mao checking gate in Senapati district, approximately 150 to 200 outsiders

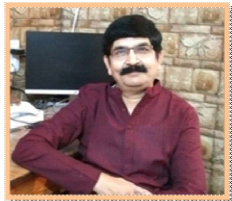
enter the state with ILP on a daily basis.

A Bangladeshi man who had been allegedly living illegally in Manipur since 1990 has been remanded for judicial custody for 15 days.

According to sources, an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh identified as Md Anwar Hussain, 54, was arrested by a team from Lamlai police station from Khabesoi following a routing spot verification on October 7.

Team Imphal Times thanks the State Government, particularly Senapati Police, for their sincere efforts in making the ILPS a more effective regulation for the protection of indigenous people.

Congress gets new face Mallikarjun Kharge



By: Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

Mallikarjun Kharge (80) deserves kudos for being elected as the first non-Gandhi leader after 24 years to occupy the party's top post. Kharge defeated fellow Congress politician Shashi Tharoor to become the first Dalit to hold the position. He is a veteran politician born five years before independence and is widely believed to have the backing of both Sonia and Rahul. There is no doubt that he will be now facing mammoth challenge of winning the next national election, due in 2024, and three state elections next year.

Kharge was seen as the favourite to win the contest. He is often called 'soliladasardara', a warrior who knows no defeat. He studied law at the Seth Shankarlal Lahoti College in Gulbarga where as a junior he won many labour union cases. Later on, he went on to become a labour leader at the Centre. He joined Congress way back in 1969 and since then he has held an array of portfolios across different profiles. He became the President of the Gulbarga City Congress Committee in 1969. He has been a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha from Karnataka since February 16, 2021. From then to October 1, 2022, he also was the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament. He has held several other portfolios under different cabinets and ministers all his life. His rise to the position of the Congress chief as a Dalit leader is being viewed as a strong political move ahead of the Karnataka Assembly Elections in May 2023. Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has rightly said that It's a moment of pride that Mallikarjun Kharge became Congress President, he is an experienced leader. Congress will strengthen under his leadership, and our party is united across the country. Kharge's biggest opportunity came in 2014 when the Congress suffered a humiliating defeat and was reduced to just 44 members in the Lok Sabha. Kharge, who won from Gulbarga for the second time, was made leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha.



Founded in 1885, the Congress led the country to freedom from British colonial rule. It has dominated India's post-independence politics, ruling the country for 54 of the past 70 years, either on its own or as the leader of coalition governments. In the process the party has failed to reform its organization or tackle issues related to its functioning and leadership that may have contributed to its decline and fall. In 1993 when Ajit Singh with his followers joined the party, it became a majority government under P.V. Narsimha Rao. This single dominant party system has done some good to the country. It was due to this that political stability came in the country, which otherwise the nation would have lost. But at the same time the Congress-men took it for granted that India was for them to be governed and this created many problems as well.

The Congress's failure to project a suitable chief ministerial candidate in most of the elections must have harmed its prospects. The results in different states are a lesson for the Congress Party; it is on a steady decline in the country's political arena. The Congress is surely losing its power base across the country, and for good reason. The results are a lesson for the Congress Party; it is on a steady decline in the country's political arena. The Congress' revival pivots on its ability to address its crisis of credibility, encouraging State leaders, and functioning as a vigorous Opposition in Parliament. The Congress party has been suffering from a leadership crisis, with Rahul Gandhi widely seen as a failure, indifferent and incompetent.

Kharge was a minister in all Congress governments after that while he was an MLA — the Gundu Rao Ministry in 1980, the S Bangarappa Cabinet in 1990 and the M Veerappa Moily government from 1992 to 1994. He was Leader of the Opposition in 1996-99 and 2008-09, and president of the state Congress from 2005-08, before he moved to national politics in 2009, when he entered the Lok Sabha for the first time. Kharge is gentle and soft-spoken, sober by temperament and nature, and has never landed in any political spot or controversy and there is no doubt that he will play a vital role in bringing back the glory of Congress party.

Rising Dengue

Sauro Dasgupta

It is strange to understand but it is now believable how this virus carried by mosquitos Aedes aegypti is taking lives. Can we not fight them back?

Our surroundings have become so dirty. Water logging in different areas, drains, pits, ditches which remains uncleaned since days. Constructions are made. Garbage and wastes are scattered. These are again moving in to the drainage system, and clogging them. Effectively, the sewage gets affected and water gets deposited there.

Nobody is bothered to get it cleaned. These are all mosquito breeding sites. They are increasing their population, making themselves ready for a viral war.

We, human beings, are now their prey. We are helpless, tormented with panic. We need each of us to help the other one. We need our local bodies to come forward. Let Humanity rise. Let us save ourselves. Let not Dengue rule us.

(The author is a PG 2 student, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University)

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Congress - from its existential crisis to a breath of relief



By: M.R. Lahu

Sincerely, I waited and waited until the result of the Congress presidential election was out. When it was out, the dominant question crept into my mind was about the next possible move by Shashi Tharoor. But he, unlike his G-23 compatriots, decided to march in tune with the party high-command's dictums. And that was brilliant. The presidential election in the Congress party has been a moment that blessed all the insiders of the party to once again conveniently lean on to show their depth of servitude to the party dynasty. And Shashi Tharoor for definitive reasons would be an outsider even if he is inside the party and strictly be alienated among the leaders in the Congress for his audacity to remain intelligently independent when others, the loyalists are blissful to think the way they are directed to think by the family high command. A well qualified, well read and well-known Tharoor has come out with a decent phraseology saying that 'the revival of the party has truly begun.' But the officially unofficial presidential candidate of the Congress party will remain eclipsed and indignantly undermined, if he continued in his present party. The ripple of political movements the Congress has presently come up with has seriously made the party once again a well meaningful subject of political discourse even though it is out of power. Electing an octogenarian as its new president from outside the Gandhi family, the eligible votary in the party has indirectly endorsed its reluctance to give the grand old

party a chance to metamorphose into a fresh avatar under a younger and intelligent Tharoor.

Tharoor could not win the presidency but his candidature should be seen as an announcement of an open dissent that has been visible and the effect of a quest that some of the insiders of the party cherished while plotting their rebellion. Tharoor may change his mind and prefer a decent exit from Congress before the general elections approach as he claimed that the entire electoral endeavour for the presidential election was stage-managed and sheepishly rigged. Though his candidacy was a public display of democratic disagreement inside the party, the leadership of the party projected this as an act of amiability and freedom rather than anarchy and acrimony in its democratic structure.

The essential eligibility irrespective of his old age, Mr. Kharge was supported for was his family proximity that the party family endorsed and staged the election drama for. Being powerful without any power in the party, Rahul Gandhi has consistently maintained his dominance in Congress. His longest walk intended to recapture the lost glory of the party has fundamentally added to the complexity that the Congress establishment is. An intelligent manoeuvre to stay away from the potential pitfalls such as the future political debates; he has once again managed to stay in limelight without any visible responsibility. The party with its behavioural ethos to stay under the protective shadow of a family has almost lost its eminence since 2014. The storm that had shattered its hopes and dreams must be giving nightmares to the Congress even today. The Modi factor, the winning strategy that the BJP is banking on, had been a profound hindrance for the Congress from gaining influence.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra by Rahul Gandhi and the coronation of Mallikarjun Kharge, a family loyalist as the President of the party,

gives the Congress a chance to set up a parallel party structure that the BJP enjoys. There, it is Narendra Modi the supreme leader and a party president probably taking his orders. This can also be seen as an overall experiment put in place well before the general elections 2024, in which, if consensus could be built to project a new Rahul Gandhi, totally reinvigorated after the yatra, emerging with a well knitted acceptance across party lines as a serious contender to Modi. The BJP must be counting this as a win-win situation. The Tharoor factor being crumbled from becoming instrumental in the Congress party's constitutionally structural build-up, the new elected president does not seem to have the mettle to bring about an increased vigour among its cadre; the only personality who would attempt to flex his muscles to take on the Modi juggernaut is Rahul Gandhi alone. Since that being the case the BJP does not have to do so many somersaults to retain its previous tally.

The present scenario in the Congress is a true replica of renunciation that the Sonia era espoused in 2004. She was eulogised and hysterically beatified by the same loyalists in the party for her renouncing the post of the Prime Minister. Rahul Gandhi also for whatever reasons decided not to embrace the responsibility of the president and has certainly been extolled by the same loyalists for turning himself a renunciate. A frenzied party cadre thronging to his yatra in states where the Congress has little significance echoed this view decisively. For them, the yatra would definitely transform the family scion of the party into its ultimate saviour. His 'no' to the presidency and his excitement to take a long march, which indeed, if completed as per the plan, would turn out to be a thrilling achievement for him in his personal pursuit of political relevance. Walking through the entire stretch of the dryness of his political career, as a leader, the Rahul factor is all set

to gain prominence. Interestingly, after Modi, in India he is the only leader who enjoys a great deal of celebrity status in politics. From 7 September to the distance that he should be inching closer to its culmination is expected to galvanise pro-Congress sentiments. But to counter a pan-India Modi impact, the entire stretch of distance he decided to walk is not enough. But unpredictability is the master when politics begins to play its tricky games. If the Rahul yatra helps the Congress to embellish its presence with little eminence, it can also garner more political support from unexpected areas. Areas where the crowd sat to hear him throughout the rain are indicative to the attention that the electorate rewarded him for his newborn maturity.

With brand Modi's USP intact, the BJP is all set to focus on the upcoming state elections. The Congress is yet to make any noteworthy start. A repeat of the saffron surge in its strong turf is predicted and undoubtedly this election does not bring any slippery moment for the BJP in Gujarat. But in Karnataka, with the tussle and fuss in the leadership of both the parties, the state elections are far from a viable prediction. The repeat of a BJP sweep and Congress decline would further damage the prospects of the party and the effect of its historic yatra would not refurbish on the celebrated Rahul makeover and his prospects in the national elections would be grimmer. But the Kharge coronation will ultimately pull the Rahul Gandhi factor into a visible sphere of recognition as a serious leader and he should be aware of the genuine challenge that the Bharat Jodo Yatra throws at him. He needs to establish his organisational popularity with meaning and purpose. In case of his party's losing mandate in the upcoming state elections, his reformer's image and saviour's prerogatives would crumble.

(The author is Freelance Journalist/ Social Worker)

Skill-Based Education is the Need of the Hour



By: Vijay GarG

Skill-based learning develops and improves the art of learning and helps to grow in academics & in the modern world. Learning with activity is also a part of this methodology that enhances the thought process behind skill development.

This is an advanced method of learning, implementing, and improving skills gained through a knowledge-based learning system. The method motivates students to think, analyze, and apply thoughts and insights they learned. This modern learning method will help learners into motivated independent intellectuals and prepare them for future challenges.

The world is changing rapidly with the scaling economies and it needs a skilled workforce to drive the nation. Skills are highly required for different sectors in different ways to increase productivity as per need. In India, most schools and colleges only provide formal education with a standard curriculum.

But they don't include skill-based education and the same is treated as vocational training obtained for the short term. This launches them with an informal sector job which is already a part of GoI's PMKVY scheme. This helps students with training and employment based on skills.

This is a skill development programme and it encourages people from different sectors to learn and improve. But there is a need to implement this process in the formal education sector also.

Today the Indian economy is spread to global nations and as a result, it opened many job opportunities for graduates in different sectors. This made them competitive and led them to get higher grades and ranks to stay ahead. Moreover, the internet, smartphones, and other electronic devices revolution has given rise to new updated skills.

Many job-seekers found these important skills to learn from the internet. Also, internships help them to update their skills on the job. The recent pandemic hit has shown stats for a major job loss in different sectors. People with lower skills or outdated skills are not able to compete with the modern world.

Students and young people are the strength of modern society and the country. It is very important to make them skilled for the economic growth of the country. In order to implement skill-based education in schools & colleges, it requires the following:-

Upgraded curriculum and infrastructure of the schools and colleges with modern 21st century needs.

Change in teaching methods with latest technology tools and giving much importance to practical learning.

Imparting vocational skills or job-oriented skills from the very basic level.

Self-management skills, teamwork, commercial awareness with interpersonal & problem-solving skills.

Activity-based learning methods should be used in an incremental manner for the school students learning higher standards.

Building employability skills with relevant core skills and academic knowledge.

Every student needs to develop certain skills in order to prosper in his academics as well as in his career. Educators and teachers also teach certain important life skills along with their regular curriculum. This helps them to prepare well for life outside schools and colleges.

Many of us know that these are the most essential life skills but sometimes the delivery of such skills in the blended classrooms is somehow difficult. It requires special attention so that the teachers can easily impart these skills to students. So, let us know what are those important and relevant skills that today's students require:-

Conviction skills
Strong problem-solving skills
Thinking creatively

Emotion management
Agility
Eagerness to learn new things
Adaptability as per need
Technical skills like designing, coding, etc.

Effective communication skills (Oral & Written)
Teamwork and dedication
Maintenance skills
Assessment, Analysing, and Imagination skills

These are the most relevant skills that need to be taught in every school and college. It needs to be a part of the regular curriculum for every student to prosper in life by understanding modern living methods along with his roots. This helps them to upgrade themselves in a dynamic way and to lead society in a better way.

In India, every-year lakhs of students come out of colleges having degrees in their hands but only a few people get good jobs. The ratio of the employability skills makes this difference among the students. Graduates studying in colleges can have multiple opportunities to develop their skills. Here, colleges can start developing employability skills within these students in different ways.

Colleges can partner with different training institutions that provide professional development skills like personality development, comm skills, interview skills, etc. Also, colleges can appoint such faculties who are able to guide, especially developing employability skills.

Security situation improved in NE, J&K, LWE areas in last 8 years: HM Amit Shah



Agency
New Delhi, Oct 21:

Union Home minister Amit Shah on Friday said the security situation in the insurgency-hit areas of the north-east and Jammu and Kashmir as well as in the states affected

by Naxal violence has improved over the last eight years of the Narendra Modi government.

Shah said this while addressing top police and paramilitary commanders at the National Police Memorial in the Chanakypuri area here on the

occasion of the National Police Commemoration Day.

"In the northeast, we have removed the special powers given to the armed forces (under the AFSPA) and instead, given special powers to the youngsters there, resulting in a decline of violence in these

areas by more than 70 per cent," he said.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is such that those who used to hurl stones at security personnel earlier have now become "panches" and "sarpanches", Shah added.

In the states affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), the national anthem is being sung in Eklavya schools while the national flag flutters on these buildings, he added.

Shah said India is proceeding on the path of development due to the sacrifices made by the police and paramilitary personnel across the country.

Paying his tributes to these personnel, he said they played a leading role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Police Commemoration Day is observed in the memory of 10 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel who were killed on this day in 1959 in an ambush by Chinese troops in Ladakh's Hot Spring area.

India records 2,119 new Covid cases, active case count comes down to nearly 25k

Agency
New Delhi, Oct 21:

India saw a single-day rise of 2,119 new infections taking the coronavirus tally to 4,46,38,636, while the number of active cases declined to 25,037, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

The death toll has climbed to 5,28,953 with 10 fatalities, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 0.97 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The active cases comprise 0.06 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has increased to 98.76 per cent, the

health ministry said.

A decrease of 473 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 1.13 per cent. The weekly positivity rate was recorded at 0.97 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 4,40,84,646, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.18 per cent.

According to the ministry, 219,500 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive.

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 one crore on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore coronavirus cases on May 4, three crore on June 23 last year and four crore on January 25 this year.

The five new fatalities reported in the 24 hours are one each from Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab and West Bengal.

Cleanliness Drive conducted at Chandel



IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

ICAR - KVK Chandel has conducted cleanliness drive today at Lamphoupasna village, Chandel under Special Campaign 2.0 launched by Government of India. The special campaign 2.0 is to be conducted from October 2 to October 31, 2022 with a focus on "Swachhata (cleanliness) and reducing pendency in government."

"Special Campaign 2.0 encompasses Adoption of villages for Microbial based Agricultural Waste Management using Vermicompost; Awareness programme about Swachhta; Crop Residue Management; Demonstration of technologies on waste and wealth; Cleaning of villages programme with farmers; Ori-

entation of school children on various topics like hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness; Cleaning of offices and campus and disposal of scraps, space freed, etc. and Timely disposal of references.

Today event was conducted at St. Dominic School, Lamphoupasna village, Chandel. Awareness on cleanliness was conducted at the school and cleanliness drive was conducted in the school premises along with the school children. A drawing competition on the topic "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" was also conducted to instill the young mind. The resource persons, for the awareness programme, were Dr. A. Ameeta Devi, Head in-charge & SMS (Animal Science); Ps. Lavid Anal, SMS (Horticulture) and Ts. Leenda Monsang, SMS (Plant Breed-

ing), ICAR - KVK Chandel. Later on, demonstration of vermicompost technology was conducted with the farmers of Lamphoupasna village. Ps. Lavid Anal, SMS (Horticulture) informed the farmers that Vermicompost is the process by which worms are used to convert organic materials (usually wastes) into a humus-like material known as vermicompost. She elaborated that vermicompost is stable, fine granular organic manure, which enriches soil quality by improving its physicochemical and biological properties and it is highly useful for raising seedlings and crop production. She inculcated that vermicompost is popular major component of organic farming system, which will benefit the human being and the future generation.

Special Court allows ED to confiscate fugitive Nirav Modi's properties worth Rs 500 crore

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Oct 21:

The Special CBI judge SM Menjoge allowed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to confiscate 39 properties worth around Rs 500 crore standing in the name of fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi wanted in connection with multi-crore PNB fraud on Thursday.

However the judge noted that the Punjab National Bank (PNB) was interested in a Singapore bank account owned by Nirav Modi's sister Purvi and her husband Mainak Mehta. Besides, it was also interested in 8 other properties. As such except these properties, the rest of the properties can be confiscated by the ED, the judge said.

Nirav Modi was declared as Fugitive Economic Offender on December 5, 2019. As such ED counsels-Advocates Hiten Venegaokar and Arvind Aggarwal appearing for ED, argued for confiscation of Modi's 48 properties, valued at Rs 929 crore, under the Fugitive Eco-



The Rhythm House in South Mumbai, one of the properties of Nirav Modi to be confiscated by the Enforcement Directorate. (Inset: Nirav Modi).

nomic Offenders (FEO) Act. They pointed to the estimated proceeds of crime as mentioned in the case was approximately Rs 6498.20 crore.

The properties to be attached include 12 immovable properties attached to the Rhythm House at Kalaghoda in South Mumbai, consignments seized by agencies in transit, money parked in bank accounts outside the country, and valuables seized from Modi's Alibaug bungalow (Raigad district, Maharashtra) including 22 cars.

Modi has 16 stores in diverse locations such as such as Delhi, Mumbai, New York, Hong Kong, London and Macau. He is currently in the United Kingdom and is seeking political asylum in Britain. Modi's uncle Mehul Choksi is in Dominica. The charges of his illegal entry into Dominica were dropped by a Dominican court in May last year.

In the first confiscation order under the FEO Act in 2020, the court had directed that the properties of Modi be attached by the ED. However, it had ex-

empted properties secured to PNB and a consortium of banks either through mortgage, hypothecation or personal guarantee.

The lawyer for the PNB stated a huge amount of loan was granted to Modi and his companies. It is public money and because of non-payment of the loan amount, the financial condition of bank has been adversely affected. The Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) has passed an award in favour of bank and if properties are confiscated by the government, then nothing will be there to execute the DRT Awards.

The PNB scam relates to fraudulent letter of undertaking worth Rs 10,000 crore issued by the bank. The key accused in the case were jeweller and designer Nirav Modi, his maternal uncle Mehul Choksi, and other relatives and some PNB employees. Nirav Modi and his relatives escaped India in early 2018, days before the news of the scam became public. PNB scam has been dubbed as the biggest fraud in India's banking history.

Omicron Covid variant may have originated in animals, study finds

Agency
Washington, Oct 21:

The Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus may have been transmitted from an animal species to humans, according to a study.

The research, published recently in the journal Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences, provides new insights into the evolutionary origins of Omicron.

An essential step in coronavirus infection occurs when spike protein, which helps the virus to infect the cells, binds to the host's receptor.

After establishing consistent infections in the host, the spike protein becomes adapted to the host's receptor. The researchers carried

out a detailed structural biology analysis of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant.

They identified several mutations in the Omicron spike protein that were uniquely adapted to the mouse receptor and incompatible with the human receptor.

This suggests the Omicron variant might not have originated from humans directly, and instead may have been transmitted from other animal species to humans, according to the researchers.

"These Omicron mutations are evolutionary traces left by the virus during its transmission from one animal species to another, said study lead author Fang Li, from the University of Minnesota in the US.

"Our detailed structural biology approach has successfully recovered these subtle yet unique evolutionary traces," Li said.

The researchers noted that the COVID-19 virus is capable of infecting many animal species — which is one of the main reasons why variants keep emerging.

These findings also suggest that epidemic surveillance of rodents may be important for stopping new COVID-19 variants from emerging in the future, they said.

"Animal to human transmission of coronaviruses will likely continue to threaten global health. It has been suggested that all coronaviruses circulating in humans came from animals," said Li.

SC seeks responses from Centre, states on plea seeking UAPA against anti-Muslim hate crimes

Agency
New Delhi, Oct 21:

The Supreme Court on Thursday sought responses from the Union government and states on a petition seeking to stop the "growing menace of targeting and terrorising the Muslim community of India", *Live Law* reported.

The petitioner, Shaheen Abdullah, sought action under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and other laws against persons and organisations engaging in such hate crimes.

Advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the petitioner, said

that action needed to be taken against those making hate speeches or engaging in hate crimes, according to PTI.

A bench comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi and CT Ravikumar, however, remarked that the petition was vague and that cognisance could be taken of individual cases where first information reports were filed.

Sibal, however, said that the petition is precise as it had listed several incidents. He said that many petitions have been filed in court to stop such crimes, but they still take place.

The court tagged the matter along with other petitions

on the same subject that were pending before another bench.

Abdullah said in her plea that the Muslim community was being targeted by the ruling party members, who have delivered hate speeches on many occasions.

"The spread of hate towards Muslims and other minorities gets accelerated and becomes all the more far-reaching in its impact as a result of the support, directly or indirectly, extended to radical miscreants, who engage in acts of hate crimes, physical violence as well as communally charged speeches by the ruling political party," the

petition said. Abdullah cited examples of news channels programmes in which Muslims were demonised and examples of speeches calling for genocide and the economic and social boycott of the community. The plea said that no action is taken against individuals or organisations that engage in such hate speech.

"In most cases, minimal action of merely registering FIRs and that too under lesser offences, is the only thing that is done by the authorities which seems to be more of a formality than any genuine initiation of the criminal machinery," the petition said.

Pupils, teacher sit on mat for attending classes

IT Correspondent
Jiribam, Oct 21:

The state of Government School in the Jiribam District has become so disheartening that teachers and pupils have to sit on the floor mats despite the Manipur government has taken initiative of school fagathansi mission.

The scene has come out from Jirihat High school which is one of the government high school in Jiribam District. The school has no desks and benches for the students, so the pupils are bound to sit in the plastic mat for attending the classes along with the teacher. Which reminds us the ancient types of Gurukul education system in this modern age.



The piteous condition of the school came in the light when the volunteers of Democratic Students Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) want to inspect the school.

Awareness campaigns need to be organized at remote places: Minister Dr. S. Ranjan

IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

Health & IPR Minister Dr. Sapam Ranjan Singh has said that health awareness campaigns need to be organized at remote areas of the state. Minister Dr. S. Ranjan was speaking as Chief Guest on the occasion of observance of Global Iodine Deficiency Disorder Prevention Day, 2022 held at IMA hall, Lamphelpat, Imphal today.

Minister maintained that we have many observances in a calendar year and it goes on. But we are not sure whether the people are actually benefited from it or not. We will need a targeted approach if such observances are to be made fruitful. We need a survey and collect data of the particular area and accordingly we may organize such programs on priority, he added.



Shri Ranjan stated that primary health care system needs to be focused. Without strengthening primary health care which is at the grassroots level, tertiary health care system will hardly be able to be improved. The government is trying to improve overall health care system in the state, he informed.

He stated that all the participants on such awareness programs should relay awareness and share knowledge with others which they have accumulated from it. He also appealed to all the concerned nodal officers of the department to chalk out proper strategies based on the accumulated data, minister added.

Speaking at the occasion as president, Additional Director, Public Health, Dr. Gopalakrishna said that iodine deficiency may cause diseases related to thyroid, heart and diabetes etc. Consumption of iodized salt benefits our body in many ways. We should take only iodized salt. We need to check the packet of the salt whether there is expiry date. If the salt packet is found expired, we should not take it, he suggested.

Dr. Somorjit Ningombam, State Mission Director, NHM, Manipur, Dr. Lourembam Ashananda, Senior Regional Director, Health & FW, Government of India also graced the occasion as Guests of Honor. Officials and staffs of NHM, Health Department and Family Welfare and student nurses and others also attended the occasion.

Sports

Madhya Pradesh to Host Khelo India Youth Games in 2023

Agency
New Delhi, Oct 21:

The next edition of the Khelo India Youth Games will be held in Madhya Pradesh in January-February 2023, it was formally announced by Union of Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur on Thursday.

The venue for the Games was formally announced in the presence of Chief Minister of MP, Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The sports competition is scheduled to start on January 31, 2023 and end on February 11.

Also present at the event

on Thursday afternoon was the Union Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Nisith Pramanik, Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Yashodhara Rajee Scindia, Secretary Sports, Sujata Chaturvedi, Director General, Sports Authority of India, Sandip Pradhan, and other dignitaries from the Union Sports Ministry and the Sports Authority of India.

The upcoming edition of the Khelo India Youth Games will feature a total of 27 disciplines; with water sports being included for the first time

in the history of the games. New disciplines like Canoe Slalom, Kayaking, Canoeing and Rowing will also feature alongside the usual sports and indigenous games.

The Games will take place across eight cities of Madhya Pradesh — Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Mandla, Khargone (Maheshwar) and Balaghat, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) informed in a release on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, said, "I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister from the bottom of my heart for giving Madhya

Pradesh the chance to host the Khelo India Youth Games. We promise to make it the most special Khelo India games ever and host it keeping in mind our philosophy of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'.

"We have world-class sports stadiums in Madhya Pradesh like the shooting and water sports academies. Many other facilities are also coming up. With the growing development in infrastructure and with the privilege of getting to host Khelo India Youth Games, I am certain a sports revolution will take place in Madhya Pradesh," the Hon'ble CM of Madhya Pradesh added.

JAC of AMTUC & AMGEO urges CM to release pay for the month of October

IT News
Imphal, Oct 21:

JAC of AMTUC & AMGEO has appealed the Chief Minister of Manipur to release the pay of the month of October, 2022, GPF arrears of all working government employees that remain struck with the concerned Treasury Officers and pension for the month of October, 2022 and other retirement benefits viz. pension, leave encashment benefits, gratuity, commutation of all pensioners that remains frozen quite for long before the due date of Ningol Chakouba in the interest of all the families of working/retired State Govt employees which constitute around 1/31 (one third) of the population of the entire state of Manipur.

A statement of the JAC of AMTUC & AMGEO said that the festival of "Ningol Chakouba" - a rare occasion showcasing the bond of love and affection between married women and the, parental families marked by having together a grant feast at their mother's house falls on 27th October, 2022 (Thursday) Nowadays, this festival does not confine to Meitei community only. It is being celebrated by almost all the indigenous communities of the state. Womenfolk of various communities are being invited for having a grand feast by a range of social organisations bringing about a social harmony and the feeling of oneness. The JAC appealed to release the pay of the employees so that all the people could enjoy the festival in good spirit.

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MSPDCL officials swindle over...

However, there were no sign of any work that are supposed to be taken up under SAUBHAGAYA, being completed or even taken up at some of the villages.

Except some few there are no work seen taken up under SAUBHAGAYA at the approved villages Papal, Tekcham Chingya Leikai, Chingtham Leikai Tenth Khongbam Mathak, Tenth Mayengching. Imphal Times have also visited the site at which they have reported completed at some spot in Thoubal district. As provided by them under the GPS coordinates, where they reported to have been erected LT poles, team Imphal Times failed to find many as stated by them.

What is Saubhagaya scheme?

The SAUBHAGAYA scheme also known as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana was launched on 11th October, 2017 by the Ministry of Power, Government of India. The ambitious scheme was launched in Manipur on 29th November, 2017, by the then Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, R.K. Singh and Manipur's Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. A total of approximately 1.75 lakh households (1.62 lakh rural households and 0.13 lakh urban households) of Manipur are proposed to be included under the scheme.

SAUBHAGAYA Scheme is the world's biggest Universal electrification initiative with collaborative and concerted efforts of Centre and States. It is a concurrent program to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).

The SAUBHAGAYA scheme aims at providing:

a) Last mile connectivity and electricity connection to all un-electrified households in rural areas;

b) Last mile connectivity and electricity connection to all remaining economically poor un-electrified households in urban areas. Non-poor urban households are excluded from this scheme;

c) Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) based standalone system for un-electrified households located in remote and inaccessible villages/habitations, where grid extension is not feasible or cost effective.

Under the scheme, Rs. 14,109 crore (including grant of Rs. 9,093 crore) has been sanctioned by the Ministry of Power to 26 States/Union Territories, against which Rs. 8,840.9 Cr (incl. grant of Rs. 5,408.44 Crores) has been released till 30th June, 2021.

As at 31st March 2019, country achieved electrification of 262.84 lakh households under Saubhagya (except a minuscule number of 18374 households in LWE areas of Chhattisgarh) - a remarkable progress made in a record 18 months. The achievement of Universal household electrification, which implies 100% access to electricity has been certified by the Chief Secretaries of States. Further, on the request of 7 States (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Manipur, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh), the Ministry of Power accorded time extension approval to electrify additional 19.09 lakh un-electrified households, which were unwilling earlier to get electrified and had expressed their willingness before March 2019. 18.85 lakh households have been electrified in respect of the same and the States have reported 100% electrification of all willing households identified before 31st March 2019.

Condolence Message

All staff of Directorate of Family Welfare Services, Manipur has mourned the untimely demise of Dr. Paozachin Guite, OSD (Health) & former Director of Family Welfare Services, Manipur on 20th October, 2022.

A condolence meeting chaired by Dr. N. Dihe Mao, Director of Family Welfare Services, Manipur was held at the Office Chamber of the Director on 20th October, 2022. A two minute silence was observed in remembrance of the departed soul. All staff also extended heartfelt condolences and prayed for the solace and comfort of the bereaved family members.

Online Essay Competition

Commemorating the 126th Birth Anniversary of Lamyamba Hijam Irabot, Team Imphal Times is organizing an Online Essay Competition. This is the 2nd time that the Team Imphal Times is organizing an Essay Competition. This year theme is - "Manipur's Socio-Economic Problems: System Failure or Individual Failure."

All submitted essays will be published in the Imphal Times newspaper and the name of the winners will also be published. The word count for the essay must be between 1000 and 1200 words.

1st prize Rs 5000, 2nd prize Rs 3000, and 3rd prize Rs 2000 with certificates

The competition is opened to all individuals and every submission must be accompanied by a photo/image of the candidate. The last date of submission will be 6 pm on October 30.

All participants should enclose details of their identity. Father's or Mother's name, Address, Qualification, Contact No. (Cell Phone or Landline) should be enclosed at the of submitting the write up. Language medium : English.

Participant can be sent by e-mail to: imphaltimesessaycompt@gmail.com in MS Word or PDF format.

Team Imphal Times

T20 World Cup 2022: Two-time champions West Indies knocked out in group stage; Ireland qualify for Super 12

Agency
Geelong (Australia), Oct 21:

The only side in T20 World Cup history to win the trophy twice - West Indies have been knocked out of the 2022 T20 World Cup in the group stage after an embarrassing defeat to Ireland. The Irishmen defeated the Nicholas Pooran-led side by

a massive margin of 9-wickets with 15 balls to spare.

With both teams coming into the game knowing it's a winner takes all clash, Ireland stood up to the challenge and outclassed the 2012 and 2016 Champions in all three departments of the game. The Andrew Balbirnie-led side have got the past group stage of the

competition for the first time since 2009

West Indies failed to get a big score on the board after winning the toss and electing to bat first as their top-order failed to fire. Brandon King kept them alive in the game with a solid knock of 62 in 48 balls and helped the two-time champions get a score of 146 on

the board.

Ireland were a team with a mission and put up a thunderous display with the bat and chased down the total in 17.3 overs. Paul Stirling remained unbeaten in the end with a 48-ball 66. Balbirnie and Lorcan Tucker gave him solid support with knocks of 37 and 45 respectively.