

Indo-Naga peace talks: Talks between Centre, NSCN-IM 'postponed'

Courtesy: NE Now
Kohima, Sept 20:

The much awaited resumption of the Indo-Naga peace talks between the central government and the leadership of the NSCN-IM has reportedly been 'postponed'.

According to reports, the representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the NSCN-IM leadership will sit for discussions on Wednesday (September 21).

Both the negotiating parties were supposed to hold talks on Tuesday (September 20).

However, the reason for reported 'postponement' of the talks is not yet known.

Notably, a team of the

NSCN-IM arrived in New Delhi after the outfit agreed to resume peace talks with the government of India (GoI) over the vexed Naga political issue recently.

The NSCN-IM, however, has stated that they would resume the peace talks with GoI, only if the discussions are based on the Framework Agreement.

Notably, the peace talks between the NSCN-IM and the government of India (GoI) over the Naga political issue had hit roadblock since May this year.

The NSCN-IM has remained firm on their stand of a separate Naga flag and constitution. Meanwhile, reports

have emerged that the Government of India is mulling to incorporate the Naga Constitution – the Yehzabo – into the Indian constitution.

Moreover, reports also claim that the Centre has agreed for a civil and cultural flag for the Nagas.

The union government has been holding two separate parleys with the NSCN-IM since 1997 and the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) comprising seven organisations since 2017.

The Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN-IM on August 3, 2015, and also entered into an agreed position with NNPGs in December 2017.

Union Minister of State Prahlad Singh Patel visits different areas of Chandel district

IT News
Imphal, Sept 20:

Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries and Jal Shakti, Prahlad Singh Patel today visited Chandel district to look into the Aspirational Districts Programme and review developmental works undertaken at ground level at Penaching village. And also visited Chandel District Hospital and the covid-19 vaccination centre and interacted with doctors and staffs.

The Union Minister further inspected the food processing site at Liwa Khullen in the Chandel district and interacted with the local people.

The Union Minister also visited the district level competition for Junior Chef (Pre-school Children's) and Budding Chef (Adolescent) for Healthy Recipes stall



organised by DPO-ICDS Chandel of District Administration Chandel.

Further, the union minister went to Chandel DC Office and attended a review meeting about the development of the Central Scheme under the Jal

Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission. The review meeting was attended by ADM Chandel Md. Firoj Khan, who highlighted the central scheme which is being developed in the Chandel district.

Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel expressed that the scheme being developed in the remote village is a dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, so we must fulfill the dream of a self-reliant village.

World Suicide Prevention Day observed in Thoubal



IT News
Imphal, Sept 20:

IT News
Imphal, Sept 20:

District Mental Health Program District Health Society, National Health Mission Thoubal today organised "World Suicide Prevention Day" at Community Health

Center Heirok.

A. Subhash Singh, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Thoubal was the Chief Guest of the function. Speaking at the function, Deputy Commissioner said that nowadays children and adolescents are burdened with immense pressure from their parents. One must avoid putting pressure to their children as it leads to depression

and other mental problems. It adversely affects the personality of the child when they grow up and reach adulthood. He further said that earlier children used to play in the open playground which was an opportunity to mingle with friends and people in the neighborhood. However due to urbanization such outdoor activities is now slowly fading away.

He appealed to the parents and guardians to actively socialize their children for them to mingle with friends, relatives and other elders for personality development of the child.

Speaking at the function CMO Thoubal Dr. Y. Nokul said Suicide is becoming a big health problem in the state. He said cases of suicide attempt is very high. In order to avoid such cases various programs of mental Health is being organised. He appealed to the youth and parents to reach out and take the help of medical professionals.

It may be mentioned that World Suicide Prevention Day is observed every year on 10th September. The theme of this year's observation is "Creating Hope through Action".

The program was attended by Dr. Aarti Sougajim MO in charge CHC Heirok and Th. Nimai Principal Heirok Higher Secondary School.

Tree plantation drive organized at Maharani hill range



IT News
Imphal, Sept 20:

The Central Forest Division today organised tree plantation at Maharani hill range under Sawmbug forest range of Khongbal Tangkhul village, which is also under Khamelklok Gwalabi Reserved Forest. During the tree plan-

tation, a team of CDO Imphal East under the supervision of SDPO Rk Tejbir also participated.

Rk Amarjit DFO, ACF Siba Veimi, Sadar East Range Officer Ng. Ratan, Sawmbug Range Officer K. Raghu, Nongmaiching Range Officer N. Prabir, Range Officer Head Quarter M. Jobid Thoubal,

Wildlife Warden W. Ramchandra, Village Committee members, and Khongbal Tangkhul Village members also participated.

During the tree plantation, Rk Amarjit DFO expressed that in the past this range was cultivated for poppy plantation, but now the area is planted with many trees.

Senapati branch Dalit office opened

IT News
Imphal, Sept 20:

The All Manipur Dalit Development Association (AMDDA), Senapati branch office was inaugurated today in Mao, Senapati District.

Dr. T.M. Rajen Ayangba, President, AMDDA, is present at this inauguration function as Chief Guest. At this inauguration function, the Chief Controller, AMDDA and Moirangthem Sorojini Leima, Advisor, AMDDA, attended as Guests of Honour.

The Special Invitees RK. Solomon Arow, President, NPO, Senapati and H. Silas Zho, President, Senapati District, Village Chiefs Association are present, and all the district branch presidents of the AMDDA, are also present at this inauguration function.

Ashok Gehlot versus Shashi Tharoor will be an interesting fight

Congress rejuvenation is linked to a free and fair Presidential Polls

By Sushil Kutty
New Delhi, Sept 20:

Has Rahul Gandhi's persistence prevailed? The Gandhi scion has always wanted an elected Congress president, and it seems he is getting his wish fulfilled: Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi has given her consent to Thiruvananthapuram Congress MP Shashi Tharoor to contest the party's presidential election, and Congress leaders claim there couldn't be a bigger endorsement of inner-party democracy.

Shashi Tharoor himself says the more the contestants, the merrier the contest—let the games begin! People are laughing. Why does Tharoor want Sonia Gandhi's permission to contest? The people who are laughing are of the BJP IT Cell. Shashi Tharoor is one of the

G-23, the select group of 23 Congress leaders who had written to Sonia Gandhi seeking "sweeping reforms", including elections for party posts.

Does that make Shashi Tharoor suspect? Somehow it doesn't appear so. Tharoor comes out as valued to both groups—"loyalists", as well as "establishment". And with Sonia's "consent" in his pocket, Shashi Tharoor will contest the presidential election, notification for which will be issued on September 22.

Tharoor will challenge Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Sonia Gandhi's original choice; and, perhaps, still the first preference. But Gehlot continues to be adamant "Rahul Gandhi or nobody else". Sonia Gandhi had left India with the question unresolved even as Tharoor had made sure that the Congress

president's election remained on the cards.

And neither Sonia Gandhi's absence nor Rahul Gandhi's "Bharat Jodo Yatra" could come in the way of Shashi Tharoor's intent. In fact, Tharoor and "likeminded Congressmen and Congress women" did not allow Sonia Gandhi time to reflect on her return. A meeting was sought and Sonia Gandhi was left with no option but to give her consent.

While more than one contestant could surface, the main contest will be between Ashok Gehlot and Shashi Tharoor. Reports say there's a new spring in Tharoor's steps after Sonia gave her consent though Ashok Gehlot is perceived as the "establishment candidate", and the runaway victor if Rahul Gandhi continues to decline the party chief's post.

That said, it could still be

"Rahul Gandhi for president" all the way, and Shashi Tharoor the feint to keep dissent bottled up and guessing to the extent possible. The belief is Tharoor doesn't fit the mould of the Kapil Sibal-Anand Sharma-Ghulam Nabi Azad crowd. Sibal and Azad had cut loose and gone, though they might still have pockets of influence in the party.

A spate of Congress resignations one after the other hadn't helped. The question being asked now is will Tharoor's candidature "shake-up" the behemoth? The talk going around is that Sonia Gandhi told Tharoor she's all for "free and fair" elections. But many feel otherwise. Sonia may talk this in public but she will back a Gandhi family loyalist from behind.

Sonia Gandhi's consent came even as Shashi Tharoor

endorsed a petition, signed by 650 and growing number of Congressmen and Congresswomen, seeking "constructive reforms", and a "pledge to implement the Udaipur Declaration" in full. The thing to note is that the petition could not have been drawn up in a day, and Shashi Tharoor must have known of it for quite some time.

The former UN diplomat is keen to contest and "make internal democracy" his plank, something which Ashok Gehlot wouldn't think of in his wildest dream. Shashi Tharoor and Ashok Gehlot are from two vastly different planets. The Malayalis may be all for the Gandhi family, but Sonia Gandhi at least would rather trust Ashok Gehlot than bank on the loyalty of the Malayali Tharoor.

And, as if Tharoor seeking

Sonia's permission is not funny enough, Sonia Gandhi indicating she'll "stay neutral" is hilarious! Adopting mother will be the last person to change spots. Sonia's choice/preference for Ashok Gehlot was made known to all and sundry when she left India for "abroad" for the medical check-up; now, when she has meekly agreed to an elected party president other than a Gandhi or a Gandhi-appointed, it just doesn't gel.

Also, Tharoor hadn't been sitting idle in Sonia's absence. The "loquacious" man was leaving a trail of "speaking his mind"; from writing a piece in a Malayalam newspaper to holding forth to a "Gandhi-family reporter" of a popular Hindi TV channel while on the move with Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'.

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★ Editorial

Significance of September 21 in Manipur's history

September 21 of 1948 and September 21 of 1949 are two significant days in the history of Manipur. Revisiting the two historic events that have changed the fate of Manipur is to create awareness among the people of today, generations as well as to the future generation on the importance of thinking twice before making any decisions or acting on it if the matter is of national importance, no matter if it cost our life.

Repentance or frustrations on what had happened on those days is not going to help but considering the two historic events as the fate of Manipur, and the two historic events should be a lesson of today's generation to make sure that peace and prosperity are not disturbed in the region.

For people working in the field of media here in the state of Manipur, he was the father of Journalism. But people recognized him more as the pioneer leader of the erstwhile nation who had sacrificed all comfort of life for the people of the region.

Hijam Irabot, the multifaceted leader of Manipur went underground on this day in 1948, even after he was elected as a member of the Manipur Assembly. Then, Manipur was an independent nation like India but had its constitution before India have one. Hijam Irabot went underground while attending a meeting at MDU Hall on this day of 1948, to protest against the proposed formation of Purbachal Pradesh, comprising Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, and Lushai Hills. Reason - a police person died accidentally at Pungdombam when a scuffle occurred between a group of people coming to attend the meeting and a police team who tried to stop them.

It was after the incident that the architect of Purbachal Pradesh took back their stand Manipur's distinct identity remains as it is that has existed for more than 2000 years. Why then the Manipur State Council did not support Irabot's movement against the formation of Purbachal is a matter that needs to be discussed. And if then the Manipur State Council was against such a proposal of Purbachal Pradesh, the State Council should not have declared Manipur Praja Sangha and Manipur Krishak Sabha as unlawful, for the incident that took place at Pungdombam on that day.

Leaving aside all the diplomatic strategy of those times, one thinks that the people need to remember is that it was Hijam Irabot who protected the territorial integrity of Manipur for the first time after the British left. The spirit of the pioneer leader still runs to many Manipuris till today and the government of India should know that the essence of patriotism for the love of their motherland still is in the blood of thousand Manipuris and any attempt to change the boundary of the state may produce not only 2001, June 18 people's uprising alike movement but a more deadly agitation.

A year after, i.e. on this day of 1949, Manipur's king Maharaj Bodhiachandra signed a controversial merger agreement to the Union of India at Red land in Shillong. Shillong Times newspaper reported the merger as annexation. That was an event which is the root of the present-day conflict between armed opposition group and the government. The earlier event of 1948 was the first to plant the armed movement in the soil against the establishment. And naturally, both events can be considered as the root of the present-day conflict. If the two events are well understood and given due respect by listening to the voice of the people of this region, a final settlement to the conflict may be in the card.

Giving official recognition to both the incident and an apology from whoever made the mistake will give a lasting peace in the region.

Importance of School Library in our Life

By: Rupinder Rani

A library is a place that has a good collection of books and educational materials. It is a place where one can get access to various books and informative materials. Schools are provided with libraries to benefit the students with reading and knowledge. The library is a storehouse of knowledge for the students and staff in the schools. It is necessary for children to visit the library when scheduled. It provides them with the knowledge of different topics and developing vocabulary. It also helps in the overall development of the student.

About my School Library

I am studying in one of the missionary schools. My school has two libraries for students. One is meant for the students from kindergarten to class 5th. The other one is for the students from 6th to 12th students. Both libraries are well built. I am studying in class 8th. My library is beautifully designed with lively walls and interiors. It has windows all around making the room airy. We seat in groups according to the seating arrangements. We call our librarian a sister. She distributes us different books to study. She takes a 15 min class on health and hygiene.

We study various books in our library during our library period. We can also borrow books for studying. I use to borrow novels and several storybooks. I love reading the Enid Blyton series. There is also a facility for searching and reading books online. We have a space called a cyber hub in our library itself. We can read books online and also print them. There is a creative space in our library where we can paste our written poems or small stories. Many students paste their poems and drawings over there.

Arrangement of Books and Informative Materials in our Library

Each student during the library period can read two books. We can get the books by selecting them from the almirah. The catalog is mentioned on the almirah for different subjects. It helps us in locating the books we require. There is an almirah that contains the books only to be read by the teachers. Along with books, we can also read magazines, newspapers, and news digests. They are kept on the big table which is placed in the center of the library.

Conclusion

I have a habit of reading novels and storybooks so I also visit the library in my free periods. It is a place that provides me with complete silence and to read peacefully.

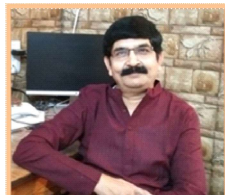
(The author is a Hindi Mistress, Gss Hakuwala, Sri Muktsar Sahib)

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Peace is a journey; Take it one step at a time Focusing on peace



By: Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

21st September is observed as the International Day of Peace around the world. The 'Peace' God means for us is not 'world peace' but it means completeness, soundness, prosperity at all levels of our lives. World peace is defined as an ideal of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and/or people.

When we wake up in the morning and listen to the radio or read the newspaper, we are confronted with the same sad news: violence, crime, wars, and disasters. Today, peace has predominantly become political work towards settlement of

issues between the nations through military involvement, cessation of arms and weapons and dialogue on less-violent, civilian matters. Peace has also included some humanitarian efforts that stretch its helping hands to the calamity-hit regions in the world. Mahatma Gandhi - the father of nation is not seen in this platform of world peace. His ideologies remain neglected at the global forum and are considered as a tonic for social and cultural development only. As he is known as the Father of the nation politically, economically his dictum stands as a medicine merely for building local economy. He said, "If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must therefore always submit to the arbitration of a third party." His perception of bringing peace and resolving conflict had such a diversified point of interest every time when he insisted on taking fast to bring hostile situation under control.

Today we that all the over the world people crave for peace. The leaders and politicians of the world

are trying to achieve world peace. But many difficulties come in the way. There is fear and suspicion among nations. Russia suspects the motives of American. America likewise does not trust Russia. Pakistan says that it is afraid of India.

It is said that voice of the people is the voice of God. Nowhere in the world people want war. They are fed up with it. The desire for peace is supreme in their hearts. Powerful countries should give up the race of arming themselves and their friendly countries to the teeth. Peace and prosperity can be attained through the realization of five basic fundamental freedoms, for all people, everywhere in the world. They are: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from the environment, and freedom from fear.

Modern challenges of poverty, hunger, diminishing natural resources, water scarcity, social inequality, environmental degradation, diseases, corruption, racism and xenophobia, among others, pose challenges for peace and create fertile grounds for conflict.

Peace is the mother of progress. Without peace a nation cannot make any progress. So peace is ever desirable. World-peace is absolutely necessary. The public opinion of the world is in favour of lasting peace.

It is said "Peace begins with a smile." A smile can light up a room, so imagine what a world of smiles can do. If every day, someone does something kind for someone, it will create a ripple effect.

Focusing on peace is imperative for our future. There is power when people unite in the heart for the betterment of all people and the planet. Peace is certainly something we must seek. History is a record of wars. Peace is still a dream. People talk of peace but prepare for war. Almost all the countries have been raising their defense budgets. There are a few people who have come to learn that the solutions to the challenges of life are not necessarily found on the outside, but need to come from within. Increasing our love and connection in day-to-day interactions can be the missing piece in the peace equation.

The STEM Gap

The development of world-class talent in science



By: Vijay GarG

It is a universally accepted reality that girls and women are systematically tracked away from science and math throughout their education, limiting their access, preparation and opportunities to go into these fields as adults. In virtually every realm of society, women's contributions have historically either been deterred or ignored.

For long, nations have attempted to draw more women to the

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. Women are notoriously under-represented in these critical fields. For what happens when the female perspective is lost in science, consider that the symptoms of heart attacks widely disseminated are based on research of male subjects. Women make up only 28% of the workforce in STEM and men vastly outnumber women majoring in most STEM fields in college. The gender gaps are particularly high in some of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs of the future, like computer science and engineering.

That symptoms for women are different has only come to be discussed in recent years. STEM fields globally are still male-dominated, and the women who do work in those fields don't always get the recognition that they need. This makes it harder for younger women and girls, buffeted by cultural and

societal pressures, to pursue careers in these fields. Add to that stereotypes that women's brains are not wired for the hard sciences, and it is no surprise that the few women who do choose the field struggle to remain there. Supporting women STEM students and researchers should not only be an essential part of India's strategy to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world; it is also important to women themselves. Women in STEM jobs earn 33 percent more than those in non-STEM occupations and experience a smaller wage gap relative to men. And STEM careers offer women the opportunity to engage in some of the most exciting realms of discovery and technological innovation. Increasing opportunities for women in these fields is an important step towards realizing greater economic success and equality for women across the board. On the brighter side, technol-

ogy firms in India have a better female to male staff ratio than the tech giants of Silicon Valley.

Female role models could be having a positive influence. The relatively high proportion of women in technology roles in India is an encouraging factor, not just in India, but world-wide. There have been focused efforts by the government, industry and academia towards attracting and retaining girls and women in STEM. But a lot is yet to be done in this regard.

The development of world-class talent in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is critical to India's global leadership. It is imperative that the government understands that fostering an open and diverse scientific community that draws from an array of unique experiences and viewpoints is a necessary step to realizing this goal. In this context, it is imperative that a course correction takes place.

Bangladesh promotes military diplomacy for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region

By: Kamal Uddin Mazumder



of Indo-Pacific regional ground forces to exchange views and opinions on peace and stability.

This year's conference brought together senior officers of the military forces of 24 countries. Under the theme of "Possibilities and Challenges for Maintaining Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific Region," the main focus of the event was "robust peacekeeping," "women empowerment," and "land power in regional cooperation." Apart from these, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, leadership development, countering

transnational crime, and empowering women were being discussed.

Significance of Military diplomacy

Bangladesh has historically been part of ancient Indo-Pacific connectivity. It is indeed in Bangladesh's interest to advocate and work for an open, resilient and interconnected Indo-Pacific. In a broader sense, its own continuing sustainability as an independent, sovereign, prosperous nation-state depends on this idea. With close to 40 nations comprising its make-up, the Indo-Pacific region covers more than half of the earth's

surface, home to 60% of the world's population producing 60% of global GDP, contributing two-thirds of current global growth. By 2030, the overwhelming majority (90%) of the 2.4 billion new members of the middle class entering the global economy will live in the Indo-Pacific. 7 of the world's 10 largest armies are in the region where border disputes and sovereignty concerns are headline events. Therefore, maintaining peace and security across the region is central to global progress.

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Congress says 'nobody needs anybody's nod, specially leadership' for prez polls

Agency
New Delhi, Sept 20:

Amid speculation that Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot and Shashi Tharoor have emerged as frontrunners in the race for presidential elections for the Congress, the party's communication in-charge, Jairam Ramesh, on Tuesday put out a tweet that "anybody can run in the presidential polls" and "nobody needs 'anybody's nod, especially the party's leadership'".

The grand old party is set to elect its next president in October when the crucial presidential polls would be held to choose Sonia Gandhi's successor. The BJP and others have often criticised the party over dynastic politics, accusing it of not being able to look beyond the Gandhis.

On Monday, when Shashi Tharoor visited Sonia Gandhi, he was assured that the election will be held in a "fair and transparent" manner and anyone who wants to contest may file their nomination. "Entire party is immersed in making #BharatJodoYatra a success. Even so it's important to reiterate that any member is welcome to contest for Congress Presi-

dent," Jairam Ramesh tweeted on Tuesday.

"This is a democratic and transparent process. Nobody needs anybody's nod to contest, especially that of party leadership," he further wrote.

Meanwhile, names of Tharoor and Gehlot have emerged at a time when several state units have appealed for Rahul Gandhi's return to the top post. Ashok Gehlot too has backed one such resolution in Rajasthan. Rahul Gandhi, however, has said he "has made the decision on the matter clear".

The next Congress president would have many challenges, including revival of the party's grip ahead of the 2024 national elections.

Meanwhile, Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday took a jibe at Congress MP Shashi Tharoor reportedly conveyed his intent to contest party chief polls to Sonia Gandhi and said "nobody needs anybody's nod to contest, especially that of party leadership".

"Entire party is immersed in making #BharatJodoYatra a success. Even so it's important to reiterate that any member is welcome to contest for Congress

President. This is a democratic & transparent process. Nobody needs anybody's nod to contest, especially that of party leadership," Ramesh, party's general secretary in-charge communications, tweeted.

"Anybody who wants to contest is free and welcome to do so. This has been the consistent position of Congress president and Shri Rahul Gandhi. This is an open, democratic and transparent process. Nobody needs anybody's nod to contest," he said.

Tharoor on Monday met Sonia Gandhi and expressed his desire to contest the upcoming AICC chief polls, while the Congress president conveyed that she would stay "neutral" in the October 17 election, sources said.

Sonia Gandhi welcomed the idea of more people contesting the polls and dispelled the notion that there would be an "official candidate", they said, PTI reported.

Tharoor, a former Union Minister, was among the group of 23 leaders or G-23 who had written to Sonia Gandhi in 2020 calling for an organisational overhaul.

As per reports, Rajasthan

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, a loyalist of Gandhi family, is also likely to for party president opposite Tharoor.

On Monday, Shashi Tharoor, along with fellow party leaders Deepender Hooda, Jai Prakash Agarwal and Vijendra Singh, met Sonia Gandhi at her residence. Though Tharoor did not divulge details about the meeting, sources told India Today that he got a go ahead from Sonia Gandhi to contest the Congress presidential election.

"Anyone is free to contest the Congress presidential poll," Sonia Gandhi told Shashi Tharoor at the meeting, as per sources.

Recently, Shashi Tharoor created quite a buzz when he hinted at contesting the Congress presidential polls, calling for a contest with 'several candidates'.

Shashi Tharoor, though not a member of the Group of 23 dissident Congress leaders, has long advocated reforms within the party, including the election of a new Congress president. The post fell vacant after Rahul Gandhi stepped down as Congress president after the party's dismal performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

India records 4,043 new coronavirus infections, active Covid cases decline to 47,379

Agency
New Delhi, Sept 20:

With 4,043 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 4,45,43,089, while the active cases declined to 47,379, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The death toll climbed to 5,28,370 with 15 fatalities which include six deaths recorded by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprise 0.11 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate in-

creased to 98.71 per cent, the ministry said.

A decline of 648 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 1.37 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was 1.81 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,39,67,340, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent.

According to the ministry, 216.83 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide 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 the one crore mark on December 19.

The country crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year. It crossed the four crore mark on January 25 this year.

The nine fatalities reported in the last 24 hours include two each from Haryana and Maharashtra.

Accused youths blackmailed Chandigarh University girl student to record 'objectionable videos', sources reveal

Agency
Mohali, Sept 20:

Even as the SIT started investigation into the Chandigarh University MMS leak case, preliminary interrogation of three accused currently in police remand revealed that the youths were blackmailing and pressuring the girl student to record the alleged 'objectionable videos' of the female hostellers.

The three, including the girl student and two youths from Himachal Pradesh, were sent to 7-day police remand by Kharar court in Mohali on Monday.

The girl student was arrested on Saturday late night from the varsity's girl's hostel after students resorted to massive protests. The other two accused, including the girl student's boyfriend who she had sent the alleged 'objectionable video clips', were arrested on Sunday from Himachal Pradesh.

Her boyfriend Sunny Mehta and his friend Rankaj

Verma allegedly threatened the girl to make her private videos viral unless she filmed and shared the videos of her hostel mates taking showers in the common washroom of the hostel.

Sources said that during the investigation police found shocking WhatsApp chats on the mobile phone recovered from the girl. In the chat, the accused Sunny orders the girl student to make videos of the women hostellers bathing in the washroom. The girl on this, texts back that she was spotted by someone when she was recording the videos.

In some other chats, Sunny and Rankaj allegedly instructed the girl student to delete the chat history and videos. The mobile phone of the girl has been sent for forensic examination, added sources.

Meanwhile, police have recovered four mobiles phone and electronic devices, including laptops and computer belonging to the two youths, and have also

been sent for forensic analysis.

Police sources further claimed that name of a third youth has also come to the fore and he can be arrested at any time by the police.

Reports further said that the three accused are being interrogated face to face at the Sadar Police Station in Kharar.

A team of SIT also visited Chandigarh University to investigate the case.

Police had earlier claimed that the arrested girl student shared only one video of only herself with her boyfriend and they have found no other objectionable video of any other student from the accused.

The university authorities also claimed the reports as "false and baseless". Dr. RS Bawa, Pro-Chancellor of Chandigarh University said in a statement that "there have been no videos found of any student which are objectionable except a personal video shot by a girl which was shared by herself to her boyfriend."

Anti-submarine warship INS Ajay Decommissioned

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Sept 20L

INS Ajay, the Indian Navy's anti-submarine warship, was decommissioned, after rendering 32 years of yeoman service to the nation, at a solemn ceremony held at Naval Dockyard in South Mumbai on Monday evening.

The national flag, naval ensign, and the decommissioning pennants were lowered for the last time at sunset even as the Naval band played the last post. The ceremony marked the end of the ship's commissioned service. The decommissioning is a formal, yet very emotional ceremony for a ship, her crew, and the Navy in general.

Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command was the Chief Guest for the ceremony. The event was also attended by several veterans who had



INS Ajay was decommissioned at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai on Monday. (Inset: Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, FOC-in-C, WNC addressing the gathering.)

the privilege to serve onboard the ship.

The Guest of Honour for the decommissioning ceremony was Vice Admiral AG Thapliyal, (Retd), the commissioning Commanding Officer of INS Ajay, the very first man to take this war machine to sea.

Commissioned on June 24, 1990, in the freezing temperatures of Poti Shipyard of the erstwhile Soviet Union (at

present in Georgia), the ship was decommissioned in an atmosphere filled with nostalgia.

During her service, INS Ajay has been operating as part of the 23rd Patrol Vessel Squadron under the operational control of the Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area. The ship's primary role was anti-submarine warfare and with her formidable armament of long-

range torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets, the submarine hunter successfully discharged her role of keeping our coasts safe.

During her illustrious career spanning more than three decades, the ship was forward-deployed on several occasions including for Op Talwar during the Kargil War in 1999, Op Parakram in 2001, and post-Uri attack in 2017, maintaining vigil and remaining ever ready to give a befitting reply to the adversary against any misadventure.

The ceremony was attended by over 400 personnel including flag officers, senior officers from the Army, IAF, and Coast Guard, officers, and men of the commissioning crew of previous commissions as well as the ship's present crew and families. The chief guest addressed the gathering present at the ceremony, highlighting the invaluable service rendered by the ship.

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Bangladesh promotes military diplomacy for peace and stability....

However, the conference brings army senior leaders together to discuss differences, establish trust, mitigate miscalculations, resolve challenges, and find commonality among multinational-professional soldiers. There are issues that cannot be solved in isolation by just one or two countries. This platform allows military leaders in the region to get together, share their ideas, and find a collective solution to a pressing and immediate problems. The relationships developed throughout the seminar and through Army-to-Army engagements would help to identify issues of common interest for arriving at pragmatic multi-lateral solutions, and dealing with the escalating threats.

It is imperative to build trust at the strategic level. So, the armies need to work together with the public sector in policy-making and lay out a develop-

ment foundation that links economic and social development with the protection of the environment and natural resources. The IPAMS promotes network building among military chiefs at all levels to join forces in coping with the world's various changes and challenges for sustainable advancement of the region. The forums provide a unique opportunity to advance understanding of key issues while showing respect for each other's role in promoting security and stability. It would build interpersonal relations, mutual trust, and confidence among the ground forces in the region, which would reduce tensions. "The IPAMS can create a sense of friendship and warmth so that peace and stability prevail in the region," PM Sheikh Hasina said while addressing the opening ceremony of the seminar.

The meetings are yet an-

other symbol of the close co-operation between Bangladesh and the United States. It also paved the way for stronger co-operation between the armies of the two countries. Charles A. Flynn, commanding general of the U.S. Army Pacific, assured that the United States will co-operate with Bangladesh and other Indo-Pacific countries to ensure the security of this important region. Again, the Bangladesh Army Chief expressed hope that working together will give the Bangladesh army a lot of scopes to learn as the US Army is one of the best in the world and very developed.

While the militaries of the participating countries discussed disaster management, transnational crime, security issues, and women's empowerment, the issue of Rohingya refugees who have fled from violence in Myanmar is not

overlooked. It is undeniable that since the Rohingya crisis erupted in the Indo-Pacific region's heartland, it has all the potential to directly threaten the peace and stability in the region. Because of the prolonged stay of more than 1 million Rohingya refugees in crowded camps, the economy, environment, security, and socio-political stability in the region will be seriously affected. A delegation of top military officials from 24 countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, India, China, and Vietnam, visited the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, where Rohingyas expressed their desire to go back to their home country of Myanmar's Rakhine State and not to any third country. The members of the group witnessed the plight of the Rohingyas firsthand and developed a "clear perception" of

the gravity of the refugee crisis and the need for their repatriation to Myanmar.

Organizing such an international military conference is a great achievement for Bangladesh Army. Noteworthy, The Bangladesh military's positive and active role has earned the nation an international reputation with political and diplomatic mileage. The Armed Forces of Bangladesh have glorified the country on the global stage through their brilliant participation in UN peacekeeping missions. As the UN peacekeeping operations have been evolving continuously, Bangladesh has regularly been carrying out the performance appraisal of its peacekeepers and taking measures to cope with future challenges. Despite being a late entrant (in 1988) as a troop contributor, Bangladesh has emerged as a credible UN partner over the last three de-

cadres. Since 1988, Bangladesh has participated in 54 peacekeeping missions in 40 different countries across 5 continents with more than 175,000 uniformed personnel, including over 1,800 female peacekeepers. Currently, there are over 7,000 troops and police deployed in 10 missions (as per data from the Armed Forces Division). Praising the Bangladesh Army, US Army General Charles A. Flynn said: "The Bangladesh Army is known for its leadership globally because of its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. Its peacekeeping campus and training center are not just known within the region, they are known internationally. There are many, many things that the US Army and so many other armies can learn from the experiences of the Bangladesh Army in their international and global commitment to humanitarian assis-

tance, disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations. "This acknowledgment has once again proved that our armed forces are a vital factor in upholding global peace and are able to keep our country safe from the subversive activities of internal and external enemies.

Last but not least, this conference is a critical opportunity to connect with the world's military leaders to foster alliance partnerships and cooperative relationships. It is expected that dialogues like these will further strengthen ties between the Indo-Pacific countries and the Bangladesh Army and increase possibilities for mutual cooperation to cope with recent challenges in order for the region to move forward in a secure and sustainable manner.

(The author is a Researcher and Security Affairs Analyst, Dhaka, Bangladesh)

Biggest threat to mainstream media is the mainstream media channel itself : Anurag Thakur

PIB
New Delhi, Sept 20:

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur today inaugurated the 47th Annual Gathering and 20th Meeting of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) in presence of Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Dr. L Murugan, Secretary, I&B Apurva Chandra and Director, AIBD Philomena Gnanaprasam.

Speaking on the occasion Thakur has said that the biggest threat to mainstream media is not from new age digital platforms, but rather the mainstream media channel itself. He went on to say that real journalism was about facing the facts, presenting the truth and letting all sides the platform to present their views.

Inviting guests who are polarising, who spread false narratives and who shout at the top of their lungs damages the credibility of a channel, the Minister remarked. "Your decisions regarding the guest, the tone and visuals - define your credibility in the eyes of the audience. The view may stop for a minute to watch your show, but will never trust your anchor, your channel or brand as a trusted and transparent source of news," he further added.

The Minister exhorted the broadcasters present on the occasion to not to watch the narrative be defined by soundbites but redefine it yourself and set the terms for the guests and the channel.

Posing prodding questions to the audience the Minister asked "Are you going to watch as the younger audience switches and sweeps through the shrill on TV news or are you going to bring back the Neutrality in NEWS and Discussion in DEBATES to stay ahead of the game?"

Anurag Thakur credited the AIBD leadership during the COVID pandemic for keeping



the member countries connected online and maintaining a constant dialogue on how media can mitigate the impact of the pandemic. He noted "member countries were immensely benefitted through sharing of information on the latest developments in the medical field, positive stories of Covid warriors and more importantly in countering fake news which was spreading faster than the pandemic." Shri Thakur congratulated Director of AIBD, Philomena, President of AIBD General conference, Mayank Agrawal and the member countries who worked together in building a strong media response to Covid pandemic in the Asia Pacific region.

Speaking on the theme of the event 'Building a stronger future for broadcasting in the post pandemic era', the Minister remarked that "though broadcast media is and has always been in the mainstream of journalism, the COVID-19 era has shaped its structure in a more strategic way. Covid pandemic has taught us how the right and timely information can save millions of lives. It is media which brought the world on one platform during this difficult phase and reinforced the spirit of one global family." Presenting the role of Indian media during the pandemic as a success story, he said that the media ensured that COVID-19 awareness messages, important government

guidelines and free online consultations with doctors reached everyone in nook and corner of the country.

Thakur prodded the member countries to set up cooperation in the area of good quality content exchange. Programme exchanges through co-operation bring the world cultures together. Such media partnerships between the countries help in building strong people-to-people bonds, he said.

In conclusion, the Minister underlined that media, in all its forms, has immense ability to shape public perceptions and perspectives as an effective tool of empowerment. "It is imperative to create an enabling environment for our journalists and broadcasters friends for making the space of media more vibrant and rewarding", he added.

Mayank Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati and President, AIBD, in his remarks said that AIBD continued its training and capacity building programmes even during lockdowns. 34 training programmes were conducted in last year alone and were focused on tradition as well as emerging issues like climate change, green technologies, sustainable development, faster reporting, programming for children etc.

Sh Agarwal highlighted that with increase in use of internet in broadcasting, training of journalists in cyber security journal-

ism has become imperative, he said. He added that AIBD is the first set up to take this up as part of its training programmes.

Philomena Gnanaprasam said that content is going to determine the future of media and how the content is shared and monetised will determine the future of broadcasting. She also thanked all the delegates and representatives of various organisations for their presence.

During the event, Union Minister Anurag Thakur presided over the award presentation for 2021 and 2022. The Appreciation Award for 2021 was conferred on Radio Television Brunei. The Appreciation Award for 2022 was shared by Ministry of Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development, Republic of Fiji and Fiji Broadcasting Corporation.

The Lifetime Achievement Award for 2021 was given to Khieu Khanharith, Minister of Information and Communication, Cambodia. The Lifetime Achievement Award for 2022 was conferred on Mayank Agarwal, CEO, PB and President, AIBD.

Heads of various foreign missions in India, delegates from the AIBD member countries, Officers from Prasar Bharati and different wings of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India were present at the occasion.

Cities cannot be developed with election-centric approach PM Modi at mayors' conference

Agency
Gandhinagar, Sept 20:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked mayors of BJP-ruled urban bodies to plan a holistic development of cities and said the elected representatives should not think just in terms of winning polls as cities cannot be developed with an election-centric approach.

He also urged the mayors to focus on urban planning, creation of satellite towns and development of Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities to ease the burden on large cities.

Modi was speaking after virtually inaugurating an all India conference of mayors of BJP-ruled cities held in Gujarat capital Gandhinagar.

As many 118 mayors and deputy mayors of BJP-ruled urban local bodies from 18 states and Union Territories are participating in the two-day event.

The PM also urged mayors and other local elected representatives to spend time with the poor beneficiaries (of government schemes) to understand their issues and also work on the beautification of their respective cities.

"The elected representatives should not think just in terms of winning elections. You cannot develop your city with an election-centric approach.

Many times, decisions which could prove beneficial for the cities are not taken just out of the fear that such decisions can result in election loss," the PM said at the inaugural session of the conference.

He said states should take the lead in urban planning instead of just depending on the Centre.

Recalling his days as Gujarat chief minister, Modi said the state was ahead of other states in adopting the latest urban transport systems and utilities, such as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, app based auto-rickshaw services and multi-modal transport systems.

He said the Metro rail network in different cities of India was less than 250 kilometres in 2014 and has now increased to more than 750 km, while work is going on for another 1,000 km.

"Today, we are developing 100 smart cities across the country and so far, we have completed projects worth Rs 75,000 crore. Urban housing is a major challenge for cities. Under our PM Awas Yojna (urban), we have so far allotted 1.25 crore houses to the poor," the PM said.

The budget for housing projects has been increased from Rs 20,000 crore in 2014 to Rs 2,00,000 crore today, he said.

"This shows our commitment towards the urban poor population," Modi said.

"Do you (mayors) sit with them and discuss their issues? We only assume that since it has been published in newspapers, the work must have been done. The more you meet the poor and work for them, they will return it with a bonus. I urge you to finish projects in time and without any compromise on quality," he said.

The prime minister also appealed to mayors to ensure registration and training of all street vendors so that they can avail loans under the PM Svanidhi scheme.

He also urged the mayors to focus on urban planning and creation of satellite towns as well as developing Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities to ease the burden on large cities.

"You all need to think about the future. Urban planning should not be ad-hoc. We can standardise urban planning through formulating policies. This will also eliminate grey areas," he said.

The PM also stressed on increasing people's participation in maintaining public assets, such as gardens.

"Not everything can be achieved by spending money. People's participation is also necessary. People's participation is necessary for development. We have to change their habits like throwing garbage in the open and wasting water," he said.

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Ashok Gehlot versus Shashi Tharoor...

Sonia Gandhi's assurance to Shashi Tharoor that there will be "no official or establishment" candidate revolts against the Congress culture of the day. In the Malayalam newspaper article, Tharoor had spelt out the necessity for an election. He was also game for a non-Gandhi party president; asking that "many can-

didates come forward and participate in the election in the democratically functioning party..."

The Congress could do with Shashi Tharoor at the helm. This man isn't the sycophant like so many others in the Congress; he wants to be his man rather than somebody else's coolie. He wants the

party's central election authority to publish the party's electoral list on the All India Congress Committee website for "free and fair" elections. The Congress central election authority has refused point-blank, and that tells a story. In any case, it is interesting time for the Congress Party. (IPA Service)

Sports

Indian youth boxers clinch 19 medals at Golden Glove of Vojvodina tournament in Serbia

All 12 boxers claim medals in the women's category

IT Correspondent
New Delhi, Sept 20:

Indian youth boxers bagged 10 gold medals on the final day to conclude a successful campaign with 19 medals in the 40th Golden Glove of Vojvodina Youth Boxing Tournament in Serbia on Monday.

Bhawna Sharma (48 kg), Devika Ghorpade (52 kg), Kunjarani Devi (60 kg), Ravina (63 kg) and Kirti (+81 kg) finished on top of the podium as all 12 participating boxers returned with a medal in the women's category.

Kunjarani, Ravina and Kirti outpunched their opponents by unanimous decisions whereas Bhawna and Devika earned 4-1 wins in the finals.

Muskan (75 kg) and Pranjal Yadav (81 kg) secured silver medals after losing in the finals. Kashish (50 kg), Neeru (54 kg), Aarya (57 kg), Priyanka (66 kg) and Lashu (70 kg) were the other five Indian medallists in the women's section, who



signed off with bronze medals each.

Country's men boxers also had an impressive outing as all the five boxers fighting in the final emerged victorious. Vishwanath (48 kg), Ashish (54 kg) and Sahil (71 kg) notched up dominating 5-0 wins over

their respective opponents in the final. On the other hand, Jadumani (51 kg) and Bharat Joon (92 kg) bagged gold medals after winning by 4-1 margins.

Nikhil (57 kg) and Deepak (75 kg) claimed bronze medals. Jadumani was adjudged

the 'Best Fighter of the Tournament' for his power packed show while Ravina won the 'Best Boxer' award in the youth women's category.

The tournament saw participation of top boxing nations such as Kazakhstan, Thailand and Ukraine.

Bangladesh beat Nepal 3-1 in final, clinch maiden SAFF Women's Championship

Agency
Dhaka, Sept 20:

A brace from Krishna Rani Sarkar and an early goal from Shamsunnahar Jr helped Bangladesh clinch their first-ever SAFF Women's Championship title at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu on Monday.

With this win, Bangladesh have broken India's dominance in this competition who were knocked out earlier by host country Nepal for the very first time in the history of this tournament.

Krishna Rani scored the second goal for Bangladesh in the 42nd minute, following Shamsunnahar Jr's opener in the 14th minute and ensured Bangladesh's victory with another expert finish in the 77th minute.

After taking a 2-0 lead in the first half on a rain-soaked pitch and in front of a capacity crowd, Bangladesh came

under tremendous pressure from the hosts, who pulled one back in the 70th minute through a powerful diagonal attempt.

This was the first victory for Bengal Tigrises against Nepal in their ninth attempt, with losing six and two draws. Bangladesh President, PM lauded women's football team for winning SAFF Women's Championship 2022.

Bangladesh team captain Sabina Khatun became the top scorer of the tournament

with eight goals in the tournament. Unbeaten champions Bangladesh conceded only once in the tournament - Nepal's consolation goal netted by Anita in the final - and scored 23 goals.

Bangladesh became champions in South Asian women's football for the first time in the sixth edition, ending India's reign of five successive titles. Hosts Nepal, meanwhile, had to contend with the runners-up trophy for the fifth time.

Name Change

I, Sanmati Kumar Patni/Jain, S/o. Manoj Kumar Patni, a resident of 69, Thangal Bazar, Imphal West, Manipur have changed my name from Sanmati Kumar Patni/Jain to Abhishek Jain vide Affidavit No. 198587 drawn before the Oath Commissioner (Judicial), Manipur on 16/09/2022. My date of birth is 08/07/1990.

Sd/-
Abhishek Jain
69, Thangal Bazar
Imphal West, Manipur