

Chief Minister inaugurates Flybig Flight from Imphal to Tezu



IT News
Imphal, Sept:

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh inaugurated the Flybig Flight from Imphal to Tezu at the Bir Tikendrajit International Airport today.

Speaking on the occasion, N. Biren Singh maintained that under UDAN Scheme which is an initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's, the State will be connected to Arunachal Pradesh by the Flybig flight. The flight will directly fly to Tezu in Arunachal Pradesh and

then to Guwahati. With such an initiative, connections among peoples of different North East States will become closer, he added. He continued that this would not only increase people to people connections but also bring growth in businesses and in the tourism sector.

Regarding the Imphal to Bangkok Flight service, the Chief Minister informed that Imphal to Bangkok via Guwahati will start its operation soon. However, the direct flight from Imphal to Bangkok

is still under consideration, calculating the volume of passengers from the State, he said assuring that the same will also be started.

The inaugural programme was also attended by Works Minister Govindas Konthoujam and Transport Minister Khashim Vashum.

Earlier, the Chief Minister also inaugurated Hotel Imolesh located at Old Lambulane Road, Imphal West in presence of Works Minister Govindas Konthoujam and Former Minister Okram Henry Singh.

Addressing the gathering, N. Biren Singh expressed that a politician should always work tirelessly to provide people with a quality life, safeguarding human rights and making arrangements for their people to be self-sustaining in their occupation. As such, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken up various welfare schemes for the people of the Country and ensured its accessibility at micro level, he added.

Continuing that under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the State Government has been putting all efforts to bring a change in the State, the Chief Minister mentioned that an Institute of Hotel Management had been opened recently. The Government had also provided IT training to around 2,000 youths, out of which around 1,000 youths had got jobs in the sector. He also maintained that many foreign tourists are willing to visit the State considering its scenic beauty, weather, decency of people and the taste of its cuisine. He added that the Hotel Imolesh was being inaugurated at the right time as many tourists are visiting the State for the upcoming Sangai Festival 2022.

Mera Chaorel Houba unites all communities of the state – MP Sanajaoba

IT News
Imphal, Sept 26:

The festival of Mera Chaoren Houba, was held today with cultural flavour. During the festival, MP Rajya Sabha Leishamba Sanajaoba stated that the festival will bring the people of the hills and valley together. Mera Chaoren Houba, a festival for preserving and promoting unity and integrity amongst all the communities settled in Manipur, celebrated on the advent of Mera-tha (month of September-October). The festival will strengthen the bond of unity, integrity, and understanding among the different communities so that peace and prosperity may prevail in the state.

The festival was jointly



organised by Lainingthou Sanamahei Temple Board, Haying Khongban and

Umanglai Kanba Apunba Lup(UKAL).

The function was attended

by PDA Chairman Lourembam Rameshwar Meetei, MLA of Kairao AC.

Major Chongtha Mia was a Meitei warrior and not Pangal – United Chongthas

IT News
Imphal, Sept 26:

Reacting to a social media post at which an organization claimed Anglo Manipuri War hero Chongtham Mia as a Meitei Pangal, The United Chongthas warned organization that have been spreading such fabricated stories that may malign the image of Meitei Community.

In a statement, The United Chongthas said that As per Ceitharol Kumbaba, Chongtham Mia was an im-

portant commander of the Meitei army. He fought the British trooper from dawn to dusk on March 24, 1891, when the later attacked the Kangla. In the war against the British troopers at Thoubal. Athokpam Chongtham Mia led a convoy to fight the Britishers with two cannon. At Khongjom war too he fought the British by leading a Manipuri convoy. During the Khongjom war he was captured after being hit by 3 bullets. Later the British retrieved all his properties and belongings and

sent him to Andaman and Nicobar Island. Later on May 12, 1896 Chongtham Mia left Andaman and return to Brindaband and stayed for 2/3 years. Later he went to a village called Narayana Thakur village in Tripura where Chthas clan settled and spend for around 10 years. He left for heavenly abode on January 17, 1908.

Chongtham Mia was born to Vadriyan and Mantrimayum Shija at Lalabung Makhong Chongtham Leikai. Later, he was married to Nameirakpam Chanu and

had two sons. He was a true son of Chongtham clan of Chenglei salai.

The life history of Major Chongtham Mia was published in 2006 by Chongtham Somorendro.

Attempt to distort the history by spreading false and fabricated stories through social media by an organization has been seriously warn by the United Chongthas. The organization questioned the specific organization about their agenda of misleading the people and its history.

New COVID-like virus found in bats, could infect humans, resist vaccines: Study

Agency
Washington, Sept 26:

A new SARS-CoV-2-like virus discovered in Russian bats is capable of infecting humans, and is resistant to current vaccines against COVID-19, a study has found.

A team lead by researchers at Washington State University (WSU), US, found spike proteins from the bat virus, named Khosta-2, can infect human cells and is resistant to both the antibody therapies and blood serum from people vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2.

A virus uses the spike protein to enter and infect the human cells. Both Khosta-2 and SARS-CoV-2 belong to the same sub-category of coronaviruses known as sarbecoviruses.

"Our research further demonstrates that sarbecoviruses circulating in wildlife outside of Asia — even in places like western Russia where the Khosta-2 virus was found — also pose a threat to global health and ongoing vaccine campaigns against SARS-CoV-2," said Michael Letko, corresponding author of the study.

The finding, published in the journal PLoS Pathogens, highlights the need to develop universal vaccines to protect against sarbecoviruses in general, rather than just against

known variants of SARS-CoV-2.

"Right now, there are groups trying to come up with a vaccine that doesn't just protect against the next variant of SARS-2 but actually protects us against the sarbecoviruses in general," Letko said.

"Unfortunately, many of our current vaccines are designed to specific viruses we know infect human cells or those that seem to pose the biggest risk to infect us," the scientist added.

While hundreds of sarbecoviruses have been discovered in recent years, predominantly in bats in Asia, the majority are not capable of infecting human cells. The Khosta-1 and Khosta-2 viruses were discovered in Russian bats in late 2020, and it initially appeared they were not a threat to humans, the researchers said.

"Genetically, these weird Russian viruses looked like some of the others that had been discovered elsewhere around the world, but because they did not look like SARS-CoV-2, no one thought they were really anything to get too excited about," Letko said. "But when we looked at them more, we were really surprised to find they could infect human cells. That changes a little bit of our understanding of these viruses, where they come from and what regions are concerning," he added.

The researchers determined Khosta-1 posed low risk to humans, but Khosta-2 demonstrated some troubling traits.

They found that like SARS-CoV-2, Khosta-2 can use its spike protein to infect cells by attaching to a receptor protein, called angiotensin converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), found throughout human cells.

The team then set out to determine if current vaccines protect against the new virus. Using blood serum derived from people vaccinated for COVID-19, the researchers found that Khosta-2 was not neutralised by current vaccines.

They also tested serum from people who were infected with the Omicron variant, but the antibodies, too, were ineffective. Letko said the new virus is lacking some of the genes believed to be involved in pathogenesis in humans.

There is a risk, however, of Khosta-2 recombining with a second virus like SARS-CoV-2.

"When you see SARS-2 has this ability to spill back from humans and into wildlife, and then there are other viruses like Khosta-2 waiting in those animals with these properties we really don't want them to have, it sets up this scenario where you keep rolling the dice until they combine to make a potentially riskier virus," Letko added.

Tribute paid to Hijam Irabot on 71st Death Anniversary



IT News
Imphal, Sept 26:

Fitting tribute was paid today to pioneer of Manipur Hijam Irabot on his 71st Death Anniversary today at various places.

The Joint Student organization comprising of AMSU, MSP, KSA and SUK today observed the 71st death anniversary at the office of the Kangleipak Students' Association (KSA). Students and members of the student's bodies paid floral

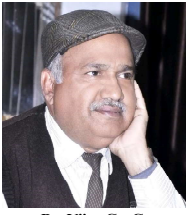
tribute to the portrait of Lamyamba Hijam Irabot.

Tribute was also paid to Lamyamba Hijam Irabot at the office premises of Imphal Times. Team Imphal Times consider and paid tribute to the pioneer leader as "father of the modern Manipuri Journalism. Hijam Irabot even though is a multi facet leader, was also the first to introduce journalism in the state of Manipur. He edited a hand written magazine called Meitei Chanu in 1922. Irabot is also the author of Seidam

Seireng, a text book that was approved by the Manipur State Darbar for studying in Class V. he also wrote many series of article in various of the time.

A statement by the JSSC said that Hijam Irabot had is the one who had proposed to established schools at every villages to impart education to all the people during the Chinga Meepham which was held in December 2 and 3 of 1938. He also moved for compulsory education to both girl and boys.

Poverty and Education



By: Vijay GarG

The effects of poverty on children are wide-reaching and can lead to lifelong struggles, especially when young people don't receive full educations.

Poverty and education are inextricably linked, because people living in poverty may stop going to school so they can work, which leaves them without literacy and numeracy skills they need to further their careers. Their children, in turn, are in a similar situation years later, with little income and few options but to leave school and work.

Child Fund aims to help families escape the cycle of poverty through various educational and livelihood programs. Many times, we learn by listening to communities about their specific needs and working to fulfill them.

The Effects of Poverty on Education

In many countries where Child Fund works, school is free, but there are additional costs for uniforms, books and transportation, especially in rural areas, where a student may travel more than an hour each way by public bus to school. The expenses may be too much for a family to pay, on top of the money the family loses by not sending a child to work or even marrying off a daughter.

Some countries' governments also spend a lower share of their gross domestic product (GDP) on education, which makes public education less available (particularly to the poor) and of lower quality. Overcrowded classrooms, broken desks, no computers — all are common sights in school districts with budgets that don't meet students' needs. Teachers burn out or may be unqualified to teach certain subjects. All of these challenges create a serious disadvantage for children growing up in poor households.

The Importance of Education in Developing Countries

The importance of education in developing countries cannot be overstated. Education can be the catalyst needed to pull families and communities out of the cycle of poverty. Knowledge gives children the power to dream of a better future and the confidence needed to pursue a full education, which in turn will help generations to come.

Education also makes a significant difference for adults, particularly when it applies to day-to-day life, including nutrition, healthcare and gender equity. When adults learn, they become role models to their children, who also wish to learn.

Education Improves Food Security and Reduces Malnutrition

When people learn about agriculture and farming techniques, they gain the ability to grow and maintain healthy crops, which provide vegetables for meals and additional income. Families also learn what nutrients their children need for healthy development, as well as foods pregnant women need to eat to promote their babies' growth.

Education Improves Standards of Health

Literacy is key to good health because women need to be able to read about prenatal vitamins and other health information during their pregnancies. This, in turn, reduces the rates of prenatal and maternal mortality, and improves children's health, too. The ability to read also is important in educating communities about clean water and sanitation, particularly if families need to use filters or boil water before drinking it to avoid waterborne illnesses. Other examples abound, including emergency notices about the Zika virus, Ebola or HIV. Reading keeps people healthier in many ways.

Education Reduces the Spread of Communicable Diseases

The spread of disease in developing countries is often exacerbated by a lack of public knowledge about how it is transmitted. In 2014 and 2015, youth groups in West Africa helped spread the word about prevention of the Ebola



virus, particularly the need to avoid traditional burial practices that spread the deadly disease. Especially when local, trusted voices convey this lifesaving information, communities are receptive to learning. Even in non-emergency situations, education about the spread of disease is important.

Education Improves Gender Equity

Educating women and girls about reproductive healthcare and their rights regarding marriage empowers them to make decisions about their lives. Early marriage and pregnancy cut educations short and often lead to underweight, undernourished children, as well as domestic violence. When girls stay in school longer, they are less likely to marry before age 18 and have children early, and they're more likely to find rewarding work after leaving school. Approximately 39,000 under-aged girls marry each year, some as young as 8 or 9. Community-wide education helps everyone understand the harm of this practice.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Through Education

Education in all different forms is key to breaking the cycle of poverty. It has an uplifting effect on other aspects of society that may seem totally unrelated, such as girls' education lowering the number of prenatal deaths. The relationship between poverty and education is complex, but we know that education helps people make healthier and smarter decisions about their children, their livelihoods and the way they live.

Education also has a significant role in the fight for children's rights, both in teaching children what they can and should expect from adults, and in showing adults the benefits of respecting their children's rights. In Timor-Leste, children have stepped forward to advocate for their rights in school through the Children Against Violence project. Touring around the country, they raise awareness of corporal punishment through theatrical drama. In this and many other cases, education is a powerful tool that can make the world a better place.

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Socio-cultural Tourism in Northeast India: Possibilities and Apprehensions



By: Fr Paul Lelen Haopik

World Tourism Day is observed each year on 27 September to foster the significance of tourism and its social, cultural, political, and economic values. It is high time to re-think tourism that is socially and culturally sustainable. Tourism is a win-win social interaction principle, of course, with a flipside. While possible economic progression is a motivating factor, we must seriously consider tourism's socio-cultural implications. Northeast India has many motivating features for tourism, but the infrastructure is poor compared to other well-established tourist places. While Northeast India remains an unexplored part of India, it is the corridor

to Southeast Asia. This article postulates the possibilities of socio-cultural promotion and dilution.

Possibilities in tourism

The eight Northeastern states of India are pitched on the great Himalayas' ranges, harbouring biodiversity. These mountainous states of India are beautiful places with challenges as well. The diverse cultural uniqueness could contribute to the diversity of the world. With tourism rising to a world standard, financial investments and resource sharing could occur. Employment of host communities could increase without leaving their homes. Increased per capita income could offer better educational facilities to the younger generation. There is a possibility to minimise the income gaps of people. Another possibility is the chance to learn foreign languages to serve as tourist guides. Learning a foreign language can go a long way to secure bread and butter for one's family while adding attraction to tourists who could have things explained in their native language while in a foreign land. Intercultural marriages are also a huge possibility that can raise the genome of people, economically uplift and culturally broaden our outlook. Local handicrafts and specialties could find

a global audience. Indigenously produced drinks could have inroads to imported drinks. Indigenous shawls and ornaments could attract a global audience.

Apprehensions in tourism

Will tourism in the Northeast promote the socio-cultural mosaic, some of which are almost extinct? Or will the tourist influx dilute the already vulnerable socio-cultural remnants? Drug tourism and flesh trade in Northeast India is possible as it shares a significant porous international boundary with neighbouring countries. In the pretext of tourism, there could be more availability of logistics for national and international terrorism. There is also a high chance of aping the western socio-cultural life and forgetting the indigenous cultural roots and practices. Northeast people are very adaptable to affluent lifestyles, so there is a high possibility of imitating the socio-cultural lifestyle of tourists in our society. More prominent communities throttling smaller communities for the lion's share of tourism income is a threat. Interval disagreements and ethnic clashes are tourism's 'No, No'. No tourist will like to lay down their lives in Northeast India. Overtourism and overcrowding can affect services and

lead to harmful environmental conditions. Pollution with plastics, waste food materials, and non-degradable substances are alarming fears that need proper regulation. Hydro and land bodies stand the chance of contamination beyond redemption. These are some unwanted concomitants from what appear to be mere tourist undertakings.

Presumptions

Too many rules and regulations will discourage tourists, but improper safety regulations could also jeopardise the whole gamut of the tourism sector. A loof from both extremes, the middle path may be the wisest part. Tourism is a boon, a bane, a powerhouse, and a possible nuke. Understanding the apprehensions of tourism can prepare us to plan and manage tourism well. This planning needs the Government, stakeholders, and host communities to re-think tourism with the present needs and expectations of tourists. If the socio-cultural tenets of Northeast India are diluted and compromised, tourism could be a distraction than a direction.

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The Genuine Ambition in Life



By: Satellite Nongmaithem

Can you undoubtedly predict that life will be what you aimed for? Absolutely not, but everyone seems to incline towards becoming someone known by most. One might be drained with the curiosity of becoming an IAS Officer, a doctor or anything great. Practically, behind thousands of wrestlers waiting to be in the ring, only the adept individual gets to play in. These couple of words may insist you to think - Why will you not be the proficient one? Of course, you will. However, living in such a corrupted society will always be its own stumbling block. By virtue of this, many diligents

are disheartened on account of their broken ambition in life. Should we always feel repentance for the cause?

Apart from all these, myriads of youths are still aimless and some are constantly shifting their preceding life goals in order to handle their life circumstances. Never try to be a victim in the trap of not being able to decide what we want in life. In fact, everyone is born aimless and nothing should be discouraging you from becoming a prominent person.

Through the epoch of my life, childhood memories always convey a place in my mind. It was when I was able to walk just after months of crawling. There was a picture posted on the wall of our house's drawing room which consisted of a DGP, a Pilot and a Navy. When my mother asked me about my desire, I specified Pilot as my aspiration. That's a childish thought! As I said - Childish thought - I switched to the Navy in a few days. Fortunately, I was born multi-talented. When I got to my 6th standard, my skills in drawing took its best forms. I won exciting prizes in various competitions. Some elders suggested that I should become a professional painter.

On the other hand, I was well-versed in most sports, especially in athletics, football etc. It may be worth mentioning that I was also absorbed in the field of sport for a short stretch of time. Furthermore, I was not too bad in acquiring bookish knowledge either. A psychologist also told me that I am a multi-talented individual and also mentioned that individuals like me are most confused with what they really want in life as they can mostly adapt to many things. As a result of this, I had developed an urge to become an IAS Officer. As time goes by, I encounter many great experiences. Now again, I prefer to choose Graphic Designer as my career goal. Sometimes, I ruminate and blame myself for my mercurial mindset. And again, I do console myself for this is the age of explorations.

Moving on, the founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, pursued a career in Computer Science then stormed up to taking chief roles in various financial firms where he eventually dropped in with the evolution of e-commerce, establishing Amazon at the age of 31. And again now, he is into space rockets. The 40th President of the United

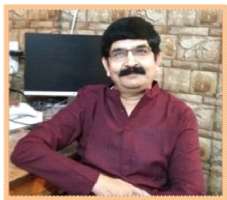
States, Ronald Reagan was a young Hollywood actor. Even in the context of our society, the transition of career from an IAS Officer to a Member of the Legislative Assembly is no longer an exception.

Indeed, keeping a life goal is ethical, but responding to the status quo is more vital. When harnessing effective results from the current situation, one's life ambition might face an unexpected shift. Moreover, striving for a life goal is fictitious. Even though we are aimless or may be in any stage of life, we should not feel anxious for our future aim. Instead, let us try to hunt a self-satisfied lifestyle, handling the outcomes. Then a precious goal will undoubtedly be gifted to us. This is what we consider as 'the genuine aim.'

I know because of the streamlined parabolic words that's used, I might be mostly taken as self-entitled. But with the little that I know, what the hunger of wanting to share the mistakes, I held no stagnancy but greased down my pen to vibrate my heartfelt and honest commands.

(The writer is an ex-student of Sanatombi Oriental English School, Kumbi.)

Is eating Pani Puri good for health ?



By: Vinod Chandrashekar Dixit

Pani Puri is one of the most popular street foods available all over India. In north India, Pani Puri is called gol gappe, gup chup, pani ke pataashe or phulkis. The signature element of this recipe is a spicy stuffing made out of a potato-chickpea mash and really tangy water, liberally infused with mint leaves. *Pani Puri* is not just any other street food for Indians; it's a cultural identity for many different states.

In Mumbai, it is predominantly the hot *ragda* (thick white peas curry) variety that you get with the tangy green and sweet tamarind chutney. What *vada pav* is to

Maharashtra, *gol gappe* is probably to North India. Every street and corner is lined with *gol gappe* vendors in different parts of North India. It is basically a Puri that is broken in the center and then dipped into a mixture of ragda, potato, spicy and sweet water. It is enjoyed with *sev*, and the sweet chutney is mostly left out while onions are incorporated. The flavored water is usually heavy on mint and green chilies. One of the major reasons to love pani puri is its tangy, spicy and at the same time sweet taste.

Pani puri in many ways is nearly almost the favorite street food across the country. The taste it produces arouses every taste bud in the mouth. In India, one can find a stall at a stone's throw distance and so the problem of supremely hungry people like us is solved by walking just few steps to the stall.

We have all seen groups of women gathered around a Pani Puri seller enjoying the sweet and spicy treat. Pani Puri not only serves hunger issues but also helps you balance your emotions. Pani puri continues to bring a smile on millions of

faces. And it acts as a perfect appetizer before a meal.

Most of the time, the panipuri wala is very sweet that they make alterations to your dish as you want (like bhayya thoda zyada teekha daalna, bhayya without pyaaz...etc). Another reason for loving panipuri is the panipurivala himself. In this busy world, he listens to you and makes you those breathtaking panipuris as well. This is one of the signs that you love panipuri.

Firstly, street foods lack hygienic preparation. Also, if there are open drains around the food stalls, it could be dangerous. An innocent dish as it may sound, this is also considered one of the most unhygienic things to eat. Forget about the calorie and the saturated fat involved in the cooking and eating process, our concern is even deeper.

Eating Pani Puri is healthy if it is made at home or eaten at a healthy place. Eating panipuris on the roadside is as horrible as their roadside counterparts is a really bad idea. We are always fond of road side foods, no matter what it is. We never know that the water that's being used is hy-

gienic or not and if the hands are as clean as expected to be or not. It is often seen that street vendors often add unclean water due to non availability of clean water and are not aware of how to prepare food hygienically. Most of the Pani Puri vendors do not have a permanent set up for serving dishes. They use whatever is available at that particular point of time. Pani Puri is not exactly a restaurant dish. It is mostly sold by street vendors, and people have never seen them washing their hands. They do all sorts of unhygienic things and serve Pani Puri with bare hands. He would always wipe his hands on the same cloth after everything that he did. It is also reported that they sell in unhygienic environment, also they make the puri in bulk in ground in a congested room on a floor where 20 guys stay together in shared rooms. Pani Puri is not healthy because puries are deep fried, contains potato and tamarind chutney, but if eaten in limit, it does not cause any harm and its yummy to taste. The hygienic lies in which place you are eating. If you eat this in a hygienic condition, then there is no problem.

RSS Sarsanghchalak addresses public meeting in Shillong, Bharatiya and Hindu are synonyms: Mohan Bhagwat

IT Correspondent
Guwahati, Sept 26:

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Dr Mohan Bhagwat, while attending a public meeting at U Soso Tham auditorium in Shillong of Meghalaya on 25 September, stated that Bharat is an ancient nation since time immemorial, but due to forgetting the civilizational motto and values, it lost the freedom. Sarsanghchalak Bhagwat also added that 'our binding force among one another is our inherent faith in our age-old value, which lies in spirituality'.

"These values of this country's eternal civilization have been named as Hindutva by people outside our country. We are Hindus, but there is no particular definition of Hindu, although it's our identity. Both the terms Bharatiya and Hindu are synonyms. It is a geo-cultural identity in fact," pointed out the Sarsanghchalak, who was welcomed with the traditional Khasi way for the program on 25 September 2022.

Addressing the audience, Bhagwat narrated different inspiring incidents related to the Sangh founder Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, who was a born patriot. It was interesting how, while being jailed fighting the British colonial power



in the freedom struggle, according to the judge who was hearing the petition, Hedgewar's reply in the court was more sedition than his original speech, for which he was jailed.

Sangh teaches to do sacrifice for the country giving up one's individual selfish ends, Bhagwat commented, adding that in the hourlong Sangh Shaktas, the people learn about these benevolent values and duty to the motherland.

RSS draws this tradition of sacrifice from this country's ancient history. Indian ancestors visited different lands beyond and departed the same values to Japan, Korea, Indonesia and many other countries.

"We are following the same tradition today even," asserted the RSS chief referring the examples of how during the Covid-19 crisis Bharat served humanity by sending vaccines to different countries and also it stood with Sri Lanka during her worst ever economic crisis. The Sarsanghchalak emphasized how the RSS since five generations with the help of dedicated Swayamsevaks doing the national reconstruction work since 1925.

Sangh is not just another organisation working for making the organisation itself strong, but the real mission is to make this society organised in order to make Bharat attain her all round development. To achieve it, Swayamsevaks

learn certain disciplines from the working methodology that is in the Shaktas working. The Sangh's orientation is to deepen it into one's own habit by doing it on a daily basis.

In presence of many educationists, intellectuals, community leaders, spiritual & social luminaries, Bhagwat analysed that if Bharat becomes powerful and prosperous, each Bharatiya will become resourceful. He asked the audience from different walks of life to analyse RSS not from distances but by direct observation. Bhagwat's two day Meghalaya visit will come to an end on Monday after a series of meetings with Sangh functionaries and socio-cultural leadership.

Agency
New Delhi, Sept 26:

With 4,129 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 4,45,72,243, while the active cases declined to 43,415, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Monday.

The death toll climbed to 5,28,530 with 20 fatalities, which includes 13 deaths recorded by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The active cases comprise 0.10 percent of the total infections, while the national

COVID-19 recovery rate has increased to 98.72 percent, the health ministry said.

A decline of 579 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.51 percent. The weekly positivity rate was recorded at 1.61 percent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,40,00,298, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 percent.

According to the ministry, 217.686 crore doses of the COVID-19 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 the one-crore mark on December 19.

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

Mizoram CM Zoramthanga urges Centre to resume peace mission in trouble-torn Myanmar

Agency
Aizawl, Sept 26:

Mizoram chief minister Zoramthanga has urged the Centre to resume its peace mission in coup-hit Myanmar.

There have been requests from some quarters that India should broker peace in the wake of political crisis in Myanmar, an official said on Sunday.

Four Indian states Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh share over 1600 km long international border with Myanmar.

"We received requests from some quarters in Myanmar that India should broker peace in the coup hit country. This is a golden chance for our country to resume the peace mission we have begun in the past in order to restore peace in the neighbouring country," Mizoram CM Zoramthanga told reporters in Aizawl.

He said that the Centre should negotiate with the military government and various ethnic underground groups in Myanmar to restore peace, which in turn will help in restoring democracy in the neighbouring country.

The Mizoram chief minister said that he was sent to Myanmar on a peace mission along with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval five years ago.

However, the peace process with the Myanmar military government and ethnic groups was aborted when Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy came to power in 2015, he said.

Mizoram CM Zoramthanga visited the national capital dur-

ing September 3 and September 24 and met various leaders at the Centre, including President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah over the Myanmar political crisis and influx of refugees from the neighbouring country.

"During our visit to Delhi, our main subject was the Myanmar political issue. All the Central leaders whom I have met, including the President, were concerned about the Myanmar political crisis," the Mizoram chief minister said.

He said, "I told the central leaders that India should take a fatherly step and resume the trade we have already started in the past in order to restore peace in Myanmar."

The former rebel leader turned politician said that the ethnic underground groups operating in Myanmar are in favour of federation within the union of Myanmar and independence is not their main goal.

He said that when he was on a peace mission in Myanmar the military government was willing to grant federations to the ethnic groups.

The subsequent Aung San Suu Kyi government also did not object to granting federations to the ethnic groups, he said.

"It seems that peace cannot be established in Myanmar due to communication gaps between stakeholders, if India plays its role in the right time, restoring peace in the neighbouring state is possible," he said.

Mizoram CM Zoramthanga further said he had also urged

the Central leaders during his visit to the national capital that India should beef up security and intelligence units along Mizoram border with Bangladesh and Myanmar to check potential influx of Rohingya Muslims from both the two neighbouring countries.

Citing that Mizoram could be the main entry point of Rohingyas to the country, the chief minister said, "What we fear most is not the Rohingya Muslim entering the state as refugees but as terrorist because rich Arab countries and Muslim terrorist groups can help them due to the atrocities and expulsion they faced in Myanmar."

He said that some Rohingya Muslims have been arrested in Mizoram in the recent past.

Mizoram shares 510 km border with Myanmar in the east and 318 km border with Bangladesh in the west.

While the Assam Rifles is guarding the Mizoram-Myanmar border, the Border Security Force (BSF) is guarding the Mizoram-Bangladesh border.

Zoramthanga said that he had also asked the Centre to deploy or reinforce complete Mizo battalions as paramilitary forces along with the Assam Rifles and BSF along the state border with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

He said that posting Mizo battalions would result in more efficient guarding to curb infiltration as Mizo personnel will easily identify foreigners better than the Assam Rifles and BSF personnel do.

Six IAF Officers Named in a Suspicious Death of a Trainee Cadet in Karnataka

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Sept 26:

Six staffers of the Air Force Technical College (AFTC) located at Jalahalli, Bengaluru in Karnataka have been named in a suspicious death of a 27-year-old student of the college Ankit Kumar Jha, who was found dead on the college premises on Wednesday, September 21.

An offense under section 302 IPC was registered at the Gangamangudi police station based on a complaint filed around 2.20 am on Thursday, by the deceased's brother Aman Jha, a native of Uttam Nagar in West Delhi.

Ankit died by hanging himself, leaving behind a seven-page death note, allegedly mentioning the names of all the six suspects.

DCP (North Bengaluru) Vinayak Patil told media agencies that the offence has been registered against the six suspects, who are of the ranks of



The deceased Ankit Kumar Jha.

Air Commodore, Group Captain, and Wing Commander. "The officers against whom the complaint was lodged have not been arrested but the Indian Air Force has assured us all assistance. We are waiting for the post-mortem report to carry forward the investigation", Patil added.

The Indian Air Force in a statement issued here on Sunday said that there are reports in the media about the death of Under Trainee Flying Officer (UTFO) Ankit Kumar Jha at Air Force Technical College

(AFTC), Bengaluru on September 21.

The deceased UTFO joined IAF in February 2021 and was undergoing training at Air Force Technical College (AFTC). His training was terminated on September 20, after informing his father of the same. Termination of training was the result of recommendations made by a Court of Inquiry (COI), which was instituted following a complaint by a fellow woman trainee officer against the UTFO on June 30. It had been established that

the UTFO had committed certain acts of misconduct. The Inquiry proceedings were duly examined at multiple levels before being approved at Air HQ, as per established procedure on the subject.

As per the existing norms, an IAF officer was deputed to convey the news of this unfortunate happening to the parents of late UTFO AK Jha, in New Delhi. A Post mortem examination was conducted on September 23 and the report is awaited. A Court of Inquiry by IAF is underway to establish the circumstances leading to the death of the UTFO. On September 24 his kin visited AFTC. They were briefed about the incident.

The Indian Air Force condole the unfortunate loss of life and prays for strength to the bereaved family in their time of grief. IAF is cooperating with the investigation being conducted by the police on the matter.

EAM Jaishankar calls out US media, including Washington Post, for 'Biased' coverage of India

Agency
Washington, Sept 26:

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has slammed the mainstream American media, including The Washington Post, for their "biased" coverage of India. "I look at the media. You know, there are some newspapers you know, exactly, what they are going to write including one in this town," Jaishankar told a gathering of Indian-Americans from across the

country amidst laughter and applause on Sunday.

The prestigious Washington Post is the national daily published from Washington DC and is currently being owned by Jeff Bezos of Amazon.

"My point is there are biases, there are efforts really, to determine... Look, the more India goes its way and the people who believe that they were the custodians and the shapers of India lose ground in India the more actually, some

of these debaters gonna come outside," Jaishankar said responding to a question on the increase in anti-Indian forces in this country.

Such groups, he asserted, are "not winning in India". Such groups, the minister noted, will try and win outside or try and shape India from outside.

"This is something which we need to be aware of. It is important to contend. It isn't because most Americans will not know what sort of the nuances and

the complexities of back home, so, it's important not to sit back, not to let other people define me. That is something which I feel as a community is very important for us," he said.

Responding to a question on misrepresentation of the Kashmir issue in the American capital, Jaishankar said if there is a terrorist incident, it doesn't matter what faith the person who's killed belongs to.

"If there are Indian soldiers or Indian policemen who

are abducted; If there are people working for the government, or citizens going about their business, who will lose their lives?," he added.

"How often do you hear people talking about it; pronouncing it, in fact, look at the media coverage. What does the media cover what does the media not cover?," the External Affairs Minister asked. That is how actually opinions and perceptions are shaped, he underlined.

"There is a big song and dance about the Internet being cut. Now, if you've reached the stage where you say an Internet cut is more dangerous than the loss of human lives, then what can I say?" Jaishankar said amidst applause from the audience.

"If you look at A (Article) 370-issue. What was a temporary provision of the Constitution was finally put to rest this was supposed to be an act of majority. This was supposed

to be majoritarian. Tell me what was happening in Kashmir was not majoritarian? I think the way facts are slanted, things are laid out. What is right, what is wrong is confused. This is actually politics at work.

"We should not let it go. We should contest it. We should educate. We should shape the narrative. This is a competitive world. We need to get our messages out. That is my message to you," he said.

Joint opposition rally in Haryana on September 25 has helped in advancing the cause of unity

By Nitya Chakraborty
New Delhi, Sept 26:

The joint opposition rally held at Fatehabad in Haryana on Sunday organized the INLD leader Om Prakash Chautala on the occasion of the birth anniversary of his father Devi Lal has made a good success in facilitating the unity of the anti-BJP political parties to take on the Narendra Modi Government in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

There are three positive pointers from this rally for the opposition. First, Nitish Kumar who was the main attraction at the rally announced that Congress must be the part of the anti-BJP coalition, though the Congress was not invited by the host at the rally. There was no opposition to this politically important statement of the Bihar Chief Minister from those who had reservations about joining the Congress in any coalition, INLD included.

Secondly, Akali Dal Leader Sukhbir Singh Badal made a cardinal point that the NDA was gone. The three main constituents of the NDA, JD(U), Shiv Sena and Akali Dal were in the rally and that meant while the anti-BJP opposition was growing in strength, the NDA was left with BJP alone. Though the Shinde-led Shiv Sena had cast its lot with BJP by splitting the Uddhav-led party, still the trend indicated the isolation of the BJP from the original partners of NDA in the last few years.

Third significant thing is the message of the Odisha chief Minister and the BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik sending best wishes for the birth day of Devi Lal despite knowing that it was a political rally to unite the opposition parties against the BJP. Naveen has been fighting both the BJP and the Congress in his state but he is monitoring the developments and he will decide his position after the outcome of the Lok Sabha elections. He

is also getting the signal that there is a possibility of BJP losing in the 2024 polls. BJD supremo will take his final position if there is a hung Parliament.

Significantly, both Nitish Kumar and Lalu Yadav met the Congress president Sonia Gandhi after the rally and discussed about the opposition unity and the importance of her role in this process. Reports said that the two leaders requested Sonia Gandhi to take lead in bringing opposition together. Nitish Kumar will be meeting the Congress leader after the presidential elections in the Congress Party is over on October 19. RJD Leader Lalu Yadav is ill and he is supposed to go to Singapore for a kidney transplantation. If that is so, Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav, the Bihar deputy chief minister will be meeting the Gandhis and the new Congress president in the first week of November.

As of now, Nitish Kumar is the fittest opposition leader to carry on follow up discussions with the other non-BJP political parties. Nitish is most secure now in Bihar as the BJP, his main opposition finds itself isolated. Nitish is cool headed unlike TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and he has that acceptability totalk across all parties including the BJD, YSRCP and AAP. Already Nitish talked to the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during his last Delhi visit. He is a pragmatist and he knows the minimum possible basis of forging unity of the opposition parties to take on the BJP.

Only eighteen months are left for the holding of the Lok Sabha polls in March/April 2024. Before that a series of state assembly polls will be held in the country. The BJP is concentrating all its attention on the coming state polls and its leaders including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the BJP president J P Nadda are monitoring

the developments on a daily basis. For the major parties of the opposition, the supreme need is to defeat the BJP in the state polls and that is where the major party, the Congress is lacking.

The state polls are taking place in Himachal and Gujarat by year end. In Gujarat, the Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is the state observer and he is supposed to monitor the developments on daily basis. But he is contesting for the post of Congress President and he will be busy till October 19. He will not have any time to give for Gujarat during this period. The Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is leading the Bharat Jodo Yatra. There are no reports that he will campaign in Gujarat during this Yatra period.

Thus Gujarat has been left in the lurch by the Congress Party while both the BJP and the new entrant AAP have focusing full attention on the campaign. PM Modi is constantly visiting. Arvind Kejriwal is trying to convert the Gujarat polls into a contest between BJP and AAP, but the Congress leaders are nowhere to be seen though the anti incumbency is high in the state and the people are looking for a change. Comparatively the situation in Himachal for the Congress is better as the observer the Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel is doing his work consistently and the election machinery of the party has been galvanised.

It is no coincidence that the BJP high command under Home Minister Amit Shah recently discussed the plan of action for 2024 Lok Sabha polls and identified 144 seats for special focus which they lost in 2019 elections. They worked out the strategy on how to retrieve many of these losing seats. BJP is in a backfoot because it has lost most of its powerful allies in the Hindi-speaking heartland. Especially, the loss of JD(U) and the

SAD has given a big jolt to the saffrons electorally. BJP's strategy is to keep the losses from its existing 303 seats at minimum and make up this loss from the gains from last year's losing seats. But this BJP strategy can be ably challenged by the opposition parties if they move with a flexible electoral strategy from state to state ensuring maximum mobilisation of anti-BJP votes in favour of the strongest opposition candidates in that state.

For opposition it will be wise for it to ensure that the strongest opposition party in each state, will be the decider of the nature of alliance in that state to take on the BJP. As of now, there are no problems in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The opposition fronts are model front taking most of the anti-BJP parties. Such fronts can not be repeated in other states. The Congress is the major opposition party in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Himachal and Gujarat and it will have the main responsibility to fight BJP in these states. If the Congress feels it necessary to have alliance with smaller anti-BJP parties, its decision will be final.

This flexible electoral strategy can help in minimising the differences before the polls. The prime objective is to bring maximum number of non-BJP political parties in the anti-BJP camp after the Lok Sabha polls. The Prime Ministerial candidate can be decided in the post poll scenario if there is a hung Parliament, on the basis of the strength of the respective political parties and the maximum acceptability of the proposed candidate by the participating parties. The entire process will need flexibility and visionary approach. Certainly eighth time Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar and Sharad Pawar are suited to lead negotiations in the post-election process. (IPA Service)

Ghulam Nabi Azad announces the name of his new party as 'Democratic Azad Party'



Agency
Srinagar, Sept 26:

A month after he quit the Congress party, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad announced the name of his party as the 'Democratic Azad Party'. He addressed a press conference and said that his party received around 1,500 suggestions in Urdu as well as Sanskrit.

"The names for my new party were sent to us, in Urdu, and Sanskrit. The mix of Hindi & Urdu is Hindustani. We want

the name to be democratic, peaceful, and independent," Azad said. Unveiling the party flag, Azad said that the mustard colour indicates creativity and unity in diversity, white indicates peace and blue indicates freedom, open space, imagination and limits from the depths of the ocean to the heights of the sky.

In his first public meeting after quitting the Congress party, Azad had announced that his party will focus on the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

"I've not decided upon a name for my party yet. The people of J-K will decide the name and the flag for the party. I'll give a Hindustani name to my party that everyone can understand... My party will focus on the restoration of full statehood, right to land, and employment to native domicile," he had said.

Slamming Congress, the organization he was associated with for almost 50 years, Azad had said that the party was made by its workers with their blood and not by computers and Twitter. Alleging that his former party colleagues were trying to 'defame' him, Azad had alleged that people from Congress now go to jail in buses, call DGP or Commissioners, get their names written, and leave within an hour.

In his resignation letter to Sonia Gandhi, Azad had targeted the party leadership, particularly Rahul Gandhi, and alleged that he was a "non-serious individual" and "immature".

Security Forces apprehend two PREPAK(PRO) cadres

IT News
Imphal, Sept 26:

Based on credible intelligence input provided by

Keithelmanbi Battalion, Imphal East CDO apprehended two UGs of PREPAK (PRO) from Wangkhei Ningthem Pukhri Mapal, Imphal East district

yesterday. The apprehended were involved in placing extortion demands on behalf of the prescribed outfit.

AR organises interaction with CSOs

IT News
Imphal, Sept 26:

Churachandpur Sector of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR(South) carried out interaction with CSOs of Churachandpur District at Tuibong today.

In keeping with undeterred effort of Assam Rifles to reach

out to CSOs in the region, an informal interaction was carried out to develop a sense of security in the region in view of the multiple extortion threats being received recently.

During the interaction, DIG, Churachandpur Sector took a stock of the situation. They were assured of all types

of assistance during these difficult times. A total of 06 CSOs of different organisation from Churachandpur district have attended the meet.

The CSOs appreciated the efforts of the battalion for conducting such an event which also helps in strengthening the cooperation and synergy with local populace.

Sports

Croatia, Netherlands into Nations League semi-finals as France survive relegation

Agency
London, Sept 26:

Croatia and the Netherlands booked their places in the last four of the Nations League as holders France needed a favour to avoid relegation from the top tier on Sunday.

Les Bleus lost 2-0 in Denmark to finish with just one win from their six group games, but Croatia's 3-1 win at Austria saved the world champions from the drop.

Didier Deschamps will be hoping to have a number of key men back from injury by the time France's defence of the World Cup begins against Australia on November 22.

"It was a young French team, which for the most part does not yet have experience of the highest level," said Deschamps.

"Tonight is a dose of reality and what will be waiting for us in two months."

France will also come up against the Danes in the group stage in Qatar and the Euro 2020 semi-finalists showed they are more than capable of causing more trouble in two



months' time.

Both goals came before half-time as Kasper Dolberg stretched to turn home Mikkel Damsgaard's cross before Andreas Skov Olsen volleyed in from the edge of the area.

France were without Hugo Lloris, Jules Kounde, N'Golo Kante, Paul Pogba, Ousmane Dembele and Karim Benzema through injury.

But the star trio of Antoine Griezmann, Olivier Giroud and Kylian Mbappe failed to find a way back into the game for France.

Denmark's win meant Croatia needed to get all three points in Austria to top the group.

Luka Modric got the 2018 World Cup finalists off to a flying start, but they were quickly

pegged back by Christoph Baumgartner's header.

Two goals in three second-half minutes proved decisive as Marko Livaja and Dejan Lovren headed in at the far post.

"Austria made our lives very hard, but in the end, the win was deserved," said Modric. "I am very happy that we are in the top four."

Defeat relegated Austria to League B.

The Netherlands made sure of top spot in Group A4 with a 1-0 win over Belgium thanks to Virgil van Dijk's header 17 minutes from time.

The Dutch just needed to avoid defeat by a three-goal margin after winning 4-1 in Brussels earlier in the group.

A Belgian revival never looked likely. Van Dijk settled the game when he was left completely unmarked to head in a corner inside the six-yard box.

In the same group, Wales were relegated after losing 1-0 at home to Poland.

Karol Swiderski scored the only goal in Cardiff as Robert Lewandowski's cushioned through ball.

Turkey were already guaranteed promotion from League C, but were still embarrassed by a 2-1 defeat to the Faroe Islands.

The Faroes led 2-0 through Viljormur Davidsson and Joan Edmundsson before Serdar Gurler's late consolation for the side ranked 83 places higher in FIFA's world rankings.

Will be gard to score against us, says India Women's U-17 team Head Coach Thomas Dennerby



Agency
New Delhi, Sept 26:

The Indian team for the upcoming FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup which the country will host has improved in defending but needs to work on "attacking and some technical details", head coach Thomas Dennerby said on Sunday.

Dennerby, who is currently camping in Spain along with the players for an exposure tour ahead of the age-group showpiece, said the fitness level of the team will also not be a problem.

"We are well organised and have a good fitness level. The

fitness level won't be a problem. We have good sessions of defending so it will be hard to score on us but we still have to utilise our chances on the pitch. We are playing at a higher tempo and higher pace than before," Dennerby said.

"Meanwhile, we are working on our attacking side as well as on some small technical details, which require attention at this moment. But we feel we are on the right track," the Swede said in an AIFF release.

The Indian team will play against Imabari JFA Academy in their first friendly match on Monday at Soccerland, Catalunya, Spain.