

## Tourism sector to get investment of \$500 million from the US – Chief Minister

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 18:

Manipur tourism sector is set to get an investment of \$500 Million US dollars from a company based in the United States of America, says Chief Minister N Biren Singh on the side-line of the B20 Meet at Marjing Polo Complex in Imphal East. The company has assured to invest a sum of \$500 million into the tourism sector of the state.

A discussion between the US delegates and the Chief Minister was held yesterday after the B20 conference at City Convention Centre Imphal and assurance was given during that discussion, said N Biren Singh.

A number of female nurses from Manipur are currently working in Japan and now, delegates from Argentina and Peru have requested to send female nurses from the state to their respective countries, said CMN Biren. Delegates from Argentina also expressed their interest in the development of sports especially football in the state, he added.

Welcoming the proposal from the US to invest in the state and the interest from Argentina and Peru, N Biren said the state is expecting other foreign investments from other delegates and countries.

The 3 days conference which started yesterday is the first of the B20 sessions in the North East state of



India, which is the forum for the global business community and organised by the Ministry of External Affairs

under the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future". Delegates from Australia, Argentina, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Chad, Canada, China, France, Greece, Ghana, Iceland, Japan, Nepal, Russia, Seychelles,

Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tunisia, Togo, Uganda, United States are participating in this mega event. Delegates from Overseas Trade Delegation - Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Asia Supporting Organization, APO, JAPAN, India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Bilateral Organisation - Indian Association of Japan, Indo Icelandic Business Association were among the participants. Besides, diplomats - Ambassadors from the Embassy of The Republic of Tunisia, High Commissioner - Bangladesh High Commission, High Commissioner- High Commission of the Republic of Seychelles, New Delhi, Deputy Head of Mission -

Embassy of Iceland, Chargé d' Affaires /Head of Mission - High Commission of Togo in India were part of the B20 event.

The inaugural session was followed by a plenary session, where topics including Investment Opportunities & Support Ecosystem for doing Business in Manipur, Opportunities in Core Sector, Healthcare & Medical Tourism, Tourism & Hospitality, ICT, Handlooms & Textiles would be deliberated. Representatives of G20 and other countries also addressed the plenary session. The inaugural session was also attended by Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and Senior Government Officials among others.

## Dovetailing the G-20 theme neighbourhood youth parliament held in Thoubal District

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 18:

Neighbour youth parliament on the theme "Vashudaiva Kutumbakam" for Thoubal District was held today at Thoubal Moijing Community hall. The program was jointly organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra Thoubal and Youth Empowerment and Development Society Moijing.

The event was focused on the topics, "G-20 & Y-20 summit", "Mission LiFE", "International Year of Millets" and "Catch the Rain Campaign".

Angom Shijalembi Chanu, MCS, SDO Lilong was the Chief Guest of the function. Speaking at the program, she said the role of youths in the development of society is very important. She also expressed concern about the present situation of the environment and appeal to the youth to actively take part in environmental conservation.



President of the function, Dr. Md Rahejuddin Sheikh, Principal Lilong Haoreibi College spoke on India's G20 Presidency, the involvement and engagement of youth under the G20-Youth 20 summit, its themes, and the importance of unsung heroes and role models for youths.

Guest of Honour, Dr Md Hamidur Rahaman, Asst Prof, Dept of Biotechnology Manipur University, spoke on Mission LiFE and the importance of forest and water conservation, and rainwater harvesting. Guest of Honour, Md Abdul Warish, Ex-Pradhan

Moijing GP highlighted issues of water scarcity and tree cover in relation to the water table. Guest of Honour and Youth Coordinator Thoubal, Michael Thangminlin Mate highlighted Catch The Rain where it falls when it falls project of the National Water Mission executed by NYKS.

Later, Chief Guest led the youths in a Water pledge and officially launched Catch the Rain Campaign.

The program culminated with cultural program "Atithi Devo Bhava", showcasing the unique cultural programs of the district.

## Assam Rifles organises Ex-servicemen Rally

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 18:

A mega Assam Rifles Ex-servicemen Rally for ex-servicemen of Manipur was conducted under the aegis of DGAR at Mantripukhri Garrison today. The rally elicited participation by more than 600 ex-servicemen from all the districts of the State including World War II veterans, Veer Naris, widows and their dependents.

The aim of the rally, organised under the theme "Serving Those Who Served Us", was to connect with the veterans, strengthen bonds with them and also acknowledge their contribution made for the country during the prime of their lives. The occasion was graced by Lt Gen P C Nair, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, PhD, DG Assam Rifles as the Chief Guest.

Speaking on the occasion, the DG lauded the contribution of the veterans and the serving soldiers of Manipur who have contributed immensely to ensure the security and prosperity of the North-East and the country.

The veterans were informed about various beneficiary



schemes including the recruitment rallies, sports quota for recruitment in Assam Rifles, reservation in various educational institutes/hostels, Ayushman Bharat and extension of Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) to Assam Rifles veterans. The DG also highlighted about conception of an Ex-servicemen (ESM) Cell every Unit level, adoption of Veer Naris and disabled veterans and outreach programme as part of which the Assam Rifles is reaching out to Veer Naris and veterans pan India.

As part of the event, a felicitation ceremony was organised in which the DG

Assam Rifles felicitated Veer Naris, World War II veterans and other ex-servicemen. The representatives of HQ DGAR, Shillong also provided a platform for registration of grievances and their immediate redressal.

As part of the rally, a Medical cum Dental Camp was also organised. Doctors from Assam Rifles along with specialist doctors from RIMS, Imphal and from the State Government Medical Department provided consultation and medicines to the veterans and their dependents. The veterans were also distributed various medical aids like wheel

chairs, spectacles, walking sticks, hearing aids and portable commodes at the venue.

A number of stalls promoting Skill development, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Social Welfare, Fishery and Small Scale were also setup during the rally. In addition facilities including CSD, banking, Aadhar and PAN card registration etc were also provided to the veterans and their dependents.

The event was followed by lunch for all participants. The Ex-servicemen expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the DG Assam Rifles for organising the event.

## Budget shock tricks gold trade, imports plunge to 32-month low

### Commerce Ministry suggestion for import duty cut was ignored

By K Raveendran  
New Delhi, Feb 18:

Nirmala Sitharaman's budget has played truant with the gold trade, which is in the throes of a crisis for what the finance minister has not done rather than any act of commission in her last full-fledged budget of her current tenure.

The gold trade had been looking for a cut in the import duty for the metal in the budget, with the result that jewellers and traders hardly bought any gold in January, particularly in the second half. But there was no duty reduction in the budget.

As a result, India's January gold imports plunged 76

per cent from a year earlier to a 32-month low. At the same time, domestic prices rallied to record highs. The country imported 11 tonnes of gold in January, compared with 45 tonnes a year earlier. In value terms, January imports dropped to \$697 million from \$2.38 billion a year earlier. The lower imports have, however, had a salutary effect on the country's trade deficit, just as it lent support to the ailing rupee.

Further, local gold futures jumped to a record high of Rs 57,270 rupees per 10 grams in January, stifling retail demand, which had been expected to improve amid the ongoing wedding season.

The trade is now waiting

for a reversal of the price trend, which is beginning to happen. Local gold prices have fallen nearly 5 per cent from the all-time high and this has helped attract retail consumer back, and the trade is expecting a pickup in purchases.

It was widely believed that the Centre would reduce the import duty on gold so as to discourage smuggling, which has increased to alarming proportions in recent times after the import duty was hiked to 15 per cent from 10.75 per cent in July last year in a bid to contain the current account deficit. Although the basic duty was only 12.5 per cent, the effective rate was 15 per cent in

view of the additional 2.5 per cent duty on account of the agriculture infrastructure development cess.

But ahead of this year's budget, the commerce ministry had sought a reduction in the duty with a view to pushing exports and manufacturing of the gems and jewellery. The ministry also wanted the duty on certain other products to be tweaked to boost manufacturing and exports. In fact, the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council wanted the import duty on gold, silver and platinum to be reduced to 4 per cent.

But Nirmala Sitharaman's budget did not listen to any of the suggestions and on the contrary increased the duty

on silver, while sparing other precious metals. The demand for duty cut fell on deaf ears.

India had led the global recovery in gold sales with 17 per cent year-on-year growth with a demand of 146 tonnes in the third quarter of 2022. According to World Gold Council, global annual gold demand jumped 18 per cent to 4,741t, almost on a par with 2011, which was marked by a period of exceptional investment demand. The strong full-year total was aided by record fourth quarter demand of 1,337 tonnes.

The year saw a record annual average gold price of US\$1,800 per ounce, closing the year with a marginal price increase despite facing

notable headwinds from the strong US dollar and rising global interest rates. Although the fourth quarter average price was slightly weaker, a sharp November rally was followed by continued recovery throughout the closing weeks of the year.

Brisk retail investment lifted bar and coin demand to a nine-year high. Strong growth in Europe, Turkey and the Middle East offset a sharp slowdown in China, where demand was affected throughout the year by Covid-related factors. Indian gold demand remained robust compared with longer-term pre-pandemic levels. Despite a fairly soft

start to the year, Indian consumer demand recovered and only just fell shy of the strong levels of demand seen during 2021. Continued recovery from Covid boosted yearly comparisons, although the sharp local price rally choked off demand in the closing weeks of December.

Overall, total gold supply halted two years of successive declines in 2022, lifted by modest gains in all segments. Full-year mine production grew 1 per cent but failed to match its 2018 peak. Annual recycling supply made only marginal gains, despite strong local currency price rises in many markets, according to World Gold Council. (IPA Service)

# Children should be communicated age appropriately about sex and sexuality

The taboo about sex refers to the cultural or social taboo surrounding the discussion of sex and sexual topics. In many cultures, sex is considered a private matter, and discussing it openly is seen as inappropriate or even shameful.

There are many reasons why sex has historically been a taboo topic. Some of these reasons include religious or moral beliefs, social norms, and the fear of sexually transmitted infections or unwanted pregnancies. The taboo around sex can also be influenced by issues of power and control, as well as the way sex has been portrayed in media and popular culture.

However, the taboo around sex can have negative consequences. It can lead to a lack of education and knowledge about sexual health, relationships, and consent. It can also contribute to stigma and shame around sexual behaviour, making it difficult for people to seek help or support when they need it.

Breaking the taboo about sex and opening up honest and open discussions around sexuality can have many positive benefits, such as promoting sexual health, reducing shame and stigma, and fostering healthy relationships.

Education and communication about healthy sexual behaviour, Children who receive age-appropriate sex education can learn about healthy sexual behaviour, which can help prevent them from engaging in inappropriate or harmful sexual activity at the same time sexual crimes will also be

reduced.

When communicating with children about sex and sexuality, it is important to use age-appropriate language and concepts that the child can understand.

For young children, it may be best to focus on the basics of body parts and boundaries, such as using proper names for body parts and teaching them that their body belongs to them and no one should touch them without their permission. It can also be helpful to emphasize the importance of consent and personal space.

Using nicknames to refer to a child's private body parts can be confusing and may create shame or embarrassment around normal bodily functions. It is important to use accurate anatomical terms when discussing the body with children, including the correct names for the genitalia, rather than using nicknames or slang terms.

For older children, discussions about puberty, sexual orientation, and healthy relationships can be introduced. It's important to create an open and safe environment for children to ask questions and express their feelings without fear of judgment. It's also important to emphasize that sexuality is a normal part of human development and to provide accurate information about the risks associated with sexual behaviour, such as sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.



By: Satya Gopal Dey



Keisam Pradipkumar

In summary, it is recommended that parents and caregivers use accurate anatomical terms when discussing the body with children, including the correct names for the genitalia, rather than using nicknames or slang terms.

For older children, discussions about puberty, sexual orientation, and healthy relationships can be introduced. It's important to create an open and safe environment for children to ask questions and express their feelings without fear of judgment. It's also important to emphasize that sexuality is a normal part of human development and to provide accurate information about the risks associated with sexual behaviour, such as sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.

Overall, the goal is to provide children with accurate and age-appropriate information about sex and sexuality while promoting healthy

attitudes and behaviours towards sexuality. Parents and caregivers can also seek guidance from health care providers or educators to help navigate these conversations.

In India, discussions about sex and sexuality have traditionally been considered taboo and have often been kept under the carpet. There are several reasons for this, including cultural, religious, and societal factors.

In traditional Indian culture, sex and sexuality have been viewed as private matters that should not be discussed openly. Religious and moral values have also played a role in shaping attitudes towards sex, with conservative values emphasizing chastity and modesty.

Societal factors, such as the lack of comprehensive sex education in schools and the prevalence of conservative social norms, have also contributed to the taboo around sex

and sexuality. In many cases, there is a lack of awareness and understanding of issues related to sex and sexuality, which can lead to harmful practices and behaviours.

However, there has been a growing movement in recent years to break the silence around sex and sexuality in India. Activists and educators are working to promote comprehensive sex education and to raise awareness about issues related to sexual health and rights. This is an important step towards creating a more informed and empowered society that can make healthier choices about their sexual lives.

Communicating with children and adolescents about sex can be challenging, but there are some important tips to keep in mind. Start early: Begin talking to your child about their body parts and boundaries when they are young. This will set the foundation for future conversations about more complex topics. Use age-appropriate language: Use language that your child can understand, and avoid using technical or clinical terms that may be confusing. Be honest: Be truthful when answering your child's questions, but don't provide more information than they are ready to handle. Create a safe environment: Make sure your child feels comfortable asking questions and expressing their feelings without fear of judgment. Discuss values: Talk to your child about your family's values and expectations around sexual behaviour, but also be open to discussing alternative perspectives.

Emphasize consent: Teach your child the importance of consent and that they have the right to say no to unwanted touch. Be ongoing: Have multiple conversations with your child about sex and sexuality over time. This allows for a deeper understanding and creates an open dialogue.

Seek outside resources: There are many resources available, such as books, websites, and healthcare providers, that can provide information and guidance on communicating with your child about sex and sexuality.

Remember that communication is key when discussing sex and sexuality with your child. It is important to create a safe and open environment for them to ask questions and express their feelings.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, is a law enacted by the Indian Parliament in 2012 to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The law defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years and provides for the establishment of special courts to handle cases related to sexual offences against children.

Some of the key provisions of the POCSO Act include, criminalizing sexual offences against children, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and the use of children for pornography. Providing for the mandatory reporting of sexual offences against children by any person who has knowledge or suspicion of such offences.

contd. on page 3

## Maha Shivratri : Occasion to bow before the Supreme Dev



By: Er. Prabhat Kishore

Karpurgauram Karunavataaram Sansarsaram Bhujagendrahararam.

Sadavasantam Hridayaravinde Bhavam Bhavansahitam Namami.

(The one who is pure like Kapur, whose personality is the embodiment of compassion. Those who are the essence of the entire creation and the one with the serpent king as his garland, reside in the heart, including Lord, Shiva and Kamal in the mud and I bow you.)

Indian culture is based on spiritual values, in which Bhagwan Shiva, the god of gods, pervades in every particle. He is omniscient and is equally revered and venerated by both the gods and the demons. Shiva is the foster and Shiva is the destroyer, Shiva is the beginning and

Shiva is the end, Shiva is the power and Shiva is the eternal. Shiva is the embodiment of power and Shiva is also the eternal proof of the light of life on earth. He is corporeal and formless as well. He is the first Guru of this world. Shiva is in each and every particle of this universe.

Na Punyam Na Papam Na Saukhyam Na Dukham Na Mantra Na Teertham Na Vedas Na Yagyam.

Aham Bhojanam Naiva Bhoyjam Na Bhokta Chidananda Roopah Shivoaham Shivoham.

(I am neither virtues, nor sin, nor happiness nor sorrow, nor Mantra, nor pilgrimage, nor Veda nor Yagya. I am neither food, nor I eat nor I Yagya. I am conscious form, I am bliss, I am Shiva.)

The nature and personality of Lord Shiva teaches positivity, simplicity, love, balance, and yoga in human life. All the Navaratrias possessed by Lord Shiva have their own relevance. *Trishul* represents three powers - knowledge, desire and perfection, *Damru* represents Creation and Brahmaand, *Rudraksh* represents purity and satvikta, *Nandi* represents righteousness, *Ganga* represents the stream of spirituality, *Chandra* symbolises from origin to

the end, the *snake king Vasuki* represents to keep the ego under control, the *Third eye* is a symbol of intelligence, and the *Iyaghra Chhal (Tiger-skin)* is a symbol of fearlessness and perseverance.

Mahashivratri, which is celebrated on Falgun Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi Tihti, has been mentioned in various Purans such as Skanda Puran, LingaPuran, Padma Puran. There are several legends, traditions, beliefs and customs which makes this occasion special among the festivals celebrated in the world. Devotees celebrate the day with zeal and enthusiasm with locally featured traditions. This day is said to be the beginning of creation. Mahashivratri is said to be fortunate day because the Moon (represents life) and the Sun (representing Shiva) it is close to each other on this day. According to the mythological belief of Sanatan Dharma, on this day Mahadev, the saviour of the world, tied the nuptial knot with Mata Parvati, the mother of the world. This is the night of the union of Shiva and Shakti. Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of Linga, which reflects both Shiva and Shakti. The Shivaling has two parts - the Linga which represents the male part i.e. Shiva and the Yoni which

represents the female part i.e. Shakti or Parvati. In a combined form, both worldly and spiritual are the emblematic of unity and completeness.

According to Shiva Puran, once there was a heated argument between Brahma, the creator of world and Vishnu, the sustainer of the world, regarding their superiority over each other. Realizing the devastating consequences of ego of the two, Bhagwan Shiva emerged as a ray of light in the form of Jyotirlinga i.e. Agni Shivaling, having the effect of crores of suns on the night of Phalguna Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi Tihti.

*Chaturdashi Krishna Chaturdashyamadidevo Mahanishi. Shaivalinga Tyodbhavah Koti Surya Samprabhabh.* This had neither origin nor end (symbolising that ego has no end). He challenged both gods to locate the origin and end of the light. Brahma ji transformed into a swan and went upwards to find the upper end while Vishnu ji took the form of a boar and went inside the earth. But both the gods failed in their campaign and it was self-evident that no-one but Shiva is the supreme among the gods. This incident of Mahashivratri also teaches to stay away from ego, anger, falsehood and pride.

On the occasion of Mahashivratri, Adidev had appeared in the form of Jyotirlinga at 64 holy places of the world, but due to human being aware of only 12 of these places, we know and worship only the twelve Jyotirlingas (Somnath, Mallikarjuna, Mahakaleswar, Omkareshwar, Kedarnath, Bhimashankar, Vishwanath, Trimbakeswar, Vaidyanath, Nageshwar, Rameshwar, Gushmeshwar). On Mahashivratri, a series of lamps are decorated in the temples so that the flame of fire can be generated like a lamp. On this auspicious occasion, fasting, night awakening, yoga and Havan-pujan are performed by devotees in the night, which is the destruction of planetary defects and enemies, along with the path of salvation. *Shivam Cha Mokshe Cha Mahadeve Sukhe.*

On Mahashivratri itself, Lord Shiva had consumed Halahal poison, the destroyer of the universe which came out during the Samudra Manthan, to protect the universe. Due to this his throat turned blue and he was called Neelkanth. As the poison was held in his throat, it caused severe burning all over Shiva's body. Devotees offer milk, water, honey, ghee, sugar etc. on Shivaling to re-

duce the burning so that by the grace of Shiva, happiness, peace and progress can come in the world.

Like the Panch Bhuta (five great elements) of the earth, namely- Kshiti (Land), Jal (water), Pavak (Fire), Gagan (Sky) and Vayu (Wind), the five faces of Lord Shiva are respectively described as Ishaan, Tatpurnash, Aghor, Vamadeva and Sadyojata. On this night, the position of the northern hemisphere and the planets and constellations of the earth is such that the Kundalini energy awakens in the human body. Lord Shiva is revered by 108 names like Pashupati, Rudra, Nataraj, Jagdish, Bhairav, Vishwanath etc.

Shiva after being engaged in meditation in Yogamudra for centuries, had become stable and united in Kailash Parvat on Mahashivratri. Shiva is the most supreme and divine ruler of the universe who acts as a creator, promotor as well as destroyer. Mahashivratri is the night when Shiva performs the heavenly dance of creation, preservation, and destruction. It marks the remembrance of "overcoming darkness and ignorance" in life and in the world.

(The Author is a technocrat and educationist)

## Maha Shiva Ratri: Implication for Religious Harmony & World Peace

By: Prof. (Dr.) Jayadeba Sahoo

On the 82nd "Trimurti Shiva Jayanti"-Anniversary of GOD's Advent (Birth extraordinary) on to the corporeal medium of Pranjita Brahma.

Shivratri is here again. What better occasion to take a close look at the very interesting deeper aspects of this festival and of God Shiva, with whom it is associated.

First of all who is God Shiva and what is our relationship with Him? Shiva - the name means benefactor - is referred to as *paramatma* or the Supreme Soul, while all the other gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon are called *devi devatas* or

deities. That is why the prayer, *Brahma devaya namah, Vishnu devaya namah, Shankar devaya namah...* ends with *Shiv paramatmayaya namah.*

The Supreme Soul, who is incorporeal, is the father of all human souls. That is why all humans, irrespective of the faith they profess, regard and worship God as an incorporeal entity. Being incorporeal, God Shiva cannot be represented by an idol. Therefore Hindus worship Him in the form of the Shivaling.

Many people confuse the deity Shankar with Shiva. But the depiction and the attributes of the two should make it clear that they are two

different entities. Shankar is a deity having a human form and he is always shown sitting in a meditative state, often before a Shivaling. It is clear that He is remembering an entity higher than him, which can only be the Supreme Soul. Shankar is one of the creations of the Creator, Shiva. He is bestowed with the task of destruction of the world when it reaches a state of extreme degradation at the end of Kaliyug, the Iron Age. It is because Shiva and Shankar are two different entities that Shivratri is never called Shankar-ratri.

Now, why *ratri*? It is always a birthday or holiday that is celebrated. Then why is God Shiva associated with night? Shivratri is not Shiva's night. In fact, there can be no night where there is Shiva, who is also called the Sun of Knowledge. In truth, this festival commemorates the descent of the Supreme

Being into this world when it is enveloped in the night of ignorance, vices and unrighteousness. He comes and dispels the darkness of the night and ushers in a new dawn - the Golden Age.

It is said that Shiva opened His third eye and destroyed all the evil in the world. He, being incorporeal, has no eye. What Shiva does is to open the eye of the intellect of human beings by first reminding them of their true identity - that they are souls, not bodies - and imparting them knowledge of the entire cycle of human history. He teaches humans the way to liberate themselves from vices so that they become worthy of entering the Golden Age.

Being the knower of the past, present and future, Shiva is called *trikaldarshi* or one who knows the three aspects of time.

Since He also has knowledge of the three worlds - the corporeal world we call the universe, the subtle world that exists beyond it, and the still farther incorporeal world, the abode of all souls and the Supreme Soul - He is called *trilokinath*. He is called *trimurti* because He is the creator of the three subtle deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar, through whom He performs the three tasks of creation of a new golden aged world, its sustenance, and destruction of the vices in the old world.

The celebration of Shivratri to mark incarnation of God Shiva in this world proves that He is not omnipresent. Had He been omnipresent there would have been no evil in this world, and omnipresence precludes the need for incarnation.

Now is the time when God incarnates in a human medium, whom He

names Brahma. Through Brahma He imparts spiritual knowledge in order to create a new world order. This new order is built by humans who adopt Godly knowledge in their lives to become free of the vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego and full of divine virtues (The fasting by devotees on Shivratri is a commemoration of this forsaking of vices). This group of spiritually empowered souls is engaged in this noble task right now. When these souls reach a critical number, the power of their purity and positive thought energy will bring about massive transformation in this world, and the *ratri* will give way to a golden dawn.

"Happy greetings on the Divine Birthnight of God Shiva"

(The author is a Faculty, Brahma Kumaris & Dean, Faculty of Education, R.G.U.)

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to "Imphal Times" can be sent to our e-mail: [imphaltimes@gmail.com](mailto:imphaltimes@gmail.com).

For advertisement kindly contact - 0385-3590330 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.



# Assam will intensify police action against child marriage, says CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

Agency  
Guwahati, Feb 18:

Assam will intensify its crackdown on child marriages, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday at a meeting with police officials, PTI reported.

Since February 3, the Assam Police have launched an operation against child marriages with retributive arrests. As of February 17, a total of 3,047 people have been arrested in 4,037 cases filed under either the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act or the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. Earlier this week, the

Gauhati High Court observed that police action was causing havoc in the state. The court made the comment while granting anticipatory bail in four separate cases of child marriage, noting that charges under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act may not be justified.

Thousands of women across the state have protested against the Bharatiya Janata Party government's crackdown on child marriages, saying the arrested men are the sole breadwinners of their families. Police data seen by *Scroll* shows that districts with high Muslim populations have seen more

arrests than others.

Despite the High Court's grim view on the matter, Sarma on Friday held a meeting with deputy commissioners and superintendents of police of all districts to discuss measures to up the ante in alleged child marriage cases.

"The idea is to ensure that no child marriage happens in the state and we will eliminate it by 2026," he told reporters, according to PTI. He also denied that arrests were being made targeting any particular religion.

He pointed out that courts have granted bail to only 251, or 8.23% of the persons ar-

rested since the crackdown started, which showed that the cases were not botched up.

In January, the Assam chief minister had referred to the "alarming results" of the National Family Health Survey-5 conducted in 2019-20 to justify the government's drive against child marriage. According to the survey, Assam had an underage pregnancy rate of 11.7% - significantly higher than the national average of 6.8%.

But activists have said the police crackdown was short-sighted as it did not address the structural reasons such as poverty and illiteracy behind underage marriages.

# The Rebel Shinde Faction Gets Original Title-Shiv Sena and the poll Symbol



The break away faction led by Eknath Shinde outwits the Uddhav Thackeray faction.

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Feb 18:

In one of the biggest jolt to Shiv Sena in its 57 year old history, the Election Commission of India (EC) allotted the title "Shiv Sena" and a poll symbol "Bow and Arrow" to the breakaway faction led by Eknath Shinde (now Maharashtra Chief Minister), on Friday.

While dealing with dispute (No 01 of 2022), the EC in its final order issued on Friday, February 17, noted that the current constitution of the Shiv Sena party was undemocratic. It was mutilated to undemocratically appoint people from a coterie as office bearers without any election at all. Such party structures fail to inspire confidence.

"The constitution of political parties ought to provide for free, fair and transparent elections to the posts of office bearers and a further free and fair procedure for the resolution of internal disputes. These procedures ought to be difficult to amend and should be amendable only after ensuring larger support of the organisational members for the same," the ECI said.

The EC ruled that the Shinde faction will get the official name of "Shiv Sena" and the "bow and arrow" symbol of the party amid an ongoing tussle between the Shinde faction and the Uddhav Thackeray faction over these rights. The Shiv Sena founded on June 19, 1966 by the

Shiv Sena patriarch late Balasaheb Thackeray.

The rebellion on June 20 last year, spearheaded by Shinde and supported by the BJP, resulted in the collapse of the Uddhav Thackeray government on June 29, 2022. The two factions have been staking a claim on the Shiv Sena name and the original symbol of the bow and arrow, since then. The decision on the dispute pending in the Supreme court, is slated to be delivered on February 21.

Since the issue was pending with the EC, the bow and arrow symbol was frozen. For the Andheri Assembly bypoll, held in November last year, the two factions were allotted two different symbols — Shinde faction two swords and a shield, Uddhav faction flaming torch.

Reacting the EC ruling the Uddhav Thackeray faction MP Sanjay Raut said the EC has lost credibility with the order and Uddhav's faction will now challenge the decision in the court.

# Army Public School Students undertake Heritage Walk to Gateway of India

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Feb 18:

With a view to commemorate 75 years of Independence as part of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", the Army Public School, Mumbai conducted a Heritage Walk from Colaba Military station to the iconic Gateway of India located in South Mumbai, on February 17, Friday.

The Heritage Walk began from the Army Public School (APS) at Colaba with 120 students accompanied by their teachers and Principal Lakshmi Madhuri Chatti. During the walk,

the students displayed placards advocating messages to protect our heritage, follow green practices for protection of environment and various other social causes to create awareness amongst the citizens.

On completion of the heritage walk at Gateway of India, a vibrant cultural programme showcasing our cultural heritage was put up by the students. The program began with the release of tri-colour balloons by Lieutenant Colonel Sandeep Legha and the Principal of APS. The program culminated with singing of the National Anthem.

The Heritage walk was indeed an enthralling experience for the students. It highlighted the important historic role and character of the city to the students and also generated interest and involvement of the local community in the urban conservation activity, an official statement read.

Army Public School, Mumbai is a public school, is run under Indian Army supervision and is part of the Army Public School network. The school also has a student council, which is elected every year through a three tier process of elections

and is responsible for maintaining discipline in the school.

The APS is a system of private schools established for imparting education to the children of the Indian Armed forces personnel. With 137 schools throughout the country, it is one of the largest chains of schools in India. It is controlled by the Army Welfare Education Society (AWES), which was established in 1983, also has 249 Army pre-primary schools across India, and also several institutions of higher education. The APS follow NCERT curriculum and are affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi.

# PEC demands release of Afghan scribe Mortaza Behboudi

IT Correspondent  
Geneva, Feb 18:

Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), the global media safety and rights body, demands an immediate release of Afghan journalist Mortaza Behboudi, who was arrested on 7 January by the Taliban regime in Kabul. Though Afghanistan did not report any incident of journalist last year, the troubled south-east Asian nation maintains its pathetic record over media persons, hundreds of whom have already escaped the poverty-stricken country since the Taliban grabbed the power.



Recently, the Afghanistan Journalists Center called for an immediate and unconditional release of Mortaza, who possesses dual nationality (Afghan and French) for some years and is presently held in a Kabul prison. It also expressed concern that the whereabouts and the current situation of Mortaza have not been dis-

closed. The centre urged the Islamic Emirate (Taliban) authorities to release the award-winning journalist.

"Afghanistan continues to reflect the poor press freedom situation, where journalists are routinely facing threats, insults, detentions and physical assaults. Over 600 active Afghan media outlets now cease to operate. More than one hundred Afghan journalists were temporarily detained by the authorities last year. The female journalists are facing the most challenging time there. We demand authorities to ensure press freedom," said Blaise

Lempen, president of PEC.

The south Asia representative of PEC (<https://presseemblem.ch/pec-news.shtml>), Nava Thakuria revealed that Mortaza began his career as a photojournalist and later fled his country to Paris. Soon Mortaza started contributing news and articles for a number of French newspapers and news channels. Even he took assignments from various media outlets in France. With such an assignment Mortaza arrived in Kabul on 5 January and subsequently he was detained by the Taliban agencies.

Contd. from Page 2

# Children should be communicated age.....

Establishing procedures for the recording of statements and conducting of trials in a child-friendly manner to minimize trauma to the child. Providing for the confidentiality of the child's identity and prohibiting the publication of any information that may lead to the identification of the child. Providing for the establishment of special courts to handle cases related to sexual offences against children. Providing for the appointment of special public prosecutors to handle cases under the Act.

The POCSO Act is a comprehensive legislation that seeks to address the issue of sexual offences against children in a holistic manner. The law provides for stringent punishment for offenders, including imprisonment for a term that may extend to life, and a fine. The law has been instrumental in raising awareness

about child sexual abuse and providing a legal framework to protect children from sexual exploitation.

According to POCSO Children cannot legally give consent to sexual activity because they are not able to fully understand the nature and consequences of sexual acts, and therefore cannot give informed consent. Sexual activity with a child is illegal and constitutes child sexual abuse, regardless of whether or not the child appears to be a willing participant.

It is important to recognize that any sexual activity involving a child is exploitative and damaging to the child's physical and emotional well-being. Adults have a responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to report any suspicions of child sexual abuse to the appropriate authorities.

When talking to children

about sex and sexuality, it is important to emphasize the concept of consent and to teach them that they have the right to say no to any unwanted touch or sexual activity. Parents and caregivers can also work to create a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable asking questions and discussing issues related to sex and sexuality. This can help to empower children to protect themselves from potential abuse or exploitation.

While discussing sex and sexuality can help to create a more open and informed culture, it is important to recognize that sexual crimes are the result of complex societal and psychological factors, talking openly and honestly about sex can help to reduce the stigma and shame surrounding sexual issues and can help to empower individuals to make informed and healthy choices. By edu-

cating individuals about healthy sexual relationships, consent, and the consequences of sexual crimes, we can help to create a culture that values and respects human dignity and bodily autonomy.

It is also important to recognize that preventing sexual crimes requires a multi-faceted approach that includes education, law enforcement, and social interventions. Strategies such as comprehensive sex education, effective law enforcement, and community outreach programs can help to address the root causes of sexual crimes and prevent them from occurring in the first place.

Satyra Gopal Dey is Head, Child Protection, Advocacy & HR of Vikramshila Education Resource Society. Keisam Pradipkumar is a journalist and former Member of Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

## Post Office Passport Lost

I, the undersigned, Seram Chinglembi of Pishumthong Ningom Leirak, Imphal West District, Manipur have lost my Passport, bearing No. 4828070689, issued by the Head Post Office on the way between my residence and Head Post Office on February 5, 2023.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Seram Chinglembi  
Pishumthong Ningom Leirak  
Imphal West, Manipur  
#8974606196

## Name Change

I, the undersigned, D Ginsang Gangte, residence of Khousabung, Churachandpur do hereby declare that I have relinquished, renounced and abandoned the use of my old name **Ginsang Gangte** as I have assumed my new name **D Ginsang Gangte**.

Sd/-  
D Ginsang Gangte  
Khousabung, Churachandpur

## “টেজ-উইল” (লান-খৌরম)



মাসেম তাইবঙপানসিদা ঐশ্যেয়া খাইবি ইরজা তিববীরায়া মরৈবাকীদমক খজবদা মিংকুপ অমফাওবা নুঙাইবা ফংখিঅিঅা লাই ওইঅা ইরংবম ভোৱোত গীয়ায়া চাওৱেন-হায়া খঙনবীখিবনা মপুনা থারকপা চৌশিং-চৈথেক ৱরদনা হোৱাং-হৌশিং ৱনা চাদা, লোৱাং-লৌশিং ৱনা চিন্দা, তাইবঙ চেংজেল লৌহিৱদনা হৌখিবা লৌহিদাম ফাইৱেন থাগী ১৯নি পানবা, যাইফরবা কোৱী ইৱাই নুমিং, ইং কুমজা ২০২৩ গী ফেব্রুৱাৰী ১০, নুমিং অসিদা শৌৱীবা মপু মহাকী মফমদা লোৱাং লৈনম ওইনা তিনজায়ে।

লাক্সিবা লৌহিদাম ফাইৱেনগী ২৩নি পানবা, যাইফরবা কোৱী লৌপাকপোকপা নুমিং, ইং কুমজা ২০২৩ গী ফেব্রুৱাৰী ১৪, নুমিং অসিদা মাজনি লৈনম তমজৱগা, লাক্সিবা লৌহিদাম ফাইৱেনগী ৩০নি পানবা, যাইফরবা কোৱী নিংখৌকাবা নুমিং, ইং কুমজা ২০২৩ গী ফেব্রুৱাৰী ২০, নুমিং অসিদা লান-খৌৱম থোৱে। নুমিং অসিদা লৈখিঅবগী থৱায়া মপু মাগী মফমদা ঙিবা চিকনা লৈজৱনবগীদমক মপুগী মিংখ শক-শোশজদুনা গুমজবা হোৱাং-লোৱাং থৱং কংচপনি।

নুমিং অসিদা অহল-লমন, মরুপ-মাপাং, ইচিন-ইনাও, ইচে-ইচল, খাই খিবিঅা মতম চানা লৌৱীৱক্তনা লান-খৌৱম অসিবু শৱক যাবীৱনবা চেনা লোৱাংগী লৈছং শিঅা লৈকংচৱি। চেনা লোৱাং লৈছং শিঅদুনা পাওজজৱগী অয়ো-অৱান খিবিঅ ঙাকপীগনি।

নোঙ্কচৱিঅিঅিঅ-গে

ইৱেবম ওংবী যমুনা লৈমা (মমা)  
ইৱেবম ওংবী জোইলি (পুৰ্ণিমা) লৈমা (লৌহিদা)

অমদি ইমুং-মনুং

খাগেমপল্লি হুইড্রোম লৈকাই, ইঙ্কাল।

# PM Modi addresses Economic Times Global Business Summit; says govt focusing on empowerment & welfare of people

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 18:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the government is focusing on the empowerment of the poor so that they can contribute to national development.

Addressing the Economic Times Global Business Summit in New Delhi, Modi said, the government re-imagined how to improve the delivery of services to the poor and the implementation of welfare schemes. He said, his government has given pucca houses to three crore poor families in the last nine years, which reflects the government's dedication for upliftment of the poor. Modi said, the government has so far transferred 28 lakh crore rupees under the Direct Benefit Transfer, with zero leak-

age.

Prime Minister said, better infrastructure is needed for the rapid growth of the country, therefore the government re-imagined infrastructure building as a grand strategy. He said, PM Gatishakti National Master Plan is not only giving speed to the construction of infrastructure but also giving emphasis to area development and people development.

Modi said, highways are being built in the country at a speed of 38 kilometres per day and more than five kilometres of rail lines are being built daily. He said, today, India has put a new model of physical and social infrastructure development in front of the whole world.

Taking the example of the government's concept of re-imagination, Modi said, more than one hundred districts

which were considered very backward in 2014 were turned into aspirational districts. He said, the sanitation coverage in rural areas of the country at that time was less than 40 percent which has now reached 100 percent under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The Prime Minister said, today India's prosperity is the world's prosperity and India's growth is the world's growth. He emphasised that the theme of One World, One Family, One Future chosen for G-20 contains solutions to many challenges of the world. Modi said that the world can become better only by taking common resolutions and protecting everyone's interests.

Modi said, his government worked on the principle of trust, with Citizens. Talking about the exponential growth of digitalization in the coun-

try, the Prime Minister said, today, 40 per cent of the world's real-time digital payments take place in India. He said, this is the answer to those who questioned the ability of the poor and marginalized to make digital payments.

The Prime Minister elaborated that after 2014, the government-first mentality was re-imagined as a people-first approach and the government worked on the principle of trusting its citizens.

The Prime Minister said, India has shown the world how to convert calamities into opportunities. He said, in the last three years the whole world has changed due to the Covid pandemic. Mr Modi said, in the last three years, India has shown the world the true meaning of anti-fragile.

# Illegal poppy cultivation destroyed at Phungyar Block, Kamjong



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 18:

Under the supervision of DC Kamjong and SP Kamjong, a combined team led by SDO Phungyar along with SDPO Phungyar, NAB, Forest Department, Phungyar Police and Kasom Police destroyed illegal poppy plantation of

around 14/15 acres in Marou village, Phungyar subdivision of Kamjong district.

While speaking to Chief and village authority about the drive, the chief briefed that poppy plantation in Marou village has been banned by the village since two years back and he also reiterated that no new plantation has been un-

dertaken but the seeds that fell from the already planted years back sprouted and that has led to the regrowth of poppy plants in his village.

Further, the village authority requested for training farmers for alternative crops with awareness camp for pest and disease management of alternative crops.

# Arunachal Pradesh govt suspends internet services in Itanagar capital region till Sunday

Agency  
Itanagar, Feb 18:

Life in Arunachal Pradesh capital town was paralysed on Friday in the dawn-to-dusk 'public' bandh called to press for the fulfillment of the 13-point charter of demands of the Pan Arunachal Joint Steering Committee (PAJSC)-APPSC related to alleged leak of the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) question paper.

Faced with large scale demonstrations by aggrieved aspirants and their family members, which triggered clashes with the police, the government temporarily suspended internet services in the Itanagar capital region from 6 pm of Friday to 5 pm of Sun-

day in the "interest of public safety".

The government order said the step was taken at the request of the director general of police to "prevent further occurrence of serious law and order problems during the bandh which has taken a serious turn after destruction of police barricades, lathi charge and firing of tear gas shells".

The bandh began at 5 am and thousands of protestors came out to the streets of the capital town in the early morning hour demanding cancellation of the scheduled swearing-in of the new APPSC chairman on Friday evening. They also demanded posters of President Droupadi Murmu, who is scheduled to arrive in the

northeastern state on February 20 on a two-day visit.

Scores of protestors and police personnel were injured in spontaneous clashes, which compelled the police to resort to lathi charge and to lob tear gas shells, officials said. In Itanagar business establishments, markets, banks, educational institutions, government and private offices remained closed and vehicles kept off the road.

The situation prompted Chief Minister Pema Khandu to call off the oath taking and appealed to the PAJSC-APPSC to withdraw its agitation. He invited it to the civil secretariat on Saturday at 11 am for a discussion of its demands and assured that the government would bear the cost of medical

treatment of those injured in the day's clashes.

Appealing to the agitating youths and general public to understand the situation and maintain peace, Khandu said We are more than concerned about the alleged question paper leakage and are determined to revive and rejuvenate the APPSC. We have no other intention but to provide free, fair and equal opportunities to our youths through the Commission.

The protestors should call off their agitations and not create an ugly law and order situation as it will be detrimental to the state. "The bandh will not solve any issue, only discussions can, he told a press conference at his residence here.

# Career Guidance and interaction organised by AR

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 18:

Loktak Battalion of IGAR (South) organised "Interaction and Career Guidance" at Siamsinpawipi Residential School, Nughathal village of Churachandpur District yesterday.

Loktak battalion took this opportunity as an initiative to address approx 600 local students, both boys & girls, of Nughathal village and contiguous area in and around for the counseling session. The basic aim of this campaign was to impart knowledge on career prospects and recruitment procedure to join Armed Forces as well as private Sector. In addition, battalion distributed essential items to the

students. The counseling was constructive as students grasped important information provided to them. The initiative was well received by the local students of Nughathal village and contiguous area who appreciated the efforts of Loktak battalion in reinforcing their motto of being the "Sentinels of North East".

An interaction and motivational lecture for students appearing for NEET and presently studying at Assam Rifles Centre of Educational Excellence, Kangvai, District Churachandpur was organized yesterday.

Brigadier Michael D'Souza, Commander Churachandpur Sector Assam Rifles interacted and motivated the students for their upcoming exam scheduled

in the month of May 2023. The students were briefed about the Security, Health education and Stress Management while preparing for NEET examination. They were also briefed about the nuances of the procedure for joining the Indian Armed Forces including physical and academic requirements and the selection process for various types of entries in the Armed forces as officers and Medical Corps. He also interacted with teaching and administrative staff of Assam Rifles Centre of Educational Excellence.

The lecture was followed by an interactive session in which queries raised by the students were answered. A total of 28 girls are being trained for duration of one year for the upcoming exam.

## Sports

# Santosh Trophy: Kerala Beat Odisha 1-0, Punjab Sink Goa 3-1



Nijo Gilbert (No. 7), who scored Kerala's match-winner against Odisha, celebrates with his teammate

Agency  
Odisha (Orissa), Feb 18:

Three teams stood a chance to qualify from Group A after Kerala and Punjab won their respective matches in the Santosh Trophy national football championship on Friday. Karnataka and Maharashtra played out a

scrappy draw in a six-goal thriller.

Kerala beat Odisha 1-0 with Nijo Gilbert scoring from the spot in the 16th minute.

In another match, Punjab defeated Goa 3-1.

Punjab found the net through Nickson Castanha (own goal) in the 20th minute while Rohit Sheikh scored in

the 74th and 80th minutes.

Goa scored through Clencio Pinto in the 88th minute.

A leaky defence had been the bane of the defending champions Kerala in this edition, and they had conceded as many as they had scored (7), going into the crucial game against the hosts.

# Indian Junior Women's Hockey Team Beat South Africa 8-1

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 18:

The Indian junior women's hockey team began their campaign in South Africa with a convincing 8-1 win over the hosts.

The visitors displayed good structure in their attack with successive goals coming their way from the very first minute of the match.

Goals were scored by Deepika Sr. (12, 302), vice captain Rujata Dadaso Pisal (182), Hritika Singh (202), Sunelita Toppo (282), Deepika Soreng (362) and Annu (442) on Friday.

For South Africa, Mikkela Le Roux (362) was the lone goal scorer.

The Indian junior women's team will play two more matches against the South Africa U-21 team on Saturday and Monday followed by two games against South Africa 'A' team on February 24 and 25 respectively.

# Asia Mixed Team Badminton Championships: India reach Semifinals to ensure First Medal in Continental Event

Agency  
Dubai (UAE), Feb 18:

India staged a remarkable comeback to down Hong Kong 3-2 and qualify for the semifinals of the Asia Mixed Team Badminton Championships and ensure a first-ever medal in the continental tournament on Friday.

Down 0-2, the Indians showed great fighting spirit as the doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Chirag Shetty and PV Sindhu levelled the scores after reverses in the first two matches.

In the first match of the tie, the mixed doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto fought hard before losing 24-26 17-21 against Lee Chun Hei and Reginald and Tsz Yau NG to hand Hong Kong a 1-0 lead.

World No. 11 and Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen squandered a game lead to lose 22-20 19-21 18-21 against world No. 14 Ka Long Angus NG in one hour



and 10 minutes.

The men's doubles pair of Kapila and Shetty pulled one back for India with a hard-fought 20-22 21-16 21-11 win over Tang Chun Man and Yeung Shing Choi.

In the women's singles match, two-time Olympic medalist Sindhu had to dig deep

to get the better of Saloni Samirbhai Mehta 16-21 21-7 21-9 and level the scores at 2-2.

In the decider, Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand defeated Tsz Yau NG and Wing Yung NG 21-13 21-12 in the women's doubles to clinch the tie.