

## 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly: Mining of minerals using machines ban: Chief Minister

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 28:

During the question hour on the Seventh Day of the 3rd Session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly held today, Leader of the house and the Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh informed the House that the cabinet has resolved to ban mining of Minerals including sand in riverbeds with the help of machines in the state. However, manual mining will be streamlined considering the livelihood of the manual labourers. The manual workers can continue their work with prior permissions from Commerce & Industries and Forest Departments. Chief Minister made the statement in reply to the Calling Attention put up by MLA, Surjakumar Okram on the illegal mining leading to deterioration of Thoubal river.

Leader of the House N. Biren Singh stated that we, the human beings, are selfish and some of the people have no civic sense. He said

that 99 per cent of the people are not aware of setting up toilets properly. They built toilets near the running river irrespective of whether they are contaminating the water which are consumed by others. He informed the House that recently the government has done a mass drive of eviction of toilets and cleaning the river banks stretching from Kangpokpi to Imphal river. He also said that Singda Dam is drying up because of the cutting down of trees on the hills around Singda, leading to scarcity of drinking water.

Biren further informed the House that the government has taken up steps from time to time by arresting the persons involved in illegal mining and quarrying especially at Thoubal river. For the survival strategy, the people are illegally mining sand and others, neglecting the consequences that affects the future generation. He said that any activities that are disastrous to the environment will be seriously dealt with as per the

law. He informed the House that locations are being identified by Industry Department and Forest Department. Proposals are sent to the Centre for consent to preserve the areas, he added.

Replying to the queries of MLA Surjakumar Okram, Minister of Relief and Disaster Management Awangbaw Newmai stated that the Government declared Drought during kharif-2019 on 31st August, 2019. Based on the field survey on various parameters, the State Government sought Rs. 151.04 crore as relief assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). The Ministry sanctioned Rs. 26.53 crore in 2020 as assistance, he added.

Minister of Textiles, Commerce and Industries Smt. Nemcha Kigen informed the August House that no stone crusher is permitted/licensed to function in paddy land. She added that the permit/license for stone crushers is issued under 'The Manipur Factories Rules, 2021'.

Forest, Environment & Climate

Change Minister Th. Biswajit Singh informed the House that there is no forest village in the Nongmaiching Reserved Forest and that there is no Reserved Forest by the name of Leimaching Reserve Forest. He added that construction of religious and memorial structures in Reserved Forest area are not allowed without the prior forest clearance from the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 after promulgation of the Act from 25th October, 1980. He further stated that the structures that are related to religion cannot be evicted considering the social sentiments of the people.

Replying to a query raised by MLA K. Ranjit Singh, Power Minister Th. Biswajit Singh informed the House that during peak hour 250 MW of power are needed in the State. The pre-construction work of Loktak Downstream amounting to Rs. 63.5389 crores have been completed but the work of Project Construction is yet to start.

## Earthquake tremors in Manipur, Meghalaya, quakes also hit Afghanistan and Tajikistan

Agency  
Imphal/Shillong, Feb 28:

An earthquake of magnitude 3.2 hit the Noney district of Manipur in the early hours of Tuesday, according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS). Earthquake tremors were felt in Meghalaya's Tura district too.

An earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale also occurred in Afghanistan. Another 4.3 quake also hit Tajikistan.

In Manipur, the earthquake struck at around 2.46 am with a depth of 25 km. An earthquake of magnitude 3.7 jolted Meghalaya's Tura district with a depth of 29 km.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 3.2, Occurred on 28-02-2023, 02:46:39 IST, Lat: 24.67 & Long: 93.66, Depth: 25 Km,

Location: Noney, Manipur, India," the NCS said in a tweet.

An earthquake of magnitude 4.1 occurred in Afghanistan on Tuesday, according to the NCS.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.1, Occurred on 28-02-2023, 04:05:22 IST, Lat: 36.38 & Long: 70.94, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Afghanistan," NCS tweeted on Sunday.

The quake struck at a depth of 10 kilometres, at a latitude of 36.38 and a longitude of 70.94.

The NCS said an earthquake of magnitude 4.3 occurred in Tajikistan at 05:31:54 IST on Tuesday.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.3, Occurred on 28-02-2023, 05:31:54 IST, Lat: 38.20 & Long: 73.85, Depth: 10.0 Km, Location: Tajikistan," NCS tweeted on Tuesday.

The quake struck at a depth of 10 kilometres at a latitude of 38.20 and a longitude of 73.85.

An earthquake of 3.0 magnitude struck Indore and parts of Madhya Pradesh on February 19. Tremors were recorded at 12: 54 pm and the epicenter was Dhar, about 151 kms South West of Indore.

Slight tremors were felt in Indore, Dhar, Barwani and Alirajpur, while some tehsils in Jhabua and Khargone also felt the tremors on Sunday afternoon. However, there was no report of injury or loss or damage to property.

Two days back, a 4.3 magnitude earthquake jolted Gujarat's Rajkot. The quake struck at around 3:21 pm with a depth of 10 km. No casualties or damage to property was reported.

## Government urged to declare results for 190 Assistant Professors

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 28:

A group of candidates who had appeared in the recruitment for 190 posts of Assistant Professors on contractual basis for the State Government colleges under the Department of Higher and Technical Education, urged the government to declare recruitment results at the earliest.

The candidates expressed that the State's Education Minister, Th. Basanta Kumar, in the ongoing Manipur Assembly session assured declaration of the results of various posts, including Assistant Professors, at Dhanamanjuri University.

"Unfortunately, the Education Minister did not give any information concerning the recruitment of 190 Assistant Professor posts in State government colleges," lament the candidates.

It is further stated that the applicants have been waiting for the recruitment examination results for almost one and a half years, and the recruitment has marred them from advancing their careers. The examination was conducted in September 2021.

A list of shortlisted candidates was uploaded on the official website of the Directorate of the University and Higher education on August 23, 2021, after the screening

of academic credentials and suitability of the applied candidates strictly in compliance with UGC norms and criteria.

Accordingly, the interview for the posts began on September 3 and was completed on September 21, 2021. The department concerned issued a press release on June 23, 2022, informing that the recruitment process is near completion and has been referred to the personnel department to declare results. At the same time, there are reports of an acute shortage of teaching faculty in the higher education sector.

The new National Education Policy of 2020 also made

it clear that adequate teaching faculty will improve the gross enrolment ratio in the higher education sector, thereby leading to overall socio-economic growth.

In the meantime, recruitment results of 1500 graduate teachers were declared by the Department of Education (S) recently. But, unfortunately, the recruitment process of the graduate teachers took place simultaneously with that of the assistant professors, which is still being kept pending, the statement added. The candidates drew the attention of the minister and the department concerned to declare the recruitment examination results as soon as possible.

## Health Talk programme at Kangpokpi



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 28:

The Community Medicine Department of Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal today organised its ongoing program of Health Talks at Ramgaolung in Kangpokpi District.

Meghachandra, Health Educator of Community Medicine Department, RIMS delivered

the introductory speech of today's Health Talks which was organised on the topic "Substance Abuse" and other intern doctors deliberated on the said topic. Senior Resident Doctor P. Amrita and Dr. K. Sornajit was the program guide for today's health talk programme. Today's edition of the Health Talk programme was organised under the overall supervision of Dr. Brogen

Singh Akoijam, Dean (Academic) RIMS, and HOD of Community Medicine Department, RIMS.

Free Health check-ups and medicines were distributed to all the attendees who took part in the awareness. Blood Sugar, Blood Group and Haemoglobin test were done free of cost for all the attendees of the programme by Lab Technician Y. Gambhirsana Singh.

## Mizoram all set to Host B20 Meetings in the State

### Conference on opportunities for multilateral business partnerships in urban planning, infrastructure, bamboo, startups, skill development, nursing and paramedics

PIB  
Aizawl, Feb 28:

Mizoram is all set to host the second of the four B20 sessions scheduled in the North East tomorrow, which is the official G20 dialogue forum for the global business community. Elaborate arrangements have been made by the State Government to host delegates from different countries.

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga along with Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, MoS, External Affairs Minister and Som Parkash, MoS, Commerce and Industries Minister, Government of India in the presence of Senior Government Officials from the State and Centre will grace the inaugural programme of the B20 sessions.

Addressing media person about the event today at Chief Minister's Office Aizawl, Chief Minister Zoramthanga stated that it is a matter of great pride and privilege for Mizoram to have the opportunity to host the B20 Initiative which is the official G20 dialogue forum for the global business community from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2023. This is the second of the four Business 20 (B20) sessions being organised in the North East.

The B20 programme will bring together several policymakers, thought leaders, business leaders, CEOs and senior executives representing businesses of the G20 and allied countries along with the presence of the representatives of several multilateral organizations, to stimulate enriching discussions and deliberations on the business agenda under B20 India in the region.



The B20 meeting in Mizoram will help commence discussions on the identified priorities and will begin work towards formulating policy recommendations, stated Chief Minister Zoramthanga and said that it would help the State to project it as an important investment destination by showcasing its strength besides giving the delegates a sneak peek into our culture, heritage, festivals and the tourism potential.

The State capital will witness the convergence of a host of overseas delegates from 17 nations representing Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), China, France, Germany, Ghana, Japan, Nepal, Russia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, United States and Zimbabwe in addition to the Indian and local business participants.

Visiting dignitaries includes 48 overseas business delegates and 17 diplomats, Trade and Business delegations and representatives from Bhutan, Bangladesh and Japan will participate at the event.

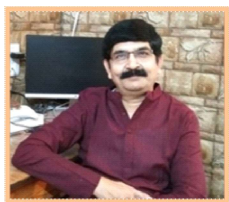
The B20 conference scheduled on March 2, 2023 will focus on Opportunities for Multilateral Business Partnerships in Urban planning, Infrastructure, Bamboo, Startups, Skill Development, Handloom & Handicraft, Nursing and Paramedics.

As part of the programme, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is facilitating Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G)

meetings. Visiting Overseas Business Delegates would get the opportunity to interact with the local industry during the B2B and with the Government in the B2G session for potential investment, collaboration and tie-ups. Over 100 B2B and B2G requests have been generated including request for interaction with Government Departments viz-a-viz Health, Urban Development, Commerce and Industries, Tourism, Sports and Labour employment, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. CII is inviting speakers from all over India to deliberate on the focus sectors at the Conference.

contd. on page 4

## Ahmedabad (Gujarat) a World Heritage City



By: Vinod Chandrasekhar Dixit

Ahmedabad city was founded on 26 February 1411 and announced as the capital on 4 March 1411 by Ahmed Shah I of Gujarat Sultanate as a new capital. UNESCO has declared Ahmedabad (Gujarat) as World Heritage City. Really one feels proud of being Amdavadi. There are many who are not aware about the various heritage places in Ahmedabad. The names of various places Monuments are found only in tourism maps and Websites.

Ahmedabad rose in stature and soon began to be called the "Garden city of Hindustan". It flourished during the steady reign of the Sultans. The merchant class grew in affluence, and peace and stability began to attract a great number of people from surrounding areas. It is now the largest city in Gujarat and the seventh largest city in India. One would be surprised to know that Manek Chowk, named after Maneknath became the marketing complex of the new city, Kalupur, named after Begda's minister Abba Haji Kalu, consists of a mixed population of Jains and Muslims. Usmanpura was a prosperous suburb during the Badshah period, specializing in the trade of ghee and local medicines. The era of the Sultans in Gujarat has often been called the "Golden age of Ahmedabad". Architecture has found its glory in Ahmedabad. Today, the masjid of Siddi Sayed and the design of "Jalis" has become the main advertising logos of the city.

Our heritage is all that has been passed to us by previous generations. Cultural heritage is a legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society — man-made heritage. It is disheartening to note that some people, forgetting that they are doing an irreparable damage to invaluable archaeological masterpieces by inscribe their initials, names, love messages on these national treasures. We must learn to value our inheritance for reasons beyond their mere utility and their functional use. This is because each heritage is unique and exceptional; it is the responsibility of the current generation to preserve it. The conservation and protection of these monuments cannot be neglected any further.

It clearly shows that cities like Ahmedabad have emerged as the prime engines of the Indian economic growth and generators of national wealth. Ahmedabad is the best of India's mega-cities the commercial capital of Gujarat, Ahmedabad has progressed steadily over the years. The reasons for this could be attributed to uninterrupted and stable power supply. No water shortage, wide and maintained roads, friendly & traditional, yet progressive people, good educational and health facilities etc. The most important is the city is a heritage city with people still living in heritage buildings in the old city that has become hosts for some of the most modern management schools.

People of Ahmedabad are known for their cooperative attitude, entrepreneurship and aspiration for values. Graced by rich heritage and culture Ahmedabad offers values to the tradition and diversity. One would have observed that the Amdavadis are very fun loving and has a lot of respect for the traditions and customs of their community. It would be no exaggeration to say that in the whole world there exists no town so grand and beautiful like Ahmedabad.

Ahmedabad after more than 600 years now make its presence on the international map. It is now regarded as a national pilgrimage, a symbol of non-violence and peace. People of Ahmedabad are known for their cooperative attitude, entrepreneurship and aspiration for values. They have a great vision to take the city to dizzy heights with their business acumen and gentle mannerisms. One thing is certain that if the world today recognises Mahatma Gandhi as the apostle of peace, Ahmedabad had a major role in the making of the Mahatma. In the last 600 years, Ahmedabad has seen unpredictable changes and has developed into a mega-city which is at heart of Gujarat state's development. It is nice to see that though the city has changed over the years it has sealed its historical and cultural heritage.

## Unschooling is different from homeschooling



By: Vijay GarG

Unschooling is a broad term that encompasses a range of labels, definitions, and practices unique to each person or family. At its core, it's the opportunity — and often for new unschoolers, the challenge — for children to explore their own interests rather than adhere to the criteria and curriculum predetermined by school boards or other entities. Unlike the traditional homeschool model which often seeks to mimic the classroom or follow a defined curriculum usually with parents acting as teachers, in unschooling, children take the

lead. Adults, sometimes (but not always) parents, typically offer support, assistance, and guidance when needed. **Allowing kids to shape their own education** It can be helpful to think of unschooling not as an educational approach but as the philosophy that learning is a natural process constantly taking place. After working as a teacher in a conventional setting for several years, Holt realized the motivating factor for many of his students wasn't a love of learning but a fear of failure and criticism. He noted a marked difference between the natural creativity in preschool-age children and the lack of excitement and curiosity in elementary school students and beyond. Over his lifetime, his writings on unschooling inspired many to reexamine the state of America's public schools and our rigid expectations of children.

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## Global Science for Global Wellbeing & National Science Day (NSD) - 2023

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh

Science brings about solutions for everyday problems and provides answers to the greatest mysteries of the universe. Science is thus one of the most important channels of knowledge. It has a specific role, yet has various functions, for our society's benefit, i.e. improving knowledge and education, and enhancing the quality of life. A country can evolve thanks to scientists who find new approaches to problems and prove new scientific laws. In this regard, **National Science Day (NSD)** is observed on 28<sup>th</sup> February each year in India, to honour the revered physicist Dr Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman's contributions.

From this special day's origins to how to celebrate it, here's everything you need to know about National Science Day. National Science Day commemorates the discovery of the Raman Effect by Dr C.V. Raman, for which he won the Nobel Prize in Physics. Every year, on this particular day, the Government of India felicitates scientists from various fields for their valuable contribution to science. National Science Day's main objective is to increase awareness among people about the importance of science and technology in their lives. Dr C.V. Raman officially declared on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1928 that he had invented the Raman Effect. He was then awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930 for his findings. The National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) put forward a proposal for the National Science Day to be celebrated on 28<sup>th</sup> February every year to pay tribute to this achievement. Following this, the Government of India accepted the proposal, and the first-ever National Science Day was celebrated on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1987.

The Raman Effect states that when a light wave emerges out of a liquid, a portion of this light wave is distributed in a direction that's different from the direction of the incoming light wave. Most of this scattered light is of an unchanged wavelength. This research by Dr C.V. Raman thus explains certain phenomena like why seawater looks blue in colour. The Raman

Effect is all about the flexible distribution of photon particles. In fact it is an inelastic collision of a photon with molecules, which means that there is an exchange of energy and a change in light direction. This effect was named **Raman scattering or Raman Effect**. This phenomenon is also known as "**Raman Spectroscopy**", which is used by chemists and physicists to analyze materials.

National Science Day's primary objective is to ignite an interest in science, inspire people, especially students, to perform new experiments, and make them aware of the latest developments in science and technology. Several scientific activities and programs are organised on this day. Every year, National Science Day is celebrated with a concept or theme that focuses on the importance of science, and the Department of Science and Technology selects the theme. This year's theme is "**Global Science for Global Wellbeing**". The motive of the year's theme is to encourage talented Indian minds to come out from silos working culture and take part in theme-based projects. Today, National Science Day gives people an opportunity to learn more about how science affects their everyday lives and contributes to societal development. Many scientific centers and institutions organize scientific debates, competitions, lectures, and public speaking events to mark the occasion.

Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman was born on November 7, 1888 in the city of Trichinopoly, Madras Presidency, British India. Today the city is known as Tiruchirappalli and sits in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Raman's father was Chandrasekaran Ramanathan Iyer, a teacher of mathematics and physics. His mother was Parvathi Ammal, who was taught to read and write by her husband. Lokasundari Ammal was his spouse and Vikram Sarabhai, Venkataraman Radhakrishna and Chandrasekhara Raman were his children. He was the uncle of Subramanyam Chandrasekhar who won 1983 Nobel Prize for Physics. At the time of Raman's birth, the family lived

on a low income. Raman was the second of eight children. Raman's families were Brahmins, the Hindu caste of priests and scholars. His father, however, paid little attention to religious matters: Raman grew up to share his father's casual attitude to religion, but he did observe some Hindu rituals culturally and respected traditions such as vegetarianism. When Raman was four years old his father got a better job, becoming a college lecturer, and the family moved to Waltair (now Visakhapatnam). From a very young age Raman was interested in science, reading the books his father had used as a student. As he grew older, he started borrowing mathematics and physics books from his father's college library. Entering his teenage years, he began learning from books his father had bought when he had intended taking a master's degree in physics.

Chandrasekhara aka CV Raman was exceptional in studies, he cleared his matriculation exam at the early age of 11. Two years later he got passed through the intermediate-level exam and later joined the Presidency College in 1902. In the year 1904, Raman got his bachelor's degree. He was the first rank holder and a gold medalist in Physics. After three years, he completed his Master's Degree as well. He was also selected for the government service job in the Finance Department of Colonial government which he later quit after he got his hands on the position as the Palit Professor of Physics at the University of Calcutta in the year 1917. While carrying out experiments on the scattering of light which later ended up in discovering the Raman Effect in the year 1928. Sir CV Raman won the Knight Bachelor award a year later discovering the scattering of light and became a Fellow of the Royal Society. In the year 1932, Raman and Suri Bhagavantam discovered the quantum photon spin which further confirmed the light's quantum nature. Raman was also interested in Music so became the first person to study the harmonic nature of mridangam and tabla. CV Raman was honoured and appointed as the first Indian direc-

tor of Indian Institute of Science (IIS) in 1933. After India got independence in 1947, Raman became the first National Professor of the Country. This day commemorates the achievements and efforts that have brought science to its current state, as well as highlights its importance in our daily lives. National Science Day is observed as an opportunity to discuss important issues in science. It emphasizes how important it is to be informed on scientific issues and debates that affect our daily lives. It is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways that science advances human progress, and it's important for people of all ages to be aware of how scientific discoveries can improve our lives. It is celebrated for discussing all the issues and implementing new technologies for the development of science in India. It gives an opportunity to scientific-minded citizens, encourages people as well as popularizes science and technology. CV Raman died on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1970 at Bangalore.

The Department of Science and Technology in India presented the National Award for Science and Communication to five institutions on February 28, 2009. These awards are presented to recognize the efforts of government and non-government bodies, as well as individuals who make science popular in the country. In 2009, the **Vikram Sarabhai Community Science Center** was awarded the highest award for its contribution to science-related learning material and training programs that promote science education. This event celebrates Sir CV Raman's outstanding contributions to research and discovery, inspiring future generations. To not stop after making one breakthrough in any area, but to continue seeking the nation's credit in every possible way. We celebrate National Science Day to recognize science's greatness, intending to eliminate taboos and accept that environment is mostly about science—as scientific research is mostly about environmental factors, no matter what shape they take on.

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## Maturity to Debate



By: Fr Paul Lelen Haokip

form of airing one's convictions and a civilised form of disagreement. Debate offers a space to receive input from others and see reality from a 360-degree perspective.

### Power Politics

Power politics has been the prime cause of world conflicts disturbing local-global peace and the livelihood of the poor. Power is conferred upon someone by people or institutions. Power is never a 'forever' entity. Power itself is an intangible thing but the results of its execution can be beneficial or detrimental. It is a passing thing. Religious or political powers are but for the good of society, thereby bringing peace and well-being. Power is for a purpose, not for show or misuse. If we look at any society, we notice that traditional or ethnic social administrations preceded the present sophisticated political powers that be. A mature society can debate about 'power politics' — its fruitful use and misuse because the power to rule itself is conferred by the people, especially in a democratic society. The power of legislature, executive and judiciary are three powerful engines of a democratic society. But if one or two over-

power the other(s), we will have autocratic designs and processes in the garb of democratic governance. The 'Rule of Law' ensures equality and equity for the powerful and the not-so-powerful. The absence of it leads to arbitrary decisions and executions, further leading to rampant corruption in every possible field. Power corruption is also a form of corruption creating a trust deficit between individuals and institutions, between communities, between academia, and the scientific community.

### Agree to Disagree

It is a sign of insecurity and low-grade learning when a person or institution cannot tolerate voices that differ from theirs. Truly, it will be incredibly dull if all of us think and act in the same way. Differences in thinking, execution and life principles bring variety and expand our horizons for the better. If we accept the premise that 'no one is perfect on this earth', then there is a room that all that we do is not perfect. If someone offers a better idea (through suggestions or constructive evaluations), we should be doubly happy to accept it. In fact, we should thank those who suggest better ways of think-

ing and doing things. But, if a person (or institution, society, group, or government) thinks that everything he or she does is the best and nothing can be better, that thinking is a fallacy. A fallacy is a mistaken belief based on unsound arguments. It is a fallacy to believe that one is foolproof. If one has a mentality of being foolproof, it should be open for a mature debate to test if that belief can stand the test of time.

We live in a world where what the majority holds is taken as truth despite knowing that the truth is something else. We are swept away by politics, ethnicism, regionalism, and survivalism. Until we can maturely debate existing policies, principles, social issues, and religious concerns to arrive at a responsible situation, the truth will be compromised in multiple ways. As long as 'money power' and 'other fleeting powers that be' rule society, it is unlikely that we will be mature enough to debate.

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# Akhil Gogoi kingpin of Maoist activities in Assam, NIA tells Supreme Court

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 28:

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has claimed that the Rajar Dal chief is a kingpin of Maoist activities in Assam.

The NIA told the Supreme Court on Monday that bail cannot be granted to MLA Gogoi as he is a kingpin of Maoist activities in the state.

MLA Akhil Gogoi, who was vocal against the BJP Government during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) agitation in Assam in December 2019, moved the top court against a February 9 order of the Gauhati High Court allowing an NIA court to proceed with the framing of charges in one of the two cases against him.

A bench of Justices V Ramasubramanian and Pankaj Mishra, which extended the protection from arrest to Gogoi till March 3, said it would hear the matter on Friday.

As the hearing commenced, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing in the court on behalf of the NIA, referred to the chargesheet filed by the agency and said Gogoi is a kingpin of Maoist activities in Assam.

"I am ready to show the seriousness of the offence. He is associated with the CPI(Maoist). He sent cadres to train in Maoist camps and conspired and orchestrated widespread blockade in Assam, paralysing government machinery, and provoked a mob to cause damage to public property," Mehta said, adding that 64 FIRs have been filed against the legislator.



Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for Gogoi, argued that there is an overarching ground of political vendetta.

"Gogoi is a political leader and an elected representative of people. He is merely opposed to a particular political dispensation, that is why they want to put him in jail," Ahmadi said.

The bench said it would take up the matter on Friday.

Earlier, the high court had allowed the NIA to seek framing of charges in the special court against Gogoi and three of his associates in connection with the anti-CAA protests and their suspected Maoist links.

The high court's order had come on an appeal filed by the premier investigation agency challenging the order of the NIA court that gave a clean chit to the four.

A division bench of the high court, comprising Justices Suman Shyam and Malasri Nandi, had asked the agency

to go ahead with the framing of charges after reopening the case.

"The high court has accepted the NIA's plea to reopen the case and frame charges against the four persons. The case will be heard again in the special NIA court," Gogoi's counsel Santanu Borthakur had said.

Akhil Gogoi has approached the top court against the order.

The other three accused are Dhaijya Konwar, Bittu Sonowal and Manash Konwar, all of whom got bail in one of the NIA cases and were released from prison.

Gogoi was the only one whose bail plea was rejected by the court and he was released after spending 567 days in jail once Special NIA Judge Pranjal Das cleared him, along with the three others, of all charges.

The Assam legislator and the three other accused were asked to appear before the special NIA court on February 23.

The NIA is investigating two cases against Gogoi related to the anti-CAA protests.

In one of those, the NIA court granted him bail, which was upheld by the high court in April 2021 after the probe agency challenged it.

The RTI activist continued to be in judicial custody as he was denied bail in the second case and was being investigated by the NIA.

On July 1, 2021, the NIA court released Gogoi and his three associates in the anti-CAA protest case and observed that there was nothing to indicate that the "talk of blockade" threatened the country's economic security or was "a terrorist act".

The NIA then moved the Gauhati High Court with an appeal to allow it to frame charges under various sections, including the provision dealing with sedition, of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

# Agnipath Scheme in National Interest, Court Won't Interfere with Policy Decisions: Delhi HC

Agency  
New Delhi, Feb 28:

The Centre's Agnipath scheme for recruitment into the armed forces was formulated in the national interest, with a laudable objective of maintaining national security, the Delhi High Court said on Monday while making it clear that it will not interfere with policy decisions.

The court dismissed a batch of petitions assailing the validity of the scheme while terming it a "well-thought" policy decision of the Centre.

Besides the pleas challenging the Agnipath scheme, the court also rejected a bunch of petitions relating to the recruitment process in the armed forces under certain previous advertisements while clarifying that such candidates do not have a right to seek recruitment.

Dismissing the pleas relating to the previous advertisements, the bench said the Agnipath scheme is in "public interest" and the aspirants cannot claim any right to seek recruitment on account of their participation in the processes initiated under notifications issued prior to the introduction of the new policy.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad said it does not find the scheme to be "arbitrary, capricious or devoid of reason" and policy decisions with regard to national security are taken after a careful consideration of the country's socio-political scenario, along with the socio-political scenario of the neighbouring countries.

It said policy decisions with wide-ranging implications on the nation's health and security should be decided by bodies best suited to do so and it appears that the government has been considering for long the possibility of creating armed forces that consist of more youthful, agile and physically adept individuals.

Dealing with 23 petitions, the bench said the government's objective is nei-

ther discriminatory nor mala fide or arbitrary, and the court finds no reason to interfere with it.

The Agnipath scheme, unveiled on June 14 last year, lays out the rules for recruitment of youngsters into the armed forces.

According to the rules, those aged between 17-and-a-half and 21 years are eligible to apply and they would be inducted for a four-year tenure. The scheme allows 25 per cent of them to be granted regular service subsequently. After the scheme was unveiled, protests against it erupted in several states.

Subsequently, the government extended the upper age limit to 23 years for recruitment under the scheme in 2022.

"We have extensively gone through the Agnipath scheme and can conclusively state that this scheme was made in national interest to ensure that the armed forces are better equipped," the bench said.

Regarding the petitions on the previous advertisements for recruitment, the bench observed that the court cannot bind the government to its earlier policy decision and a recruitment process can be changed midway if public interest is involved.

The objective of the scheme is to reduce the average age of the forces to make those "leaner, agile and will be greatly beneficial for border security" and such objectives cannot be said to be arbitrary, whimsical or mala fide, it said.

"It has also been stated that the impugned scheme, by reducing the average age of soldiers, will bring our armed forces at par with other nations, as the average age of armed forces across the world is 26 years. The stated objective of the impugned scheme is to have a blend of young jawans, sailors or airmen between the age of 18-25 years as agniveers, supervised by an experienced regular cadre having the age of 26 years. To achieve this goal, the State has also been consis-

tently decreasing the age bracket of officers," the court said in its 55-page verdict.

It said the scope for judicial interference is further constrained when a scheme or policy decision pertains to national security, adding that the present issue — recruitment of soldiers into the armed forces — most definitely qualifies as one falling under the ambit of "national security".

"It is exceedingly clear that this court does not interfere with policy decisions pertaining to national security in normal course, as this court is not best placed to take such decisions," the bench said.

It said rather than focusing on the alleged "political motives" behind the scheme, it is necessary to focus on the benefits offered by it.

It noted that the "agniveers" who are not recruited into the regular Army would be given skill certificates that will enable them to get employment in the private sector.

"Considering the fact that the laudable objective of maintaining national security is at the heart of the impugned scheme, this court does not find it arbitrary, capricious or devoid of reason," the bench said.

"The material on record also discloses that the impugned scheme will not only provide an opportunity to youth to serve the country but will also result in the armed forces having the most capable individuals, who will be rewarded with a decent financial package and a bright future," it said.

Several petitioners, who sought recruitment under the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and a 2019 notification for the Indian Army and Air Force respectively, had approached the high court with a grievance that the recruitment processes for several posts were halted at the "flag end" and subsequently, cancelled on account of the introduction of the Agnipath scheme, which effectively nullified their recruitment.

# Assam Rifles organises Awareness Programme on Agniveer Rally

IT News  
Imphal, Feb 28:

It has always been an endeavor of security forces to help the local youths from remote areas to fulfill their ambitions to join the defence forces. In view of the upcoming Agniveer rally for aspirant

youth of Manipur, Churachandpur Battalion of HQ IGAR (South) organised awareness for local youth of Hengkot and neighbouring villages yesterday.

Churachandpur battalion took this opportunity as an initiative to gathered local youths from Vill Hengkot and contigu-

ous area for the awareness programme. The basic aim of this event was to guide on career prospects, registration, documentation and recruitment procedure to join Indian Army through Agniveer scheme 2023. Battalion assured all local youths for all kind of assistance including free registration,

theoretical classes, training of computer skills, physical training and communication skills. Pamphlets were also distributed.

The initiative was well received by the locals who appreciated the efforts of Churachandpur battalion in reinforcing their motto of being the "Sentinels of North East".

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# Unschooling is different from....

Today, unschooling is practiced by people across the world for all sorts of reasons, even within their own families. For us, it's an opportunity to release expectations and observe what learning looks like naturally for our youngest son, age 7. For our middle child, age 11, the driver is independence: the ability to choose which projects to pursue, books to read, and even languages to study. And for our eldest, 15, who was attending traditional school before the pandemic, our decision to unschool this coming fall will allow him space to dive deep into the subjects he's most passionate about.

Our days typically look like a mix of scheduled activities, some guidance or instructional assistance if needed, and a dedicated amount of time for exploration or personal projects. We have some expectations, such as using technology to support a project or interest rather

than endless scrolling, or setting goals that we regularly check-in on, agreed upon together as a family. Not all unschoolers do this, but this is what works for us. A tool we picked up from our unschool community is the use of contracts to outline those expectations and requests. We use them for everything from resolving conflicts to requests to use certain tools and resources (this can help with ensuring healthy use of the internet).

There's daily reading, their pick — for one that's an audiobook, another a comic. They may have a virtual class in the morning, something they may request on their own or something we noticed they were naturally drawn to. They each have projects or interests they're actively pursuing, so in the afternoon they could be doing that on their own or with our assistance. For example, our eldest is currently on scene four of his

animated film, so you'd find him working on that, while our youngest is eager to read "bigger books" like his brothers, so more structured reading assistance could be happening then. Before the pandemic, for two days a week they would attend Natural Creativity, a self-directed learning center featured in the documentary Unschooled, where facilitators would help support, guide, and assist them in their endeavors (program costs are fairly reasonable, and there are financial aid options).

**Unschooling as a working parent can afford more freedom**

For working parents, any kind of homeschooling isn't easy, but unschooling gives a different sort of freedom. Think about it this way: With a defined curriculum, your role is teacher. With self-directed learning, that shifts to a more supportive role, or as we've liked to view it, a sort of partnership. Children take the lead,

explore subjects that interest them, play, and read; you support with assistance, help connect ideas, or introduce new material that builds on those topics.

On the days where more support, structure, or scheduled interactions are needed, especially for younger children who may need more assistance, there are platforms like Outschool, which offers countless live online classes with teachers and other students. A current favorite is Storybook STEM class, an hour each day that occupies a busy first-grader with a story and a project in science, technology, engineering, or math. Self-directed centers like Natural Creativity continue to offer virtual community and weekly afternoon activities. There are also co-ops where parents rotate during the week to lead a lesson or activity for a group of children — virtually or socially distanced, of course.

The concept of

unschooling can be a lot to digest, especially in comparison to what we've come to expect from traditional school. But remember, school is designed for efficiency, to educate large groups of students. Homeschool is a different strategy altogether.

If you're considering homeschooling in general, it's important to read your state's laws so you're clear on what's expected of you. And while reporting requirements may vary from district to district, unschooling is a perfectly acceptable homeschool method in all 50 states. Even in the most strict states, there aren't benchmarks students are required to reach. You can unschool and make the transition back to traditional school if your child's needs and preferences change.

Meanwhile, for older unschoolers interested in college, it's a great practice to get in touch with the admissions office of their desired schools

to find out what their requirements for homeschooled students are. You might be surprised to learn that in lieu of traditional transcripts and test scores, colleges welcome the creative learning experiences from unschoolers and homeschooled of all backgrounds.

Just like traditional school, college is one of many paths for unschoolers. In fact, in the absence of the high stress and rigid structure of high school, many unschoolers are quite successful in college. Not only have they had ample practice in taking the lead in their education, they're also used to the freedoms in college that students in traditional schools aren't necessarily familiar with. While unschoolers frequently do go on to college and grad school, they also pursue vocational schools and other special skills. It's common for high school-aged unschoolers to explore internships that align with their in-

terests, start businesses, or pursue large-scale creative projects that assist them as they navigate life beyond school.

Unschoolers often find careers they enjoy and that support them. I'm not saying unschooling is right for every child, and I understand the hesitation that comes with such unstructured learning for your kids. As for heading back to school next year, I would simply encourage all parents to remember that even though it might be different from what we are used to, learning is still happening all around us. Uncertainty is the theme for everyone right now. But as we're gathering research, looking over the data, and waiting to hear some sort of plan, perhaps you could consider a different approach to manage it. Take the year into your own hands, let your children take the lead, and watch what happens when you learn without school.



# Messi and Putellas voted best players at FIFA awards again

Agency  
Paris, Feb 28:

World Cup champion Lionel Messi edged Kylian Mbappé again, this time to take FIFA's best men's player award on Monday.

The best women's player was Spain's Alexia Putellas for a second straight year.

After steering Argentina to World Cup glory in an epic final against Mbappé's France last year in Qatar, Messi won the best player vote against Mbappé and Karim Benzema and secured the FIFA prize for the seventh time in 14 years. He won the World Cup on his record-equaling fifth attempt.

"It was a crazy year for me," Messi said. "I could fulfil my (World Cup) dream after fighting for it for so long. And in the end, it happened, and it was the most beautiful thing of my career. It's the dream of every player, but very few can achieve it, so I'm thankful to God for being able to do it."

The three players made the final panel of national team captains and coaches, selected journalists in each of FIFA's 211 member countries, plus fans online.

The 35-year-old Messi also beat Mbappé — who was seeking his first best player award from FIFA — to the Golden Ball trophy awarded by FIFA for the World Cup's best player. Mbappé earned the Golden Boot as the top scorer.

In the FIFA Awards vote, Messi had 52 points, Mbappé 44, and Benzema 34.



Mbappé, 11 years younger than Messi at 24 and considered Messi's heir apparent on the world stage, made the three-man shortlist for the first time. He was fourth in voting for the 2018 award, the year he led France to the World Cup title.

Real Madrid star Benzema won the more prestigious Ballon d'Or in October ahead of the World Cup. The French forward missed the tournament because of an injury. Messi was not on the long list of Ballon d'Or candidates announced in August.

Robert Lewandowski won the FIFA award the last two years, and Cristiano Ronaldo was left off the 14-player shortlist for the award this year for the first time.

Messi broke a record he shared with Ronaldo by making the men's world best XI for the 16th time. The team included Belgium's Thibaut Courtois, Morocco's Achraf Hakimi, Portugal's João Cancelo, Dutchman Virgil van Dijk, Belgium's Kevin de Bruyne, Croatia's Luka Modric,

Brazil's Casemiro, Norway's Erling Haaland and France's Mbappé and Benzema.

Messi voted for former Barcelona teammate Neymar as his choice for best player. Only Brazil captain Thiago Silva also voted on Neymar.

Russia's coach and captain were not banned from voting in the award.

Putellas won her award from Alex Morgan of the United States and Beth Mead, who led England to the European Championship title in 2022. Barcelona playmaker Putellas made the top three again despite being injured days before the Euro and missing the tournament. She scored 34 goals across all competitions last season.

Mead was the joint top scorer at the Euro and was named the tournament's best player. She sustained a serious knee injury in November while playing for Arsenal and could miss the Women's World Cup in July in Australia and New Zealand.

Morgan, who was second in the 2019 vote to teammate

Megan Rapinoe, was player of the tournament when the U.S. won the CONCACAF W Championship last year. She was also the joint top scorer.

Earlier, Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni was voted FIFA men's coach of the year after leading his team to the World Cup title in December. The women's coach award went to Sarina Wiegman, who led England to the title at the Women's European Championship.

Scaloni took over Argentina at the end of 2018 on an interim basis and was widely criticized for lacking experience as he had never coached a professional team. Earlier Monday, his contract as the national team coach was extended to the end of the 2026 World Cup. The other coaches on the shortlist were Real Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti and Manchester City's Pep Guardiola.

The women's goalkeeper award was given to Euro winner Mary Earps of England, and the best men's goalkeeper was Argentina's World Cup winner Emiliano Martínez.

The event in Paris was marked by tributes to Pelé, who died late last year at age 82 following a battle with colon cancer. Pelé's wife, Marcia Aoki, received a trophy honouring the soccer great from the hands of former Brazil striker Ronaldo.

"I have three words to say to God, who gave us Edson; to Edson, who gave us Pelé; and to the world, who received them so well: Grateful, grateful and grateful," she said.

# AR inaugurates memorial statue of Major Bob Khathing



IT News  
Imphal, Feb 28:

Somsai Battalion under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) inaugurated the memorial statue of Late Major Bob Khathing and organised the closing ceremony of his 111th Birth Anniversary Tournament yesterday at Ukhrul district.

The unveiling of the memorial statue was carried out by John SR Khathing, son of Late Major Bob Khathing and Headman, Hunphun village authority in the presence of the Raleng clan. 9th Edition of Late Major

Bob Khathing Tournament culminated with the Men's football final and the trophy was lifted by HPFA in a thrilling neck to neck match which finished with a spectacular penalty shootout. Chief guest of the closing ceremony, John SR Khathing addressed the huge gathering post culmination of the match and the closing remarks were given by Commander 10 Sector Assam Rifles, congratulating and appreciating all associated, especially the spirited participants. This was followed by the prize distribution ceremony for the winners

and runner-ups of the Women's Volleyball tournament, Baby League Tournament and Men's Football Tournament.

The tournament was organised by Assam Rifles in association with Ukhrul District Sports Association (UDSA) from 20-27 February. The celebration was witnessed by youth, women, students, teachers and people from all walks of life. The people of Ukhrul extended their gratitude to Assam Rifles for hosting the hugely successful tournament and offering tribute to Late Major Bob Khathing.

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## Mizoram all set to Host B20.....

Chief Minister Zoramthanga further said during the press briefing that taking advantage of the presence of a large contingent of international delegates, the State Government is making elaborate arrangements not only to showcase investment and partnership opportunities in the State but also provide a unique experience for visiting delegates with an exposure to

the State's culture, cuisine, art, festivities, and scenic beauty.

The delegates will also participate the Chapchar-Kut festival which is the main festival of Mizoram at the Assam Rifles Ground on the March 3, 2023. Elaborate preparations have been made for their participation, stay and hospitality showcasing the potential of the State for inviting investments during the B20 Meeting.

The Chief Minister also shared his appreciation and gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for exploring the opportunity presented by India's G20 Presidency in allowing the State of Mizoram to host this auspicious and monumental B-20 meeting which is a landmark moment in the history of the State.

# Yaipha Thourang Crafts Bazar

At MMRC & Unity Park, Khangbaok, Thoubal District, Manipur

DATE : 24th Feb., to 5th March 2023

TIME : 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



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