

School, Jowai. Adventist Higher Secondary School. Khlheityrshi in the senior category will represent the district at State level Children's Science Congress to be held on November 14 and 15 at Shillong College.

State Council of Science, Technology and Environment programme officer Dayamon Diengdoh motivated the students to actively participate and take the most out of the event to develop their knowledge and skills.

Eminent professionals C P Syiem (Rtd Research Officer S&T Cell Planning department) and Rahul Chatterjee, core committee member, SCSTE & teacher of Jail Road boys Higher Secondary School, Shillong, were evaluators for the competition.

► Turn from p1

NEHU teachers and non-teaching staff...

He said the JAC in its extended meeting discussed issues like gross violation of NEHU Act, 1973 on too many occasions and correlated accumulated systematic violations of statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations by throwing into winds the rule-based framework within which NEHU is required to function.

"The primary motive of being autocratic, arrogant and abrasive on the part of the vice-chancellor lies in not adhering to collective wisdom of elected statutory bodies only to serve his ego by flouting all norms in the university. Indeed six years of previous incumbent Prof SK Srivastava's misrule represented the height of such foul acts. The present regime of Prof PS Shukla just started flouting and in no time, as all un-statutory activities lead, it resulted into serious violations in administrative and academic affairs of the

university."

"Keeping this in mind, the JAC listed issues like statutory violations, infringement of the University authority like the Academic Council, etc., non-adherence to democratic and well-established procedures of the University, non-functioning of university facilities such as health centre, labs, etc., delay in appointment in statutory positions-registrar and finance officer and other officials like University engineer and director-college development council," he said.

The chairman said the JAC also raised the urgent demand of filling up of all vacant non-teaching positions so that current stalemate in university's functioning is removed; present approach of tolerance to corruption and corrupt officials from last regime and present regime must be changed.

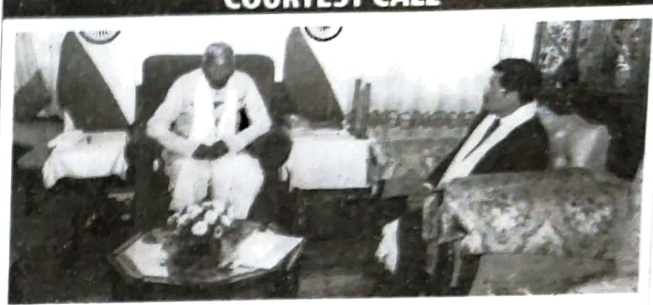
The home ministry has granted approval to the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra to receive contributions from foreign sources for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, its general secretary Champat Rai said on Wednesday.

Such contributions can be sent to a designated bank account of the trust in the SBI's main branch located in Delhi, he said. The Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra has been approved by the FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs,

voluntary contributions under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010," he said in a post on X.

In a media statement issued separately, he said, "The FCRA section of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Government of India, has registered the trust 'Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra' to accept the voluntary contribution from the foreign sources."

"Kindly note that such contributions can be sent to only designated bank account ...of the state Bank of India, Main Branch, situated at 11 Sansad Marg, New Delhi," he said.



Chief Minister, Conrad K Sangma on Wednesday paid a courtesy call to Meghalaya Governor, Phagu Chauhan at Raj Bhavan, Shillong.

AIADMK to extensively campaign on snapping ties with BJP

CHENNAI

Even as the BJP national leadership is frantically trying for a rapprochement with the AIADMK leadership in Tamil Nadu, the latter has unequivocally informed its cadres and district-level leaders that the alliance with the BJP is broken forever and that the party will not have any truck with the saffron outfit.

In a recent meeting with the district incharges of the AIADMK at Chennai during the party's foundation day celebrations, former Chief Minister and AIADMK General Secretary, Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) informed the party leaders that the first agenda should be to communicate at the grass-roots level that the alliance with the BJP is gone forever. According to sources in the AIADMK, he categorically informed the

PALANISWAMI categorically informed districts incharges that the party was in the process of forging new political alliances

districts incharges that there was no looking back and that the party was in the process of forging new political alliances and combinations in Tamil Nadu. EPS also told the party district incharges to communicate with him directly if the district office-bearers were creating any hindrance.

Sources in the AIADMK told IANS that EPS called upon the district incharges to make sure that the party wins all the 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone seat in Puducherry.

It may year ago the AIADMK snapped ties with the BJP. Tamil Nadu former made tracks and late Annadurai late AIADMK Chief Minister. The BJP is the bad the mu Nadu, w after the snapped party. The ship had Assam C Biswa S with the for a tru in the Drav sever all



Wounded Palestinians sit in al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City, central Gaza Strip, after arriving from al-Ahli hospital following an explosion there. The Hamas-run Health Ministry says an Israeli airstrike caused the explosion that killed hundreds at al-Ahli, but the Israeli military says it was a misfired Palestinian rocket. Photo PTI

Norms for street hawkers soon

Draft guidelines cleared by Cabinet

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: The State cabinet today approved the draft of the Meghalaya Street Vendors Scheme 2023 which will regulate street hawking and also identify vending zones in Shillong city.

The salient features of this scheme, broadly, speak of town vending committees and who will be eligible to be identified as legal hawkers, cabinet minister Paul Lyngdoh told media persons.

According to him, a set of criteria has been laid down for being identified as a street vendor and include that the person has to possess a voting card issued by the Election Commission of India and a certificate to prove that he has resided for at least three years in Meghalaya.

Further, the street vendor should have been vending in a particular spot for a minimum of six months. He must possess a valid trade license in areas that are outside of the three normal areas under the control of the Shillong Municipal Board.

Our next step is to immediately take up an inventory of the street vendors and process the applications of these vendors based on the broad framework. We will also be taking up this special planning in order to decide which areas are vending and which areas are no-vending zones and the government would also strive to provide dedicated vending zones and market spaces to the street vendors," Lyngdoh said.

He also said that the State government is expecting that the inventory process will take two months time followed by the registration process.

"Following this we will decide in which areas will be vending zones and which areas will be no-vending zones," Lyngdoh added.

Asked which areas in Shillong will most likely be these vending zones, Lyngdoh said, "The identification of areas will be based on certain criteria. For instance we want to make sure that these areas will not impede the movement of traffic, movement of pedestrians and will not cause law and order issues. Those are factors that will be taken into account," he said.

Contd on P3

Footpaths completely taken over by hawkers: HC

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: The Meghalaya High Court has expressed its concern over the problem caused to pedestrians and vehicular traffic in Shillong by hawkers and street vendors.

Indeed, in many areas pavements have been completely taken over by hawkers and vendors, forcing pedestrians to spill on the streets which are already far too narrow to accommodate smooth vehicular movement. This malaise can be seen from the prime Laitumkhrah area in Shillong, the division bench of Chief Justice Sanjay Banerjee and Justice Wanlura Dhengoh said today while hearing a PIL on traffic congestion in the city.

During today's hearing, the State government filed its report on its plans to deal with traffic congestion.

"Despite the grandiose plans earlier and the details indicated in the report that runs into five pages, the situation on the ground is quite alarming with very little improvement since the matter was instituted," the High Court said.

The High Court also asked the State government to look at other "out-of-the-box solutions" to ease the traffic congestion in the city. The next hearing on the matter will be held on November 14.

Govt bails out MeECL, to pay Rs 565 cr pending dues to NTPC

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: The State government has come to the aid of the cash-strapped Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited (MeECL) by deciding to pay Rs 565 crore pending power dues to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in 20 instalments.

The decision proposed by the Power Department was approved by the State cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma today.

Briefing media persons, Power Minister Abu Taher Mondal said the agreement signed in 2007 to purchase electricity from the NTPC has put the MeECL in a tight spot and in great debt.

Mondal also said that from Rs 488 crore, the MeECL has paid the NTPC Rs 244 crore from Atmanirbhav loan but now the amount to be paid to the NTPC has increased to Rs 664 crore.

"This amount will continue to go up and up and thereby put us into a financial crisis also. So the cabinet has been kind enough to agree to this proposal of the Power Department," he said.

Mondal informed that the dues of Rs 488 crore have accumulated for quite a long time but through a loan the MeECL was able to pay Rs 244 crore to the NTPC. In the meantime, the remaining Rs 244 crore with all the fixed charges, late payment charges, including penalties, the dues skyrocketed to Rs 665 crore, he said adding that if this dues continues now it will touch Rs 1000 crore and become a big burden to the MeECL and the State government.

"NTPC was charging quite high fixed charges. We had approached them for reduction in interest and fixed charges and all these things and ultimately it did not materialise. After that we have even moved to the court of law but then this agreement was executed in letter and spirit even the court has not given a favourable verdict in our favour," Mondal said.

"Now after much negotiation and meetings with the NTPC they have agreed that we can pay them Rs 565 crore in 20 instalments instead of Rs 665 crore and we got some relief here," he added.

Stating that the State government would pay the dues of Rs 565 crore to NTPC, Mondal however said that the government is still negotiating so that the instalments are increased to 30 or more so that the burden is further reduced.



NEHU lodges FIR in Naga student ragging case

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: Almost a week after the alleged ragging case of a first-semester student at the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Tura hostel surfaced, the university has filed an FIR at Tura police station on October 14.

The FIR was lodged by NEHU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Prabha Shankar Shukla at Tura police station.

The Naga Students Union, Shillong said this fulfils the conditions put forth in its charter of demands.

While no headway has been made so far in the case, the NEHU's fact-finding finding headed by Prof Luty Zehol had recently met with representatives of NSU, Angami Elders' Forum, the NEHU Students Union, and the Naga students of the university.

During the meeting, the leaders had asked the university to hand over three documents to the family of the student victim, that includes, a verbatim copy of the FIR, an authentic copy of the report compiled by fact-finding committee and a formal endorsed missive from the Vice-Chancellor assuring that NEHU is resolutely committed to taking appropriate measures, in strict compliance with the UGC Anti-Ragging Laws, regardless of whether the police investigation will garner results.

The university assured

Contd on P3

JAC formed to 'save NEHU from VC's irregular acts'

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: Two aggrieved groups have decided to make common cause and form a joint action committee (JAC) to save North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) from the "irregular acts of Vice-Chancellor Prof PS Shukla.

The JAC comprises the NEHU Teachers' Association (NEHTA) and NEHU Non-Teaching Staff Association (NEHNSA), it was announced in a press release today.

The two groups expect

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Every day is holy, not just Sunday: Paul

Minister defends Cherry Blossom Festival schedule

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: The argument that the Cherry Blossom Festival should not be held on a Sunday due to religious reasons is not worth commenting on, according to Tourism Minister Paul Lyngdoh.

The minister was asked by reporters today to respond to an NGO's demand that next month's Cherry Blossom Festival should not be held on Christians' day of rest. The festival is scheduled to end on November 3.

Lyngdoh said that every day is holy and not just Sunday. "I don't think it is worth commenting on this because every day is holy and precious. There is no particular day in a week that is holy and the rest of the week unholy."

STIEH, the NGO in question, had recently petitioned Lyngdoh over the festival's last day, saying that Sundays are a sacred and holy day according to the majority Christian population of Meghalaya.

"Sunday is a day reserved for professing our faith and devotion to God and conducting a festival which pays tribute to a tree is an insult to our faith and belief and also to God Himself," STIEH said.

HC relief to retired employee denied pension, gratuity by Govt

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: In a relief to a retired government employee from Sohra whose pension and the gratuity were withheld since 2014, the Meghalaya High Court has today directed the State government to pay simple interest at the rate of 7.25 per cent per annum on the amount of gratuity and arrears of pension from the date on which those amounts became due till the date on which the same are actually released to him.

Tigen Singh Basatawmt having attained the age of superannuation, retired from service on January 31, 2014 as Accountant from the office of the Block Development Officer, Shella, (hologram) C&RD Block, Sohra. However, even after his retirement, no service benefits like Pension, Gratuity, Leave Salary and GPF have been released to him by the government.

Basatawmt being aggrieved by the non-release of the retirement benefits filed a writ petition before the High Court and the writ petition was disposed of by the court which passed an order on August 23, 2019 directing the government to take up the representation dated August 22, 2017, which was filed by the Basatawmt and pending before the government for

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Musey-Toon

MEGHALAYA SUDDENLY RECOGNISES ITSELF AS A CHRISTIAN STATE THANKS TO CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL!

ARE YOU GOING TO THE CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL OR TO CHURCH?

CALL FOR THE CHURCH SERVICE IN SHILLONG.

BAHKOIAMS

MBOSE starts celebration of 50 years of educating youth

HP NEWS SERVICE
Shillong, Oct 18: The Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE) began its golden jubilee celebrations in Tura today.

Deputy Chief Minister Snaibwalang Dhar was the chief guest at the inaugural function, which was marked by colourful cultural performances and a nostalgic reflection of the board's five-decade journey. The theme for the golden jubilee is "Celebrate the past, embrace the present and rise to the future."

Addressing a huge gathering of distinguished dignitaries and academics, Dhar extended his heartfelt gratitude for the achievements of MBOSE over the past 50 years.

In 1973, the year MBOSE held its first High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination, just 38.3 per cent of the 3,797 students passed. The pass percentage has now risen to 78 per cent 50 years later, MBOSE Controller of Examinations TR Lalao informed.

Dhar acknowledged the significant progress and development in the education sector of the region in spite of various challenges. The Deputy CM also commended the



Deputy Chief Minister Snaibwalang Dhar along with other dignitaries cut the jubilee cake during the Golden Jubilee celebration of MBOSE in Tura on Wednesday. Photo MIPR

remarkable performances of students from various schools and also expressed gratitude to all officers and staff for their dedicated service for the welfare of the people of the region.

Education Minister Rakkam A Sangma, who was the guest of honour, also expressed his deep appreciation for every individual who had dedicated their services to the board over the past five decades. He reminisced about the board's inception in Tura, which was a momentous development closely following Meghalaya's attainment of statehood.

MBOSE was created through the Meghalaya Board of School Education Act 1973, Lalao informed, which was pivotal in regulating and supervising school education in the new state.

In the later part of the programme, an academic discourse by prominent speakers delved into the historical tolls of various missionary groups in the spread of education in Meghalaya.

Further, a spelling bee, quiz and music display were also organised for the students and everyone present.

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Director, Urban Affairs,
Mission Director PM-SVANidhi
Shillong.

DFMEGHALAYA
MANAGEMENT UNIT
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mail address: meghalaya.sulm@gmail.com

Dated Shillong the: 5th October 2023

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Director, Urban Affairs,
Mission Director PM-SVANidhi
Shillong.

NEHU lodges FIR

the leaders that the anti-ragging policy would be followed and that severe punishment would be given to the perpetrators, once identified.

The student was of the Department of Agri Business Management in NEHU and it was his first day on campus when he was subjected to ragging inside the Arbella Boys' Hostel on October 8. The Naga student

and was subjected to abuse in the hands of seniors. Some of the ragging was communal in nature.

Humiliated and fearful, the student left the hostel the next morning and went back to Nagaland, where he formally lodged a complaint with police.

West Garo Hills Police have also started investigation after the receipt of the emailed copy of the FIR.

JAC formed to

that others will also join the JAC in opposition to the functioning of the VC.

Shukla has been under fire, though admittedly still with his supporters, over the way NEHU has gone about introducing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in the state's colleges, which will mean the introduction of four-year undergraduate courses.

NEHUTA has said that

Shukla went over the heads of the varsity's Academic Council (AC) in pushing through the implementation of the NEP this year.

Today, it described the VC as "autocratic, arrogant and abrasive" for not listening to the university's elected statutory bodies.

Other allegations against Shukla include delay in appointing a Registrar and Finance Officer, irregular

appointment of a staff member in the VC's office, that he has done nothing to make the health centre functional or to fill vacant teaching positions, that he has tolerated corrupt officials and that the university is slow in clearing bills, etc.

The JAC has decided to pursue each of these points and to see that they are resolved in a democratic fashion.

HC relief to

consideration and to decide the same expeditiously. As the same was not done, Basaiawmoit approached the High Court by filing a contempt petition and during the pendency of the contempt petition, the government issued letters dated November 28, 2019 and February 21, 2020 informing him regarding the decision to release provisional pension and to withhold the payment of gratuity to him.

"The impugned letters dated 28-11-2019 and 21-02-2020 are set aside and quashed. The petitioner is found to be entitled to grant of interest for delayed release of his regular pension, and gratuity. Accordingly, it is directed that the respondent shall pay simple interest at the rate of 7.25 per cent per annum on the amount of

gratuity and arrear of pension from the date on which those amounts became due till the date on which the same are actually released to the petitioner. Since, it is submitted by the learned counsel for the petitioner that the respondents have already issued orders for the release of regular pension and gratuity to the petitioner, no direction in this regard is required to be passed. Let the calculation of the amount of interest be done by the respondents within a period of two months from the date of receipt of the certified of this order and the actual amount, so calculated, be released to the petitioner immediately thereafter." Justice B Bhattacharjee said in an order passed today.

The government has

alleged that Basaiawmoit was involved in forgery which resulted in filing of FIRs and initiation of criminal proceedings against him. The FIRs against him were filed on June 6, 2014 and May 8, 2014 (with supplementary FIR dated May 18, 2014), approximately three months after the date of his retirement.

However, there is nothing on record to suggest that Basaiawmoit was subjected to any departmental proceedings during his tenure of service. There is also no evidence to remotely suggest that he was ever placed under suspension. When he attained the age of superannuation and retired on January 21, 2014, there was no departmental proceeding pending against him.