

1920 HRS
24th APRIL 2018

THE HEADLINES:-

- **Prime Minister Modi launches Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan with focus on building infrastructure and stepping up initiatives under e-Panchayat.**
- **Coinciding with the celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day and Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, Nagaland holds State Level Conference of VDBs and Village Councils in Kohima.**
- **ANCSU cautions of massive agitation against illegal encroachment of Science College land.**
- **Advisor Dr. Nicky says VDBs should involve in all the phases of developmental activities of the villages.**

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi today launched the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan at Ram Nagar in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day. The scheme focuses on training, building infrastructure and stepping up initiatives for e-governance under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project. He said, these institutions foster a spirit of democracy and further the aspirations of our citizens. The PM said that the budget of the country is for the welfare of all and the government is continuously working

for the development of villages. Mr Modi said, the Centre will support the representatives in empowering the villages and its people. He said, representatives should focus on Jan Dhan, Van Dhan and Gobar Dhan, asking them to ensure that people have Jan Dhan accounts and insurance coverage under the government schemes. The Prime Minister said, India will transform, when the villages are transformed. The Prime Minister also said, the government has provided adequate facilities in villages for education, but the children have to be sincere towards being regular to schools. He added that farmers in the country need to know about and learn new farming techniques. On the occasion, Mr Modi felicitated village Sarpanches who have achieved 100 percent smokeless kitchens, vaccination under Mission Indradhanush and electrification under Saubhagya Scheme.

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Coinciding with the celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day and also Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, Nagaland today held a State Level Conference of Village Development Boards (VDBs) and Village Councils at Kohima under the aegis of Rural Development Department. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said the VDBs have been functioning for almost four decades and are regarded as a role model for Local Self Government and Community Participation across the country. Rio said Nagaland has been exempted from the purview of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, due to the existence of the traditional Local Self-Government Bodies like the Village Council and the VDBs which were

effectively established and functioning in a unique way in the State. In this regard, he said the State has not adopted the three-tier Panchayati Raj system. Rio said VDB is the developmental agency of the village, which functions under the Village Council. Rio informed that Funds are made available in the form of grants to all the VDBs, with allocation being made on the basis of number of household in every village, to ensure that each citizen is equally involved in all rural development activities. He said funds should not be diverted for payment of community loans or other non-developmental works. Stating that we need to adapt to the rapid changing facets of development, Rio called the VDB members to improve their knowledge in technology and be aware of the various developments in Information Technology. He said the innovative approach to involve the VDBs in the process of credit related micro- Financial Intermediaries Activity is firmly rooted, and all the VDBs will now be involved as Micro-Financial Intermediaries. Rio said this will have a direct bearing on the income generating capabilities of the villagers, as credit would now be locally and readily available for development activities in the rural areas to improve the economy. Emphasizing that the Block Development Officers are the cutting edge and backbone of the villagers, he urged them to re-dedicate their commitment to the service and quality of implementation with timely reporting and updation of projects.

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The All Nagaland College Students' Union, ANCSU today asserted that it will not compromise with the massive illegal encroachment of

land belonging to Kohima Science College Jotsoma by government departments, individuals and churches. Addressing a media-persons in Kohima, ANCSU president Katho P Awomi and other office bearers lamented that the District Administration was yet to respond to its 40 days ultimatum served on 14th of last month demanding immediate demolition of the permanent and temporary structures. Pointing out that ANCSU has submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on 19th of this month, reiterated that they will not compromise even an inch of land that was originally acquired for Science College. Revealing that the District Administration has assured to conduct a joint survey of the actual 200 acres of land belonging to the College, ANCSU cautioned if no action is initiated by the government before the commencement of the regular classes, the students' community would start a vigorous agitation in the form of vandalizing the government buildings located within the acquired land of Science College.

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Advisor for Rural Development, MLA Dr. Neikiesalie Nicky Kire said the institution of VDB in Nagaland was first setup in December 1976, at Ketsapomi Village in Phek District. He said on the success of the Ketsapomi VDB, a mass campaign was launched in 1980 to expand the coverage of this unique institution throughout the State, and consequently the VDB Model Rules was enacted in the year 1980. Dr. Nicky was speaking at the State Level Conference of Nagaland VDBs and Village Councils today in Kohima. He said the actual concept of rural development began to take shape during the 7th Plan period. Dr.

Nicky said the VBDs are involved in all the phases of developmental activities, and their responsibility includes all aspects from the receipt of allocation of funds, selection of beneficiaries of schemes, monitoring the progress of work and expenditure and ensure completion of schemes. He said the State Rural Development Department has proposed to enhance the activity for providing permanent shelter to the rural poor, replacing the existing traditional houses with the objective to improve the living standard of the rural people and better health.

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The inter-ministerial central team led by Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Abhishek Chandra accompanied by Under Secretary Sanjay today held a coordination meeting with Zunheboto district Nodal departments under Gram Swaraj Abhiyan at DC's conference hall. In the meeting the visiting team inquired and took reports on various central government flagship programs taken up under the Abhiyan in the district, which include Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana (LPG connections for eligible families), Saubhagya - Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijili Har Ghar Yojana, Ujala Scheme – LED lamps for all, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Bhima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bhima Yojana, and immunization of children under 2 years and all pregnant women under Mission Indradhanush.

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With the objective to engage on the issues clean and hygienic practices, All India Radio Kohima today observed Swachhata Pakhwada with Officers and staff participating in cleaning the office compound. Head of Office, K V Ramachandran stressed upon the importance of cleanliness, saying that it is the duty of every individual to sustain the culture of cleanliness.

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