



No man has enough good memory to be a successful liar  
Abraham Lincoln

### Ring out cancel Class X exams call Govt needs to listen

The Government should heed the suggestion of the All Manipur Recognised Private Schools Welfare Association (AMRPSWA). The CBSE has already cancelled the Class X examinations and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations has done away with the ICSE examinations (Class X) this year. Schools and colleges have been closed and so have hostels. A number of students of Manipur studying in different parts of the country have been home since 2020 and some who had gone back to college have again returned following the second wave of Coronavirus. Technically the second wave may not yet have landed in the State, but this is no reason to be lax. It is along this line that the State Government had earlier stipulated that all coming back to Manipur or visiting the State should a negative report via RT-PCR, TrueNat or CB-NAAT COVID-19 testing only to add RAT later following the immense strain that testing labs have been put under in different parts of the country. That not all come back with the needed negative test results can be surmised from the fact that a number of incoming air passengers have had to undergo testing at the airport itself on arrival and quite a few of them have tested positive. The new strain, this is probably what could have infected the returnees. The State Government has also gone ahead and announced the closure of the three Ima Keithels and ordered that shops at Thangal Keithel and Paona Keithel should open on rotational basis. SOP violators continue to be pulled up on a daily basis for failing to adhere to the mandated SOPs and this is probably where Manipur may be said to be sitting on a keg of gun powder. The number of fresh cases has also seen an increase in the last few days and Manipur is now back to the days when the number of new cases used to be in three digits. It is against this reality that the AMRPSWA has urged the State Government to cancel the pending Class X board examinations. This sounds logical. With the new strain of the virus now infecting the younger lots, exposing young students to the possibility of gathering in huge numbers inside the examination halls may not be what the doctors and experts would advise. And a number of other States too have already postponed or even cancelled the Class X examinations. The danger is real, very real and the State Government would do wise to consult educationists and those engaged in teaching the young students to take a concrete decision. On the other hand, cancelling the examinations should not mean giving a free hand to the young students to roam around freely with no anxiety over the board exams. This is where the responsibility of the parents and elders of the family come into play. No doubt Class X examinations is one of the most important stages in the education of the young students but there is the need to take cognizance of the reality and this is a global pandemic and India is going through one of the worst phases with over 3 lakhs fresh infection daily in the last couple of days. The State Government certainly cannot afford to take chances.

### Etc, Etc On Covaxin, India's own vaccine Kamala Thiagarajan

Contd from last Saturday

Which other countries have ordered Covaxin? Bharat Biotech has signed deals with OcuGen, a US based biopharmaceutical company, to produce the vaccine for the US market, and Precisa Medicamentos to supply to Brazil, pending regulatory approval there.

How has Covaxin been received by the medical community? The emergency approval before phase III trials were completed triggered widespread criticism from the scientific community in India.<sup>16</sup>

With nearly 14 million coronavirus infections at the time of writing, India has the second highest number of reported cases globally after the US, but the approval came at a time when cases were dropping.

The CDSCO said the vaccine had been approved for "restricted use in an emergency situation" and that it would be deployed in a "clinical trial mode." This vague terminology, with no official clarification, has left doctors and scientists puzzled, though one doctor The BMJ spoke to said it implied that safety data would be collected.

The All India People's Science Network, which represents numerous scientific organisations, described the approval of Covaxin as "hasty," while the All India Drug Action Network, a group of non-government organisations working to increase access to essential medicines, said it was "shocked" and "baffled" by the decision. In the interest of "public welfare and transparency" the group urged regulators to make the data public. To compound this anxiety, one participant in the phase III trials died. The hospital at which the trial took place, the People's College of Medical Sciences and Research Centre in Bhopal, has been accused of not following proper procedures while screening candidates for the trials.

However, 45 doctors—including two former directors of the All India Institute of Medical Science—labelled the criticisms of Covaxin as "irresponsible."<sup>17</sup> They called the vaccine India's "gift to humanity."

Footnotes  
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## Boon or Bane ? Promoting students without examinations

The ongoing second wave of Covid-19 pandemic is changing the way the world functions.

Should students be promoted without exams ? Examinations, tests, assignments are words that are probably dreaded by almost every student across the world. The best way to define an examination is that it is an official test of a student's knowledge, skill and intelligence.

Examinations can be of varied types – written, practical or oral examinations. With the advent of the online school ERP systems—schools also have the option of conducting online exams for the students. Irrespective of the type, structure, length or difficulty level of the exams, there are many advantages of examinations for the students and the school alike.

1. Examinations help students to strengthen their grasp of a subject or a concept.
2. Examinations build the personality and confidence of the students
3. Examinations reflect the pressures of adult life where the children learn to work hard, push the limits and do their best. Examinations also create a sense of competition for the students. This sense of competition goes a long way in building the confidence of the students.
4. Examinations serve as the gateway to scholarships and further studies

For students interested in pursuing further studies,



Image : Times Now

competitive exams and entrance exams are a gateway to esteemed institutes across the world. Scholarship exams also give students who are unable to afford fees, an opportunity to learn without stressing about their finances.

4. Examinations allow the teachers to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods
5. Examinations give the school a glimpse into the interest and the aptitude of the students

Examinations are important because they provide feedback to the schools and the teachers about the interest and aptitude of the students. The schools also get an in-depth understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of the students. This valuable information will help the school to create programs and courses that help bring out the best in their students.

The Downside of Exams  
Examinations also bring plenty of stress for the students. This can lead to various health problems such as headache, nausea etc. Often failure in exams can lead to a loss of confidence for students who do not perform well. In the worst-case scenario, this loss of self-esteem can also cause suicidal tendencies.

The Conflict  
In the current scenario, Governments across the world are deciding to cancel the exams. Examination halls with multiple students from different parts of a city have the potential to transmit the virus at a very rapid rate. Conducting exams involves handling papers by several human beings which is also extremely dangerous.

Currently, institutes have also realized that the spread novel coronavirus is unpredictable. In this situation, planning out an exam schedule for the year can be extremely difficult.

Considering all these concerns, many institutes have decided to promote their students without any exams. While the decision makes sense in the current scenario, but without exams, there is no way to assess the learning of the students. The school also loses out on all the other advantages of exams.

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## Exposed: Wolf in sheep's clothing - tobacco industry's greenwashing attempts thwarted

Shobha Shukla and Bobby Ramakant (Citizen News Service)

At a time when the entire world is reeling under a severe public health emergency, the tobacco industry is not leaving any stone unturned to protect and expand its markets of products that are proven to cause deadly diseases and greenwash its dirty image (as it has blood on its hands of over 8 million deaths every year attributed to tobacco use). More alarmingly, tobacco is a major risk factor for several health conditions that increase the risk of serious outcomes if one gets infected with coronavirus, including death. And let us not forget that even before the Covid-19 pandemic, tobacco-caused diseases were of epidemic proportions and causing completely avoidable human suffering and untimely deaths.

Nepal rejects attempts by tobacco industry to clean its dirty image  
Tobacco kills 27,000 people every year in Nepal, and each of these untimely deaths could have been averted. Likewise, each of the deadly diseases caused by tobacco use could be prevented. But this is only possible if Big Tobacco is held financially and legally liable for the damage it has caused to human life and to our planet.

What happened in Nepal will remind us of the oft-quoted words: 'wolf in sheep's clothing'. But the best twist is that people are wiser now to recognise that corporate wolf and rise up against its devious designs.

A senior journalist from Nepal, Kalpana Acharya, who is also a former Chairperson of Nepal Health Journalists' Forum, and a founding board member of Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media), said that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was to be signed between a children's hospital and Surya Nepal, a company of which tobacco is the leading business. But the media exposed this ill-fated ominous MoU, due to which the MoU signing event had to be cancelled. Prof Dr Bhagawan Koirala, founding Chairman of Kathmandu Institute of Child Health (KIOCH), rightly rejected the money offered by the tobacco industry. This is a big achievement for public health and for Nepal, remarked Kalpana Acharya.

Tobacco industry has used deception and lies to lure our children and young people into using their addictive products. That is why in 2014 then Director General of the WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, had rightly said: "One record shows that there was an internal discussion whether the [tobacco] industry should consider children as part of its market. I remember very well one reply which I would like to quote: 'they have



got lips, we want them'. They [tobacco industries] just want market share, they couldn't care less whether they are killing children or not." "Giving any tobacco company a place at the negotiation table is akin to appointing a committee of foxes to take care of your chickens" had said Dr Chan. That is why Nepal's rejecting tobacco industry 'help' towards child health becomes even more important for public health.

"For tobacco companies, corporate social responsibility is nothing more than a business strategy that directly contradicts the global tobacco treaty. Article 5.3 and Article 13 of the legally binding global tobacco treaty (formally called the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control or WHO FCTC) aims to prevent the industry from meddling in and influencing tobacco control policy. As per the WHO FCTC, corporate social responsibility is considered as "tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship" which must be banned comprehensively. It is indeed yet another major public health win for Nepal and broader health justice movement that Kathmandu Institute of Child Health has declined signing the MoU with Surya Nepal as well as rejected the money offered by it. Nepal should continue complying with its obligations to the global tobacco treaty as well as enforcing national laws strictly" said Dr Tara Singh Bam, Asia Pacific Regional Director of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) and Board Director of Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT).

Nepal is among more than 180 countries worldwide that have ratified the legally binding global tobacco treaty, which contains the world's most effective tobacco control and corporate accountability measures and is estimated to save more than 200 million lives by 2050 if fully implemented. Nepal and all other countries that have ratified the global tobacco treaty have obligations to fully implement the lifesaving policies, including the WHO FCTC Article 5.3, of whose first principle is grounded in the fact that there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict of interest between tobacco industry and public health. Countries must establish measures to limit interactions with the tobacco industry and ensure the transparency of those interactions that occur. Governments must also reject partnerships and non-binding or non-enforceable agreements with the tobacco industry. More importantly, WHO FCTC Article 5.3 also states that governments must denormalize and, to the extent possible, regulate activities described as "socially responsible" by the tobacco industry, including but not limited to activities described as "corporate social responsibility".

Governments must reject 'donations' from tobacco industry but hold them liable  
"Right now our greatest chance of dying from Covid-19 is not necessarily related to the treatment we receive or the variant, but our outcome of Covid-19 is pre-determined by our health history – whether we have hypertension, diabetes (or other health conditions that are associated with serious outcomes of Covid-19) – whether you have had years of badly managed underlying health conditions- this is the single most predictive and prognostic marker of whether you will die from Covid-19" had said Dr Michael Ryan, Executive Director of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, who leads the team responsible for international containment of Covid-19.

Tobacco has been causing epidemic-proportion diseases that were entirely preventable. In addition, tobacco is also a major risk factor for conditions that determine whether every Covid-19 positive person will develop serious outcomes or die. That is why governments must reject so-called 'donations' in every form from the tobacco industry but instead hold these companies legally and financially liable. Financial liability of these companies will give governments much more resources to rebuild post pandemic a socially just world, which also has to be tobacco-free.

## Be patient for sustainable career

Contd from prev issue

The use of technology properly will enhance the employability skills. One may also think of learning another language. One of the best things is investing the time instead of wasting the time. Most of us waste the time and will repent in future. This is the time to invest time to gather knowledge and different skills. Getting accessed to different digital libraries is one of the best options.

One of the best things we can do at home is starting participatory learning where students as well guardians and parents also start learning. We can transform the home into a learning hub till lock down or similar situation remains. All the members of the family may start learning something new. Learning or online classes should not only limit students or job seekers. As there is no age for learning and reading so let us all utilize the time in learning new things and skills. There are many online courses with certification where stu-

Ranjan K Baruah

dents and others may enrol. Before taking any certification course digitally please ensure that credible institutes are being chosen by aspirants.

Like the students of secondary and senior secondary students, college and university students may also prepare for various exams conducted by different agencies. Students preparing for different competitive examinations should feel good that they have got more time for preparation. More time means more possibilities and more chances of learning many new things. Let us tell our mind that we are investing the time so that we get more interest and the interest would be cracking competitive examinations in near future.

My request to teachers and faculty members would be please think of innovative ways as experienced teachers can do wonders even in this situation. There can be team work

with formal teachers and other mentors or professionals engaged in guidance to keep motivating our students. But all the students should remember that the best person to motivate one is the person himself or herself. Let us stay motivated and remain positive for our own bright future. Instead of worry we should try to engage ourselves in constructive activities. Let us keep fighting the pandemic and make sure that all of us remain healthy. Instead of focusing on little negative news like deaths or shortage of oxygen in a few areas, let us focus on the fact that many have cured from COVID 19 and we need to trust our immune system and keep ourselves healthy to fight the virus. Invest time and don't merely waste time in these situations if we want a sustainable career for us.

(Ranjan K Baruah is a career mentor and skill trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjan@gmail.com for any queries)

## Death is just a friend

—YOUNG THOUGHTS—  
Birkarnelzelzit Thiyam

"I do not fear death. I had been dead for billions and billions of years before I was born, and had not suffered the slightest inconvenience from it," says Mark Twain. If we really think that home is elsewhere and that this life is a 'wandering to find home,' why should we not look forward to the arrival? Are you afraid to die? Or don't know how death will knock at your door? If you don't know how to die, don't worry; Nature will tell you what to do on the spot, fully and adequately. She will do this job perfectly for you; don't bother your head about it.

Again from the perspective of Steve Jobs, death is just a door that exchanges the old for new. No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet, death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it, and that is how it should be, because death is very likely the single best invention of life. It's life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Let's put it this way, if death meant just leaving the stage long enough to change costume and come back as a new character - would you slow down? Or speed up?

And again, people say we die twice, I do believe that. The first death is when you stop breathing and a second time, a bit later on, when somebody says your name for the last time. So, the best option to live on is not to extend the timing of our last breath but to extend the time of people talking about us. Therefore, the goal isn't to live forever, the goal is to create something that will.

I know all these won't really comfort the fear for death but if you do things that you fear most then the death of fear is certain. Yes, death might set you free but it will always leave

a headache to some which no one can heal, like love leaves a memory no one can steal.

Like Chuck Palahniuk said, "I don't want to die without any scars." Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Hell Bloody Ride!" So, guys – safety should be strategic but not an impulsive fear.

To remember, death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live. On the other window of Lemony Snicket, it is a curious thing, especially the death of a loved one. We all know that our time in this world is limited, and that eventually all of us will end up underneath some sheet, never to wake up. And yet it is always a surprise when it happens to someone we know. It is like walking up the stairs to your bedroom in the dark, and thinking there is one more stair than there is. Your

THE GOAL ISN'T TO LIVE FOREVER IS TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT WILL  
— Chuck Palahniuk

Image Courtesy: 9buz

foot falls down, through the air, and there is a sickly moment of dark surprise as you try and read just the way you thought of things.

I know life and death is nothing but a circular one way door. Or life is both sad and solemn. We are led into a wonderful world, we meet one another here, greet each other - and wander together for a brief moment. Then we lose each other and disappear as suddenly and unreasonably as we arrived.

I don't know who is reading this article but listen to me please, "fear will ruin your life, go run – run – run."

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