

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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Fortnightly Special

Political instability in Leh: Mismanagement or fight for power

4

Fortnightly Special

Disillusioned Ladakh seeks to search within

5

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Brief News

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2346 aspirants take exam for eight VLW posts

LEH: A total of 2346 candidates appeared for VLW examination for eight posts on November 25.

The examination was conducted by Leh Autonomous Hill Development Sub-ordinate Services Recruitment Board. Eight examination centers and more than 350 staff including police personnel were deployed for the smooth conduct of the examination.

Seminar on 'Education' held in Leh

LEH: A one-day seminar on the theme 'What is Education' was organized by Ladakh Buddhist Association in collaboration with Socially Engaged Buddhist of Ladakh (SEBOL) on November 22 at Chowkhang Vihara.

Pawan Kumar, Educationist, and His Eminence Palga Rinpoche were the guest.

His Eminence Palga Rinpoche said that the Ladakh region is at a critical juncture of the history. Without realizing how rich their culture is the young generations are changing the practices fast to westernize themselves. It is the responsibility of locals to trust in values and traditions of this region.

Correction and clarification

It is the policy of 'Reach Ladakh Bulletin' to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition, date, news item or the article.

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Anjuman Imamia celebrates birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad in Leh



During the celebration of Eid-ul Milad-Un-Nabi, Birth Anniversary of Prophet Mohammad.

Rigzin Wangmo

CHUCHOT: Eid-ul Milad-Un-Nabi, Birth Anniversary of Prophet Mohammad was celebrated with religious fervor on November 26 at Imam Bargha, Chuchot Yokma.

Hojatul-Islam-wal-Muslimin Sheikh Nazir Ahmed Sharifi, President, Majeless Ulema was the chief guest. He spoke about the importance of the occasion and urged people to adhere to the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad.

Birth anniversary of the Prophet Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (PUBH) is celebrated as Hafta-e-wahdat (week of unity) from 12 to 17th of Rabbi-u-awal, 1440H as per the Islamic calendar throughout the world.

Ashraf Ali Barcha, President, Anjuman Imamia, Leh said, "We are celebrating peace and when the same prevails among all communities then we could accomplish it in the entire world. Unfortunately, there is a lack of unity and peace owing to which we witness adverse effects. Every individual is different. There are few who creates disturbances in the society and make people fight with each other for their own self-interest".

He further added, "We have a precious human life and we should stand united to live in peace and harmony and pray for the development of all beings. We should condemn the negative forces. So, it is important for all of us to live in harmony and know the true sense of life."

...Continues on Page 3

Protest rally demanding UT status for Ladakh with legislative power



People during the peaceful protest demand of UT for Ladakh.

Rigzin Wangmo

LEH: Demanding Union Territory status with legislature, all the business establishment remained shut down for half day on November 26 in Leh.

Thousands of people joined the peaceful protest called by Ladakh Buddhist Association.

Expressing unhappiness over the government for neglecting the long pending Union Territory demand for Ladakh, the rally started from Chowkhang Vihara and culminated at Pologround.

Tsewang Thinles, President, LBA said, "It was very important to conduct the rally because of the bad condition in the entire state. We hope that our demands will be fulfilled during Governor's rule,

as several other demands have been fulfilled during the Governor's rule in the past".

He further said, "UT status for Ladakh is a long pending demand which has been brought forward from time to time. The central government should also consider Ladakh whenever a decision is announced for the state. People of Ladakh have always been faithful towards the nation but sadly, the issues of Ladakhi's are hardly taken seriously."

He appealed people of Ladakh to stay strong and united.

Konchok Stak, President, LBA Youth Wing said, "Ladakh has been and is suffering due to the Kashmir issues. Stu-

...Continues on Page 2

Kargil Press Club set up

Hosain Ibn Khalo elected unanimously President



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Marking a historic step for the media fraternity in Kargil, Press Club of Ladakh Kargil was formally inaugurated by Haji Anayat Ali, Chairman J&K Legislative Council on November 15.

Hosain Ibn Khalo, Editor of Kargil Today was unanimously elected as president.

While congratulating all media persons, Haji Anayat Ali said, "With the media's primary role of building an informed citizenry and scrutinizing those who govern, the institution will help in providing a free and legitimate space for the 4th pillar of democracy to work, plan, organize and deliver".

He said that media is an asset for all political, social and religious organisations of Kargil and plays an impartial role in the society.

He added that it will provide much-needed space for media persons to come together, discuss, debate, analyse and build discourses, narratives, and counter-narratives.

He further assured all possible help from his side and said that various initiatives including Journalist Welfare Scheme are under consideration of the government for ensuring the welfare of the fraternity.

Aga Syed Mujtaba Musavi also highlighted the importance of media in Kargil and said that media has played a vital role in the development of Kargil district. He said that media is one of the main resources for the overall development.

Syed Mujahidul Haq, DY SP HQR Kargil appreciated the role of media in Kargil and said that the press club will

...Continues on Page 3

Panchayat elections records 64.1 percent voter turnout

99 female employees deployed on election duty at 29 polling stations for the third phase



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The third and final phase of Panchayat election ended successfully with the polling in Chuchot, Thiksey, Leh, Nimmo, and Saspol block on November 24.

The total voter turnout was around 64.1% including Chuchot 69.1%, Thiksey 63.9%, Leh 56.4%, Nimmo 62.6% and Saspol 65.9%.

For the first time, the entire polling team was comprised of female employees. 99 female employees were deployed on election duty at 29 polling stations for the third phase of panchayat election.

District Panchayat Election Officer/DC, Leh Avny Lavasa inspected polling stations in Palam-Pharka, Stok, and Chuchot and interacted with the polling staff and the candidates.

Out of the 95 panchayat halqas in Leh district, 39 Sarpanch was elected uncontested and 56 seats of sarpanch elections were conducted in different blocks except for Korzok due to non-polling.

Also, out of the 687 panch wards in the district, 642 panches were elected uncontested. Elections were conducted for 23 panch seats and 22 panch ward remained vacant.

Editorial

'Bure Din' for the BJP in Ladakh**Rinchen Angmo Chumikchan**

The recent resignation of MP Thupstan Chhewang, stating the reason that the BJP has failed to fulfil the promises made during the 2014 elections, makes it clear that all the promises made were empty rhetoric. The resignation may shake up the political dynamics of Ladakh.

The BJP leaders had fooled Ladakhis by announcing that Ladakh would get UT status within six months. Now when the tenure of the ruling party is about to end and the people have understood, though late, it was all gimmick and lies. We can now clearly see that the 'Acche din' of the party is turning into 'Bure Din' for them in Ladakh, and that too ahead of the 2019 general elections.

Over the last three years, the BJP in Ladakh has seen many ups and downs, starting with the appointment of the Chief Executive Councillor when the BJP won the Hill Council election with a majority. The crisis of leadership and interference from outsiders has been the reason for all the troubles in the party. The reshuffling of the Chairman thrice, the internal rift within the party and the fight for the chair has further worsened the situation. It is clear now that public opinion in Ladakh has turned against the BJP. The recent removal of the CEC, Dorjey Mutup, has made the matter worse and angered party supporters and fuelled doubts amongst the leaders across parties and the general public.

The BJP started facing setbacks when they lost the Thiksay constituency to the Congress which the party had never won since 1995, when the Hill Council, Leh, was established. The recent MC election in which the Congress won all the 13 wards clearly validates the point that the BJP is lagging behind on people's expectations.

Another big reason why the opinion of the people has started turning against the BJP is that even after the Prime Minister himself had visited Ladakh twice since 2014, the government failed to fulfil

the promises made.

P.Stobdan, former ambassador, has rightly written in Tribune, in an article, titled, 'Disillusioned Ladakh seeks to search within', that the present situation is an early sign of how Ladakh is likely to get torn apart by factional strife. People are indulging in petty and divisive politics to the detriment of social cohesion and unity. Confusion among people is palpable. The balance and maturity that existed in Ladakhi society seem to be fast receding.

What we need is a common platform for all the political parties to keep our aspirations alive which was never heard of, or given any importance at the Centre and state level. Instead of playing petty politics, our leaders should learn to play healthy politics which has been the culture of Ladakh.

The BJP at the Centre and state not only deceived MP Thupstan, they have also been playing with the sentiments of the people of Ladakh.

A closer look at the MC election results also shows that there are signs of revival of the Congress, and there are reasons for the BJP to worry about its position in the 2019 elections. This development has opened up many possibilities for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Thupstan Chhewang has written a letter to the Prime Minister, accusing his party of doing nothing towards the fulfilling of the promises they had made during the 2014 campaign in Ladakh. The State BJP leader's false statement on the MP's resignation is condemnable and should be taken seriously. Such action clearly proves that there is something fishy going on in the party. Everything that happened or done so far was in a very hush-hush manner.

Thupstan Chhewang certainly has credibility and is the face of the BJP in the region. At the practical level, the focus is on whether Thupstan Chhewang's exit will fuel instability in the party. His decision to quit could lead the party into a "great trouble."

**CEC stresses on fee regularisation and safety in private school**

Committee to be formed soon to look into these matters

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

LEH: A meeting was held in which in private schools were asked to regularise fee structure, ensure safety in school buses and prohibits from selling uniforms and text/ notebooks till November 30.

The decision was taken by Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC during his meeting with the heads of all private schools in Leh on November 27 at Council Secretariat.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss, brainstorm and take suggestions to reduce the gap between government and private schools in terms of academic and other facilities.

He appreciated the private schools for their contribution in

providing quality education but asserted on a collective effort to strengthen government schools.

He said that unlike building bridges, roads etc, the education sector is to build the future of students and improve the value of human resources.

The school heads were asked to deliver the best of education to the children and also ensure to follow all the guidelines and norms issued by Supreme court to run the educational institute. He also asked them to read Section 23 and 24 of LAHDC Act to gain insight into school education norms in Ladakh.

He said, "I'll not compromise at any cost concerning the safety of school children."

Issues including pay acquain-

tance, classroom size, teacher-student ratio, admission procedure, teacher appointment, and 25% reservation quota in private schools were also discussed.

He informed that a committee will be formed soon to look into these matters and based on their suggestive solutions council will take required but inclusive decisions.

A common calendar for all government and private schools in the coming year was also informed.

Tashi Dolma, Joint Director Education Ladakh, Konchok Angmo, Principal DIET/ In-charge CEO, Paldan Tundup, ZEO, Leh Tashi Tundup, Assistant Secretary, JK BOSE, Leh and principals of 21 private schools were present.

CEC takes up the issue of hefty airfare

Dr. Jitendra Singh directs Ministry of Civil Aviation to find out a solution for bonafide residents of Ladakh

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

DELHI: Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister for State (Independent Charge) directed Ministry of Civil Aviation, Jayant Sinha to work out an arrangement for the demand of subsidized tariff flight rate for Ladakhi people.

The step was taken after the meeting of Dr. Jitendra Singh with Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC on November 21 in Delhi.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal highlighted the expensive airfare and limited air transport facilities to the people of Ladakh region. He said that travelling by air is not a luxury but a compulsion for Ladakhis due to the closure of two vital highways for six to seven months in winter which virtually makes it impossible for a section of the society such as patients, students, pilgrims, and others to

visit other parts of the country.

He further added that travelling abroad is much cheaper than travelling to Leh by air.

He requested Dr. Jitendra to act on the long pending demand of subsidized tariff, capping of the airfare or framing a flat flight rate for the local people and the government employees working in the Ladakh region.

Protest rally demanding UT status for Leh with legislative power

...Continued from Page 1

dents of Ladakh are struggling to get a university which must be considered as a priority. The state government discriminates Ladakhi employee and the business sector of Ladakh is suffering. It is the responsibility of the Indian government to safeguard Ladakh and its people."

PT Kunzang, Vice President LBA, Rinchen Angmo, President, Women Wing, LBA and Ven. Shedup Chamba, President, Ladakh Gonpa Association

also spoke on the occasion.

Along with Union Territory status with legislature, people also reiterated the demand to include Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, Central University, a law to safeguard the business interest of the people of Ladakh and establishment of police range in Ladakh region.

A copy of the memorandum was submitted to the Governor through Avny Lavasa, Deputy Commissioner Leh.

POLITICS



Tsering Namgyal
President, District Congress
Committee, Leh

BJP lead 5th Hill Council, Leh was formed with much hope but in three years we have seen many changes and instability. The recent resignation of Dorjay Motup from the CEC post was unceremonious and also the shuffle in the party cannot be undermined. Though we cannot comment on the development and changes in their party, yes as a responsible opposition party we find that all such changes are not at all good for the region.

The recent resignation of Thupstan Chhewang from the post of MP and BJP party is yet another big setback. Thupstan Chhewang is the face of BJP and it is under him that the regional party 'LUTF' was converted to BJP for the larger interest. The platform for the BJP in Ladakh is all created by Thupstan Chhewang. Today, the man who is elected by the people with so much of hope and trust is made to resign then definitely it is a big setback not only

for the BJP party but the people of Ladakh region.

The resignation letter citing the reason behind his back foot to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah clearly talks about the disinterest shown by the party towards the people of Ladakh.

He also mentioned the interference of Jammu leaders in the decision making because of which many issues have risen.

Ravinder Raina, President, BJP J&K statement on Thupstan Chhewang's resignation based on health ground and pursuit of spiritual life is condemnable. We should seek an apology from him for misleading the people.

Hill Council is granted after many sacrifices and efforts by our leaders and interference from outside to elect our CEC, EC and assigning the portfolios despite having se-

nior, educated and experienced local leaders is questionable and sad. On one hand, we talk about freedom from Kashmir and other external forces and on other hand we are welcoming the decision of outsiders in our local politics. Are we incapable to run our own Council or unaware?

The sole aim of every party whoever comes in power is to strive for the demands and aspiration of the people who have voted with hope.

The politics played in other parts of the country and in Ladakh is very different. Till now, at the local level, Ladakh plays an inclusive politics by concerning and taking the experienced senior leaders in confidence. The game of power played nowadays is not at all a good example for the upcoming young leaders and the aspiring youths who want to pursue their career in politics.



Tsering Angchuk
President, National
Conference, Leh

The resignation of the most senior and respected leader of Ladakh from the Member of Parliament seat and the party itself is a matter of concern for the people of Ladakh. The letter of Thupstan Chhewang to the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah citing many reasons behind his resignation clearly shows the party's failure to understand the aspiration of people of the region. His resignation clearly indicates the non-seriousness of the leaders of BJP at the center and state level towards people's demands and the promises made before the election.

The party which does not take the only MP of the region seriously, will they think about the people of the region? Sidelining the MP means sidelining the region. It's high time that people need to understand the empty promises made by the party.

The involvement of the State leaders in the matter of the Hill Council also poses a question. Hope no such different controversial agenda and ideology played in rest of the states emerges in Ladakh. The intervention of the outsiders in the decision making of the Hill Council makes no point in the existence of our own local leaders.

We have a culture of deciding and working with the elders. The blend of senior experienced person and energetic young minds in a system is always appreciated for an overall development.

Due to geographical, economical and strategical difference, the politics of Ladakh works differently as compared to other parts of the country. We have a very limited season within which all the developmental planning and activities are carried out. Instead of accomplishing all the work if the leaders are busy gaining their political score, only the public is going to suffer.



Tashi Gyalsan
President, PDP, Leh

Our heroes did not sacrifice their lives to handover our autonomy to outsiders. Anyone who tries to destroy or malign the sanctity of LAHDC will have to face the consequences. People of Ladakh cannot be taken for granted, any external threat to this institution shall not be tolerated.

What Thupstan Chhewang has done by resigning from MP and primary membership of BJP for not fulfilling the demands as promised to him at the time of his joining is appreciable and praiseworthy. Everyone knows that he joined the right-wing party against his own will only to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Ladakh. He has been very smartly lured on the pretext of granting UT and fulfilling other demands. A leader of his stature was humiliated and treated shabbily by the BJP leaders who turned deaf ears to the promises made to him.

In one of his statements, he indicates that BJP leaders from Jammu are dictating the local political affairs of Ladakh and how unceremoniously former CEC Dorjay Motup was removed from the post of CEC is disgraceful, which is a matter of concern for all of us. BJP failed to fulfil all the promises made to him, be it UT or other demands like that of the inclusion of Bhoti language in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution, opening of Kailash- Mansarovar route via Ladakh, establishing a full-fledged university in Ladakh, developing the health sector on modern lines, and I wonder why the BJP members from Leh are silent on the exit of Thupstan Chhewang and the reason he has cited.

One should introspect from his statement that the sensitivity, emotional and political support for Ladakh by these leaders from Jammu are missing except for some vested interest political gain.

Though our ideology is different, I am in complete support of Thupstan Chhewang and personally feel that he has still got the potential to lead and guide us. I don't agree at all what BJP state president describes him of going for spiritual refuge. Having said that, I am of the opinion that we really need to introspect on the demands we have been raising, because whoever comes to power in Delhi are only exploiting the sentiments of people and do nothing except things which benefits them politically. We cannot afford to be betrayed again in the hands of people with vested interests.

I sincerely hope that the new BJP, Leh in the absence of Thupstan Chhewang, will be able to protect and safeguard the LAHDC from external influences.

Anjuman Imamia celebrates Birth Anniversary of Prophet Mohammad in Leh

...Continued from Page 1

Mohd Ramzan, Advocate, President, Youth wing Anjuman Imamia, Leh said, "All religion teaches us to respect and to live in peace. But many for their own political benefits raises conflict and confusion among the people and such influences are dominating all of us. The essence of all religion is peace but few are fooling people in the name of politics and religion."

Sheikh Abdul Qasim Matuhari, Hojatul-Islam-wal-Muslimin, Hafiz Noor-ul Hassan Nadvi,

Moin-ul-Islam, Ahmed Sharif, President, Majel-wss Ulema also shared their views and emphasised to create harmony and brotherhood among every community.

Students from Imamia Mission School Chuchot, Imamia Model School, Leh, and Al Hadi Boys Hostel also took part in the occasion.

Later, prizes were distributed to the toppers in exams, competitive exams qualifiers and person having outstanding performance in co-curricular activities.

Kargil Press Club set up

...Continued from Page 1

help to tackle media-related issues in an organised manner.

Hosain Khalo, President, Press Club Ladakh Kargil apprised several issues faced by the media community in Kargil.

Haji Anayat Ali assured the press club members to call a meeting with the LAHDC and deputy commissioner Kargil after panchayat election to discuss issues related to media.

Muhammad Ali Tak, Assistant Director Information Kargil, Chief Advisor, Sajjad Hussain and other members of the club were present on the occasion.



Avny Lavasa convenes meeting with Municipal Committee members

Dr. Ishey Namgyal seeks cooperation and coordination for effective service delivery



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The first interactive meeting of newly elected members of Municipal Committee with district officers of line departments was held under the chairmanship of Avny Lavasa, DC, Leh on November 26 at DC office, Conference Hall.

Dr. Ishey Namgyal, President MC, Leh, Rigzin Spalgon, Administrator MC, Leh, ward members and HODs of line departments were present.

Avny Lavasa said that the newly formed body of Municipal Committee, Leh will be helpful in giving an impetus to the effective implementation of projects in Leh and bridging the gap

between line departments and the public in addressing the issues.

She urged the district officers to take feedback from the ward members positively and try to address the issues as soon as possible.

She added that MC members will help them in monitoring a huge volume of work and reduce the workload caused by the shortage of manpower in the departments.

She stressed upon the ward members to have a thorough understanding of the departmental procedural formalities and suggested drafting a vision document to ensure effective service delivery and to set an example for future Municipal bodies.

Also, urged them to utilise the power to raise a local revenue in a balanced manner and work with a long-term plan on issues like water shortage, dog menace, solid waste management, encroachment, etc. And to ensure a ready inflow of information by educating and informing the public about the constraints in terms of funds causing unintentional delays in the completion of projects and cooperation on their part for the effective imple-

mentation of works.

Dr. Ishey Namgyal urged all the officers to cooperate and coordinate with them in ensuring an effective service delivery to the people of Leh.

He inquired about various projects going on in Leh under UIDSSMT and AMRUT schemes department wise and raised ward wise issues. He urged the officers to do a site visit to have better ground reality and effective execution of works/repairs. He also urged the ward members to take up genuine issues based on priority.

Rigzin Spalgon informed that in the last three days a series of meetings were conducted at ward level with public and ward members. On the basis of the outcome/feedback of the meetings, a compilation of issues ward wise was submitted to all the concern officers during the meeting.

Political instability in Leh: Mismanagement or fight for power



Dr. Tsultim Dorje

Ladakh during Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) was like a family striving for UT status. Dissolution of LUTF and its members joining different parties was the earliest sign of fragmentation of political Ladakh. The transition from one united party to multiple parties resulted in difference of ideological perspective of the leaders and voters. This change in ideology was due to mistrust and disagreement among the leaders and be taken as a race for achieving the highest political seat, meanwhile the possibility of the development of Ladakh in their respective minds cannot be denied.

Recent reshuffling of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh could be seen as a second major sign of fragmentation in politics of Ladakh. CEC Dorje Motup's resignation shook the local administration and voters' faith. Some sources say that Dorje Motup cited health reason for his resignation is not true. If it is to be believed, will at any point of time Dorje Motup also show (as MP Thupstan Chhewang did) courage to come openly to tell the people of Ladakh his actual reason for resignation? Whatsoever, his resignation (voluntarily or under pressure) was a disappointment for his well-wishers. BJP Leh may lose a huge number of voters who support him from his constituency and other possible vote banks and could result in a big blow to BJP Leh.

BJP's village representatives/Mandal Presidents duly signed a letter that has been circulating on social media stating 'inacceptance of Mr. Jamyang Tsering Namgyal as party president' adds on to the internal turf in BJP Leh. Later it claimed to be inauthentic by some BJP members. But if the letter was not authentic, why did BJP Leh not take any action against the person who has done such malpractice?

BJP's J&K State President's statement (*The Indian Express*, 16 Nov 2018) on Ladakh's MP Thupstan Chhewang's resignation from party membership and from MP seat was no less than bombarding BJP Leh. Raina stated that his resignation was for pursuing a spiritual life which proved to be a taunt to the MP. This has perhaps what sparked the fire and compelled MP to write letter to the Prime Minister and BJP's national party president on 18th November 2018. His resentment over unfulfilled promises and thoughtless actions were the actual reasons why he has submitted his resignation letter. This is another indication of mistrust and disagreement among the leaders of the same party. BJP's current LAHDC Leh councilors' visit to



Delhi to convince MP Thupstan Chhewang for the withdrawal of his resignation from the party as well as from the MP seat highlights insecurity and instability among the BJP Leh members. Not sure if he will withdraw his resignation as his dissatisfaction with the party is proven to the whole world through print as well as electronic media. If the BJP loses Thupstan Chhewang, it will certainly be a big blow to the party and might lose a huge number of BJP's supporters.

"Though I am more in favour of 'Statehood with Special Provisions for Ladakh', as a Ladakhi, I appreciate MP Thupstan Chhewang for his daring step. I believe that every single Councillor and other leaders must support him and hand over their resignation to the concerned institutions at the earliest to show the overall resentment. Ladakh must get united once again and raise voice so that our cries are heard. After all, Ladakhis cannot be treated like kindergarten kids anymore whom the state and central government always hand over a lollipop.

As far as oppositions are concerned, NC and PDP boycotting the first-ever Municipal Committee Leh elections has been proven as a big blessing for INC in regaining a breath though it is too early for INC to expand their chest yet. LBA's meeting on "Recent Development in J&K State" on 23rd November, 2018 and a peaceful procession of thousands of people accompanied by Ladakh Bandh for a half day on the 26th November, 2018 is also a sign of restlessness/political grievance among the people.

It is the general perception of the people of Ladakh nowadays that under the Governor's rule, all pending tasks and demands could be completed and met which the leaders and ruling parties could not do in years. Is this the sign of people losing hope in their elected representatives and the government? Are the democratically elected representatives compromised due to internal party pressure? To some extent, it is understandable due to PDP-BJP alliance (until BJP pulled its support to PDP lately) in the state but the leaders should be able to dispose off most of the tasks they have committed to the people of Ladakh in their election manifestos. Election manifesto is a legal document on the basis of which a voter may question the elected representative/leader for works he or she has or hasn't accomplished in a given time. But the situation in Ladakh is like 'who cares'.

We (Ladakhis) are all sailing in the same ship and safety of which is in the hands of the sea (Democracy), Captain of the ship (CEC), its crew (Dy CEC, Executive Councillors, Councillors and bureaucrats), weather (Central government), iceberg (State government) and inefficient fuel (uncertain/untrustworthy votes)." Ladags Rgyal Gyurshik!

Few questions that arise in the current political scenario are:

1. Is the presence of BJP's State president at the time of election of the current CEC indicates interference in the local/internal matter of Leh? Does it show the elected councilors' inefficiency to elect CEC on their own? Or was he there just to grace the occasion?
2. Why is Election Commission in hurry to hold Jammu and Kashmir assembly election before May 2019? Does it have to do anything with the Darbar move? Will it affect Ladakh's political scenario/structure in any way?
3. How long had Governor's fax machine been dysfunctional for? Had the government of alliance been formed, would it have affected the political scenario of Ladakh in general and Leh in particular?
4. Is it constitutional for a Governor to meet a particular party president (Amit Shah) and the PM day/days before the dissolution of assembly? (Source: NDTV)
5. Should Ladakhi leaders think only of party's image or care for the development of Ladakh?

The author, Dr. Tsultim Dorje (Solpon, Yangthang) is a sociologist who has been closely observing all the major aspects of Ladakh for many years.

The importance of municipal elections



Sabah Sharif

Ladakh underwent its first-ever municipal elections (Urban local body) recently. The verdict of the elections in the 26 wards showed a clean sweep by the Congress in all the 13 seats of Leh Municipal Committee. Dr. Ishey Namgyal has been appointed the president of the Municipal Committee.

The spectacular political triumph of the Congress can be a strong evidence of the tectonic shift in the politics of Ladakh as municipal elections in the state can be considered as a semifinal for the upcoming 2019 general elections.

At a broader level, we need to understand the importance of the municipal elections and why it is important to cast our votes. We can understand it by understanding its relevance in a democracy like ours. India is a democratic country in which governments are elected by the people through elections. There are three tiers of governance in India; central/union government, state government, and the local self-government.

The local self-government can also be called the grass-root democracy, which is a process by which much decision-making authority is shifted to the lowest geographic level or social level. Therefore, the essence of any true democracy is grass-root democracy. Urban local government is the responsibility of the department of local government in the state. In India, a local government is widely known as local self-government. This term originated when the country was under the British administration and did not enjoy any self-government either at the Centre or state levels. When a decision was taken by the British Government to associate Indians in administering local affairs, it meant a slice of self-government for the people. But today the term self-government has lost its significance as the country

enjoys self-government both at the central and state levels. In fact, in the Indian Constitution, the term used now is local government.

The essential characteristics of local government is its constitutional status granted by the 74th amendment Act of 1992, its power to raise finance by taxation in the area under its jurisdiction, participation of the community in decision making.

The programmes, plans and projects for the development of a country can be successful only when it reaches the country's grass-root level. Local government forms the link that helps bring these efforts of the government to the grass root level. Thus the process of decentralisation of power to the local government arouses a sense of participation amongst the citizens which paves a way for the effective realisation of democratic values by strengthening the local government or grass-root democracy. What grass-root democracy really then means is a political structure in which democracy is not just confined to the national or regional level but is extended to the local level as well.

Problems such as supply of water, removal of rubbish, drainage, lighting facilities, public health, regulation of trade and commerce arise when people live in a community. Amenities that solve these problems and make life better physically, socially, economically is what local governments are responsible for. In fact, the local government is today much more important in the daily life of a citizen than the state or Central government. The validity of a citizen's right and duty to participate in local government lies in the fact that the nation is a community of communities and to participate only in the government of the nation is, therefore, not enough. A citizen, therefore, needs to participate in the government of one's own community as well. To quote Harold Laski, "Unless we begin by the admission that all problems are not central

problems, and that the results of problems not central in their incidence requires decision at the place, and by the persons, where and by whom the incidence is most deeply felt".

Therefore, one can truly enjoy the rights and duties of his/her citizenship only when one directly participates in the decision-making process. By voting in local elections and holding officials accountable, we can create the change we want to see in the country. Voting turnout is very important in elections. However, in the recent municipal elections in Leh, we witnessed only 54.2% turnout. Voting for a government which has a direct effect on our lives can be the most important civic duty we have as citizens. However, it can be seen that the voter turnout is the least in municipal elections as compared to Assembly elections, etc, because we as individuals have been trained to believe that important decisions take place only at state level or national level, and, therefore, the local level gets ignored. However, citizens cannot fully contribute to the political and administrative processes of the country unless they participate in the decision-making process which directly concerns their life in the local community.

To conclude, the participation of the people in the municipal elections can play a decisive role in their daily lives and, at the same time, the verdict of these elections also prove as a litmus test for the future state and general elections. In the recent Municipal Committee election results in Leh, we saw a complete shift in the support of people towards the Congress.

Whether the Congress can come out with the same kind of results in the upcoming Assembly elections in the state and the 2019 general elections is something we can only speculate.

The writer, Sabah Sharif is an Assistant Professor in Political Science at Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Leh.

SoulSpeak

P. P. Wangchuk

Small and gradual improvements are sure shots for one's success



Only if we could follow the much-touted 1% change/improvement daily, we would really get to see wonders. Just imagine how the great achievements of the world would have been done. One thing is sure, they were not achieved overnight. They came up as a result of hard work and determination over many, many years.

Foresight, planning and willpower do help in that little incremental progress that leads one to great heights in the long run.

This kind of thinking gels quite well with the proverbial saying that slow and steady wins the race. That means nothing done in a hurry has a perfect ending. To do an exemplary job, one has to be patiently steady and work for that small change for the better on a daily basis. The sum total of small achievements done over a period of time comes out as a big achievement.

The way to go is, as somebody has said, "Plan your work and then work your plan." The good thing about this is that it does not call for much of an effort or brilliance. Any one of us can do it provided we have the willingness to be consistent and persistent. We need to be a little serious and strict in regulating our daily work in a manner that everything that is important to be done on any given day is not carried forward.

Normally, nothing of today's work should be carried on. Only then the journey of life goes on smoothly. And, one will have no reason to grumble about life and its vicissitudes.

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

The author is a New Delhi-based Editor-at-large, columnist and professional speaker

Disillusioned Ladakh seeks to search within



Phunchok Stobdan

Ladakh has become a battlefield for outside agendas and the resignation of its MP from the LS is a pointer to it. Ladakh can no longer allow itself to be driven by the force of self-destruction. If not restrained, it may regress into disorder, social upheaval, and chaos.

Ladakh is passing through a very difficult time. The recent resignation by Thupstan Chewang, Ladakh's only Member of Parliament and also the BJP is indicative of the protracted nature of the political crisis confronted by this strategic region.

For a long time, circumstances never allowed Ladakh to shape its own political identity and instead it had to remain steadfastly under the political patronage of external political groups and agenda.

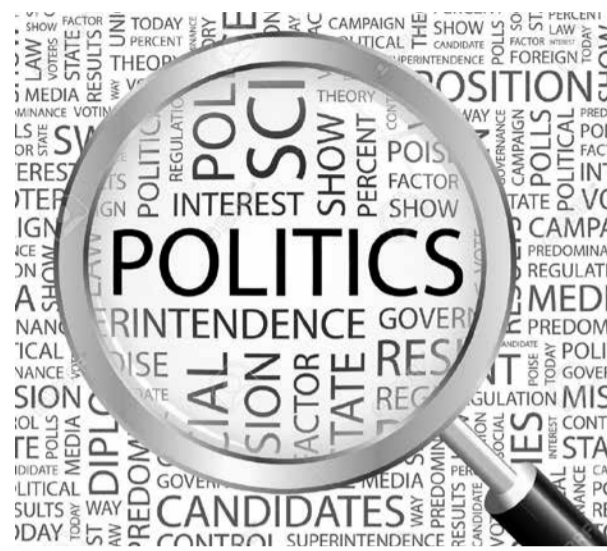
Of course, intermittent attempts by people to voice their local aspirations were either ruthlessly crushed or they were skilfully outmanoeuvred by political masters from outside. None of the demands raised by Ladakh, some of them predating the J&K's merger with the Indian Union, still remain unfulfilled.

A battlefield for political agendas

The reasons are numerous, but essentially they have succeeded in exploiting the simplicity, backwardness, fragility and also played on local fault-lines to keep Ladakh under their thumb. Such proclivities are seemingly encouraging others (outsiders) to find space for playing mischief and bring friction in Ladakh's social fabric. We are now witnessing rival political/ideological interest groups and parties from outside increasingly making Ladakh a battlefield for pushing their political agendas.

The present situation is an early sign of how Ladakh is likely to get torn apart by factional strife. People are indulging in petty and divisive politics to the detriment of social cohesion and unity. Confusion among people is palpable. The balance and maturity that existed in Ladakhi society seem to be fast receding.

Such tendencies are already vitiating the peaceful atmosphere of Ladakh with serious consequence of putting a great deal of strain on its society. Clearly, Ladakh can also no longer allow itself to walk consciously or be driven by the force of self-destruction. If not restrained, fear is that Ladakh too will regress into needless disorder, social upheaval, and chaos.



It becomes, therefore, imperative and also a moral obligation to restore and return to the era of peace, stability, brotherhood, communal amity between communities. Urgency demands that people make serious interventions to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

Limit to pulls of political dynamics

It is also clear that being a small community, there is a limit to how much Ladakh can withstand the pulls and pressure of political dynamics taking place elsewhere at the national level. Whereas, Ladakh has its own social, political and economic issues that are specific and distinct that cannot be addressed by juxtaposing or over-identifying with the larger trend.

At the same time, it is very important to care and participate in politics, for Ladakhis should know not only what is going on around them but also to ensure that political decisions made at various levels do not adversely affect their lives. Ladakhis have to exercise our democratic rights carefully because every vote that people make will either make or break society.

However, Ladakh cannot allow its political aspirations to be driven by external motivations, which seems easier but not an ideal choice, for it will amount to exposing its political bankruptcy.

It is of utmost importance that people of Ladakh are proud of their

regional identity which is more distinct by any yardstick compared to Jammu and Kashmir. The situation around Ladakh has changed rapidly in the past 20 years, and the time has now come to deal with the widespread shortcomings in our political approaches that are not without detrimental to Ladakh's interests.

Clearly, Ladakh's problems can only be addressed through its own political ideas, thoughts, actions, and wisdom that would in a way enable the people to reflect their own regional distinctiveness and aspirations. Ladakh has a strong political leadership which can guide the people on the right path with a clear sense of future.

Against the backdrop of these impinging political concerns and without going into merits and demerits of the past experience, several responsible people have been mulling over the idea of creating a local political platform under the rubric Ladakh Rangyul or simply the Rangyul with the following objectives:

"To nurture a political expression and outlook for Ladakh to be able to uphold its identity and interest first;

"To fill the void of identity politics in Ladakh;

"To steer an alternative political discourse based on local aspirations and challenges;

"To work towards the removal of prolonged political neglect of Ladakh by putting the key issues on the forefront of national attention;

"To strive for changing the political status quo of Ladakh within the Indian Constitution;

"To identify, articulate and exude Ladakh's core issues through its own voice and platform;

"To cater to growing to rising expectations of the people especially the younger generation to prevent them falling adrift;

"To exploit the full political potentials and economic interests of Ladakh;

"To enable Ladakh to play a greater political role both in the Centre and state;

Any person or groups wishing to push for a transformational change Gyrur-ja in Ladakh and believes in the principles, aims and objectives of the Rangyul should come forward to take the idea further.

Courtesy: Tribune

FORTNIGHT HIGHLIGHTS



Tsering Chondol, President, Women Alliance receiving Devi award for dynamism and innovation from Dr. Satya Pal Singh, Minister of State for Human Resource Development on November 13 in New Delhi.



District Congress Committee, Leh felicitates newly elected Sarpanches, Panches and Municipal Committee members on November 28 at Shenam Community hall.



Kargil Feroz Ahmed Khan, CEC along with the Executive Councillor for Horticulture Aga Syed Mujtaba flagging off a group of 40 farmers to Leh for exposure and training on latest interventions in Horticulture under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA).



Leh uproar UT with legislature demand for Ladakh on November 26.



A meeting with President Ram Nath Kovind and Veer Naaris (widows of war veterans) from Ladakh at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi during the Capacity Building tour under Operation Sadbhavana.

KNOW YOUR CULTURE

Galdan Namchot

An auspicious day celebrated by the Buddhist of the Himalayan belt to commemorate Birth and Buddhahood of the Tibetan saint-scholar, Lama Tsongkhapa (1357-1419). Lama Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelukpa School during the 14th century was born in 1357 in Tsongkha valley of Amdo province in northeast Tibet, presently integrated into the Chinese province of Qinghai. He received Buddha's teachings from all major traditions but was mainly inspired by the great Indian Nalanda master, Atisa.



Revered as an emanation of the three great Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, and Vajrapani, Lama Tsongkhapa embodied the respective profound qualities of enlightened compassion, wisdom and spiritual power of all three beings.

Having noted as an extraordinary child, Lama Tsongkhapa's father sent him to receive layman ordination at the age of three from H.H. the Fourth Karmapa, Rolpay Dorje (1340-1383). Tsongkhapa then received the name Kunga Nyingpo. Rolpay Dorje, predicted the boy as the Second Buddha.

At the age of seven, Lama Tsongkhapa received his novice ordination vows from Dondrup Rinchen, who was to become Tsongkhapa's first teacher. From 1373-1393, Tsongkhapa traveled all over Tibet, studying under 45 greatest teachers from different Buddhist lineages. He mastered not just in Buddhist teachings of Sutra, Tantra and countless deep retreats, but also excelled in medicine, astrology, and poetry.

Thus, on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar monasteries, stupas, houses, and all public buildings are illuminated with lights and butter lamp marking the celebration of Galdan Namchot. Lighting of butter lamps also marks the annihilation of darkness i.e ignorance and thus symbolises vision towards the better understanding of dharma and life.

The day also marks the beginning of New Year or Losar celebration in Ladakh. It is said that earlier Ladakh celebrated Losar with the Tibetans in the 12th month but due to a war scene to Skardo during the reign of King Jamyang Namgyal, Ladakh had to celebrate Losar two months before. As such the custom of celebrating it in the 10th month prevailed.

Scrumptious traditional cuisines are prepared and enjoyed with near and dear ones thus, spreading love, happiness and welcoming the New Year.

Source: www.lamatsonghapa.com

Kargil observes complete shutdown demanding University in Ladakh



Sajjad Hussain

KARGIL: Demanding a university for Ladakh in Kargil, complete shutdown was observed in the district on November 23.

The protest call was organised by Students Educational Movement

(SEMOK) of Kargil supported by religious organisations including Anjuman e Jamita e Ulema Isna Ashariya and Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust.

Representatives of both religious organisations extended their full

support with the students in demanding a university for Ladakh region in Kargil.

SEMOK representatives highlighted the importance and need of a university in the Ladakh region. They talked about the issues and problems of the students who are already pursuing their higher studies outside Ladakh.

Senior Advocate Ghulam Murtaza also stated that the students of Ladakh are suffering more in outside Ladakh.

However, the demand of a University for Ladakh in Kargil was also supported by the J&K Chairman Legislative Council, Haji Anayat Ali, CEC & EC's of LAHDC Kargil through various statements.

District Administration sets regulation and standard operating procedures for Chadar Trek

License of tour operators, porters and agencies to be revoked on rules violation

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Considering the safety and security of the tourists who intend to do Chaddar Trek during January and February 2019 in Ladakh, District Administration Leh circulated regulations and standard operating procedures on November 17.

Avny Lavasa, DC in an order made mandatory for all the foreign and domestic tourists to have medical insurance when they apply for Chaddar Trek and take medical check-up before the trek.

Apart from it other important directives like acclimatization up to the 2nd day of arrival in Leh,

getting NOC from ALTOA and a permit from Wild Life Department before trek also been framed.

As per the order, the medical check-up facilities and insurance cover will be provided by Ladakh Rescue Centre (Fantasy Tour Co.) and Adventure Sports Cover 360 (approved by District Administration) at Tourist Information Centre under the supervision of ALTOA.

Chaddar trek shall be allowed to do only through registered travel companies based in Leh or through porters registered with ALTOA having experiences and training, identity cards issued by ALTOA

with the condition of client porter ratio of 5:1.

To keep the Chaddar route neat and clean, green bags will also be provided to each group by the Wildlife Department for garbage collection. To deal with emergencies and evacuations, District Administration shall provide sat-phones to the agencies to facilitate communication.

The order further said that the District Administration reserves the right to revoke the license of the tour operators, porters, and other agencies if any regulations are violated.

DC interacts with people at zero border on her two days visit to Nubra

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NUBRA: Avny Lavasa, DC interacted with public and listened to their grievances and demands during her two day Nubra subdivision tour on November 27 and 28.

She visited Bogdang, Turtuk and Thang villages along with Sonam Norboo, SDM Nubra, Tashi Namgyal, Xen PWD Nubra, Mohd Rafiq, BDO Diskit, Ab Rehman, Naib Tehsildar Turtuk, and Nisar Ahmed, SHO Nubra.

People highlighted the issues including settlement of land compensation case with the army, construction of Turtuk-Hanu circular road, declaration of Turtuk and its seven adjoining villages under the Actual Line of Control (ALC) category, opening of Tebay-Domkhar trek route, resolution of CP Thang and other land disputes.

Avny Lavasa assured to take up their issues with the higher authorities for early redressal.

She also briefed about Ayushman Bharat PMJAY scheme and its benefit to the general public. And urged the Nambardar and newly elected Sarpanches and Panches to ensure maximum enrollment of beneficiaries under



the scheme once it gets underway.

She informed that the enrollment process will get started shortly once SDM Nubra identifies suitable locations to establish the CSC (Common Service Centre).

She also visited sub-District Hospital, Diskit and took update of the ongoing registration process of Ayushman Bharat PMJAY scheme.

During the inspection, she issued strict instructions to SDM and BMO to speed up the work by mobilizing health workers. She asked them to approach the army for the provision of internet services in completing the registration process.

Also, a review meeting at the waste segregation centre Diskit was held.

The participants expressed gratitude and happiness over the opening of this centre and requested DC for opening of similar centre at Hundar. Besides, they raised issues of stray animal menace, construction of public toilets on Leh-Nubra road, the revival of SRTC bus service from Diskit to Skuru etc.

Avny Lavasa expressed happiness and satisfaction over the successful functioning of the centre. She urged the Panchayat to play their crucial role in the functioning of this segregation centre in future.

EC agriculture conducts meeting to finalise draft capex budget 2019-20

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Executive Council for Agriculture Phunchok Stanzin convened a meeting of Councilors with HODs of Agriculture, Horticulture, Command Area Development and Soil Conservation departments to finalize the draft capex budget 2019-20 and revised estimate 2018-19 in his office chamber on 20 November.

Discussing about the Agriculture sector, Phunchok Stanzin, EC said that Council is giving priority to lead the agriculture sector of Leh towards organic and to substitute chemical fertilizer with compost manure. Council has proposed ₹10 lacs in capex budget 2019-20. Likewise, Council is introducing some new schemes on trial basis including the introduction of horticulture



plants in Changthang region, development of pasture land in Changthang and Lingshet-Photoksar area.

He further informed that to cover maximum farmers under various subsidy based schemes under Agriculture, Horticulture, Command Area and Soil Conservation sectors, Council has increased the quantity of all the schemes including Chainlink, Green House Polythene, ma-

chine and tools etc in capex budget 2019-20.

He further said that the coming budget is designed to encourage cash crops like rajma, buck wheat, apple and apricot, mushroom, floriculture etc.

Councillors also gave valuable suggestions and feedbacks to strengthen the Agriculture sector and in one vice demanded additional funds in this sector.

Over 100 players participate in 10th District Kargil Taekwondo Championship



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Clinching 20 medals, SAI SAG Kargil lifted 10th District Kargil Taekwondo Championship 2018 trophy on November 23 in which over 100 players from all over Kargil participated.

The 10th District Kargil Taekwondo Championship 2018 was organised by Kargil Taekwondo Association under the aegis of J&K Taekwondo Association.

Feroz Ahmad Khan, CEC Kargil, chief guest appreciated the efforts of Kargil Taekwondo Association for grooming young interested youths into professional players since 1998.

He expressed optimism that the local players who have immense

talent and aptitude for martial arts particularly Taekwondo, despite having limited resources, have the potential to bring laurels to the district at state, national and international level.

Reiterating the commitment of the Hill Council Kargil towards the encouragement of youngsters in different fields, he assured Kargil Taekwondo Association for all support to ensure that the aspiring Taekwondo players are groomed in the best possible manner.

He further added that Taekwondo is one such game in which players from the district have shown their caliber at the national and international arena.

Nasir Hussain Munshi, EC Works said that Kargil is proud

to have 50 Black Belt in Taekwondo and hundreds of players having medals in national events.

He said that the Council will do its best to tap the talent of young players by ensuring appropriate platform and encouragement.

Lifetime achievement award was conferred to Gulzar Ahmed Mir, Senior NCC Instructor, and Sports Promoter. Also, medals, trophies, and mementos were distributed among the players and teams.

Professor Nasir Hussain Shabani, Muhammad Ali Tak, Assistant Director Information Kargil, Gulzar Hussain Munshi, President Kargil Taekwondo Association and Ajaz Hussain Munshi, Social and Cultural Activist were also present.

Gyal P Wangyal reviews schemes and projects of LREDA

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Engineers of LREDA directed to aware councilors of LAHDC, Leh about various schemes of LREDA and take their consent while implementing such schemes.

The direction was given by Gyal P Wangyal, Deputy Chairman during the review meeting of the ongoing schemes and projects of LREDA in the district on November 28.

Dr. Tsewang Thinlas, Project Director LREDA, engineers and staff of the department were present.

Dr. Tsewang Thinlas apprised that

Leh district has great potential to explore renewable energy and can generate revenue for Hill Council, Leh. He informed that GoI is also ready to sanction a number of big projects for LREDA but due to lack of funds to meet salaries of staffs in the LREDA since few years, two third staff left their jobs.

He requested LAHDC, Leh to allocate adequate funds under District Plan/Non-Plan for LREDA office expenses so that they could take some big projects in near future.

He also updated about the progress on a six number of mini hydel projects in Nubra valley. The hydel

project Turtuk (500 KV) and Chamshen (450 KV) will be commissioned in May-June 2019, likewise, hydel project Tsati (500 KV) and Henachey (600 KV) will be commissioned by the end of 2019. Similarly, hydel project Bogdang (800 KV) and Chalungkha (800 KV) is expected to be commissioned in the year 2020.

Gyal P Wangyal directed Dr. Thinlas to give a proposal regarding handing over of about 130 Solar Power Project to villages, Govt institutions, and religious organisations so that LREDA could concentrate on new projects.



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 Day 10: Drive From Krabi To Phuket. Overnight Hotel
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