



VOTE FOR HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY



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FOR THE PRESENT & FUTURE OF SIKKIM,
YOUR VOTE FOR HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY



A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF SIKKIM

Dear People of Sikkim,

Greetings from **Hamro Sikkim Party!**

You know that on 11th April you have to elect a new government in Sikkim. This is not an ordinary election. This is an election that will decide the direction and condition of future of Sikkim. We just urge you to read this letter once, then think and then vote as your wisdom directs.

We have highlighted some of the core issues of common people and have presented Hamro Sikkim Party's stand on each of them:

1. Do you want a Sikkim where there is a clean politics, where there is no buying of vote and where the government takes care of the people more than itself?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because the whole idea behind creation of Hamro Sikkim Party is to fight against corrupt and selfish political establishments and present an alternative to the people of Sikkim. We promise you that after winning elections, our candidates will always be with you and work for you, unlike current politicians who work to fill their pockets for 5 years and when elections come they try to bribe you to buy your votes. Remember, those who are spend money in trying to buy votes will recover every bit with interest from you by exploiting you after winning elections and will not work for your betterment.

For Clean Politics in Sikkim, Your Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

2. Do you want a poverty-free Sikkim?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because within 25 days of forming the government, Hamro Sikkim Party will launch "Sikkimey Samman Yojana" under which every individual of Sikkim will get Rs.1500/Month i.e. Rs.7500/Year directly in their bank accounts which means if a family has 5 members then they will get Rs.7,500/Month i.e. Rs.90,000/Year and Rs.4,50,000 in five years. This scheme will cover everyone in Sikkim except those who are earning more than Rs.25,000/Month. Hamro Sikkim Party believes that everyone has the right to live life with dignity (Samman) and has thus designed this scheme in consultation with experts. Sikkimey Samman Yojna will be proved a landmark decision for eradication of poverty in Sikkim.

For Poverty-Free Sikkim, your vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

3. Do you want to remove unemployment permanently in Sikkim so that every youth has job matching with their ability?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because today Sikkim has 2nd highest unemployment rate in India and Hamro Sikkim Party has taken a resolution to make Sikkim unemployment-free for which within 6 months, all persons holding temporary, contract, daily wage, guest, Anganawadi, ASHA, MDM or One Family One Job Scheme jobs, will be assured of work till retirement age & equal pay or legal minimum wage. For this, Hamro Sikkim Party shall make a new law. Within 6 months, all qualified & unemployed will get jobs because all vacant positions shall be filled in Education, Health & other Essential Public Services. We will form an Employment Commission and Job Creation Centers in each district to ensure generation of employment for every youth of Sikkim. Till now, only 100 days of job guarantee was there under MNREGA which shall be increased to 150 days by Hamro Sikkim Party, that too on wages of Rs.300 per day. Within 25 days of taking oath, Hamro Sikkim Party firmly commits to launch Sikkim Universal Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Sikkim Grameen Rozgar Guarantee Yojna) for every Sikkimese rural household. We have prepared complete blueprint of unemployment-free Sikkim by taking inputs from the experts across the globe.

For Employment of Youth, Your Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

4. Do you want that talented sportspersons of Sikkim be provided free quality training and facilities to represent Sikkim at National & International level?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because under the leadership of Bhaichung Bhutia, former Captain of Indian Football team & the founder member of Hamro Sikkim Party, Hamro Sikkim Party shall usher in RIGHT TO UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SPORTS. To promote sports in the state, our government will set up Sports Authority of Sikkim at state level and District Sports Authorities in each district. Our government will provide free training, diet and education upto college level to talented sportspersons from the age group of 8 to 15. We will develop international level indoor and outdoor stadiums in all four districts and playfields with budget of rupees one crore in each assembly segment of Sikkim. Hamro Sikkim Party government will also ensure reservations in government jobs and educational institutions for sportspersons. We will make Sikkim a hub of sports and sporting activities in India.

For Right To Sports & Bright Future of Sportspersons, Your Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

5. Do you want that every household of Sikkim should get 24 hours of electricity and water?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because within 12 months, every urban and rural household shall be assured of 24 hours drinking water and electricity supply by intensive and comprehensive planning, infrastructure development and power/water shortage shall become history. Nature has given abundant resources to Sikkim but due to poor planning by previous government, people have to be deprived of basic necessities like water and electricity. We will provide free water and cheaper electricity and also respect and protect our natural resources.

For Free Water & Cheaper Electricity, Your Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

6. Do you want quality education for your children and make sure that they don't have to go outside for the higher education?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because Hamro Sikkim Party believes that besides immediate corrective measures that are necessary and which Hamro Sikkim Party will take, long term prosperity can only be achieved by imparting quality education and skills to our children. Within 12 months, Hamro Sikkim Party will overhaul primary and secondary education system to impart high quality effective education & skills to sustain universal functional literacy & numeracy. It will be ensured that the curriculum of education imparted is all-round and leads to children of Sikkim being able to compete nationally. It will be ensured that government schools are properly staffed & funded & every school is RTE compliant. RTE shall be expanded to age 16 & great emphasis shall be laid on early childhood education. Shortage of teachers shall be eradicated by filling regular vacancies and ensuring that teachers are properly trained to meet the requirements of the curriculum. There will not be any transfer of teachers during the academic session, unless absolutely necessary.

For Future of Children and Quality Education, Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

7. Do you want that the condition of our farmers should improve and agriculture should not be a loss making profession?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because within 10 days of taking Oath, Hamro Sikkim Party firmly commits to grant one-time comprehensive loan-waiver for all farmers for all crop loans from all lending sources. To ensure that farmers do not fall into debt traps in future, Sikkim Farmers' Disaster and Distress Relief Commission shall be set up and Credit Guarantee Fund shall be created. Within 6 months, assurance of at least Rs. 18000/- per month per farm household shall be achieved through a combination of measures like SSY, Remunerative MSP, SUPS etc. Within 6 months, Remunerative MSP for all crops and agricultural produce (including vegetables, fruits, spices, non-cultivated food, forest produce, milk and eggs) shall be declared at Comprehensive Cost of Cultivation (C2)+50% profit and all farmers shall be guaranteed sale/offtake at such Remunerative MSP. Besides these we will provide Sikkim Kisaan Card to every farmer as a comprehensive identity document for access to all schemes for credit, compensation and benefits. Hamro Sikkim Party is committed towards working for betterment of the farmers and will take every step which should be taken by a sensitive government.

For the Rights and Respect of Farmers, Your Vote for Hamro Sikkim Party

8. Do you want that our elders should be respected and they should not be dependent on anyone?

- **If you answer is YES then VOTE for HAMRO SIKKIM PARTY.** Because within 25 days of taking oath, Hamro Sikkim Party firmly commits to launch Sikkim Universal Pension Scheme (SUPS) for every Sikkimese. For elders in the age group of 59 to 69 years we will provide Rs.5,000/Month and for elders of age 70 years and above we shall provide Rs.10,000/Month in their bank accounts through direct bank transfer. Additionally, free healthcare of high standard shall be delivered at doorstep of every Sikkimese man and woman above 70 years of age. Our elders are the guiding light for us and we are committed to providing every possible support to them.

For Respect of Elders, Your Vote For Hamro Sikkim Party

Above are 8 key topics on which we have thrown some light. Apart from these, in our Manifesto, we have taken care of every aspect that is necessary for happiness and prosperity of Sikkim. We have the blueprint and vision of implementing every promise which we have made. You can read our full manifesto on our website <https://www.hamrosikkimparty.org/manifesto/>.

This time before voting just think once, what kind of government Sikkim deserves? The same which we have been seeing till now in which MLAs worked more for themselves than for the people or we deserve an alternative political leadership which has the vision and roadmap for the overall development of Sikkim without any discrimination and partiality?

If you feel this time Sikkim should get a clean and effective government then vote for Hamro Sikkim Party.

Success in Sikkim eludes national parties

KUNDAN KUMAR

GANGTOK, APR 7 (PTI): Winning the Lok Sabha or assembly polls in Sikkim has eluded the national parties for the past four decades since the state came into being.

It has been the regional parties - Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) of Nar Bahadur Bhandari and Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) of Pawan Chamling which have won the lone Lok Sabha seat and the state assembly since 1979.

In an exception, in the first Lok Sabha polls held in Sikkim in 1977, two years after its merger with India, the Congress had won unopposed to the Parliament.

In respect to the assembly polls it has tasted limited success so far. The party had won an assembly seat in 1984, two in 1994 and a lone one in 2004.

The BJP is yet to open its account in the 32-member assembly of the Himalayan state.

The fortunes of parties like the CPI, CPI-M, Trinamool Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), who have contested in Sikkim at various times, have been equally disappointing so far with more than 60 per cent candidates of all national parties forfeiting their deposits since 1979.

Asked, a BJP senior leader said that strong regional sentiments among the people, who feel more comfortable with local leaders has led to the complete rout of the national parties in the polls in the state.

"The regional parties like the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front have milked the vulnerabilities of the local people to their advantage by telling

them that if the national parties come to power in the state they will abrogate Article 371(F), which protects their rights and provides special provisions for Sikkim," he said.

"We have been unsuccessful so far in convincing that we will safeguard their rights," the BJP leader said, adding, it would require more interaction between the party's leadership and the people for any headway in the electoral politics of Sikkim.

This time the party is repeating its foray in the state assembly polls despite the previous debacles and has put up candidates in 12 seats as well as in the lone Lok Sabha seat.

The Sikkim National Peoples Party (SNPP) president Delay Barfungpa confirms the analysis of the BJP leader. "We

cannot trust the national parties to protect Article 371F," Barfungpa said.

The Sikkim PCC president Bharat Basnett felt that the national parties have not given enough importance to Sikkim because it has "just one Lok Sabha seat".

"It is the national parties' indifference towards Sikkim, its people and issues which have prevented them from making inroads in the state's politics," he said.

Basnett, who is the party's candidate for the lone Lok Sabha seat this time, said Congress had done important things for Sikkim like granting special status to it under Article 371F and inclusion of Nepalese language under eighth schedule of Constitution.

"Yet the Sikkimese people have not reposed confidence in the Congress, elections

after elections, for decades," he said.

He also blamed the regional ruling parties for creating a fear psychosis among the people against the national parties saying they will snatch the special status if allowed to rule Sikkim.

The SDF spokesperson Bhim Dahal, agrees that the Sikkimese people are not comfortable with the national parties when it comes to voting for them in elections.

"The national parties like the Congress and BJP have paid only lip service to the aspirations of Sikkim while ruling at the Centre ... The tendency of the central government to sit on important demands of the Sikkimese people for decades have led to strong undercurrent against them among the local people," he said.

Dahal, a former Lok Sabha MP, cited the is-

sue of delay in reservation of assembly seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities as an example of the national parties' apathy towards Sikkim.

As long as the national parties continue to remain indifferent towards Sikkim it is unlikely that the Sikkimese people will trust them, he added.

The SSP had been in power in the state since 1979 to 1994, while the ruling SDF under Pawan Kumar Chamling has held the tight reins of the state since 1994.

Chamling is the longest-serving chief minister of the Himalayan state and is looking forward to return to power for the sixth consecutive term.

Polling for the 32-member assembly and the lone Lok Sabha seat will be held on April 11.

East preps polling parties for election duty

GANGTOK, APRIL 07 (IPR):

Preparations for dispatch of polling parties has been started by the East District Administration, the District Election Officer (East), Kapil Meena, informs. Training for the same has been scheduled for 08 April for all the tables which will dispatch polling materials.

The Strong Rooms which house the prepared EVMs and VVPATs will be opened on 10 April at 7:30am in the presence of candidates and their election agents at Brihaspati Parsai Senior Secondary School, he adds.

A complete plan for activities on the day of dispatch and thereafter for reception of polling parties is being made by Office of District Election Officer.

The dispatch of all 214 polling parties will be completed by noon on 10 April with Sector Magistrates escorting the polling parties both on the day of dispatch and on the day of reception after the polling is over.

The sealing of strongrooms for the Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency and for 13 Assembly Constituencies of East District, including Sangha, will then be done in the presence of candidates/ agents and General Observers on the night of 11 April after reception is completed.

Sufficient number of reserve machines have been prepared and will be provided to Zonal Magistrates and Sector Magistrates for any replacements on the day of polls if needed.

Will PM Modi have courage to fight from Kerala or Tamil Nadu, asks Shashi Tharoor

ASIM KAMAL

NEW DELHI, APR 7 (PTI):

Rahul Gandhi's decision to contest from Wayanad shows he has the confidence to win from both north and south India, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said Sunday and asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would have the courage to fight from a seat in Kerala or Tamil Nadu. With Gandhi contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Kerala's Wayanad constituency, there is palpable excitement across the southern states that the next prime minister could be elected from the the region, Tharoor told PTI in an interview.

Tharoor also slammed Modi and the BJP for suggesting that Gandhi chose Wayanad to "run away" from majority dominated areas, saying the ruling party has repeatedly resorted to peddling bigotry. It was dismaying that this was coming from the prime minister, he added.

"By reinforcing his role as a torchbearer for the BJP's bigotry, Mr Modi has disregarded the principled position that a prime minister of India must be a prime minister for all Indians," he told PTI from Thiruvananthapuram. Addressing a

rally in Wardha in Maharashtra, the prime minister had said the opposition party was "scared" to field its leaders from constituencies where the majority dominates. Tharoor claimed Gandhi's decision to contest from Wayanad comes at a time of "unprecedented strain" on the spirit of cooperative federalism that has held the country together since its Independence in 1947.

Under the BJP-led Centre, he alleged, relations between the southern states and the federal government have "steadily deteriorated" over a number of issues such as threats to the economic security of the south as well as the future of its political representation.

In that context, Gandhi has made a bold statement of intent to suggest he can be the bridge that repairs the growing north-south divide within the country, Tharoor said, adding that it also signals that the Congress chief has the confidence to win elections in both the north and the south.

"Can Narendra Modi make such a claim? Would he have the courage to fight for a seat in Kerala or Tamil Nadu?" the former diplomat turned politician asked.

Sector Magistrates and SPOs briefed in North Sikkim



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 APR:

District Election Officer-cum-Returning Officer, North, Raj Yadav, along with Superintendent of Police (SP), North, Kunzang Dorjee Shangderpa, convened a meeting with the Sector Magistrates and Sector Police Officers of the district today here at the conference hall of District Administrative Centre (DAC), Mangan.

The DEO/RO briefed them about the roles

and responsibilities of SMs and SPOs towards smooth conduct of elections on poll day.

He elaborated the dispatch process of polling materials and polling teams to their designated stations on 10 March and instructed them to arrive at the DAC complex at 7 AM to receive their tasks.

He has also directed to SMs to submit a report of their drive up and set-up of Polling Stations by 6 PM the same day. SMs must ensure proper dis-

tribution of voter slip through Booth Level Officers, he added.

The SP-North, in turn, briefed the SMs and SPOs about the rules and laws to be adhered to on polling day. He reminded them about the ECI guideline that polling vehicles should not be stopped on the way until they reach the designated Polling Stations.

Altogether 10 SMs and 10 SPOs were present for the meeting along with the SDMs.

NOTICE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER, EAST

As per Section 171 B of Indian Penal Code, any person giving or accepting any gratification in cash or kind during election process, with a view to inducing the person to exercise his electoral rights is punishable with imprisonment upto 1 year or with fine or with both. Further, as per Section 171 C of Indian Penal Code, any person who threatens any candidate or elector, or any other person, with injury of any kind, is punishable with imprisonment upto 1 year or with fine or both. Flying Squads have been formed to register cases against both the giver and the taker of bribe and for taking action against those who are engaged in threat and intimidation of electors. All the Citizens are hereby requested to refrain from taking any bribe and in case, anybody offers any bribe or is having knowledge about the bribe or cases of threat/intimidation of electors, then he should inform on the toll-free number 1950 of the 24 X 7 Complaint Monitoring Cell or on District Control Room Number 03592-284026 of the District, set up for receiving the complaints.

Resentment over unmet promises brews in Assam's tea city

ZAFRI MUHAMMAD NOFIL

DIBRUGARH (ASSAM),

APR 7 (PTI):

Minimum wages, ST status, basic amenities and permanent employment avenues are some of the demands of Assam's tea tribes, who form a considerable chunk of voters in this Lok Sabha constituency but are struggling to be heard above the din of political rhetoric. This tea town, which goes to the polls on April 11, is home to around 4.5 lakh voters of the community, made up of scores of tribes who form the bulk of workers in the tea gardens of the state.

But things have not improved much for tea garden workers despite leaders from the community getting elected to Parliament several times. This time there are four contestants in the fray who hail from the community -- Rameshwar Teli (BJP), Paban Singh Ghatowar (Congress), Titus Bhengra (Bahujan Mukti Party) and Israil Nanda (Independent).

In 2017, the Assam government formed an advisory board to fix minimum wages of tea workers. The board recommended an amount of Rs 351 but a final decision is yet to be taken. At present, a tea garden labourer gets a daily wage of Rs 167. According to Teli, who represents the constituency in the Lok Sabha, the government cannot raise wages and it is up to tea garden owners to take a decision.

"We cannot put pressure on the tea garden owners to raise wages. They will face problems. So what our government is doing is giving support to the tea garden community to improve their living conditions. We are giving free rice, monetary help to pregnant women, mobiles to line sardars (head of labourers) and scooters for girls," Teli told PTI.

His political rival, former Union minister and Congress candidate Paban Singh Ghatowar, questions the BJP's stand on the minimum wage issue saying it has been fooling the tea garden community.

YT Lepcha assures to serve Gangtok as sincere Chowkidaar

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 APR:

Bharatiya Janata Party's Gangtok candidate, YT Lepcha, assured to work consistently for the people of Gangtok as a sincere Chowkidaar. He further expressed hope that the people will evaluate the party's performance across the State and have the lotus bloom in the State.

Mr Lepcha, who is also the East District president of the BJP state unit, has been going door-to-door with the programmes promised in the BJP manifesto. The party, he in-

forms, has taken out a 21-programme constituency-level manifesto for Gangtok.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Lepcha thanked the party for having picked him as a candidate for Gangtok and said that the party is committed to make Gangtok a model constituency.

"BJP wants to reach benefits of all the pro-people flagship programmes of the party to the people," he said and alleged that the state government has not been implementing these programmes properly.

Police Observer visits South Polling Stations



NAMCHI, 06 APR (IPR):

The Police Observer for Sikkim, Naveen Arora visited and inspected three Polling Stations in 14/10, 14/14 and 14/15 at Namphing Senior Secondary school under Temi Namphing constituency. The sector magistrate, along with three concerned BLOs, was present during the inspection.

The Observer also took stock of the upcoming election preparedness and explained in detail the various guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for the smooth conduct of election. During his inspection, the Observer was accompanied by the Temi Police Station SHO, Anupa Gurung.

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LATEN TSHER-ING SHERPA
Lok Sabha candidate

Sikkim ki Janta Bhare Hunkaar
Paryatan ko Udyog ka Darja Dene
Aa Rahe Hain **Chowkidaar**

Modi Sarkar in, Casino Sarkar Out

From State BJP, Sikkim



Oppn indulging in politics of deception, Chamling alleges



ARPAN PRADHAN
MINING (RANGPO), 07 APR:
Sikkim Democratic Front president, Chief Minister Pawan Cham-

ling, today held forth that Election 2019 presented the electorate here with an easy option of choosing the optimism and em-

pathy presented by the SDF or the negativity and spite espoused by the Opposition. The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was

- SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE IN RANGPO**
- Upgradation of Duga Secondary School to Senior Secondary School
 - Land to Santanirankari
 - Free education for children of the business community in the upcoming medical college.
 - Sangha Panchayat Seat like Sanga Assembly
 - Middle Camp School to be upgraded to Senior Secondary School
 - Tumlabung Junior High School to be upgraded to High School
 - West Pendam constituency to have a Minister
 - A Damai candidate to appointed Chairperson
 - Flats for Harijans, their jobs to be regularized and 13 months salary to be paid to them every year

clearly in his sights as he expressed hope that the people decide in Sikkim's favour and give continuity to development, peace

and security.
"It has not been easy to bring Sikkim to its present state, but we

turn to pg06

The lotus will bloom in Sikkim this time: Nabin



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 APR:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim election in-charge, Nitin Nabin, today reiterated that BJP wants to give a corruption-free and transparent government in Sikkim.

He expressed confidence that the development delivered to Sikkim

by Narendra Modi has won the trust of the people here and that this was reflected in the positive response received by BJP candidates thus far.

"We are confident that the lotus will bloom in Sikkim this time," he said.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Nabin raised four

questions with the Chief Minister and asked his who the enemy of the people of Sikkim that he frequently alluded to was.

"Are the party and person who gave one lakh crores for the development of Sikkim the enemy of the people or those who invested this

turn to pg06



एसडीएफको
आधारभूत
चाहना

- * जनता राजमा जनतै राजा: सिक्किमे जति सबै राजा।
- * सिक्किममा सिक्किमेको राज: सर्व-समावेशी सभ्य समाज।
- * आत्मनिर्भर र स्वावलम्बी सिक्किम: समृद्ध, सुखी र शान्ति सिक्किम।
- * सबैभन्दा अघि सधैं सिक्किमलाई: पहिलो पालो युवालाई।
- * गुणात्मक शिक्षा सबैलाई: नि:शुल्क शिक्षा सबैलाई।
- * स्वास्थ्य सेवा सबैलाई: सुरक्षित जीवन सबैलाई।
- * महिला सुरक्षा अनि सम्मान: आमा-चेलीहरूको सशक्तीकरण।
- * सबलाई बिजुली: सबलाई पानी।
- * सबलाई अवसर: सबलाई रोजगारी।

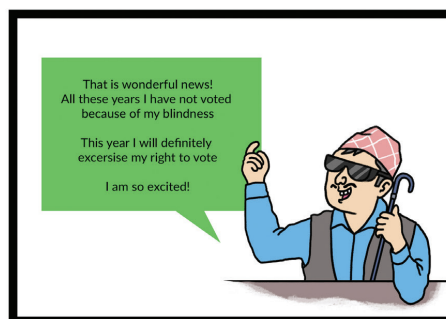
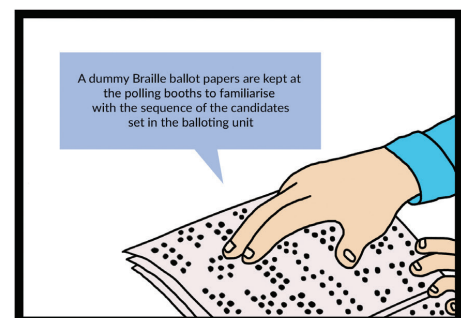
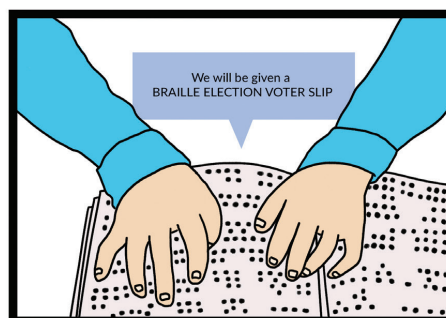
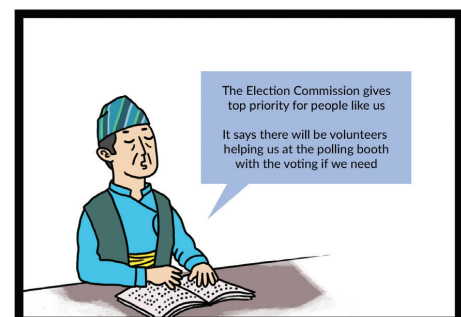
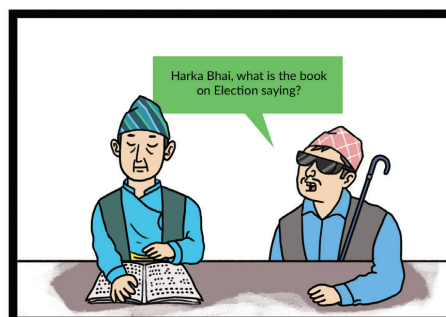
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बहुमूल्य भोट दिनुहोस्!



Advt.

SIKKIM को ELECTIONS



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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

For Labour

Because not enough is being said on their behalf

We see them around often, but don't always notice them. They labour on tasks which are necessary, but would not have the necessary workforce had it not been for their privations which draw them away from home to worksites across the country. They power development with their sweat, plod away, are often humiliated and yet they persevere. Had it not been for them, the planners who chart development for the country would have seen their projections stuck to the drawing board and never translated on ground. Take a look around, the sewage line does not get laid only because there is a budget for it, but because there are stomachs desperate enough to work through cold, wet nights to lay them. Cardamom is not a cash crop because Sikkim has progressive farmers, but because there are backs willing to take the load by the maund after they have harvested a crop which, let's accept it, few here have any actual understanding of. Gangtok's highways would not be neatly parted of their overnight sludge, had an entire army of labourers not been at hand to begin clearing the debris at the break of dawn. Drive on the highways, and it becomes obvious that the poor roads do not stand a chance of improving if workers from outside were not trucked in. Trekking is possible not only because Sikkim is pretty, but because realities are quite ugly for some making them carry loads wearing slippers and plastic shoes up trails where even the tougher trekkers slip despite their better shod feet.

And still, they do not figure anywhere in the pecking order and in most cases, don't even get to enjoy the infrastructure they build. Unfortunately, they also make easy targets, often denied even of their due remunerations. We read reports of Indian stuck in the Middle East, not paid their dues and unable even to afford an air ticket home, and we offer them the wrong response – clucking our tongues in sympathy when we should have been raging against the systems which allow such denials. Sikkim got a taste of such inhumanity in the wake of the 18 Sept earthquake when choppers evacuated the management and officers, but labourers at hydel and other construction sites had to foot it across dangerous terrain. Many of them complained of not having received their dues and only few of them had any plans of returning. They fled with their lives, leaving behind their earnings. It is unlikely that anyone even attempted to trace them down and clear their dues. They are probably being exploited somewhere else now.

The anonymity in which the labour force works and fades away is still an unfortunate reality, and one that needs to be addressed. Not just because they deserve better, but also because we need to be better. The maltreatment is not just a governmental failing, but more a societal shortcoming. It is because we, as consumers, do not pay enough heed to basic human rights that the labour, as a class, gets denied. The West now has the luxury to pay attention to such issues which the developing world still looks at as distractions. When we celebrate laws banning bonded labour and child labour in India, we should perhaps thank buyers in the West who put pressure on manufacturers to become more humane. The pressure for better protections and more genuine safeguards have to come from the lay people, who themselves have to deliver better as well. The government fixes the minimum wage, but apart from government employ, how many other workplaces offer them? How many domestic servants, even discounting meals, are volunteered such remuneration? And yet there are people willing to work for less, willing to look the other way despite a law [of minimum wage] being broken. The labour force does not require a more compassionate government, it requires fellow citizens who notice them, listen to them, respect them and when the situation demands, speaks for them.

Putin's plagiarism, fake Ukrainian degrees and other tales of world leaders accused of academic fraud

ARARAT OSIPIAN
theconversation.com

A recent college admissions scandal in the United States, which revealed that wealthy parents had bribed officials at elite universities, exposed the price some people are willing to pay to say, "I went to an Ivy League school."

In a country where the myth of academic meritocracy persists despite plenty of evidence to the contrary, many people were shocked to learn that the education system was rife with illegal and unethical conduct.

But academic fraud is nothing new – and it wasn't invented in the United States. In certain countries, my research on academic corruption attests, some public officials have built their entire political careers on the false pretense of scholastic achievement.

LYING LEADERS

You'd think that former German Minister of Defense Baron Karl-Theodor Maria Nikolaus Johann Jacob Philipp Franz Joseph Sylvester Buhl-Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg already had a long enough name.

But in 2006, he decided to add the title of "Dr." to it, completing his doctorate of law at Germany's University of Bayreuth.

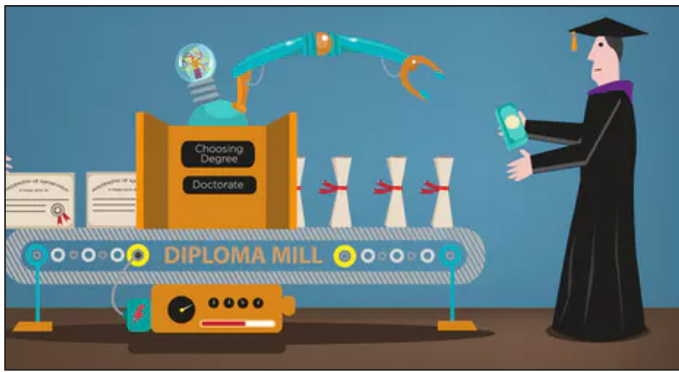
Or so he said.

It turns out that Guttenberg, then widely seen as the successor to Chancellor Angela Merkel, had plagiarized large sections of his Ph.D. dissertation comparing U.S. and European legal systems.

The internet sleuths who outed his fraud in 2011 gave Guttenberg yet another name – the sobriquet "Googleberg." He was forced to resign, fled possible criminal prosecution in Germany and, in the United States, landed an honorary position at the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank.

Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta initially tried a different approach when he was accused of academic plagiarism soon after taking office in 2012: He denied everything.

"The only reproach I have is that I did not list authors at the bottom of each page, but put them in the bibli-



ography at the end," he said.

Ponta quit his post in 2015 after going on trial for tax evasion and facing a series of other scandals.

But he still defended his academic honor.

"After...stepping down from the political scene, I wish to pursue a new doctorate while adhering to and respecting all of the standards and requirements," he said bravely, after admitting to having plagiarized more than half of his 2004 dissertation on the International Criminal Court. Ponta later wrote to the rector of Bucharest University to renounce his degree.

DENIAL: THE STRONGMAN'S TACTIC

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been far less receptive to repeated allegations that he was not the intellectual braintrust behind his 1997 dissertation, "Mineral and Raw Materials Resources and the Development Strategy for the Russian Economy."

Accusations against Putin first surfaced in 2006, when an investigation by the Brookings Institution alleged he copied about 16 pages of his 200-page Ph.D. dissertation from other sources.

Twelve years later, the Russian strongman found himself defending against accusations that his dissertation had been ghostwritten. According to former Russian legislator Olga Litvinenko, Putin's dissertation was written by her father, Vladimir Litvinenko, Putin's academic advisor and the rector of Saint Petersburg Mining University.

Also helpful in "writing" Putin's dissertation, says Litvinenko: a photocopy machine.

Employing the only cut-and-paste technology available in the late 1990s, she says her father helped Putin cheat by using scissors to snip paragraphs from various sources, glued them together and copied them to create new pages in his dissertation.

Putin has never responded to the allegations.

MODELS OF CHEATING

Guttenberg's, Ponta's and Putin's reactions to their false doctorate scandals are all completely appropriate, my research finds – if you consider the cultural context in which each occurred.

Leaving office, or even fleeing the country, after allegations of academic corruption, as Guttenberg did, is a rational response in his situation.

Germany ranks sixth of 129 countries worldwide in terms of adherence to the law, according to the World Justice Project's annual "rule of law" index. There, such criminal acts bring professional disgrace, a likely conviction in court and possibly even jail time.

In an emerging democracy that still struggles with corruption, however, such as Romania, bravado is a reasonable way to handle allegations of academic malfeasance. Among European countries, Romania is among the least likely to hold public officials accountable for abuses of power or to demand transparency from government employees, according to the World Justice Project, which ranks the rule of law worldwide.

And in a well-established autocracy like Russia, frankly, top politicians can afford the luxury of simply ignoring allegations of a

falsified resumes. Putin has held top office, as either president or prime minister, since 1999.

His grip on power is so all-encompassing that he is immune to the negative consequences of academic scandal – or pretty much any scandal. **UKRAINE'S DISSERTATION FACTORIES**

The same holds true in Ukraine, another struggling young democracy.

In Ukraine, it is traditional for top politicians to hold doctorates. All of the five presidents that have run Ukraine since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 have had their Ph.D.'s – at least in theory.

But since the country has dozens of private firms that offer ghost-written dissertations for sale, it has also become a Ukrainian tradition to expose politicians with unearned doctorates.

President Victor Yanukovich's doctorate and professorship was called into doubt when people noticed that his 2004 application to run for president contained numerous grammatical errors – including the misspelled word "professor."

In 2017, former Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk was also accused of plagiarizing his dissertation.

Both followed Putin's model: Ignore the scandal and hope it will just go away.

It did. Yanukovich became president on his second try in 2010. Yatsenyuk remains one of Ukraine's leading politicians.

DON'T ASK ME ABOUT MY DEGREE

When asked about how they made their fortune, billionaires often cite Henry Ford's quip: "I am ready to account for any day in my life, but don't ask me how I made my first million."

The car manufacturer's bon mot hints at the shady – sometimes illicit – origins or great wealth.

For some European and Russian politicians – or even American college graduates – today, the modern equivalent might be, "Don't ask me how I earned my degree."

[the writer is Visiting Professor, George Mason University]

Cervical pre-cancer rates down 88% in decade since HPV vaccinations began – first findings

KEVIN POLLOCK
theconversation.com

Cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among women in the UK under the age of 35 after breast and skin cancer. In the majority of cases, the cancer only develops if the patient is infected with human papillomavirus (HPV) types 16 or 18. This virus is mainly transmitted between people having vaginal, anal or oral sex. At some point in their lives, four in five people will be infected by HPV strains – as many as 14 can cause cancer in total. According to recent studies, other cancers heavily linked to HPV infections include head-and-neck, vulvo-vaginal and anal.

In an effort to reduce rates of cervical cancer, a number of countries launched immunisation programmes in the late 2000s, starting with Austria in 2006. The UK and its devolved governments launched a school immunisation programme in 2008 to vaccinate all girls aged 12-13. To speed up the time lag associated with achieving the benefits of vaccination, they also kicked off a three-year catch-up programme for girls aged up to 18 years.

A decade on, we are finally able to publish the first results. The data relates to Scotland, since it was cervically screening women from the age of 20 until 2016 – before falling into line with the minimum age of 25 used in the rest of the UK. This meant that Scotland obtained screening data for the 2008-09 cohort before the change in screening age. Scotland also has very detailed information about take-up rates, which have been very high: running to approximately 90% in Scotland for the routinely vaccinated girls and 65% for the older girls vaccinated as part of the catch-up programme.

For the first time, we can now confirm that the vaccination programme has begun to profoundly alter the prevalence of HPV 16 and 18 among Scottish women – and presumably elsewhere as well.

THE STUDY

My team performed an eight-year study of the women eligible for the Scottish national vaccination and cervical screening programmes. We looked at their vaccination status, year of birth, indicators of deprivation and whether they lived in urban or rural areas. Using complex statistical modelling, we were able to calculate the effect of vaccination on cervical pre-cancer. Though not all pre-cancer be-



comes cancer, all cancer requires pre-cancer. Cervical pre-cancer occurs quicker than cancer and therefore this focus has allowed us to see the impact of the vaccine earlier.

Among women born in 1995-96 – the first group to go through the regular vaccination programme in 2008/09 – there has been an 88% reduction in rates of cervical pre-cancer. This is a fall in incidence from 1.44% to 0.17%.

Not only that, women born in these years who had not received the vaccine were also less likely to develop cervical pre-cancer. This was because the high vaccine uptake meant that HPV incidence was much lower in their age group, thanks to a phenomenon known as "herd protection". This is particularly good news, since this group is also less likely to attend cervical screenings.

The findings clearly show that the routine HPV vaccination programme for girls aged 12 to 13 has been a resounding success. This is consistent with the fact that we have also seen a big fall in high-risk HPV infection in Scotland in recent years. The obvious conclusion is that we are going to see far fewer cases of cervical cancer in years to come.

From September, the UK is going to extend the vaccination programme to boys – becoming one of numerous countries to do so. This is in response to the fact that rates of head and neck cancer are rising in men: approximately 60% of head and neck cancer is associated with HPV16 infection, and should therefore be mostly preventable through vaccination. This programme should also mean that high-risk HPV infections among the population should be eliminated more quickly, which should have knock-on benefits for rates of HPV-driven cancers.

Meanwhile, in parts of Canada, HPV vaccinations are now being offered to uninfected women as part of the cervical screening process. This may protect older women from developing cervical cancer. This process may be adopted internationally, including the UK. When we look at the picture as a whole, eliminating the HPV virus, and making huge inroads into the various cancers that it helps develop, is now becoming a realistic possibility.

[the writer is Senior Research Fellow, Glasgow Caledonian University]

Tea labourers' plight main poll issue in scenic Alipurduar

AMITAVA ROY

ALIPURDUAR (WB), APR 7 (PTI): Tucked below the Bhutan hills in North Bengal's Dooars region, Alipurduar Lok Sabha constituency - one of the greenest places in West Bengal with its tea gardens, forests and rivers - will witness a battle mainly between two parties - the TMC and the BJP.

A reserved constituency for scheduled tribes, Alipurduar has a large percentage of adivasis who migrated to the region during the British era to work in tea gardens and also has a sizeable chunk of Nepalis and Rajbangshi tribals.

The "poor condition" of tea garden workers is going to play a major role as the constituency goes to polls on April 11 in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

Closure of several tea gardens since the 1990s has led to hardships for the workers and their families, forcing them to do other menial work for survival.

The ruling TMC, the BJP and the Left Front constituent RSP had fought neck-and-neck - each bagging over 3 lakh votes - in the 2014 general elections, but the support base of the Left party appeared to have dwindled since then. The Congress had come a distant fourth at that time.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Dasrath Tirkey, who has been re-nominated by the party, claimed that out of a total 65 tea gardens in Alipurduar, 15 had earlier been closed.

Now, 13 of these are open and efforts are on to reopen the remaining two gardens, Tirkey said. BJP candidate John Barla claimed that tea garden workers were being exploited by owners and contractors who force them to work for very low wages.

He said the workers are paid Rs 176 per day, though the minimum wage for a daily labourer is fixed by the government at Rs 350.

"In some gardens, workers are paid even Rs 132 per day and the workers are forced to accept it since they have no alternative," he claimed.

"The state labour department is not looking after the interests of the tea garden workers, a large number of whom are adivasis," the BJP candidate said, adding that about 45 per cent of the constituency's population are adivasis.

Suman Rai, a tea garden labourer at Kalchini, said the condition of the workers should change for the better and leaders should make their promises a reality.

"Since the Left Front, we have seen many lead-

ers who gave us hopes of a better life. I only wish that our future generation gets a better deal," he said.

In this backdrop, claims and counter claims on workers' conditions are being made by the two major players in the elections - the TMC and the BJP.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has remarked in a recent public rally at Siliguri that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is a "speed breaker" in the welfare of tea garden workers and others, the TMC supremo has said the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre has not done anything for them despite having made "tall promises."

Banerjee said it is her government which has provided foodgrains at very nominal rates, free healthcare and education for the well-being of the tea garden workers.

A tea garden worker with no immovable assets as per his affidavit, Barla claims to have worked with the people of the region since 2007.

"I am a permanent worker at Lakhpara tea garden and I live in its quarters," he said.

Talking about his opponent and the sitting MP from TMC, Barla said, "He claims to be an adivasi, but has never done anything for the indige-

nous people."

"I have spent 45 days in jail for fighting for the legitimate rights of the adivasis here who have been deprived by the Trinamool Congress government," he told PTI.

Barla alleged that Tirkey has not once visited two closed tea gardens - one of which has been closed for six months and the other for two years.

Reacting to this, Tirkey said, "He must have developed cataract if he cannot see development in the area."

He said in the last five years, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has shown Alipurduar, which was made a district from being a sub-division within Jalpaiguri district in 2014, with several projects including an university, medical college and an engineering college.

Tirkey, however, admitted that connectivity in remote areas of the district, which is crisscrossed by several rivers, is an issue.

"Colleges and hospitals have come up, but getting there becomes a problem for us during monsoons. Overflowing rivers cut us off from the rest of the district. It is extremely difficult for us to get access to emergency medical aid and children cannot go to school," said Minati Oraon who lives in a small hamlet in Mahakalguri.

Besides the TMC, the BJP, the RSP and the Congress, three other candidates - the SUCI and two Independents - are in the fray from the seat.

Five major rivers - Torsa, Kaljani, Raidak, Jayanti and Sankosh - apart from several smaller rivers and rivulets flow through Alipurduar.

Tirkey, a three-time RSP MLA from Kumargram assembly seat within Alipurduar Lok Sabha constituency, had joined the TMC and won in TMC ticket in the 2014 general elections.

With Leftist trade unions very strong among the tea garden workers, Alipurduar seat has been the citadel of Left Front constituent RSP from 1977 to 2014.

In the 2014 elections, TMC's Dasrath Tirkey won by 21,397 votes defeating Manohar Tirkey of the RSP, while the BJP came third.

While Dasarath Tirkey got 3,62,453 votes, RSP's Manohar Tirkey bagged 3,41,056 votes and BJP's B B Oraon polled 3,35,857 votes in 2014. The Congress stood fourth polling 1,16,118 votes.

RSP candidate Mili Roy said she was confident of wresting the seat from the TMC. "We take everybody together; we do not indulge in divisive politics as is being done by the others," she said.

Besides the TMC, the BJP, the RSP and the Congress, three other candidates - the SUCI and two Independents - are in the fray from the seat.

Cash remains king for election campaign merchandise in Bengal



KOLKATA, APR 7 (PTI): The government's push for cashless transactions has apparently not made much impact on the trade of election campaign merchandise in Bengal, as currency notes remain the preferred payment mode for poll favourites, such as party flags and t-shirts.

Sale of campaign materials have picked up pace in the last one week, as the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections in the state kicks off from April 11, traders said.

"Much of the business is in cash this time as well," said a shopkeeper in the Burrabazar area, the biggest wholesale

market in eastern India.

The response was similar from other traders in the market, who pointed out that buyers were not transacting through digital wallets and other online payment modes, as availability of cash has eased post demonetisation.

"For us, the mode of transaction remains cash, as it was in 2014. Cash is most convenient and helps buyers evade Election Commission's expenditure restrictions," another shopkeeper said.

Flags are a highly sought after merchandise among other poll materials like umbrella,

caps, badges, paper sun-guards and scarfs.

Coffee mugs are new items this election year, the traders said, adding, old favourites like key chains don't sell much now.

The owner of a shop selling only BJP campaign materials said business is expected to be 40-50 per cent higher than the 2014 general elections.

"In 2014, posters of leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani were in high demand, but this year, we have been selling a lot of merchandise bearing the images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Cong lodges complaint against Tripura CM, seeks his arrest

AGARTALA, APR 6 (PTI): The Tripura unit of the Congress has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission, seeking the immediate arrest of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb for allegedly spreading communal hatred in the state.



Tripura Pradesh Congress vice-president Tapas Dey filed the complaint on Friday with Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sriram Taranikanti, accusing Deb of repeatedly making false statements with "a motive to divide communities in the state on the lines of caste, creed and religion."

Dey also called for the chief minister's immediate arrest.

The office of the CEO has confirmed receiving the complaint against the chief minister.

"Our party has urged the CEO to register an FIR against Deb for his im-

mediate detention to judicial custody," another state Congress leader said.

Dey also claimed that BJP activists were threatening voters to not go to the polling stations and were attacking Congress workers and candidates.

Despite repeated complaints to police, no action has been taken, he added.

When contacted, BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya cited an earlier slogan raised by AICC member and former acting president of the Tripura Pradesh Con-

gress, Deb Burman.

Bhattacharya alleged that the slogan -- "Poila Jati, Ulo Party (caste is first and then political parties)" -- in indigenous Kokbarak language had communal overtones.

"This phrase raised by Deb Burman had communal hints. Let EC investigate the truth, and then everything would be clear to the people," he told PTI.

In Tripura, there are 23 tribal communities, together constituting one third of the state's population.

Didi maligned Bengal with scams, denied people of central scheme benefits: Modi



COOCH BEHAR, APRIL 7 (PTI): In a scathing attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Sunday "speed-breaker Didi" has applied brakes on several central schemes, denying people of the benefits available in other parts of the country.

Addressing a rally at Rash Mela ground here, he alleged that Banerjee has let loose goons in the state, dashing the hopes of people.

"Didi has maligned Bengal with Saradha Scam, Rose Valley scam and Narada scam. I want to promise you all that this Chowkidar (Modi) will seek answers for each and every paisa looted," he said.

Noting that a venue with limited space was allotted for today's ral-

ly, Modi said, "Didi tried her best to stop people from attending the rally in large numbers. How does she expect to win the elections with such childish antics."

"The way Mamata expressed her anger against Election Commission only shows how perplexed she is. Didi is fast losing her political ground in Bengal," the PM said.

Banerjee had expressed her displeasure when the Election Commission announced seven-phase Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal.

Modi also charged Banerjee with protecting illegal immigrants to secure her vote bank.

"Didi has betrayed the Centre by giving protection to the intruders. This chowkidar has brought NRC and Citizen-

ship (Amendment) Bill to drive out infiltrators. But Didi with her 'Mahamilawati' (opposition alliance) colleagues are trying to stop the government from pursuing them," he said.

Sharing his plans for the development of the country, Modi said, phone calls will soon become free in the country and the charges for Internet will be the least in the world.

"Every poor has a bank account and a debit card. Women have easy access to gas connections. What seemed impossible a few years ago has been made possible by the Modi government," he added.

Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal will be held in seven phases between April 11 and May 19.

tion rally here.

"Why don't you (Modi) remove your own cabinet secretary," she asked.

The Election Commission on Friday removed Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary Anil Chandra Punetha from the post and appointed senior-most IAS officer LV Subrahmanyam in his place.

Gauhati HC imposes penalty on gym for 'discrimination' against person with disability

GUWAHATI, APR 7 (PTI): In a path-breaking judgement on making services accessible to persons with disabilities in the state, the Gauhati High Court has imposed penalties on a gym and the Assam government for discrimination against such a person.

Gauhati High Court Judge Ujjal Bhuyan, last month, ordered a prominent gym here and the Assam government to pay Rs 50,000 each as penalty in a 2011 writ petition filed by Arman Ali, Executive Director of National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People (NCPEDP) against inaccessible, disabled-unfriendly services by the gym.

According to the case history, Ali had applied for a membership with the gym in 2011. On realising his disability, the gym demanded as condition for membership doctors certificates from both his physician as well as an orthopedician.

The gym also subjected him to a rigorous workout in an attempt to discourage him, during which he was also put through humiliation and ignominy by members of the staff and other users, Ali's petition stated.

"I was almost treated like an untouchable and they used all tactics to discourage me. The final straw was their offer of a month-long conditional membership with charges equivalent to an annual membership," Ali said.

Referring to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 and its successor,

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, which have equal opportunities and non-discrimination as its fulcrum, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, in his order, also made a reference to Section 29 of the RPWD Act, which casts a duty on appropriate governments to conduct, encourage, support or promote awareness campaigns and sensitisation programmes to ensure RPWD were protected.

Justice Bhuyan also directed the Assam government to ensure that all officers and employees of the Social Welfare Department undergo training and awareness programmes and campaigns in terms of Section 39 of the 2016 Act in accordance with commissioner of persons with disabilities, Assam and Assam State Legal Services Authority.

In his order, made available this week, he also instructed that the commissioner and secretary to the Assam government, Social Welfare Department to immediately chalk out a detailed programme to give effect to the directive.

Top officials commissioner and secretary, Social Welfare Department, have further been instructed to issue general circular to all government and private establishments, highlighting the salient features of the 2016 Act and to ensure that public buildings and public facilities and services are made accessible to persons with disabilities.

Such instructions are to be issued within two months from the date of receipt of the court's order.



It was unbelievable, will cherish for long: Joseph on dream IPL debut

HYDERABAD, APR 7 (PTI): Young West Indian pacer Alzarri Joseph described his record-breaking bowling effort on his IPL debut as “unbelievable”, saying he will cherish the moment for a long time to come. The soft-spoken Joseph (6/12) claimed the best bowling figures in IPL’s history, bettering Sohail Tanvir’s 6/14 registered in the inaugural edition in 2008. The previous best figures on IPL debut was Andrew Tye’s 5/17, in 2017.

“Unbelievable. It’s a great start. I don’t think I could have asked for anything better. So I will really cherish this moment,” said Joseph at the post-match press conference after helping Mumbai Indians secure a 40-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Saturday night. Defending a modest 136 for seven, Joseph wreaked havoc with the ball to bundle out Sunrisers for 96.

Joseph claimed the wickets of dangerman David Warner, Vijay Shankar, Deepak Hooda, Rashid Khan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Siddharth Kaul to hand Mumbai Indians their third win from five games. Asked what was going on his mind before his debut match, he said: “It was my first game. So I just wanted to go out and put all my effort into this team.

“The score doesn’t really matter. I just go out and put my best foot forward. You get the information from the first ball so you know what variations you need to use.”

Joseph said the Wankhede pitch was not the best one for shot-making and they believed in defending the modest total at the break.

“The pitch wasn’t the easiest to play on, so 136 from 120 balls we knew we were in for a game if we take some early wickets,” he said.

Stating that his sole aim is to help his side win the IPL crown, Joseph said he was happy to finish off things for Mumbai by claiming the last wicket of Kaul.

How CBSE helped students beat exam stress: Specialised audiovisual presentations, toll-free helpline

SALONI BHATIA

NEW DELHI, APR 7 (PTI): Specialised audiovisual presentations on issues affecting youth, a toll-free helpline for students, an interactive voice response system - that is how the CBSE helped students counter the board exam stress this year.

According to the Central Board of Secondary Education public relations officer, Rama Sharma, as many as 12,000 calls were received on the interactive voice response (IVR) service, which was a new feature introduced this year.

Through the IVR system, students, parents or stakeholders can obtain pre-recorded useful information on tackling board exams which included tips for better preparation, time and stress management, frequently asked questions, along with live tele-coun-



selling services. With the introduction of the IVR system, the board saw a considerable decline on the calls received on the toll-free helpline in the first phase of counselling, which commenced on February 1 and ended on April 4. The second

phase will begin after the board results are declared.

The board had roped in a total of 87 counselors, comprising 65 from India, two special educators and 22 from foreign schools. The helpline got more calls from students

as compared to parents.

As many as 1,122 calls were received, with more boys (797) calling up the helpline as compared to girls (222).

The helpline also received more calls from students of private schools as compared to

government schools.

“This has been the trend every year with more boys calling up than girls. It is difficult to understand why, but it might be because the boys are a bit distracted and usually start preparing at the last-minute causing

them to stress more. Girls, on the other hand, are more organised when it comes to studies,” another official said.

“Many a times, students used to call and say, ‘Please talk to my parents. They are reprimanding me and pressurising me’. Students have even called up to say they are distracted and are not able to concentrate because they had a break-up,” the other official said.

Some students even had suicidal thoughts and said they were “feeling like killing themselves” and some others even said they did not want to pursue a particular stream, but were being forced to do so by their parents, he said.

For the first time, a comprehensive audiovisual presentation titled ‘Knowing Children Better’ was prepared and uploaded on the CBSE’s website and other social media

platforms. The presentations were on issues like tackling exam anxiety, internet addiction, substance abuse, depression.

According to Sharma, the presentations received 75,000 hits on YouTube, while 92,000 views on Twitter with the presentation on tackling exam anxiety getting the maximum number views.

The board had also prepared a course compendium for students. The compendium of courses after class 12 was an earnest effort of the board to facilitate students while scouting for right course choices, the board had said.

The compendium featured traditional courses like engineering, chartered accountancy, medicine, while also details and eligibility criteria for unconventional subjects like how to become a detective, artificial intelligence, robotics, among others.

Middle-order woes for Sunrisers ahead of Kings XI clash



SANJAY GANJOO

MOHALI, APR 7 (PTI): A top-heavy Sunrisers Hyderabad are seeking to sort their middle-order woes against Kings XI Punjab as the two teams eye a return to winning ways in the Indian Premier League here Monday. Both Sunrisers and Kings XI have garnered six points after three wins from five games but the Hyderabad outfit is placed second in the eight-team standings on account of a better run rate. Kings XI, meanwhile, are lying fifth in the points table.

But, having suffered defeats in their previous games, both Sunrisers and Kings XI would be desperate to get back to winning ways. While Sunrisers lost by 40 runs against Mumbai Indians

in Hyderabad on Saturday while chasing a below-par 136, Kings XI were beaten by 22 runs by Chennai Super Kings.

Sunrisers have been threatening in their first three games when David Warner and Jonny Bairstow stitched century-plus stands but once the duo got out cheaply, the Hyderabad team’s middle-order looked in complete disarray. Sunrisers’ middle-order has hardly been tested and when the opportunity came against Mumbai Indians, the likes of Vijay Shankar, Manish Pandey, Deepak Hooda and Yusuf Pathan fell flat. Chasing a modest 137 against Mumbai for a win, debutant Alzarri Joseph wreaked havoc to bundle out Sunrisers for 96.

On the bowling front,

the pace trio of Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Sandeep Sharma and Siddharth Kaul have been descent so far while the Afghan spin duo of Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi have been more than impressive in the middle overs. Kings XI, on the other hand, lost the plot despite half-centuries from K L Rahul (55) and Sarfaraz Khan (67) while chasing 161 as they were restricted to 138 for five by CSK. Kings XI batsmen were choked for runs by the CSK spinners and with Rashid and Nabi in Sunrisers’ rank, it is going to be another difficult outing for the home team batsmen.

Kings XI would be hoping for Chris Gayle to be back among runs at the top, while the likes of Mayank Agarwal, Mandeep Singh, David Miller need to take more responsibility in the middle overs. While pacer Mohammed Shami had had an erratic tournament, skipper Ravichandran Ashwin has been leading Kings XI from the front in the company of Sam Curran, Murugan Ashwin and Andrew Tye.

Hockey player’s last wish triggers movement for organ donation in Canada



OTTAWA, APR 7 (PTI): A Canadian hockey player, who died in a bus crash caused by an Indian truck driver, has become an inspiration for a national movement for organ donation in the country. Deceased hockey player Logan Boulet’s parents have initiated a program “Green Shirt Day” being observed Sunday across the country, to inspire people to donate organs and help the life of others.

Boulet had signed for his organ donation long before he died in an accident last year that killed 16 people after a Saskatchewan hockey team’s bus collided with a truck driven by a non-resident Indian Jaskirat Singh Sidhu of Calgary.

Sidhu was sentenced last month to eight years in prison for dangerous driving causing death and bodily injury. The

player’s parents, Toby and Bernadine Boulet, are spreading the message of how their son’s decision helped the lives of others and how he has inspired hundreds of thousands of Canadians to become organ donors.

They are conducting the first annual “Green Shirt Day in Partnership with Canada’s Organ Donation Community.

Support for organ donation in Canada is at roughly 90 per cent, but only 23 per cent of Canadians are registered organ donors. According to Canadian Transplant Association President Brenda Brown nothing like the Logan Boulet Effect has been seen before in Canadian history and raising more awareness will hopefully raise this percentage. A memorial service is also being held to mark one year since the tragedy.

Up against 179 farmers, Kavitha says she has full faith in the community

NIZAMABAD, APR 7 (PTI): Sitting TRS MP K Kavitha, daughter of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, is up against 179 farmers who are contesting en masse, but she is not ruffled as she confidently says, “I have full faith in my farmers.”

The 179 farmers entered the fray for the April 11 Lok Sabha elections as a mark of protest, alleging that the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) had failed to ensure Minimum Support Price for turmeric and red jowar (sorghum) produce and in getting the Turmeric Board established in Nizamabad.

There are a total of 185 candidates in the seat, prompting the Election Commission to arrange for jumbo EVMs.

Kavitha says the farmers who are protesting and contesting are supporters of the BJP and the Congress. “Let them be in the fray.”

Farmers in general, she says, are benefiting from the state’s welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu.

Asked if she is tensed with farmers contesting en masse, Kavitha replies, “Not at all, wait till results. You will get to know.”



She says the TRS swept recent assembly polls and will win handily in the Lok Sabha polls as well. “Out out 17 parliamentary constituencies, we will win 16 while AIMIM will bag one seat,” she claims.

She has been addressing rallies and is determined to visit all 40 blocks that comprise 800-odd villages in the constituency.

Kavitha, who has two kids, says it has been more than a week since she has seen them.

“When I was leaving home, I told

them I will be busy with elections and won’t be available for the next 20 days. They said you will win anyway, so why do you want to go,” she says.

Though none in the family has lost elections so far barring once, Kavitha says “nothing comes easy”.

After polling, she says, she has another exam -- “that of my son. I have to be with him.”

Asked about her father’s assessment of national politics, she says, “Honestly, we haven’t talked for the last 15 days as I am in

my constituency. But he believes that the development agenda of this nation needs to change.”

Political parties should start taking their manifestos seriously and implement all promises,” she says, adding that her father, as chief minister, has given “a decent shot” at implementing the promises he made in the assembly poll.

Citing an example, she says, “We were able to fix the electricity crisis in the state within six months. If it is possible in Telangana, it is possible across the country. Right now, we are producing more power than the nation. But we are not able to efficiently distribute it. Tall leaders talk about villages without power till now, which actually looks pretty bad in the global scenario,” she adds.

Asked if the 100-odd welfare schemes are putting pressure on the state exchequer, she says, “It is a wrong thought. Our chief minister’s idea is to create more wealth. Economists talk about minimising spending, but don’t talk about wealth creation. Our government believes in creating more wealth and distributing it to the poor.”

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The lotus...

money meant for the people of Sikkim in casinos in Nepal?” he questioned.

As for the Chief Minister’s recent statements that the people will see him in a new avatar, he asked the need for a CM of five terms to take a new avatar.

“Is it due to the fear of the chowkidaar?” he asked while adding that if BJP forms the government again in the Centre, it will take account of every rupee sent to Sikkim for the people.

Mr Nabin also questioned why the CM was not allowing CBI into the State and also queried why he had not taken any action against his former Cabinet colleague and current adversary, PS Tamang [Golay], whom he is now accusing of trafficking.

Oppn indulging...

worked hard and had to constantly battle negative forces and divisive thoughts of the Opposition which has increasingly behave as Political Terrorists,” Mr Chamling said while addressing the eighth day of his election campaign which arrived here at Mining Ground, Rangpo. The campaign meet was organized for the four constituencies of Martam-Rumtek, Khamdong-Singtam, West-Pandam, and Timi-Namphing.

Addressing a huge gathering of party supporters from the four constituencies, Mr Chamling reiterated that this was an important election for Sikkim and that his party realized this and was approaching it with even more seriousness.

“Two ideologies are clearly in contest here; the Opposition driven by anger and hate and SDF promoting amity and unity,” he said.

The SDF, he said, was formed with the aim to serve Sikkim and the Sikkimese and was currently seeing a serious threat posed to the very idea of Sikkim, which, he said, was being picked at by the Opposition which was sowing divisions to confuse and distract the people from their actual agenda.

Towards this end, he urged the people to go through the election manifestos now in the public domain, analyse the track-record of parties in the fray and then ponder on what was good for Sikkim in the long-term.

Mr Chamling also recounted the achievements of the SDF Government over the past 25 years and stressed that every decision of his government was motivated by the desire to serve the interests of the Sikkimese people.

He accused the Opposition of indulging in the politics of deception and called on the people to remain on guard against such subterfuge.

Apart from what is included in the party manifesto, Mr Chamling also made several announcements for the four constituencies today.

Signature campaign to motivate recalcitrant Gangtok to vote in higher numbers

GANGTOK, 07 APR [IPR]: As a part of the SVEEP campaign to improve voting percentage, an initiative by Office of District Election Officer, East, started a signature campaign on 'Pledge to Vote' at MG Marg today.

Banners have been put up at two places, one near the District Control Room and another near Star Hall. The banner exhorts urban voters to pledge to cast their votes by signing on the board.

The event was inaugurated by the DEO-cum-RO East, Kapil Meena, accompanied by ADC East, Bharani Kumar, Assistant Collector Rohan Agawane, officials and attended by general public.



It is informed that Sikkim's voting percentage in 2014 was 83%, the third highest in the country, while Gangtok's vot-

ing percentage was 68%, the lowest in Sikkim.

Mr Meena said that this initiative to target the urban electors of Gangtok

was to try and persuade more of them to vote on 11 April. Adult franchise is a fundamental pillar of any democracy and every sin-

gle individual should cast their vote and perform the solemn duty as a responsible citizen of the country, the DEO stressed.

Manjusri students haul 14 medals at Assam tourney



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 APR:

The Taekwondo team from Manjusri Public School registered a cent-per-cent conversion rate at the Kimunoyong Internationa Open Taekwondo Championship held at Guwahati, Assam, from 29-31 March when all 14 of them returned with medals.

Sumal Rai [u-35kg],

Sneha Jennifer Tamang [33kg], Trishna Sharma [u-52kg], Sonam Lhamu Bhutia [u-42kg], Jacinth Grace P Bhutia [u-42kg], Rikzin Dorjee Tamang [u-59kg] and Akshata Gurung [u-44kg] bagged gold medals while Kalsang Deki Bhutia [u-69kg], Kalsang Samphel Bhutia [u-48kg] and Tshering Tamang [u-55kg] won

silver medals, and Karma Deeki Bhutia [u-49kg], Tenzen Namgyal Lachungpa [u-53kg], Sai Swaran [u-38kg] and Shail Pradhan [u-55kg] won bronze medals at the tournament.

The team had reached Guwahati on 28 March accompanied by Coach Sabina Sundas and Nurse/ Manager Karma Tsultim Bhutia.

Netanyahu pledges to annex West Bank settlements after vote

JERUSALEM, APR 7 (AFP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged Saturday to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank if he wins the upcoming general election. His comments come just days before the closely-fought April 9 poll and could be seen as an appeal to right-wing voters, who do not believe in the feasibility of a peace agreement with the Palestinians. "I will apply (Israeli) sovereignty, but I don't distinguish between settlement blocs and isolated settlements," he said in an interview with Channel 12 television.

Settlements built on land occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War are deemed illegal by the international community and their ongoing construction is seen as a major barrier to peace.

Annexation could prove to be the death knell for the two-state solution. Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said Netanyahu's statement on annexation was "not surprising." "Israel will continue to brazenly violate international law for as long as the international community will continue to reward Israel with impunity, particularly with the Trump administration's support," he said on Twitter.

Qureshi claims India planning another attack against Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, APR 7 (PTI): Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Sunday claimed that his government has reliable intelligence that India is planning another attack against the country between April 16-20, according to a media report. Tensions flared up between India and Pakistan after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14.

Amid mounting outrage, the Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting the biggest JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured an IAF

pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1. Qureshi during a press conference in Multan said that the government has "reliable intelligence that India is devising a new plan", Dawn newspaper reported.

"Preparations are being made, and there are chances of another attack against Pakistan. According to our information, the action could be taken between April 16-20," the paper quoted Qureshi as saying.

"A new mishap could be staged...And its purpose will be to justify their [India's] offensive against Pakistan and to increase diplomatic pressure against Islamabad," he alleged.

"If it happens, you can imagine the impact of the occurrence on the peace and stability of the region."

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Nima Lepcha confident of winning from Martam-Rumtek



REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 07 APR:

Nima Lepcha, the Hamro Sikkim Party candidate for Martam-Rumtek constituency in East Sikkim, believes that HSP is playing a crucial role in the elections.

Speaking with media-persons while on his door-to-door campaign today, Mr Lepcha, 55, also expressed confidence that he will secure a good number of votes.

"My campaign is going strongly and youth from different political parties have come forward to support my candidature and HSP," he said.

Mr Lepcha is contest-

ing from among the more congested constituencies which has six candidates in the fray along with him. Apart from SDF and SKM, BJP and Congress have also fielded candidates here and there is an independent in the mix as well.

His strongest contest will clearly be against Minister DT Lepcha of the SDF and SKM's Sonam Tshering Venchungpa. The constituency had gone to SKM in 2014.

Asked about the challenge he faces, Mr Lepcha said he does face any serious contest against him since the SDF candidate is contesting from two constituencies and

that has resulted in a lukewarm response to him and SKM has not been able to generate much traction in the constituency.

Asked about his programmes for the constituency, Mr Lepcha said that if elected, he will not only work for the constituency but also address the overall problems faced by Sikkim.

He stated that the programmes included in the HSP manifesto were well thought out and apt for the state.

"I am taking forward the election manifesto promises to the people during my campaigning," he said.

FAQ

EVM with VVPAT Unit

Q12. Is it possible to vote more than once by pressing the button again and again?

Ans. No. As soon as a particular button on the Balloting Unit is pressed the vote is recorded for that particular candidate and the machine gets locked. Even if one presses that button further or any other button, no further vote will be recorded. This way the EVMs ensure the principle of "one man, one vote". The next vote is enabled only when the Presiding Officer/Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit releases the Ballot by pressing the Ballot Button. This is a distinct advantage over the ballot paper system.

Q13. How can a voter be sure that the EVM is working and his vote has been recorded?

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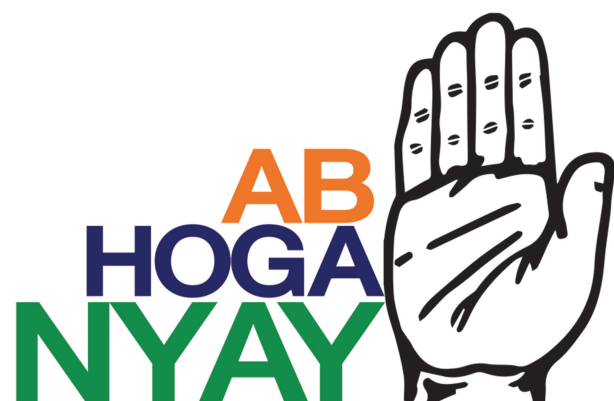
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