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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Alembic shuts down unit, workers continue protest

**Workers
serve
another
ultimatum,
SKM joins
protest**

**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 06 MARCH:**

Alembic Pharmaceutical Company Limited has shut down its manufacturing plant in Sikkim "till further advice" even as workers of the company intensified their protest today after the end of their ultimatum to the Labour Department that their issues be resolved by 2 p.m. today. Their protest has been joined by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha as well as workers of other pharma companies and private industries. The company has not given any reasons for the shutting down of the unit as of now.

On Tuesday, protestors had marched to Commerce and Industries Department in Tadong from Shram Bha-



wan and submitted their memorandum to the department with an ultimatum to the State government to resolve their issue by 2 p.m. today.

At around 3 p.m. today, the workers raised slogans at the main gate of Shram Bhavan and demanded that the Labour Minister come to the spot.

Later in the evening, the workers led by Lat-

en Sherpa also stopped the vehicle of Labour Department Secretary, LB Chettri from moving out of the premises. Police personnel tried to talk to the protestors to let the vehicle pass but they refused to do so and sat on the road.

The Secretary then came out of the vehicle and spoke with the workers. The workers demanded that the Labour

Department Secretary have a meeting with the Principal Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department on Thursday morning to resolve their issues. However, Mr Chettri informed that the Principal Secretary was out of station and the meeting could only take place on Monday.

The protestors insisted that the meeting be held on Thursday by 10

a.m. otherwise their protest will get stronger.

The protesting workers eventually dispersed at around 5 30 p.m.

Meanwhile, a press release issued by the Labour Department dated 06 March 2019 which was provided to reporters by the protesting workers today informs that despite the department's requests to Alembic

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Daughters of Sikkim want notification ending requirement of unmarried certs or husband's Col

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:**

A group of Sikkimese women married to non-Sikkimese has submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister requesting that his office to direct the concerned authorities to issue a notification declaring that there was no need for unmarried certificates or husband's Certificate of Identification for Sikkimese women applying for government jobs and procuring other relevant documents.

The group has argued that the existing rules which require such documents to be presented were unjust, unfair, unreasonable, biased, promoted gender inequality and were humiliating for Sikkimese women having Cols or Sikkim Subject Certificates. They add that such regulations were also in violation of provisions of the Constitution.

"That your honour had already announced and declared in different public forums that unmarried certificate shall not be required for women applying for the government jobs

in Sikkim but in spite of your secular and visionary thoughts, the practice is still on and daughters of Sikkim are suffering at large," the memorandum highlights.

It is added that despite of the CM's declaration, the departments have time and again, while advertising government jobs sought unmarried certificates, married certificate and husband's Col from women candidates.

The memorandum further draws attention to a High Court order which, while hearing a case in which Sikkimese women married to non-Sikkimese were denied service regularisation, had held that the said regulation could not be applied to the case.

The group further informs that in East Sikkim, after nearly ten months of discussions, a Sikkimese woman was issued a Col on the basis of her father's Sikkim Subject Certificate without having to submit an unmarried certificate. The East district has followed

this precedence ever since but the other three districts continue following the old regulations and have turned down requests for Cols by Sikkimese women married to non-Sikkimese.

A notification clearing this confusion would hence ensure that Sikkimese women are treated uniformly across the State, the group has stated.

The memorandum reiterates that the continuing insistence for unmarried certificates or the husband's Col from Sikkimese women was denial of the rights of Sikkimese women, gender discriminatory and a gross violation of the provisions of the Constitution of India and human rights at large.

It is added that the lack of coordination between departments has created confusion, harassment and unjust treatment of the daughters of Sikkim. On the same, the memorandum has requested the CM to look into the matter urgently in the interest of all the daughters of Sikkim.

Service extension of adhoc teachers forces new policy guidelines at HRDD

**No more PRT appointments;
Other requirements strictly on
merit and as per NCTE norm**

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:**

The State Government's decision to renew the extension of existing adhoc teachers by two years has forced some policy directions on the staffing of government schools in the State.

In a circular issued today, the Human Resource Development Department has directed that no new adhoc appointment of PRTs be done in any of the schools since there was adequate availability of regular PRTs, PRT [Language] and Samagra

Shiksha teachers.

As for Graduate Teachers for Science and Maths who appear to always be in short supply, the Circular directs that these may be appointed immediately based on requirement against vacancy.

As for requirement of additional Graduate Teachers [Arts], this is to be worked out immediately after joining of existing GT[A]s is compiled

and taking into consideration upgraded schools. The Circular directs that these appointments be kept at the minimum and appointment orders be given strictly on merit duly observing NCTE norms.

PETs are to be provided in all Senior Secondary Schools in consultation with the administration section of HRDD and PGT requirement

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SKM sniffs Govt's hand behind Alembic shut down



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has alleged that Alembic Pharmaceutical decided to shut down the factory on the advice of the State government to break the unity developing between workers of different companies and to safeguard the interests of private companies.

Addressing a press conference here today, SKM party spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, demanded that the company reopen and reinstate all the six expelled workers.

Should the factory not resume operations, the State Government should absorb all the now unemployed workers under the One Fam-

ily, One Job scheme and provide employment to the rest with government undertaking.

He stated that SKM waited for more than a month for the Labour Department to resolve the issue between the workers and the Alembic management. When this time lapsed without any

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Short Video Film Competition on Renewable Energy

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India is organizing **Short Video Film Competition** (maximum 3 minute duration) on Renewable Energy. The theme of the film is "Renewable Energy Powering India." The competition will be for two categories – one up to 18 years of age and the other between 18-30 years of age. The film may be on any aspect of renewable energy including renewables in neighbourhood, far-flung places, islands, hills, plain areas for different applications of renewable energy. The film can be shot using smartphones, cameras or any other digital recorder. Animation films, mobile films and films of any other genre produced with telecast quality can participate in this contest. The film (maximum 500 MB size) should be in MP4 format, HD quality and to be submitted directly through attachment or may share the link at vdofilmcompet.mnre@gov.in on or before 25th April 2019.

There is no entry fee for participation in the competition. The other details of the competition are available on MNRE's website www.mnre.gov.in.

(N.B. Raju)
Director

Government of India
Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
www.mnre.gov.in

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Sikkim FC qualifies for quarter final of 2nd Fraternity Cup



REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:
Sikkim Football Club team has qualified for the quarter finals of the ongoing "2nd Fra-

ternity Cup" 2019 at Dr Ambedkar Stadium, Delhi. Sikkim FC will take on Chakma Delhi FC in the quarter final match scheduled to be held on

12 Mar, 2019. The tournament started on 02 Mar, 2019 and shall conclude on 16 Mar, 2019 which is being organised by

NGO, My Home India. This is for the second time that this tournament is being held. Sikkim FC team won their first match on

03 Mar, 2019 against United Delhi Brothers FC with 2-1 goals and second match against Chakma Delhi FC with 6-1 goals on 05 Mar, 2019. Sikkim FC team has their next match on 08 Mar, 2019 against Komrem Warriors FC.

The tournament seeks to provide platform to northeastern youth to build positive bond, said footballer of Sikkim, Mayel Lepcha while talking to SummitTIMES.

"My Home India is a national NGO which aims at bringing emotional integration between people from different parts of the country," he added.

Mayel is representing Sikkim FC, and this is his first time in the 2nd Fraternity Cup.

KVK South Sikkim conducts training at Ruchung



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:
A day long training programme was organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, South Sikkim, Namthang at Ruchung on 06 Mar, 2019. The programme was chaired by Senior Scientist and Head, IP Shivakoti, KVK South Sikkim, a press release informs.

Subject Matter Specialist (SMS) Agronomy, Dr Nation Chamling highlighted the farmers about organic package and

practices of maize. He also demonstrated the seed treatment of maize with Azospirillum.

The programme had distribution of maize seed, Krishi Chun and hermetic storage bags. Thirty-nine farmers from Chota and Bada Ruchung were benefitted from the programme.

The programme was coordinated by SMSs, Meena Pradhan and Yangchenla Bhutia of KVK South Sikkim.

Afghan official: Suicide blast near airport in east kills 16

Kabul, Mar 6 (AP): Militants in Afghanistan set off a suicide blast on Wednesday morning and stormed a construction company near the airport in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, killing at least 16 people, officials said.

The dawn assault triggered an hours-long gunbattle with local guards, drawing in U.S. forces to assist the Afghan troops in the shootout. Along with the 16 killed, nine people were also wounded in the attack, according to Attahullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but both the Taliban and the Islamic State group are active in eastern Afghanistan, especially in Nangarhar. The two groups have been carrying out near-daily attacks across Afghanistan in recent years, mainly targeting the government and Afghan security forces and causing staggering casualties, including among civilians.

The attacks have continued despite stepped-up US efforts to find a negotiated resolution of the 17-year war, America's longest. Wednesday's attack began around 5 a.m. and five attackers were

involved, Khogyani said.

Two of them detonated their explosives, blowing themselves up, while the remaining three were killed in the shooting.

The attackers were on foot and after setting off a suicide blast at the company gates, the others stormed in, triggering a gunbattle that drew U.S. forces to the scene, according to Gen Ghulam Sanayee Stanikzai, the provincial police chief.

"US forces are supporting Afghan forces in securing the area now," Stanikzai later said.

As the attack unfolded, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani arrived for a visit to neighboring Kunar province to inaugurate an administrative health complex and to lay the cornerstone of a 200-bed hospital. It was unclear why the construction company, called MQ, was targeted. The attack was over by 10:30 am when the last of the attackers was killed, Khogyani said. "A clearing-up operation is still underway by Afghan security forces," he added. Over the weekend, the Taliban targeted an Afghan army unit at its camp in southern Helmand province, killing at least 23 troops and wounding more than 20 others.

Talks with Taliban focus on four key issues to end the Afghan war: US



LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAR 6 (PTI): The US has said the ongoing negotiations with the Taliban are focused on four interconnected issues, including counterterrorism and troop withdrawal, that will be key for any future agreement to end the 17-year war in Afghanistan.

A high-powered American delegation led by Special US Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad has been holding marathon meetings in Doha, Qatar with a high-level Taliban team led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

The talks have been going on for several days to finalise a draft agreement on a potential foreign troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and to end the 17-year war in the country.

"These discussions are ongoing, and what they're focusing on are the four interconnected issues that are going to compose any future agreement, and those four (issues) are counterterrorism, troop withdrawal, intra-Afghan dialogue and a ceasefire," State Department Spokesperson Robert Palladino told reporters at his biweekly news conference on Monday.

Responding to a question, Palladino said talks were going on and more work needs to be done.

"We're focused on this. We have private diplomatic conversations that are occurring, and we want to give all the parties time to work out these issues. Special Representative Khalilzad is engaging on this on a daily basis right now, and progress is being made," he said.

Since his appointment in September, Afghanistan-born Khalilzad has met with all sides in an attempt to end America's longest war in which the US has lost over 2,400 soldiers in more than 17 years.

The Taliban control nearly half of Afghanistan, and are more powerful now than they were at any time since the 2001 US-led invasion after the 9/11 terror attacks.

The US has continued to push for a ceasefire in the war-torn country and the opening of negotiations between the Taliban and the Kabul government.

The Taliban however have repeatedly refused to meet with officials of the Afghan government, whom they dismiss as "puppets".

During the talks held in January, the Taliban signalled their seriousness by appointing Baradar as their chief peace negotiator.

Baradar, one of the four top commanders who formed the Taliban in 1994, was released from jail last year by the Pakistan government. He is be-

lieved to be the highest ranking Afghan Taliban prisoner freed so far.

He held several senior positions in the Taliban government before its fall in 2001 and once considered the most influential Taliban leader after Mullah Muhammad Omar.

The Taliban announced last week the talks with the US were making "a steady progress" and vowed to remain engaged in the process until achieving results.

"The current round of talks in Doha are advancing on a step-by-step basis. As the issue at hand is immensely crucial and delicate, it's progression is taking place with that much care and vigilance," Spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

Meanwhile, two US Senators Tom Udall and Raul, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have introduced the 2019 American Forces Going Home After Noble (AFGHAN) Service Act to end America's longest war. The 2019 AFGHAN Service Act declares victory in Afghanistan.

"The masterminds of the 9/11 attack are no longer capable of carrying out such an attack from Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011, and Al Qaeda has been all but eliminated from Afghanistan," it says.

"Endless war weakens our national security, robs this and future generations through skyrocketing debt, and creates more enemies to threaten us. For over 17 years, our soldiers have gone above and beyond what has been asked of them in Afghanistan. It is time to declare the victory we achieved long ago, bring them home, and put America's needs first," said Raul.

It is Congress that has failed to conduct the proper oversight of this nearly 18-year war. Now, we must step up, and listen to the American people - who rightly question the wisdom of such endless wars, Udall said.

The legislation sets guidelines for withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Within 45 days, a plan will be formulated for an orderly withdrawal and turnover of facilities to the Afghan Government, while also setting a framework for political reconciliation to be implemented by Afghans in accordance with the Afghan Constitution. Within a year, all US forces will be withdrawn from Afghanistan," it says.

The last year was the deadliest for civilians in Afghanistan, with 3,804 civilian deaths reported in 2018, according to the United Nations.

The UN says at least 32,000 civilians have been killed and another 60,000 wounded in the past decade, when it began compiling the data.

DSA to appoint new president post elections

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 MAR:

The Central Executive Committee meeting of Denzong Sherpa Association (DSA) was held at Gangtok today under the chairmanship of advisor, Mingma Sherpa. The meeting accepted the resignation of incumbent president, Lha Tshering Sherpa, a press release informs.

The meeting also acknowledged the immense contribution made by outgoing President to the upliftment of Sherpa Community in Sikkim. The relentless work of Lha Tshering



Sherpa towards the social and political evolution will always be remembered and cherished.

The Sherpa Community of Sikkim will always remain indebted and looks forward to his guidance and support in

days to come and wishes him good health, success and happiness in his future endeavors, the release mentions.

To provide and facilitate a smooth functioning of Denzong Sherpa Association, the executive committee unanimously decided to appoint Pema Wangchuk Sherpa of Uttarey, West Sikkim as acting president till the new executive committee is formed through democratic process. It is further decided that the election for the formation of New Executive will be held post the General Election 2019.

NHRC National Seminar on Buddha's preachings on 07-08 March

GANGTOK, 06 MAR (IPR): The National Human Rights Commission

is organizing a two day National Seminar, on the 'Role of Buddha's preaching in realization of Human Rights' in collaboration with the Sikkim University, Gangtok at Auditorium, Tourism Department, Government of Sikkim, 5th Mile, Samdur, Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim from 07-08 Mar, 2019.

The NHRC Member, Jyotika Kalra will inaugurate the seminar as the Chief Guest, which will start at 10.30 am on the 07 Mar, 2019. The presidential address will be delivered by Vice Chancellor, Prof Avinash Khare, Sikkim University. It will conclude with the valedictory session to be addressed by Chairperson, Justice Narendra Kumar Jain, State Human

Rights Commission, Sikkim at 1.30 pm on the 08 Mar, 2019.

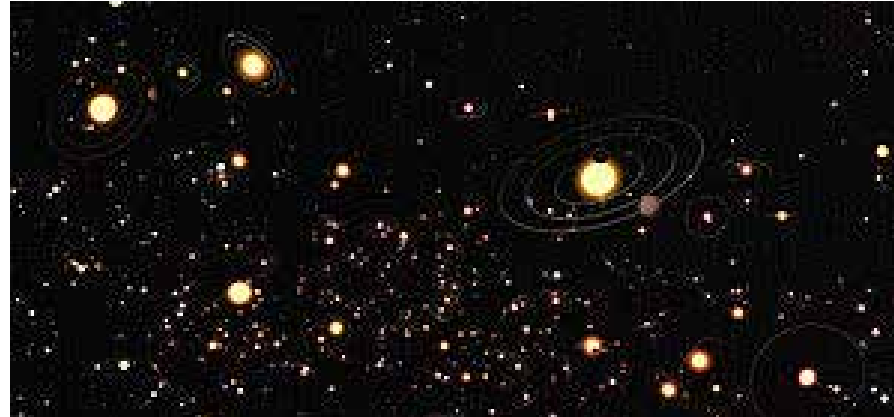
Besides the inaugural and valedictory sessions, the seminar will be spread across four academic sessions covering the subjects - 'History of Buddhism in India: Road Ahead', Challenges of Human Rights & Media in Twenty-First Century', 'Self-realization, Non-Violence & Growing Role of Buddhism' and 'Buddhism and Women-The Dhamma has no Gender'.

These sessions will be addressed by several prominent speakers including, among others, Eminent Hindi Writer & Poet, Prof Arun Kamal, Sahitya Academy Award Winner from Patna, Bihar, Joint Secretary, Dilip Kumar, NHRC, Professor of Law, Dr Imtiaz Gulam Ahmed, Sikkim Univer-

sity, Gangtok, Renowned Buddhist, Prof Jeta Sankrityayana, Mithlesh Mishra, Patna, Writer & Sr Bureaucrat, Prof Ananda Gopal Ghosh, Jalpaiguri, Renowned Historian, IAS, Dr Subhash Sharma, Patna, Eminent Writer, Snehasis Sur, Kolkata, Sr Journalist & President Press Club, Kolkata, Dr Rajiv Ranjan Giri, University of Delhi, Dr Ranjana Kumari, Delhi, Director, Centre For Social Research, Prof Pratibha, Dept of History, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, Rajasthan and Head, Prof PN Mishra, Dept. of Law, Sikkim University.

The Commission has been organizing these seminars as part of its series of National Seminars to build awareness about human rights in different parts of the country.

First exoplanet Kepler spotted finally confirmed



WASHINGTON, MAR 6 (PTI): Ten years after it was launched, the first exoplanet candidate spotted by NASA's Kepler space telescope has finally been confirmed as a real world, scientists say.

The exoplanet known as Kepler-1658 b is a massive hot Jupiter that whips around its star every 3.85 days, said researchers from the University of Hawaii in the US.

From the surface, the star would appear 60 times larger in diameter than the Sun as seen from Earth, they said.

Kepler has discovered thousands of exoplanets since its launch in 2009, using the transit method -- small dips in a star's brightness as planets cross in front of the star.

Because other phenomena can mimic transits, Kepler data reveal planet candidates, but further analysis is required to confirm them as genuine planets, according to the study published in the Astronomical Journal.

Despite being the very first planet candidate discovered by

Kepler in 2011, Kepler-1658 b had a rocky road to confirmation.

The initial estimate of the size of the planet's host star was incorrect, so the sizes of both the star and Kepler-1658 b were vastly underestimated, researchers said.

It was later set aside as a false positive when the numbers did not quite make sense for the effects seen on its star for a body of that size, they said.

"Our new analysis, which uses stellar sound waves observed in the Kepler data to characterise the host star, demonstrated that the star is in fact three times larger than previously thought," said University of Hawaii graduate student Ashley Chontos.

"This in turn means that the planet is three times larger, revealing that Kepler-1658 b is actually a hot Jupiter-like planet," Chontos said in a statement.

With this refined analysis, everything truly being a planet, but confirmation from new observations was still needed. Kepler-1658 is

50 per cent more massive and three times larger than the Sun, the researchers said.

The newly confirmed planet orbits at a distance of only twice the star's diameter, making it one of the closest -- in planets around a more evolved star -- one that resembles a future version of our Sun.

Standing on the planet, the star would appear 60 times larger in diameter than the Sun as seen from Earth, the researchers said.

Planets orbiting evolved stars similar to Kepler-1658 are rare, and the reason for this absence is poorly understood, they said.

The extreme nature of the Kepler-1658 system allows astronomers to place new constraints on the complex physical interactions that can cause planets to spiral into their host stars.

The insights gained from Kepler-1658b suggest that this process happens slower than previously thought, and therefore may not be the primary reason for the lack of planets around more evolved stars.



NAMUMKIN AB MUMKIN HAI



FREE HEALTHCARE NOW A REALITY

Free treatment available to 50 crore people through 'Ayushman Bharat'

Annual healthcare benefits of up to ₹5 lakh to every family

Benefits available at every government and associated private hospital

SMALL TOWNS TAKE HUGE LEAPS

With 'UDAN', air travel becomes affordable for the common man

More people now travel by air than in AC trains

100 airports now operational in comparison to 75 in 2014

PUTTING FARMERS FIRST

Financial aid of ₹6000 per annum to crores of farmers

Historic decision of raising MSP to 1.5 times the production cost

'PM Krishi Sinchai Yojana' improving irrigation facilities for all

RESERVATION ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS

Historic decision of providing reservation based on economic criteria to the general category

More seats in colleges and universities will create more opportunities for the youth

UPLIFTING THE MIDDLE CLASS

Income tax exemption for people with an annual net taxable income of up to ₹5 lakh

Medicines, Cardiac Stents & Knee Implants made affordable

Inflation on a tight leash and interest on bank loans reduced

ELECTRICITY REACHES EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME

18000 villages electrified for the first time since independence

2.5 crore families languishing in darkness, get electricity

BETTER LIFE FOR EVERY POOR FAMILY

1.5 crore poor families get their own home

'Ujjwala Yojana' makes lives of 6 crore women smoke-free

Ensuring financial security for the working poor

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS FOR TRADERS AND SMALL ENTREPRENEURS

Exemption from GST registration to businesses with a turnover of up to ₹40 lakh

Zero income tax for businesses with a turnover of up to ₹60 lakh

Businessmen with turnover of up to ₹1.5 crore can now opt for 'Composition Scheme'

WOMEN LED DEVELOPMENT

Secure future for the girl child with 'Sukanya Samridhi Yojana'

'Ujjwala Yojana' makes lives of 6 crore women smoke-free

Financial assistance of ₹6000 provided to pregnant women

Maternity leave enhanced to 26 weeks

EMPOWERED AND INDEPENDENT YOUTH

15 crore loans worth ₹7 lakh crore given under 'MUDRA' scheme

More seats in colleges and universities will create more opportunities for the youth

'Start-up India' giving wings to the aspirations of youth

CLEAN INDIA BECOMING A REALITY

10 crore new toilets built

Over 5.5 lakh villages are now open-defecation free

According to international reports, 'Swachh Bharat' is saving lakhs of lives

NATIONAL SECURITY IS TOP PRIORITY

Historic action against terrorism: First Surgical Strikes and now Air Strikes

Unprecedented increase in the defence budget

Bulletproof jackets, overdue for years, now available for the army

Ex-servicemen get benefits, overdue for decades, through OROP



Either Instill Mediocrity or Prepare Achievers

Not quotas, expand access to quality education instead

Little over a decade back, it took the Supreme Court to hold the Centre's hand from forcing a 27 per cent blanket reservation for Other Backward Classes in elite educational institutions without a clearly reasoned out plan. That argument has however now fallen off track in light of new reservations introduced, but that discussion we leave for another time. For now, let's return to the SC order on the OBC reservation proposal. That reservation was eventually extended, but only after it was made more effective and more reasoned, and this was done by excluding the "creamy layer" from partaking in the quota envisioned for backward classes. In its original form, the reservation was clearly inspired by vote-bank politics, an impertinence which compromises futures, sidesteps merit and, more dangerously, undermines genuine issues. To stay with the topic, back in 2006 during the initial hearings on the case, the Supreme Court did not stay the proposed reservation because OBC's did not deserve it or because the general category students would have suffered; its hand was forced when it became clear that the well-being of OBC's was not the real reason why the quota was being proposed. Had it been so, the Central Educational Institutions Act [which allows for the reservation] would have been a more intelligent piece of legislation, not one that justified the reservations on the basis of census data collected in 1931! Had those who drafted and pushed the quota plan been even remotely motivated to improve the lot of the OBC's, they would have first informed themselves better with at least up-to-date data on how many there were still OBC and a clear idea of who the 'socially and economically backward' people of the country were. Neither of this was apparently done.

This is not a rant against reservations/ quotas, because these are clearly required in a country where discrimination continues to dominate decisions and in such an environment, a dictated-by-law quota is the closest that sections of the society which have traditionally been denied and left-out can receive a stab at access, and through such access, equality.

Returning to what this piece began with, why was the original proposal so superficial? The simple answer is - when vote-banks can be captured with rhetoric and sops, there is no pressure for genuine affirmative action. But the initial SC observations brought people out on the streets protesting or celebrating the Supreme Court ruling, depending on which side of the divide they found themselves - with emotional responses. That is where things go wrong, in India and even in Sikkim. Emotions are necessary to motivate interest; reactions and stands, on the other hand, should flow from intelligent debate, sound reasoning and long-term perspective. It is here that those who have enjoyed quotas and reservations need to step back and take stock. Has reservation delivered? Obviously not, because while those already within the quotas are seeking more exclusive niches, those on the outside are shoring up arguments to justify inclusion in the reserved categories.

Quotas, protectionism and reservations kill competence in the long run... they snigger at ambition. What these vote-banks should demand is a stronger foundation. The demand should be for the setting up of quality schools equipped with the best infrastructure and staffed with the best educators available, teaching from syllabus and courses that are contemporary and forward looking. These should be institutions of such excellence that everyone will want to study in them and arrangements should be made for a quota for general students instead so that the interaction makes everyone richer in experience. If this is done, the marginalized and the socially and economically backward will turn the tide in one generation. Where seventy-plus years [for India] and 43 years [for Sikkim] of protection and reservation have met with only limited success, this one instance of delivery on a genuine need will succeed within less than a decade. The nation will probably never come around to undertaking something like this, but Sikkim could, and it probably should. In fact the country has tried, but those initiatives were compromised by red-tape and half-baked initiatives. Sikkim could learn from those shortfalls and deliver a model which grooms proud achievers and does not churn out insecure ambitions. For instance, there is talk of setting up hostel facilities for students from the Primitive Tribe Group of Sikkim. While this will be handy for now, for the long run, PTG representatives should demand a top-up on whatever crores are being provided for these hostels to set up an "international level" school in, say, Dzongu. The best school possible for Lepchas in Dzongu with a quota for general category students filled through competition. Don't allow short-cuts, ensure quality facilities and quality education and reap the benefits.



What will come after a US withdrawal from Afghanistan?

ABDULKADER SINNO
theconversation.com

The United States and the Taliban may be nearing an agreement to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan after more than 17 years of conflict.

In return, the Taliban would commit to refusing access to anti-American organizations such as al-Qaida on its territory.

How did we get to this point – and what will be the consequences of such an agreement?

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

As a longtime scholar of Afghanistan's wars and conflict dynamics, I suggest beginning with a bit of history.

The current conflict began when the Bush administration invaded Afghanistan a few weeks after 9/11.

It was on Afghan soil that Osama bin Laden hatched the plot to attack the U.S. The Taliban, the de facto rulers of much of Afghanistan in the wake of a bloody civil war, had given bin Laden and his supporters shelter.

Two months into the U.S. invasion, Taliban state institutions and defensive positions crumbled and the United States formed new state institutions led by Afghans who had fought the Taliban. The U.S. maintained a limited force to fight and capture al-Qaida and Taliban leaders but otherwise invested little in the Afghan economy or society.

It took the Taliban four years to reconstitute itself as an effective force of insurgents to fight the U.S. and the Afghan government, and they became stronger every year after 2004. As I explain in my research, the United States and the coalition of 42 countries it formed to defeat the resurgent Taliban was poorly organized, abusive and mismanaged.

Since 2001, the U.S.-led coalition has spent US\$1 trillion dollars and committed a peak of 140,000 troops and 100,000 contractors to an unsuccessful attempt to defeat the Taliban. More than 5,000 American soldiers and contractors were killed.

Today, a U.S. force of 14,000 troops and massive U.S. Airforce assets are helping maintain the defensive positions of an Afghan government that is widely considered as one of the most corrupt in the world.

The Taliban are making territorial gains and killing hundreds of regime troops each month, and feel that they are on the cusp of victory.

Militias that recruit from the Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek minorities have rearmed in anticipation of the collapse of the regime in Kabul and fear of a coming civil war with the mostly Pushtun Taliban.

Afghanistan is nearing an endgame.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE TALIBAN

An agreement between the Taliban and the U.S. would be an impressive accomplishment for the Taliban. From their perspective, it would be their reward for fighting the world's strongest military power to a stalemate.

They already were rewarded by getting to negotiate directly with the United States, as they have always requested, instead of the Afghan regime which they despise. If the negotiations are successful, they would also be getting precisely what they asked for: an American withdrawal.

In return, they are making a commitment to do something they would likely have done anyway. Al-Qaida's attack on the U.S. caused the Taliban to lose control of Afghanistan for years. They are not likely to risk having to pay that cost again once they regain control of Kabul, even if they don't sign an agreement.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR US

There is little hope for an outright U.S. victory over the Taliban at this point.

The remaining force of 14,000 U.S. troops is mostly meant to shore up Afghan state defenses. It is too small to reverse momentum on the battlefield. An agreement and withdrawal would therefore be attractive for those who value less military spending and stress on the military, including General John Nicholson, the previous commander of the American and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The agreement, however, could undermine U.S. reputation in ways big and small. The Obama and Trump administrations never reversed a 2002 Bush executive order that added the Taliban to the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists, but they have simultaneously pleaded with them to negotiate in spite of claims that Washington does not negotiate with terrorists.

It also signals U.S. weakness and inability to fight a dedicated force of insurgents. Militants elsewhere, including Islamic State leaders, could find this lesson instructive. I believe such an agreement may well be remembered as a turning point in America's ability to successfully project its military power around the Muslim world.

An agreement could also signal that the U.S. is an unreliable ally that abandons those who side with it. The United States is involved in numerous conflicts worldwide in places as diverse as Syria and Somalia, and many of its local allies would logically recalculate their own commitments after witnessing a U.S. disengagement from Afghanistan.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE STATE

As I describe in my book "Organizations at War in Afghanistan," governments tend to unravel quickly in Afghanistan when foreign support, both military and financial, ceases.

This is precisely what happened after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan and stopped their support to the Najib regime in the early 1990s. As I report in greater detail in my book, different regime militias and military units either disintegrated, joined their erstwhile Mujahideen opponents or became independent militias.

Similarly, today's Afghan state officials at all levels have long hedged their bets by maintaining ties with the Taliban, their nominal opponents and minority militias. If history is any indication, we can expect that entire agencies and units will either fragment or collectively join any of several strongman-led ethnic militias when the rewards of working for the regime stop outweighing the risks of facing the Taliban. Some may even defect to the Taliban. This is expected behavior in dangerous environments such as Afghanistan, where everyone is expected to have a hedging strategy for survival.

Once the state gets pulled in all directions, Afghanistan will likely degenerate into a civil war very similar to the one that the United States interrupted when it invaded in late 2001. Other countries, including Russia, Iran and India will choose sides to back. I estimate that the Taliban, with their dedicated Pakistani and Arab Gulf backers will win that conflict, just like they almost did in 2001. We may very well reach a point where we see the 17-year American occupation as merely a futile, bloody and costly interruption of the Afghan civil war.

I consider a U.S.-Taliban agreement to be no more than a face-saving measure to conclude a failed and costly American military intervention. If there is a useful lesson to be learned from this misadventure, it is that leaders of even the world's mightiest military power need to reconsider the merits of a militarized foreign policy in the Muslim world. U.S. military interventions are stoking resentment and inflaming a perpetual transnational insurgency across Muslim countries. If it doesn't change its course, the U.S. may very well suffer more defeats such as the one in Afghanistan and will cause even more hurt and damage in other countries along the way.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies, Indiana University]

Books are delightful as they are – don't fall in the trap of competitive reading

SALLY O'REILLY
theconversation.com

My happiest times in childhood were spent reading the books of E. Nesbit, C.S. Lewis and Joan Aiken. Preferring to read in hidden corners where nobody could find me, I immersed myself completely in these stories and believed utterly in their magic, even attempting to enter Narnia via the portal of my grandmother's wardrobe. As an adult, I still call myself a passionate reader, but sometimes feel as if I've lost my way compared to my childhood self. I buy vast quantities of books, talk about books, read as many as possible, sometimes even write them – but it's not often I find that same pure immersion in an imagined world which has been such a lasting inspiration.

Celebrations like World Book day promote children's reading and remind us all of the pleasures of a good book. Many of us make resolutions to read more, but these days there's increasing pressure to read the "right" thing. The adult world presents a constant temptation to turn every activity into a competitive sport, and reading is no exception: it is beset with targets, hierarchies and categorisations. We guilt-read chick-lit

and crime, skim-read for book groups and improvement-read from book prize shortlists.

Underpinning this is a relentless quest for self-improvement, demonstrated by the popularity of reading challenges, in which readers set themselves individual book consumption targets. On Good Reads, some participants have modest goals, others aim for as many as 190 in the year, which translates to 15.8 books a month, 3.6 a week or just over half a book each day. Impressive? Maybe, but others are reading even faster. One journalist recently embarked on a seven day social media detox and read a dozen books in that time. It's a far cry from my days with Mr Tumnus.

A PROFOUND JOY

This raises a fundamental question: why do we read at all? Do we want to enjoy books, or download them into our brains? Are we so obsessed with being able to tick a book title off a check-list that we risk forgetting that reading is a physical and emotional activity as well as an intellectual one? The perceived benefits of reading are often given more attention than the experience itself: campaigners tend to stress its utilitarian value and research findings that it increases empathy and even life expectancy.

But the reading experience is important. A sure sign of loving a book is slowing down when you come to the final pages, reluctant to leave the world it creates behind. As the UK reading agency puts it, "in addition to its substantial practical benefits, reading is one of life's profound joys". Children seem to know this intuitively, and engage fully with a story, often to the exclusion of all else. They are demanding, honest readers, more interested in what happens in a tale and where it takes them than whether it's a Carnegie prize-winner.

SLOW READING

As an adult, it is possible to recapture that immersive involvement with a book. What we need is the opportunity to focus entirely on the words, and a willingness to ignore stress-inducing challenges and targets. When I was writing my second novel I lived in Barcelona for a year, day-job free. During that time I read just six books, one of them Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent. At a recent writing retreat, I spent two hours a day reading Michel Faber's The Crimson Petal and the White. I engaged completely with these novels, forgetting the outside world, and they have stayed with me, their characters and plot twists vivid and familiar when other books, read

hurriedly in snatches amid distractions, have faded from my mind.

I'm not alone in seeing the value of immersive, non-competitive reading. In a recent Guardian article, author Sarah Waters admitted to feeling out of the loop when current writing is discussed. Asked which book she is "most ashamed not to have read" (a telling phrase), she responded, "Anything people are currently raving about. I'm a slow reader, and I read old books as often as new ones, so I always feel like a hopeless failure when it comes to keeping up with brand new titles".

There are already advocates of slow living, and a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace, savouring experience and rediscovering human connection. Perhaps it is time for this to encompass reading too. 184,000 books are published each year in the UK alone, and we're not going to make much of a dent in that pile even if we read 12 books a week. Indeed, no matter how fast we read, the vast majority of books will remain unknown to us. If there is one skill that adult readers can usefully learn from children, it is that of reading purely for pleasure.

[the writer is Lecturer in Creative Writing, The Open University]

Mamata to begin poll campaign on Women’s Day

KOLKATA, MAR 6 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will kick off the Trinamool Congress’ campaign for the Lok Sabha polls on International Women’s Day on March 8, a party leader said Wednesday.

Incidentally, the TMC chief had also commenced her party’s election campaign for the 2014 parliamentary and 2016 Assembly elections on the same date.

Banerjee is scheduled to participate in a rally convened by the party’s women’s wing from Shradhdhananda Park to Park Street here on Friday to celebrate the International Women’s Day.

“Although election dates are yet to be announced, but our campaign for the Lok Sabha elections will begin on March 8. During the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and 2016 Assembly polls also, Mamata di had started her

poll campaign on Women’s Day,” a senior leader of the TMC’s women’s wing said.

The purpose of this rally is to create a “new India, united India and strong India”, the posters of the rally read.

“She (Banerjee) will give her message for the Lok Sabha polls. And after the dates are announced, a full-fledged campaign will begin,” the TMC leader said.

Banerjee, who has been the prime mover of an anti- Bharatiya Janata Party front, had organised a mega Opposition rally here on January 19, during which she had given a call to oust the Modi government.

The TMC, which is vying to play a major role in the formation of the next government at the Centre, has vowed to win all the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The party had won 34 seats in the 2014 general election.

US ‘very closely’ following reports of F-16 misuse by Pakistan: State Dept



WASHINGTON, MAR 6 (PTI): The US is “very closely” following the reports that Pakistan misused American-made F-16 fighter jets against India in the recent aerial confrontation between their air forces, according to a top State Department official.

The Indian Air Force on Thursday displayed parts of an AMRAAM beyond visual range air-to-air missile as evidence to “conclusively” prove that Pakistan deployed US-manufactured F-16 fighter jets during an aerial raid targeting Indian military installations in Kashmir after India’s anti-terror operation in Balakot.

Pakistan has said that no F-16 fighter jets were used.

The US State Department has said that America is seeking more information from Pakistan on the potential misuse of American-made F-16 fighter jets by it against India in violation of the end-user agreement.

“We’ve seen those reports and we’re following that issue very closely,” US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino told reporters at his biweekly news conference on Tuesday.

He was responding to questions that Pakistan has violated the end-user agreement on F-16 fight-

er jets that it procured from the United States.

“I can’t confirm anything, but as a matter of policy, we don’t publicly comment on the contents of bilateral agreements that we have in this regard involving US defence technologies nor the communications that we have with other countries about that.

“So, we’re taking a look and we’re going to continue to take a look. I’m going to leave it at that,” Palladino said.

The AMRAAM missiles allow a fighter pilot to target an enemy aircraft that is beyond visual range, in day or night, and in all-weather conditions. They have an autonomous guidance capability, which allows the pilot to manoeuvre immediately after the missile’s launch.

Tensions between India and Pakistan flared up after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed killed 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel in Kashmir’s Pulwama district on February 14.

India launched a counter-terror operation in Balakot on February 26.

The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 and captured its pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who was handed over to India on Friday.

Aren’t you ashamed of doing politics over jawans’ dead bodies? Mamata asks Modi

HOWRAH (WB), MAR 6 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday accused Narendra Modi of doing opportunistic politics over the dead bodies of jawans and ridiculed the prime minister for trying to paint himself as the lone patriot.

Banerjee vowed to remove the “blacklisted” Modi government from the Centre in the Lok Sabha election and ensure that even the signboards of Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah cease to exist in the country.

“As you (Modi) have done nothing in the last five years, that is why you need to show missiles, bombs and dead bodies of jawans. Don’t you feel ashamed that you are doing opportunistic politics over the dead bodies of jawans? We all stand by our armed forces, for our country, but we are not with the Modi regime,” Banerjee said while addressing a program in



Howrah district. “Those who are questioning the government over the outcome of the airstrikes on Jaish training camps in Balakot are branded as ‘Pakistanis’ as if we all belong to the neighbouring country and only he (Modi) is an Indian,” she said.

The Trinamool Congress chief had recently sought evidence of the

airstrike, saying that Opposition parties wanted to know the details of the Indian Air Force (IAF) operations on terror camps in Balakot.

Banerjee and the BJP have been engaged in an intense war of words, with her party hitting out at the latter for allegedly politicising the airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp in Paki-

stan’s Balakot and the saffron party alleging that the TMC was echoing Pakistan by casting doubts about the attack.

“The BJP should stop lecturing us on patriotism. We don’t need to learn it from them. We are for the country, but we are not there to support the blacklisted Modi government at the Centre. We will remove

the signboards of Modi and Amit Shah from this country. Either this country will survive or they will win. The sooner this government is defeated, the better it will be for the country,” Banerjee said.

“Everyday, the BJP leaders are surfing for my religion on websites. I want to tell them my religion is humanity. They

(BJP) may not have heard about it as they have blood on their hands,” she said.

The chief minister wryly described Modi as “Gabbar Singh” and alleged that every institution and media houses in the country were being threatened by the BJP-led government. “We have seen several governments, but we have never seen such a prime minister, who is terrorising everybody in this country as if he is a Gabbar Singh.”

Gabbar Singh is a fictional character, and the main antagonist of Bollywood movie ‘Sholay’.

Banerjee alleged that more than two crore people had lost their jobs and 12,000 farmers had committed suicide in the country due to demonetisation.

Accusing the BJP government of manipulating data on jobs and GDP, she said: “Modi babu knows only how to manipulate data. Five years are over... this government’s expiry date is over.”

Judicial probe ordered into Arunachal Pradesh violence

ITANAGAR, MAR 6 (PTI): The BJP government in Arunachal Pradesh has announced a judicial probe into the large scale rioting, violence and vandalism during the recent PRC protest that left three people dead.

In his address to the state BJP council meeting here Tuesday, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said justice would be delivered to the bereaved families and the people responsible for unleashing the violence would be brought to book.

The probe would be carried out by a committee headed by a retired judge, a CMO communication said on Wednesday.

Protests had erupted

in Itanagar and adjoining Naharlagun in late February over the proposed grant of permanent resident certificates (PRC) to six non-Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APSTs) communities living in the Namsai and Changlang districts and to the Gorkhas living in Vijaynagar.


Curfew clamped in Itanagar and Naharlagun town failed to deter protesters from venturing into the streets and pelting stones that left 35 people, including 24 police personnel, injured.

The private residence of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein was set ablaze and the office of the Itanagar deputy commissioner ransacked. Clarify-

ing that the state government had never intended to move a resolution or a bill in the Assembly over the PRC, Khandu said the matter was to be taken up for deliberations during a short-duration discussion in the House and to make the recommendations of the Joint High Power Committee (JHPC) on the PRC public.

“The state government had planned to make wider public consultation involving all stakeholders, community-based organisations, student organisations and other bodies,” the chief minister said. The issue was “misinterpreted”, causing unrest among the students, Khandu said.

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ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

GANGTOK

Memo No: 622/SD IV/R&B/2018-19/267 Date: 04.03.2019

CORRIGENDUM

Consequent upon approval from the competent authority, time schedule for the submission and opening of tender documents for the works vide Notice Inviting Tender No.622/SD IV/R&B/2018-19/257, dated 26.02.2019 has been amended. The details of works and time schedule are as under:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Cost of work	Earnest	Cost of	Completion
1.	Construction of link road from S Topgay House to Dho Tapu JHS in East Sikkim under Shyari constituency	33-Kopibari Syari GPU			
	KM 1 st	42,38,496.00	1,06,000.00	1,500.00	12 months.

TIME SCHEDULE

1.	Date of submission of application with (i) Demand Draft/deposit slip for cost of tender documents drawn against account of respective GPU/ULB and (ii) TDR of SBS as Earnest money to be drawn in favour of Sr. Account Officer, R&B, for issue of Tender Forms.	(Bank account number for DD can be obtained from respective GPU/ULB)
		25 th March 2019 from office of respective GPKs and ULBs.
2.	Last date and time for submission of Tender.	
		27 th of March 2019 (10.00 am to 1.00 pm) at respective GPKs/ULBs.
3.	Date and time for Opening of Tender.	
		27 th of March 2019 (2.00 pm) at respective GPKs/ULBs.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

1. Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors of appropriate class and area.
2. GST registration is must for successful bidder before issuing work order.
3. The bidder shall produce Certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat Unit/Urban Local Bodies where the work is being executed.
4. For others General Conditions of Contract and other queries, Office of the Divisional Engineer, East I and Office of Assistant Engineer, Sub Division IV, R&B, Gangtok, may be contacted during office hours.

R.O. No. 764/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date: 05.03.2019

Additional Chief Engineer (N&E)
Buildings & Housing Department
Government of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 763/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date: 05.03.2019

Assistant Engineer-IV
Roads & Bridges Department
Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok.

COA set to refer Rahul-Pandya matter to Ombudsman, BCCI snub at ICC also to be discussed

NEW DELHI, MAR 6 (PTI): The Committee of Administrators (COA) running Indian cricket will refer the investigation into Hardik Pandya and K L Rahul's loose talk on women to the BCCI's newly-appointed Ombudsman D K Jain during a meeting here on Thursday. Rahul and Pandya were provisionally suspended for their sexist remarks on a popular TV show but their suspension was eventually revoked pending an inquiry.

Now that the Ombudsman has been appointed by the Supreme Court to resolve disputes, he will take a call on the case involving Rahul and Pandya.

"This is the first full fledged meeting of the COA after the appointment of the Ombudsman. We would be discussing various issues," COA Chairman Vinod Rai told PTI without getting into the specifics of the Rahul and Pandya controversy. Jain, a former Su-

preme Court judge, on Tuesday told PTI that he was waiting for the COA to refer him any matter, including Pandya and Rahul's case.

Both Pandya and Rahul were sent home from the tour of Australia following their controversial remarks which triggered a massive controversy.

Thursday will also be the first time that the latest member of the COA, Lt General Ravi Thodge, will be attending a meeting in person.

Thodge, who was appointed last month, attended the previous meeting over phone. Rai and Diana Edulji are the other two COA members.

Another matter likely to be discussed at the meeting is the BCCI receiving a cold shoulder from the International Cricket Council following its letter to the governing body that urged the ICC and its member nations to sever ties with countries which harbour terror.

Alembic shuts...

Pharmaceuticals in a meeting held on 13 Feb 2019, the company has said that it cannot reinstate the terminated workers because they violated the rules and norms of the company by assaulting management staff following which a police case was also registered against them. The company, however, offered three months' salary to the terminated workers as a goodwill gesture.

On the workers' demand that the police case be withdrawn, the company has said that it could be withdrawn but they would not be given their jobs back.

The release further informs that 9 workers decided to accept three months' salary and to the remaining 6 workers the Labour Department assured employment in other pharma companies till the police case is decided and in case the court acquits them then the department would have better scope of compelling Alembic Pharmaceuticals of reinstating them.

"They had a positive response on the proposal and informed that they be consulting among themselves and convey their decision to the department immediately. However, despite conveying their decision they intensified their protest through some anti social means and by gathering crowds in front of Labour Office," the release states.

Further, stating that the department respects the sentiments of the workers, the release mentions that the case being under police investigation, the Labour Department cannot intervene in the matter.

Workers of Yuksom Breweries and NHPC Teesta Stage-V also joined the protest today and submitted memorandums on their issues to the Labour Secretary as well. Workers of Aishwarya Healthcare and Mankind Pharma Limited had earlier joined the protest.

Service extension...

to be "carefully worked out" taking into consideration existing PGTs and requirement of upgraded schools. Even these appointments, the Circular directs, should be made strictly on merit and as per NCTE norms.

The Joint and Additional Directors in the districts have further been directed to "keep in mind" that engagement of fresh adhoc teachers is to be redced to the minimum and that each teacher necessarily take a minimum of 24 periods per week.

PRT and GT teachers proceeding on maternity leave should be managed from within the existing pool of PRTs and GTs, however, in the case of PGTs, fresh appointments may be considered only for a period of six months or the duration of the maternity leave whichever is earlier.

The Circular directs that the districts "necessarily" provide a consolidated picture of all adhoc teachers to the Headquarter for record and details of all new appointments be sent to the Administration Section, HRDD, for information.

SKM sniffs...

developments, the party decided to step in and get involved on behalf of the protesting workers, he said.

He informed that a seven-member SKM delegation had met with the Alembic management on 04 March and they had sought one day's time and assured to give a decision on 06 March. Instead of communication, a notice was put up announcing suspension of operations.

He insisted that the issue was "very simple" as all that the company had to do was take back the six expelled employees. "However, instead of resolving this simple issue unfortunately the company has shut down its plant," he said.

SKM has further argued that the factory has not been shut following prescribed rules and reiterated the allegation that the State Government was behind this development.

SKM labour front vice-president, Ganden Lachungpa, also alleged that the State government was working in the interest of private companies instead to working for workers.

Real Madrid's European reign ends with shock loss to Ajax

MADRID, MAR 6 (AP): Kings of Europe no more. Real Madrid's Champions League reign is over.

More than 1,000 days since winning the first of three consecutive European titles, Real Madrid unprecedented era of dominance ended with a whimper when the Spanish giant was stunned 4-1 by Ajax at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Tuesday.

The humiliating loss meant Madrid was eliminated 5-3 on aggregate in the round of 16, leaving the club looking at a trophy-less season in its first campaign since mega-star Cristiano Ronaldo left for Juventus.

"We were not going to win the Champions League forever," said Real Madrid defender Nacho Fernandez, who was sent off in the final minutes of the game.

"Reigns eventually come to an end. Something like this was going to happen sooner or later."

In the end, the club renowned for assembling its team with expensive "Galactico" signings was undone by a club centered around a core of homegrown young talents.

Ajax, which is enjoying a resurgence thanks to young stars like Frenkie de Jong and Matthijs de Ligt, needed less than 20 minutes to reverse a 2-1 deficit from the first leg, with Hakim Ziyech scoring in the seventh minute and David Neres in the 18th.



Dusan Tadic, who set up both first-half goals, added to the lead in the 62nd, and Lasse Schone sealed the Dutch team's triumph with a free kick from a tight angle in the 72nd. Marco Asensio had pulled the hosts closer a couple of minutes earlier.

"We always believed we had a chance, and we had 4,000 fans here who believed as well," Ajax coach Erick ten Hag said.

"Over the two matches we definitely deserve to progress to the next round." In Tuesday's other game, Tottenham won 1-0 at Borussia Dortmund to go through 4-0 on aggregate, reaching the quarterfinals for the first time since 2011.

Ajax was playing in the last 16 for the first time since 2006 and will be making its first

quarterfinal appearance since 2003.

For Madrid, it was the fourth straight home loss in all competitions, something that hadn't happened since 2004, and capped one of the worst weeks in the club's recent history.

The team was coming off two demoralising home losses to arch-rival Barcelona 1-0 in the Spanish league and 3-0 in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey.

Out of the Copa del Rey and 12 points behind Barcelona in the Spanish league, the Champions League was Real Madrid's only realistic chance of winning anything this season.

"We are sad. We are hurt," Real Madrid coach Santiago Solari said.

"We gave our best but

it wasn't enough. All we can do is come back tomorrow and keep working hard. The season continues and we have to keep playing."

Madrid hadn't lost a Champions League knockout tie since the 2015 semifinal against Juventus. It had reached at least the semifinals in eight straight seasons and hadn't failed to make it past the last 16 since 2010.

In the group stage this season, it had lost 3-0 to CSKA Moscow at the Bernabeu for what had been its worst ever European loss.

Madrid was without suspended captain Sergio Ramos, who was sanctioned by UEFA for deliberately earning a late booking late in the first leg, and the defense

struggled from the start on Tuesday. The attack also faltered again, with the forwards missing chance after chance.

The Bernabeu crowd went silent early when Ziyech opened the scoring after a breakaway that started with a run by Tadic through the right flank.

The already nervous crowd was stunned again about 10 minutes later when Neres added to the lead from close range after Tadic got past a few Real Madrid defenders with a run from near the midfield, clearing Casemiro with a superb spin move and dribble. Neres beat Luka Modric to Tadic's through ball and went past Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois before finding the open net. Things got worse

for Madrid as both Lucas Vazquez and Vinicius Junior had to be substituted before halftime because of injuries being replaced by Gareth Bale and Marco Asensio.

Vinicius Junior was hurt at the end of a long run in which he nearly opened the scoring for Madrid. The young Brazilian appeared to be crying as he made his way back to the bench.

Bale struck the woodwork with a shot over Ajax goalkeeper Andre Onana just before halftime. Raphael Varane had hit the crossbar with a header less than five minutes into the match, and he also missed from close range later in the first half.

Asensio and Nacho Fernandez also wasted opportunities as Madrid's lack of scoring touch was costly again.

Although the hosts kept pressing, it was Ajax that kept threatening the most throughout the game, missing several chances to increase its lead.

Tadic got his goal with a left-footed shot from inside the area, which was upheld after a lengthy video review to see whether the ball had gone out of play before Ajax launched a quick counterattack.

Asensio gave his team a glimmer of hope in the 70th, but it was snuffed out just two minutes later when Schone's curling free kick from the left flank beat Courtois and sealed the stunning triumph.

Nobody will get any information from us on source of Rafale documents: The Hindu chairman N Ram



NEW DELHI, MAR 6 (PTI): Documents related to the Rafale deal were published in public interest and nobody would get any information from The Hindu newspaper on the confidential sources who provided them, The Hindu Publishing Group Chairman N Ram said on Wednesday.

The documents were published because details were withheld or covered up, the veteran journalist said as the government told the Supreme Court that documents related to the Rafale aircraft deal have been stolen from the Defence Ministry and an investigation into the theft is on.

"You may call it stolen documents...we are not concerned. We got it from confidential sources and we are committed to protecting these sources. Nobody is going to get any information from us on these sources.

But the documents speak for themselves and the stories speak for themselves," Ram told PTI.

He has written a series of articles on the Rafale deal, the latest one on Wednesday.

Those who put documents on the Rafale deal in the public domain are guilty under the Official Secrets Act and contempt of court, Attorney General K K Venugopal said on Wednesday before a bench hearing a batch of petitions seeking a review of the court's verdict dismissing all the pleas against the agreement on the fighter jet.

"I will not comment on the proceedings of the Supreme Court. But whatever we have published has been published. They are authentic documents. And they have been published in the public interest because these details have been withheld or covered up," Ram said.

"... It is the duty of the press - through investigative journalism - to bring out relevant information or issues of great importance for the public interest," he added.

On February 8, Ram wrote in The Hindu that the Defence ministry raised strong objections to "parallel discussions" conducted by the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) during the negotiations over the Rs 59,000 crore Rafale deal between India and France.

It was allegedly based on government documents related to Rafale deal.

"What we have done is completely protected under article 19 (1) (a) of the Indian constitution - freedom of speech and expression - and also under the relevant sections of the Right to Information Act, specifically, its section 8 (1) (i) and section 8 (2), which clearly protects this," Ram said.

Spearman Neeraj eyes consistency before 90m push

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH NEW DELHI, MAR 6 (PTI): The 90m mark is mentioned everytime Neeraj Chopra picks up the javelin that has pierced through many a records but the Indian star says he wants to steer clear of the pressure of getting there and first achieve consistency in hitting 87-88m this year.

A record-breaking year behind him, star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra aims to break new grounds in this "crucial" season leading up to the Olympic Games next year.

"Last year, it was 85-86m I was consistent at and this year I want to be consistent at around 87-88m and if possible 90m. I will be happy if I do that. Consistency is the key," Neeraj told PTI in an interview from Potcheftersroom, South Africa where he is training right now.

"But I don't put any pressure on myself that I will have to cross 90m. Every time I go to a competition, I just think of doing my best."

After announcing his arrival in 2016 with a junior world record, the 21-year-old had a phenomenal season last year, winning a gold each in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

He emerged as a serious Olympic medal contender with a series of impressive throws,

breaking his own national record twice last year. The last one of 88.06m won him a gold in the Asian Games and catapulted him to the world's elite. The dashing six-footer from Khandra Village in Panipat is currently training at the North West University campus in Potcheftersroom. He has been there since January 12 and will train till the end of this month.

He is set to be exempted from the March 15-18 Federation Cup National Championship in Patiala, which will serve as the selection trial for the Asian Championships in Doha (April 19-24).

"It was a very satisfying last season, I won gold in two major multi-sporting events and then improved my national record. This year is very crucial, there is the Asian Championships and the World Championships (September 28 to October 6), not to forget the Diamond League series events," Neeraj said.

"Obviously, I want to do better this year than last year. A better performance this season will boost my confidence going into the Olympic year (next year). I could not do well in the World Championships in 2017 and this time I would like to make amends of that poor show," he added.

Neeraj had failed

to qualify for the final round in the 2017 London World Championships. He could not clear the automatic qualification mark of 83m with 82.26m being the best in the three throws in the preliminary round.

Since the season has just started, the emphasis is on fitness and building the body than actual technique.

"It is more about building and strengthening the body, core training. We have not started throwing the javelin, we will do that later this month. There are also some competitions lined-up in South Africa and nearby places towards the end of this month," he said.

The only throwing he has done in Potcheftersroom is with lightweight iron balls which are heavier than a javelin.

"...medicine balls and iron balls weigh 1 or 2 kg and strengthen my shoulder. I am throwing these iron balls to short distances like I throw a javelin. The technical adjustments (which his coach Uwe Hohn has hinted) will be done later as we go along in the year." The likes of world number 3 Magnus Kirt of Estonia (personal best 89.75m) and World Championships silver-medalist Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic (personal best 89.73m) are currently training at the same facility.

SIKKIM STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
in celebration of
“INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY” ON MARCH 8, 2019
OBSERVES “LEGAL SERVICES WEEK FOR WOMEN”
FROM MARCH 8, 2019 – MARCH 14, 2019

IMPORTANT CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA	LEGAL PROVISIONS	A. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
<p>The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only guarantees equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women to make efforts to bring them to par in the cumulative socio economic, education and political fields. Fundamental Rights, amongst others, ensures equality before the law and equal protection of law, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth within the framework of a democratic policy. Our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments to secure equal rights of women.</p> <p>Constitutional Provision for Women:-</p> <p>i. Equality before law for women {Article 14}</p>	<p>To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the State has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women. Although women may be victims of any crime such as 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating' etc., the crimes, which are directed specifically against women, are characterized as 'Crime against Women'. These are broadly classified under two categories.</p> <p>I Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)</p> <p>1. Punishment for Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)</p> <p>2. Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes (Sec. 363-373)</p> <p>3. Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)</p> <p>4. Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)</p> <p>5. Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)</p> <p>6. Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)</p> <p>7. Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age) (Sec. 366 -B)</p> <p>II The Crimes identified under the Special Laws (SLL). Although all laws are not gender specific they are reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the times viz;</p> <p>1. The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948</p> <p>2. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951</p> <p>3. The Family Courts Act, 1954</p> <p>4. The Special Marriage Act, 1954</p> <p>5. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955</p> <p>6. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendments in 2005</p> <p>7. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956</p> <p>8. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1955)</p> <p>9. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961</p> <p>10. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971</p> <p>11. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976</p> <p>12. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976</p> <p>13. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006</p>	<p>Any act of violence or abuse against a single woman, sister, widow, mother, daughter or even women in live-in-relationships amounts to domestic violence. Women can seek protection under the "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005".</p> <p>B. EVE TEASERS BEWARE</p> <p>Any indecent act including lewd comments, cats call, or whistling, touching, groping indecent exposure that degrades the dignity of women comes under sexual and mental harassment. The offender is punishable by a maximum jail term of two years.</p> <p>C. DISCRIMINATION AT WORK PLACE</p> <p>A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the workplace.</p> <p>A majority of the working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues.</p> <p>The Hon'ble Supreme Court has laid down certain guidelines in Vishaka & Ors. vs. State of Rajasthan & Ors. (1997)6 SCC 241 and has further laid down directions to be implemented by the State of Sikkim in Seema Lepcha vs. State of Sikkim & Other in Civil Appeal No. 1632/2012 with regard to sexual harassment of women at workplaces.</p>
<p>ii. The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them {Article 15 (1)}</p> <p>iii. The State shall not be prevented from making any special provision in favour of women and children {Article 15 (3)}</p> <p>iv. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State {Article 16 (1)}</p> <p>v. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the rights to an adequate means of livelihood {Article 39 (a)}; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women {Article 39 (d)}</p> <p>vi. To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities {Article 39 A}</p> <p>vii. The State to make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief {Article 42}</p> <p>viii. The State shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall, protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation {Article 46}</p>		<p>B. WOMEN CAN CLAIM MAINTENANCE</p> <p>A woman's legal right to claim maintenance from her husband is recognized under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Section 18 of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 entitles a woman to claim maintenance from her husband. Also, the claim for maintenance is extendable to her minor children. Further, these laws provide that maintenance can be claimed prior to divorce, during separation.</p> <p>E. SAY NO TO ECONOMIC ABUSE</p> <p>Women are entitled to monetary help from spouses, parents or guardians in case of natural emergencies like treatment. Husbands cannot dispose of jewellery or dowry without consent of his wife. If he does, he is guilty of economic abuse.</p>

<p>ix. The State shall make provision of nutrition and the standard of living of its people {Article 47}</p> <p>x. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practice derogatory to the dignity of women {Article 51 (A) (e)}</p> <p>xi. Not less than one- third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat {Article 243 D (3)}</p> <p>xii. Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women {Article 243 D (4)}</p> <p>xiii. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality Article 243T(3)}</p>	<p>14. The Criminal Law (Amendment)</p>
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A woman is entitled to free legal aid u/s 12 (c) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Hence any woman in need of legal aid and services may contact the office of Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim or at any of the District Legal Services Authorities or Taluk Legal Services Committees in all the Districts and Sub-Divisions:

<p>Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No : 03592-207753 Fax : 03592-207753 Helpline No. 03592-205377 E-mail : sikkim_slsa@live.com</p>	<p>District Legal Services Authority (West), Kyongsa, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone No: 03595-250189</p>	<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee (North), Court of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate, Pentok, Mangan, North Sikkim. Phone: 03592-234383/234514</p>
<p>District Legal Services Authority (East), District Court's Complex, Sichey, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No: 03592-284462</p>	<p>District Legal Services Authority (South), Court's Complex, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone: 03595-264356</p>	<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee, Chungthang Sub-Division, North Sikkim. Phone: 89006-67283</p>
<p>District Legal Services Authority (North), Pentok, Mangan, North Sikkim. Phone No: 03592-234502 (O) Fax: 03592-234832 (Fax)</p>	<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee (East), District Court's Complex, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No: 03592-284131</p>	<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee (South), Court of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate, District Court's Complex, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone: 03595-263145</p>
<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee (West), Court of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate, Kyongsa, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone No: 03595-250779</p>	<p>Taluk Legal Services Committee, Court of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate, Soreng Sub-Division, West Sikkim. Phone No: 80173-32729</p>	

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