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SummitTIMES

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Contractual employees to continue dharna until regularization orders are issued

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Contractual employees of National Health Mission, Sikkim State AIDS Control Society and Ayush of Sikkim have unanimously decided to continue their pen-down strike until they received their regularisation orders.

Contractual employees of NHM, SSACS and Ayush from across the State have been on a pen-down strike since 01 February on the single-point demand of regularisation and have of late also been sitting on dharna everyday at the State Secretariat.

Speaking to media persons, a representative of contractual employees mentioned that following a collective decision, it



was decided that the ongoing peaceful pen-down strike and dharna at the Secretariat will continue

until they receive their regularization orders.

He added that this decision has also been

conveyed to the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Health Department.

The representative

of the employees stated that the department has verbally assured to regularise all employees who

have served five or more years but has not given any written assurance so far.

He added that as per the department, the notification to this effect will come out on 15 February and the office memorandum on 22 February after which regularization orders will be handed over.

On the same, he asserted that the department should hand over the order on 15 February itself as there will many other processes to be completed.

He mentioned that another demand seeks entry level point for employees having service of less than five years. "We are still going on this issue and until this demand is fulfilled our pen-down strike will be continued," he said.

SC notices to Centre and State on LT seat demand

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

The Supreme Court today issued notices seeking responses from the Union and Sikkim Government on seat reservation for Limboos and Tamangs in the Legislative Assembly by virtue of their having become Scheduled Tribes. The notices were issued following a petition filed by Adeep Tamang, Saman Prasad Subba Limboo, Surendra Moktan, Dhan Rup Limboo and Binod Yonzon, all reportedly members of the Sikkim Limboo-Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee.

They have approached the Supreme Court seeking its intervention for early resolution of seat reservation for Scheduled Tribes and for directions to the respondents to amend Section 7(1A) of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1950 and Section 5A of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951 to provide for seat reservations

for the two communities.

The division bench of Justice AK Sikri and Justice S Abdul Nazeer heard the petition today and directed that notice be issued directing the respondents viz. Home Ministry, Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim; Delimitation Commission and Election Commission of India to file their responses to the said election writ petition within six weeks.

The petitioners have also sought that directions be issued to the Delimitation Commission to issue a final notification giving effect to the reservation in the Legislative Assembly Seats based on the 2011 census data.

According to the petition, as per Census 2011, there are 53,703 Limboos and 37,696 Tamangs in Sikkim totaling 91,399 and constituting 15% of the population here. On this basis, the two tribes are entitled to get 5 seats (15% of the 32 seats) in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Feudal forces have compromised SDF and other parties: SRP



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Sikkim Republican Party today contended that the SDF Government cannot provide justice to the majority communities of Sikkim due to the influence of the feudal powers within the party. SRP has further alleged that even other regional political parties were similarly influenced and compromised.

Addressing a press conference here today, SRP president KB Rai

stated that only SRP can provide justice to the majority community of Sikkim as it was free from any feudal influence and abides by democratic policies and principles.

He added that SRP can only clear all feudal residues from the system.

Mr Rai alleged that the State government has been playing blame-game after having failed to reserve seats for Limboos and Tamangs and that such an environment

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17 Govt Schools upgraded

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

The Human Resource Development Department today upgraded 17 government schools across the state based on the enrollment at the said schools and demands for upgradation.

Four Secondary Schools have been upgraded to Senior Secondary School level. These are: the Government Secondary Schools at Sichey, Rorathang, Melli and Vok.

Also today, six Junior High Schools were upgraded to Secondary level - Raley, Upper Burtuk, Arithang, Chanatar Rongli and Lower Biring.

The Department also upgraded seven schools from Primary to Junior High School level - Badong Thangsing, Kamaray in the East, Amaley, Maypong, Baisalgoan and Singithang in South and Tathang in West district.

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Adhoc teachers satisfied with HRDD follow-up, want all members to join duty



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

The All Sikkim Adhoc & Temporary Employees Association [ASATEA] today expressed satisfaction with how the Human Resource Development Department has followed up on their demand and confirmed that all demands of adhoc teachers have

been included in the proposal to be sent to the government for the approval.

While expressing satisfaction over the outcome of today's meeting, the association has appealed to all teachers to resume their duties at their respective schools from Tuesday onwards.

Representatives of

adhoc teachers held a meeting with senior officials of the HRDD today after having aired doubts that several issues discussed and agreed upon in previous meetings had been left out from recommendations made by the committee constituted by the department.

Speaking to media

persons after the meeting, an executive member of the association, Yogesh Sharma, mentioned that the meeting discussed the left out issues in the recommendation of the committee and informed that the department has agreed to include all demands of adhoc teachers. He said that the file

was ready to be sent to the government for the approval.

He further informed that the department has assured to take out an official notification on all demands by Saturday.

"We will wait till Saturday and hope everything is sorted out. The department has agreed on our stand that no adhoc teacher will be terminated after getting into the service and they should get service continuation," Mr Sharma said.

He stated that the association was hopeful that justice will be delivered soon.

He has appealed to all adhoc teachers and employees to submit all required documents with the form provided by the HRDD as soon as possible for the regularization process.

Mr Sharma further appealed to all adhoc

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I-T sleuths unearth Rs 20,000-cr hawala, money laundering racket in Delhi

NEW DELHI, FEB 11 (PTI):

The Income Tax Department on Monday claimed to have busted a nexus of hawala operators who were running a money laundering racket in the national capital estimated to be worth Rs 20,000 crore. Official sources in the department said a "series of" raids and surveys were conducted by sleuths of the Delhi investigation unit of the I-T Department over the last few weeks in different business areas of old Delhi.

These operations led to unearthing of illegal financial activities by three groups of operators, a senior official said. A survey was con-

ducted on one such group in the Naya Bazar area, that led to the detection of bogus billing of about Rs 18,000 crore. This group had floated a dozen bogus entities for providing fake bills, the official said.

The identities of the accused were not disclosed by the department. In the second case, a "highly organised" money laundering racket has been unearthed where current transactions in well-known shares were fraudulently camouflaged as being sales of old shares held for years, the official said.

He said this way, the beneficiaries have been

found claiming "bogus long-term capital gains."

The taxman suspects the magnitude of this purported scam to be over Rs 1,000 crore.

"This figure appears to be the tip of the iceberg. This modus operandi has been found to be going on for many years," the official said.

The department similarly conducted searches against a group and found "undisclosed foreign bank accounts and a well established racket of claiming bogus duty draw back/GST through over-invoicing of exports."

"Preliminary estimates of such bogus exports

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SKM observes 'Pratiwad Diwas' to mark lathicharge of 2013

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha observed the sixth 'Pratiwad Diwas' of the party here at the SKM party office at Deorali today.

The function, chaired by SKM president PS Tamang [Golay], was attended, among others, by party workers affected in the police lathicharge at the party office on 11 February 2013, an SKM press release informs.

The release explains that the party has been remembering 11 February as a "black day" for the unwarranted lathicharge led by ADGP Akshay Sachdeva.

Today, the SKM president honoured affected



party workers Kala Rai, Junu Chettri, Nuk Tshering Bhutia, Dependra Rai, Pankaj Giri, Tashi Wangyal Sherpa, Sonam Pintso Bhutia, Roshan Shrestha

and Sonam Lachungpa and remembered their sacrifice towards the party, the release informs.

In his address, Mr Tamang mentioned that some

antisocial elements have been defaming SKM by taking donations in the name of party and stressed that this was totally wrong. He insisted that SKM has never

raised donations and if anyone is approached in the name of SKM for a donation, they should immediately file a police complaint against such persons.

Dahal reiterates claim that SKM MLAs complicated LT seat reservation

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Sikkim Democratic Front party spokesperson, Bhim Dahal, has reiterated that neither has Sikkim Krantikari Morcha supported the formula proposed by the State government for Limboo-Tamang seat reservation nor has it offered a formula of its own for the same. What is worse, SKM MLAs along with SIBLAC have become obstacles in resolving the issue, he added while responding to SKM MLA Kunga Nima Lepcha's warning of legal action if he did not explain how SKM MLAs had compromised LT seat resolution.

In a press release issued yesterday, Mr Dahal informs that a memorandum submitted by SKM MLAs KN Lepcha and Sonam Lama and SIBLAC convener, Tseten Tashi Bhutia, to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on 08 Aug, 2018, exposed the real intentions of the trio on the LT seat issue.

The release asserts that it was the right of the people of Sikkim to know the contents of this memorandum and has demanded that the SKM make it public.

SDF rejects Bhaichung's allegations on LT seats

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Sikkim Democratic Front has lashed out against Bhaichung Bhutia and his Hamro Sikkim Party for issuing deceptive and baseless statements on Limboo-Tamang seat reservation issue. Condemning what it sees as Mr Bhutia's half-baked knowledge and blinkered politics, SDF points out that it was the consistent leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling which had won ST status for the two communities after the demand had dragged since the 1970's.

An SDF press release issued by its general secretary, Kavita Subba, asserts that the SDF Government has already presented a scientific and historic proposal to reserve five seats for Limboos and Tamangs in the State Assembly to the Union Cabinet. This, while Mr Bhutia and other inimical to the LT seat issue at heart but supportive on surface have only protested every proposal but not offered any formula of their own, the release adds.

The ruling party has further stressed that Mr Bhutia, who has been giving immature statements since coming into Sikkim politics, should first study the division of powers between the State and the Centre.

The release further argues that Mr Bhutia is toeing the SIBLAC and SKM line on the issue which is to muddy the waters and delay a resolution.

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Sikkim preps for Vice-President's visit



GANGTOK, 11 FEB (IPR):

The first preparatory meeting with regard to the upcoming visit of the Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, was chaired by Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava today. The VP is scheduled to arrive here on a two-

day visit on 25 Feb.

After briefing the officials about the tentative itinerary of the Vice President, the Chief Secretary took stock of the proposed programmes and the venues that the Vice President is scheduled to visit. He took updates

of the current status on roads, security and various other essentials.

The Chief Secretary directed all to ensure that the salient responsibilities under each of the departments/ organization were looked after and adhered to.

He also informed that alternate plans for the car-cade and reception are put in place and ready for implementation in case of weather setbacks or other exigencies.

The CS also directed the officials of all the venues the Vice President is scheduled to visit, sought submission of draft invitations, dais plans, draft speeches and other proposals at the earliest.

The VP's schedule is set to take him to Raj Bhawan, Mintokgang, National Research Centre for Orchids at Pakyong and Rajya Sainik Board complex and the Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences where he will be laying foundation stones.

ABKM congratulates Bindeswori Prasad on State honour

NITESH R PRADHAN

SINGTAM, 11 FEB:

Am Bihari Kalyan Manch (ABKM) has congratulated Senior Driver Bindeswori Prasad of Singtam on the honour bestowed on him by the State Government recently.

ABKM national president, Chhotey Lall Prasad, general secretary Tanvir Ahmad, district vice president (East) Imdad Hussain, central executive mem-



ber Pannu Singh, Rangpo Branch secretary Pradeep Prasad called on the feted driver today to

congratulate him on being felicitated by the Governor on Republic Day at Paljor Stadium.

ABKM has thanked the State Government and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for having nominated one of the senior drivers from the Bihari community for a State honour.

ABKM has also thanked All Sikkim Democratic Transport/ Drivers Front State Incharge, GM Gurung and his entire team for identifying and recommending Bindeswori Prasad for such a high recognition.

BJP's Samarpan Diwas in Singtam

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh observed 'Samarpan Diwas' at the regional party office at Singtam in East Sikkim on Monday.

BJP is observing 'Samarpan Diwas' nation-wide to commemorate the contributions of its founder, Dindayal Upadhyay, on his death

anniversary.

A BJP press release states that on the occasion, Sikkim-BJP president, DB Chauhan, urged the youth to follow on the path shown by Dindayal Upadhyay.

The release informs that leaders and workers of the party also donated from Rs 5 to Rs 1,000 to the party fund on the occasion.

Anxiety looms as Sabarimala temple reopens Tuesday

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 11 (PTI):

There is a sense of anxiety in and around Sabarimala as the Lord Ayyappa shrine is all set to reopen on Tuesday for monthly worship, after witnessing frenzied protests during the recently concluded annual pilgrim season over the entry of young women.

The hilltop temple would be opened for five days till February 17 for the monthly pujas during the Malayalam month of Kumbam, temple authorities said Monday. Several special rituals including 'kalabhabhishekam', 'sahasrakalasam' and 'laksharchana' would be performed during the five days at the shrine, the 'sanctum sanctorum' of which would be thrown open by chief priest Vasudevan Nampoothiri Tuesday evening.

Tantri (head priest) Kandamaru Rajeevaru would also be present during the time of pujas, they said. As the shrine is set to open, state police has stepped up vigil in and around Sabarimala in view of possible protests by Sangh outfits against the entry of women, belonging to the traditionally barred age group. The police said certain restrictions had already been imposed in areas from Nilackal, the base camp to Sannidhanam (temple complex) to ensure smooth darshan for devotees.

"Considering the untoward incidents caused by various organisations in areas around Sabarimala when the shrine

was opened for the Thulamasa puja and the protests over the Supreme Court order allowing entry of women of all ages into the shrine, certain restrictions have been imposed in areas to ensure smooth darshan for devotees," an official release said.

Devotees and reporters would be allowed to travel from Nilackal to Pamba and Sannidhanam only after 10 am on February 12, it said.

The BJP and Sangh Parivar outfits, which had spearheaded the agitations against implementation of the September 28 Supreme Court verdict permitting women of all age groups into the shrine, are yet to reveal whether they would try to block young women. The areas in and around the hilltop shrine had witnessed widespread violence after the CPI(M)-led LDF government decided to implement the apex court order allowing women of menstrual age into the temple.

Marking the culmination of the over two-month-long stormy annual pilgrimage season, the Lord Ayyappa temple was closed on January 20. Traditionally, women of menstruating age or in the age group of 10 to 50 years were not allowed to enter the temple as the deity, Lord Ayyappa, is believed to be in the form of "Naishtika brahmachari" (perennial celibate).

Three inducted into ASDTF Central Executive Committee



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 FEB:

Football icon of Sikkim, former national and international level footballer Chewang Thendup Bhutia (Aapey) from Tadong was inducted as an executive member into the All Sikkim Democratic Transport/Drivers Front (ASDTF) at SDF Bhawan today.

Also today, Karma L

Barfungpa of Tadong was promoted as secretary and Navin K Bhattacharai from Tumin Lingee as publicity secretary.

All of the appointed Central Executive Committee members were handed over the office orders by ASDTF State In-charge GM Gurung of Rangpo and general secretary Karma Tashi Bhutia of Bhusuk.

Adhoc teachers...

teachers to resume their duties at their respective places from tomorrow. Those teachers who has not received their appointment orders will do so by the end of the week, he said.

He also thanked all for their support and cooperation towards the association.

"If anyone does not get justice, then we are still there to fight for them," he said.

He also thanked HRDD officials for their support to adhoc teachers.

Feudal forces

would only create hatred and misunderstanding in the society.

On the same, the SRP president stated that the State government can pass a resolution on Limboo-Tamang seats and tribal status for 11 left-out communities to send to the Centre.

He further questioned how the Opposition, which does not have the right or numbers to pass a resolution in the Assembly can obstruct the LT issue.

Mr Rai alleged that the SDF was not passing a resolution in the assembly due to the influence of the feudal powers.

I-T sleuths...

is more than Rs 1,500 crore," the official said.

The search teams have seized signed, unsigned papers, MoUs, agreements, cash loans and interest earned there upon, documents of settlement of financial disputes in cash, receipt of cash in settlement of disputed immovable properties among others of around Rs 100 crore, he said.

"Evidence of arranging foreign trips and foreign currency overseas to persons on undertaking these trips have also been noticed vis-a-vis probe in the third case," the official said.

The total amount of tax evasion detected is expected to be around Rs 20,000 crore, he said.

WSOS takes Neev to Rongli



SUMMIT REPORT

RONGLI, 11 FEB:

Wandering Souls of Sikkim, a webzine and youth forum, organized an interschool scholastic festival titled, "Neev: A Foundation for Better Future", at Rongli Community Centre on 09 Feb with the objective to provide a platform to students studying at schools in and around Rongli to foster their creative genius.

The event was supported by the Regu Block Administrative Centre

and coordinated by Bering Sudunglakha Zilla Panchayat, Madhu Sharma.

More than 120 students from 16 schools participated in eight scholastic competitions, including quiz, essay writing, painting, poetry recitals, elocution, etc.

Various competitions were judged by SDM Rongli, AB Gurung, Sikkim University Assistant Professor, Binod Bhattarai, Assistant Professor Prayash Gupta, Sikkim Manipal University and

respected author, Yuwa Baral 'Anant'.

The daylong event was attended by the Chujachen MLA, Bikram Pradhan, as chief guest along with Sub Divisional officials from different departments, NGO representatives, Zilla and Gram Panchayats, teachers, students and others.

WSOS has conveyed gratitude towards all guests, sponsors, participating schools, participants, judges and all others who supported the initiative.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

ANTYESTI KRIYA

The Antyesti Kriya of late Seeta Gautam, wife of I.K Gautam (Ex Jt. Commissioner, Excise Deptt.), who left for heavenly abode on the 8th of Feb. 2019 falls on the 20th of February 2019 (Wednesday). All relatives, friends, family and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence opposite Tamang Gumpa, Sichey, Gangtok.

Sons: Pramod Gautam, Binod Gautam, Subodh Gautam

Daughters-in-law: Dr. Tara Gautam,

Mala Gautam, Dr. Kritika Sharma

Dewars: S.K Gautam, R.P Gautam, R.K Gautam, H.K Gautam

Daughter, son-in-law: Roma Gautam, Suresh Adhikari

Cont: 9434126851, 9647206717,

9775972426, 9434866889



Corrigendum

The advt of Home Deptt. published in Summit-Times vol 4 no. 28 dt. 30.1.19 under caption "Public Advisory" the correct R.O. No. should read as 632/IPR/Pub./Class./18-19 dt. 29.1.19 instead of R.O. No. 623/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19 dt. 29.1.19. Error is regretted- Editor.

BEFORE THE FAMILY COURT EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK	
Memo No. <u>351</u> /FC/E	Date: <u>20.12.2018</u>
F.C.(Civil) Case No. <u>122</u> of 2018	
Thupten TsheringPetitioner
-versus-	
SangmoRespondent
NOTICE	
To,	
Sangmo, W/o Thupten Tshering, R/o Alley KTS, Camp No. 2, Ravangla, P.O & P.S Ravangla, South Sikkim	
WHEREAS, the above-named Petitioner has filed a case against you under Section 13(1)(a) & (ib) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 seeking the dissolution of his marriage with you.	
You are hereby directed to appear positively before this Court in person on 20.02.2019 at 10 'o' clock in the forenoon without fail.	
Take notice, that in default of your appearance on the date aforementioned despite due service of this notice on you the matter shall be heard and determined in your absence.	
Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this the 20th day of December, 2018.	
 (Prajwal Khatriwada) Judge Family Court East Sikkim at Gangtok	

NAAC team visits Rhenock College

SUMMIT REPORT RHENOCK, 11 FEB:

A three-member peer team, appointed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), visited Government College Rhenock, East Sikkim on 08 and 09 Feb, 2019.

The peer team comprised of Vice Chancellor, Prof Harish Chandra Singh, Central University of South Bihar as the Chairperson; former Registrar, Dr. Rajendra

Kankariya, Shivaji University, Pune, Maharashtra as Member Co-ordinator; and Principal, Dr Chandana Bhattacharjee, Women's College, Laitumkhrah, Shillong, as the third Member.

The peer team interacted with the various departments, members of the committees, support services, faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders of the college. Document verification and visits to the fa-

cilities of the college like the classrooms, offices, library, canteen, hostels, staff quarters and others were also done.

On day one, the team held a meeting and interaction with all the Heads of Departments/conveners and evaluated the college on areas like Curriculum, Learning and Evaluation, Research Innovation and Extension. On the same day, they also convened an interaction with State

Government and University representatives.

On day two, the peer team took stock of Institutional Values and Best Practices, meeting with IQAC Coordinator and discussed outstanding issues.

The visit concluded with exit meeting on the second day.

In his address, Prof Harish Chandra Singh lauded the college for applying for accreditation despite being a very young institution.

He also pointed out the various areas where



the college can improve and urged all the stake-

holders to continue to give their best and "Rise Ever Higher".

The Chairperson later

handed over the Peer Team Report to the principal.

Finally, in her thanksgiving address to the peer team and the entire college fraternity, Principal, Government College Rhenock, Dr. Iytha M Uprety, thanked and gave her sincerest regards to the peer team for the entire exercise.

She also thanked teaching and non-teaching staff, all the students, student representative council, members of civil society and all stakeholders for their active support in the entire process of accreditation.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT, GYALSHING, SUB-DIVISION, WEST SIKKIM.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER.

N.I.T. NO:- 412/NIT/R&B/GYZ

DATED:- 29.01.2019.

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, invites sealed tender under single bid system from the eligible contractors of Class IV grade enlisted with vide Sikkim Public Works Department vide notification no.515/R&B/PWD Secy. Dated 12/06/2018, through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat/Urban local bodies (**concern ward**) where the works is to be executed. The works are listed as under :

Sl. No	Name of work	Value put to tender (Rs)	Completion Time (in months)	Amount of Bank receipt for cost of tender documents (Rs)	Amount of Earnest Money @ 2.50% For issue of tender form (Rs)
Tashiding-Yuksom Constituency					
1.	Construction of road from Melli Gumpa SPWD road to Pengretar under Melli-aching GPU				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd (0.0-500)m	21,19,248.00	12	2,500.00	52,981.00
2.	Construction of One way road from Tashiding Gumpa to PMGSY road, Penthang.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd (0.0-500)m	21,19,248.00	12	2,500.00	52,981.00
3.	Construction of road from Arithang to Bahun Goan-Gerethang				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd (0.00-500)m	21,19,248.00	12	2,500.00	52,981.00

ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
4.	Construction of road from PMGSY Chhangang to Upper Gerethang				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd (0.00-500)m	21,19,248.00	12	2,500.00	52,981.00
5.	Construction of road from Khechuperi Gumpa to Lamathang				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
6.	Construction of road from Maneydara, Middle Chongrang to Lower Chongrang				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
7.	Construction of road from Arithang to Upper Gerethang.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
8.	Construction of road from PHC, Taksam to Mangtabong.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
9.	Construction of road from Chaklat to Borong TatoPani.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iv	KM:4 th	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
v	KM:5 th	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
10.	Construction of road from Chaklat to Saliram				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
11.	Construction of road from Yangtam to Karjee				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd (0.0-500)m	21,19,248.00	12	2,500.00	52,981.00
12.	Construction of road from Topping Phatak to School Maneydara via Naya Busty Gufadara.				

i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
13.	Construction of road from Damai Bari to Tallow Goan (Link Road), Labdang Block.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
14.	Construction of road from SPWD road Nardhang to Rajyong				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
15.	Construction of road from Lower Limbang to Rangeet Pool				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
Yangthang Constituency					
16.	Construction of road to Lower Tikjek road				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
i	KM:4 th	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
17.	Construction of road to Lower Lingchom.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
18.	Construction of road from Sakyong Lambagoan to .Khatiwadagaon.				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
19.	Construction of road to Upper Singpheng				

i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
iii	KM:3 rd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
20.	Construction of road Dokothang				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
21.	Construction of road to Lagey Chettrigaon				
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
22.	Construction of road from Lower Arigaon to				
Toyang					
i	KM:1 st	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00
ii	KM:2 nd	42,38,496.00	12	2,500.00	1,05,962.00

TIME SCHEDULE

- Date for submission of application with Bank Receipt for issue of Tender Document (excluding the Tender Form) : 25th Feb. 2019 (from 10 am to 4.00 p.m.)
- Date of issue of Tender Form: 26th Feb. 2019 (from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.)
- Date and Time for submission of Tender : 28th Feb. 2019 upto 12.00 noon.
- Date and Time of opening of Tender : 28th Feb. 2019 at 1.30 pm.

Note: The Cost of tender form circulated by respective Department would be deposited to the revenue of the respective GPU works costing upto 2.00 crores

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT.

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors /Firms of appropriate Class / Area.
- The intending tenderer/ contractors should apply in writing for issue of tender documents. The application would invariably be signed by the contractor himself/ herself.
- The tender document will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDERER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
- The applications should enclose attested copies of the (a) Goods & Service Tax Clearance Certificate, (b) Validated / Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along with the application. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/ updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/ issue of the Tender Document for verification.
- The prescribed Non- Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified as above from the office of the Assistant Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, Sub-Division, Gyalshing on production of requisite Bank receipt of the State of Sikkim towards the cost of Tender Document (non- refundable) under the receipt Head of Respective GPU (cost of Tender Form).
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedules Bank which includes deposit in the form of temporary deposit receipts of Fixed deposits receipts in favour of the Sr. Accounts Officer (W), Roads & Bridges Department, Gyalshing. Tender Form shall be issued only on production of the deposit receipts to that contractors/ firm who has obtained the tender Documents, on production of toward deposit receipt of 2.5% earnest money.
- The Tender Documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the Tenderers and the name of the work superscripted on it.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of the Divisional Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders will be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the presence of the tenderness on the date and time indicated above.
- The tenderer should sign on every page of the tenders documents as Acceptance of the General Direction and Conditions of Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive GST all others Taxes and Levies. Over writing and correction should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/ Conditional tenders shall be rejected forthwith.
- In case of any discrepancy in rate (s) printed in the Schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the tender document, rates as per approved Schedule of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the SOR, the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the Principle Chief Engineer cum Secretary/ Head of the Department will be final in this regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of work are subject to change, the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account shall be entertained whatsoever. If any extra claim is made, it shall be as per the agreements rates.
- The contractors shall establish a field laboratory at the construction site. It shall be mandatory to test material by the contractor at site or any other laboratory fixed by the Government for quality control purpose. The Department reserves the rights to withhold payments to the contractor unless test certificates are not produced by the contractor when called upon to do so.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractors shall be at his own risk and cost. The departments shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to laborers at site.
- In case of roads, contractor shall be required to execute the pavement works in test patches for ensuring quality of materials and for determination of correct methodology. The test patches shall be got approved from the Engineer-in Charge.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the date of issue of work Order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to be a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor. Security deposit shall be collected by deductions from the running bills of the contractor @ 5% or as notified from time to time and applicable on date of payment.

- The contractor shall ensure the safety of plant in the road reserve area and beyond. He shall also plant additional flora as directed by the Engineer- in Charge at his own cost in due fulfillment of the stipulation under the State Green Mission. Security deposit for the work shall be refunded only after verification of the survival of such plants in additions to the others norms laid down for the release of security deposit.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The Contractors are required to register themselves under- Rule 39 or 40 (as the case may be) of the Sikkim Value Added Tax Rules 2005 with the Income and Commercial Tax Division of Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department and obtain the TIN Number before the settlement of bill, or they must be a registered Companies/Firms registered under the Companies act, 1956, having valid Pan Card and Tan. The Contractors are also required to submit PAN No as per provision of Indian Income Tax Act. Wherever applicable.
- The recoveries of Taxes and Royalties on Forest produces shall be as per rates notified by the Government from time to time and applicable on the date of payment. In no case, claim of any contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in Analysis of Rates or Schedule of Rates or Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- In case of carriage of Non Stock Materials, if these materials are available at site or are actually transported from a lesser distance than indicated in the schedules, the department shall pay the carriage as per actual proof of carriage supported by permits issued by Forest department indicating the quarries which is required to be submitted by contractor with bill, not exceeding the rates as incorporated in these schedules, The contractors are required to submit necessary documents to fulfill the claim of payment for carriage of Non Stock Materials.
- Subletting of contract work is against the norms and if it comes to the notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
- In case the man powers employed by the contractor are from outside the State or neighboring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to get them registered with the Labour department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
- The Department also reserves the right to increase, decrease, alter or modify the item of works as indicated in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
- Use of explosive shall be regulated as under.
 - Transportation, handling, storage and use of explosive (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provision of the India Explosive Act and General Guideline, Circulars issued by the department and other competent authorities on the subject from time to time.
 - The rules and regulations issued by the Sikkim Public Works department or any other competent authority shall strictly be adhered to with regard to transportation, storages, handling, and use of explosive at all times. Proper daily record of receipt and issue of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangements to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period i.e. beginning, middle and completion stage.
- Damages to properties in and around the work site must be avoided at all cost. The contractor shall be held responsible for any acts of negligence and shall be made to make good the damages.
- Expenditure involved for material testing, cube strength of concrete, crushing strength of road metals etc., at site or in laboratories shall be borne by the contractor.
- The contractor shall make necessary arrangements accordingly as and when instructed to do so.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The contractor will have to pay all taxes and duties as applicable and notified by the State/ Central Government and no claim shall be entertained in this regard whatsoever.
- The cost of stock materials supplied from the departmental store will be deducted from the contractor's bills as per rules.
- The defect liability period for the pavement work shall be for a period of five years which shall not cover the damages due to natural calamities formation sinking landslides etc.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat unit where the work is to be executed.**

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Assistant Engineer
Roads & Bridges Department,
Sub-Division, Gyalshing,
West Sikkim

R.O. NO. 680/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date :11.2.18

Introduce Employers to the Resource Pool

Skills need introductions after they have been imparted

The skill development initiative of the State Government has now been underway for quite some years. In fact, we now see this effort being replicated at the national level as well. Meanwhile, news about the homegrown skill development mission has visibly dwindled. The livelihood schools must still be functioning and imparting skills to the youth, but for such an exercise to bear real fruit, they need to be consistently promoted and publicized. That does not appear to be happening enough. By now, employment melas, events during which the courses on offer in the State and the human resource being created there are unveiled, should have become at least biannual events. Not events in which only employers open stalls, but also ones in which the livelihood schools showcase their graduates and mediate employment deals on their behalf. Don't do that, and the mission gets reduced to another bureaucratic routine which tries to make up with paperwork what it lacks by way of inspirational involvement.

Career Fairs are not a new concept, but they have become more about promoting more courses and uninteresting jobs than actually leading to careers. A proper one is long-awaited in Sikkim and pregnant with a lot of potential. To begin with, such events should make it worthwhile for all investors and private companies based in Sikkim to maintain a stall. These can be venues, which, even if they do not hand out hiring slips, offer opportunities for livelihood school managements to collect information on the nature and volume of jobs available there. This would help them plan their own course materials and intake capacities accordingly.

Job openings have definitely multiplied substantially in Sikkim in recent times, but one rarely sees employment notices to match the number of jobs being placed. Fact remains, that while private investments and new jobs have been created in Sikkim, the hiring practises still remain old-school, the ranks filled through recommendations, contacts and by chance. Something like a proper employment mela. Career fair could begin the process to make the hiring process more professional and transparent; and this will be to the benefit of both, the job-seekers as well as the employers. It is important that every agency which employs people in Sikkim is allowed space at such events even if they have no immediate job-openings; they could inform potential employees about the profile of existing positions and the qualities and qualifications they seek whenever they hire next.

The next step for the State authorities would be to encourage private agencies in Sikkim to visit educational institutions [schools and colleges] and the 31 Livelihood Schools, not necessarily to hire a workforce from the campuses, but at least to introduce the young to their organisations and the kind of employment and emoluments they offer. The young can plan better that way and the units based in Sikkim will get a wider pool to choose from. This transparency will also reward merit more than contacts. One might contend that such an initiative does not require State involvement and can be initiated by the 'morally upright' investors themselves. What one ignores with such a projection is that educational institutions are impossibly bureaucratic and the only way that an attempt to inform the youth about prospects awaiting them locally can succeed is if the Government mediates.

What this concept of bringing the unemployed and the employers together at one venue also triggers is a parallel initiative in which the industrial and production units here and the local growers and suppliers are brought into direct contact. Supplies need not always be about raw materials for the industry, and can even be about supplies of basic and essential commodities for the workforce. Take for example, the substantial number of universities, pharma companies, schools and hostels in Sikkim, all of which at least have canteens and kitchen which need supplies which can be met by local growers and suppliers provided they know the exact nature of their requirements and have the time to plan ahead. Yes, they tender these requisitions, but a 'notice inviting tenders' works only for existing suppliers who are already in the business. Village self help groups and such bodies could deliver the goods just as well if they had enough lead time and information on what is required. What such interactive events also initiate is the first step forward in a process that gets increasingly more refined in its ability to introduce employers to the available resource pool and local entrepreneurs to opportunities.



Why stop at plastic bags and straws? The case for a global treaty banning most single-use plastics

ANASTASIA TELESETSKY
theconversation.com

Single-use plastics are a blessing and a curse. They have fueled a revolution in commercial and consumer convenience and improved hygiene standards, but also have saturated the world's coastlines and clogged landfills. By one estimate 79 percent of all plastic ever produced is now in a dump, a landfill or the environment, and only 9 percent has been recycled.

This growing legacy poses real risks. Plastic packaging is clogging city sewer systems, leading to flooding. Abandoned plastic goods create breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and can leach toxic additives such as styrene and benzene as they decompose. Single-use plastics are killing birds and harming marine life.

I study international environmental law with a focus on marine ecosystems. In my view, land-based pollution from single-use plastics is a slow-onset disaster that demands a global response.

One attractive strategy is pursuing a legally binding phase-out of most single-use plastics at the global level. I believe this approach makes sense because it would build on current national and municipal efforts to eliminate single-use packaging, and would create opportunities for new small and medium-sized businesses to develop more benign substitutes.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BANS

About 112 countries, states and cities around the world have already imposed bans on various single-use plastic goods. Of these measures, 57 are national and 25 are in Africa. And the list of these restrictions continues to grow.

Most of these bans target thin single-use plastic carrier bags or imports of non-biodegradable bags. Some, such as the one in Antigua-Barbuda, include other single-use or problematic items, such as foam coolers and plastic utensils. A few measures – notably, Kenya's plastic bag law – impose stiff punishments on violators, including jail time and fines of up to US\$38,000.

Groups of states are starting to enact regional policies. The East African Legislative Assembly has passed a bill to ban the manufacture, sale, import and use of certain plastic bags across its six member states, with a combined population of approximately 186 million people. And in October 2018 the European Union Parliament approved a ban on

a number of single-use plastic items by 2021, along with a requirement to reduce plastic in food packaging by 25 percent by 2025 and cut plastic content in cigarette filters 80 percent by 2030.

Most of these bans are quite new or still being implemented, so there is limited research on how well they work. However, researchers at the United Nations who have reviewed 60 "national bans and levies" estimate that 30 percent of these measures have reduced consumption of plastics.

Plastics manufacturers contend that better recycling is the most effective way to reduce the environmental impact of their products. But many factors make it hard to recycle plastic, from its physical characteristics to insufficient market demand for many types of recycled plastics. In many instances, single-use plastics can only be recycled, optimistically, 10 times before their fibers become too short to be reprocessed.

LESSONS FROM OTHER GLOBAL BANS

Several global bans and product phase-outs offer lessons for a treaty banning single-use plastic goods. The most successful case is the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. This treaty phased out production and use of chlorofluorocarbons in a variety of products, including refrigerators and spray cans, after they were shown to harm Earth's protective ozone layer.

Today scientists predict that stratospheric ozone concentrations will rebound to 1980 levels by the middle of this century. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the Montreal Protocol has prevented millions of cases of skin cancer and cataracts from exposure to ultraviolet radiation. In 2016 nations adopted the Kigali Amendment, which will phase out production and use of hydrofluorocarbons, another class of ozone-depleting chemicals.

Why has the Montreal Protocol worked so well? One key factor is that every nation in the world has joined it. They did so because alternative materials were available to substitute for chlorofluorocarbons. The treaty also provided financial support to countries that needed help transitioning away from the banned substances.

Where countries trying to reduce use of these chemicals fell short of their goals, the Protocol provided institutional support rather than punishing them. But it also included the option to impose trade sanctions on nations that refused to cooperate.

Another pact, the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, banned or severely limited production and use of certain chemicals that threatened human and environmental health, including specific insecticides and industrial chemicals. Today 182 nations have signed the treaty. Concentrations of several dangerous POPs in the Arctic, where global air and water currents tend to concentrate them, have declined.

Nations have added new chemicals to the list and created "elimination networks" to help members phase out use of dangerous materials such as PCBs. And producers of goods such as semiconductors and carpets that use listed chemicals are working to develop new, safer processes.

Even though the United States has not signed the Stockholm Convention, U.S. companies have largely eliminated production of the chemicals that the treaty regulates. This shows that setting a global standard may encourage nations to conform in order to maintain access to global markets.

Other international bans have been less successful. In 1989, seeking to reduce the slaughter of elephants for their tusks, parties to the Convention in Trade of Endangered Species banned ivory sales by ending trade in African elephant parts. Initially demand for ivory fell, but in 1999 and 2008 treaty states allowed African nations to sell ivory stockpiles to Japan and China, ostensibly to fund conservation. These two sales reignited global demand for ivory and created unregulated domestic markets that stimulated high levels of poaching.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD

What lessons do these treaties offer for curbing plastic pollution? The Montreal Protocol shows that bans can work where substitute products are available, but require reliable monitoring and the threat of sanctions to deter cheating. The Stockholm Convention suggests that industries will innovate to meet global production challenges. And struggles to curb the ivory trade offer a cautionary message about allowing exceptions to global bans.

I believe the rapid spread of single-use plastic bans shows that enough political support exists to launch negotiations toward a global treaty. Emerging economies such as Kenya that are aggressively tackling the problem are especially well placed to take a lead at the U.N. General Assembly in calling for talks on stemming the tide of plastic pollution.

[the writer is Professor of International Environmental Law , University of Idaho]

Routine blackouts in Haiti symbolize a loss of political power for its citizens

GREG BECKETT
theconversation.com

Haiti's public utility company just announced it's reducing output again. The move comes after a series of blackouts throughout the country, some lasting weeks. The power outages are the result of a weeks-long fuel shortage that has led to fuel rationing and gas station closures as reserves run dry.

Haiti is dependent on fuel imports, and the national electrical grid is small and inefficient. Haiti's already weak infrastructure has been damaged by a string of natural disasters. Yet, for many Haitians, blackouts are not just the result of the country's vulnerability; they are also a symbol of political crisis.

BLACKOUTS ROUTINE IN HAITI

Blackouts are expected occurrences in Haiti. When they inevitably happen, talk quickly turns to the government's inability to provide basic services.

Most electricity comes from the state-run provider, Electricité d'Haiti (EDH), which is seen as being poorly managed and corrupt. When the lights go out, as they invariably do, the problem of the lack of services is made abundantly visible.

Electricity is a charged political issue in Haiti. Only about 25 per cent of the population has access to elec-

tricity, and those who do rarely have it all day, every day. Private businesses and wealthy families rely on diesel generators for their shops and homes. Poor Haitians use wood, charcoal or kerosene.

Most governments have sought to expand access to energy sources and to subsidize their cost. Most recently, President Jovenel Moise pledged to bring "24 hours around the clock" electrical service to Haiti within two years. Instead, he presides over a country wracked by chronic energy shortages.

THE POLITICS OF FUEL

The Caribbean has some of the highest utility rates in the world. In 2005, Venezuela launched Petrocaribe, an oil alliance designed to alleviate fuel costs and promote economic co-operation.

Under the plan, member states paid only 40 to 70 per cent of the price of fuel imports. The remainder was deferred, to be repaid over 25 years with an annual one per cent interest rate. Funds from fuel sales were to be spent on social development programs.

The current fuel shortage in Haiti is part of a larger story about the fallout from the crisis in Venezuela. In 2017, the Haitian Senate released a report claiming that \$1.7 billion from the Petrocaribe fund had been lost or stolen and that the program had racked up US\$2 billion in debt.

A just-released audit conducted by Haiti's Superior Court of Accounts and Administrative Disputes confirmed these claims and added that many of the development projects sponsored by Petrocaribe funds were never finished or never existed.

The Petrocaribe scandal and the energy crisis have both given rise to renewed calls to privatize Haiti's energy sector. Haiti has been forced to end its involvement in Petrocaribe; the country now buys its fuel from American providers, in U.S. dollars, continuing a long-standing program of American energy imperialism in the region.

If the new fuel prices imposed by the International Monetary Fund last year are any indication, privatization and liberalization of the energy sector in Haiti will make life more expensive for most people and make the country more dependent and more indebted to foreign powers.

It's a situation reminiscent of Puerto Rico, where debt and disaster have been leveraged to push through a series of neoliberal structural adjustment programs in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

LOSING POWER

In Haitian Kreyòl, the word for power outage is blakawout. It refers to the loss of electrical power but, like its English equivalent, can also be used to talk about a bodily condition.

In Port-au-Prince, it is common to hear people talk about blackouts in a number of ways.

Where we might say in English that a person can suffer a blackout, meaning a loss of consciousness, Haitians might say they are "living in a blackout," a phrase that speaks to a more generalized loss of physical and social energy.

Sometimes they refer to power outages to complain about the government and the lack of essential services. Other times blackouts provoke memories of repression by the Haitian military and paramilitary forces, who would often cut power to neighbourhoods before conducting violent raids.

Sometimes people say that when there is a blackout they simply "can't do anything" at all, as if the lack of light and electrical power is only the visible symptom of a more general condition — the loss of agency.

For many Haitians, blackouts do not just signal a political crisis — they also symbolize feelings of their loss of political power. In that sense, blackouts are not just the result of a weak government. They are a symptom of a deeper crisis of sovereignty as the Haitian people continue to struggle, still, for democracy, autonomy and self-determination.

[the writer is Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Western University]

Bihar registered fastest economic growth in 2017-18: Governor

PATNA, FEB 11 (PTI): Governor Lalji Tandon Monday said Bihar has registered the highest economic growth of 11.3 per cent in the country during 2017-18 and curbed crime to a great extent, thereby providing a better society for its citizens.

Addressing the Budget session of both Houses of Bihar Legislature, the governor quoted Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) figures to say that Bihar registered the highest economic growth rate of 11.3 per cent among the states in 2017-18 against the national growth rate of 7 per cent.

With a focus on development of infrastructure and ensuring better implementation of various schemes, the size of the state's budget has increased to Rs 1.77 lakh crore in 2018-19, which is 18 per cent more than the previous year, he said.

The states own tax revenue collections is expected to be around Rs 31,000 crore in 2018-19 against Rs 23,136 crore in 2017-18.

The governor also highlighted the governments priority on womens empowerment, "seven resolves" and prohibition -- the schemes and policies which have left a positive impact on peoples life.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, Leader of opposition in the Council Rabri Devi were present during the joint sitting held at the newly inaugurated central hall in the annexe building of the state legislature.

The governor was flanked by Speaker of Legislative Assembly Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Acting Chairman of Legislative Council Haroon Rashid.

Monday was the first day of the 10-day Budget session.

The governor also referred to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data to show that Bihar is better placed among states in maintaining law and order situation.

As per the NCRB data, the number of cases relating to cognizable offences in Bihar is 157.4 against the national average of 233.6 per one lakh population.

Tandon said Bihar ranked 22nd among all states and union territories in terms of crime rate.

Police have been able to crack the cases lodged in major categories besides being able to ensure conviction in 3,650 cases that took place in 2018, he said and added that the state government is working to achieve population-police



ratio as per national standard for which it has been filling posts and making fresh recruitments.

Tandon said the government has adopted "zero tolerance policy" towards corruption and it has also attached top priority to establish rule of law and create a society free of fear.

He said the governments decision to reserve 50 per cent seats in panchayats, urban local bodies and teachers appointment for women is a step in the right direction.

The state government has also implemented 35 per cent quota for women in government jobs and in the recruitment of constables and sub-inspectors in police department. Tandon said that the government has introduced Mukhya Mantri Kanya Uthan Yojana for making girls self-reliant by providing them protection, education and health care facilities.

The scheme takes care of a girl child right from her birth to graduation level by providing financial

support. The government has initiated "seven resolves" under good governance programme (Sushashan Ke Karyakrram) for the states development.

The governor said power supply reached 5,139 MW in September 2018 against a meagre 700-800 MW in 2005.

He said the government successfully implemented prohibition which has become a "social movement". Meanwhile, Bihar's revenue surplus increased from Rs 6,441

crore in 2013-14 to Rs 14,823 crore in 2017-18. The state has been a revenue surplus state since 2007-2008, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who also holds finance portfolio, said after tabling the 13th Economic Survey 2018-19 in the Assembly.

The surplus, projected to be Rs 21,312 crore during 2018-19, is considered to be the result of better financial management, Modi said adding that the surplus could be used for asset creation like roads, building etc.

The Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD) of the state government went down from Rs 16,480 crore in 2016-17 to Rs 14,305 crore in 2017-18, which was 2.9 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) keeping it within the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, the Deputy CM said.

The total revenue of the state government increased from Rs 68,919 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,17,447 crore in 2017-18, implying an increase of 70.4 per cent over a period of four years between 2013-14 to 2017-18.

The growth in agro-based industries in Bihar is 19.2 per cent which is almost five times the all India growth rate of 3.6 per cent, the minister said.

Indefinite strike in jute mills from March 1

KOLKATA, FEB 11 (PTI): All trade unions of the jute sector barring the Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress have announced an indefinite strike from March 1 on workers' various unmet demands.

Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union general secretary Anadi Sahu told reporters that the strike call was the last option for them after the workers' charter of 22 demands were ignored and not been heard since long. "All the 21 trade unions of the industry have agreed to support the indefinite strike of jute mills, except INTUC," he said.

The jute sector employs over 2 lakh work-

ers in 65 mills in the state. Sahu said the recent interim wage hike of Rs 70 with effect from February 1 2019 by West Bengal was a unilateral decision.

The state government, in a meeting held on January 17 this year with the jute industry and trade unions, had decided to give an interim relief of Rs 70, raising the wage to Rs 327 per day till the new wage agreement was finalised.

However, the relief would be applicable only to those workers who now get less than Rs 327 per day as wages.

Sahu said that besides the interim relief, no other demands were considered.

Trump defends 'executive time' after schedule leak

WASHINGTON, FEB 11 (AFP): Donald Trump pushed back Sunday at the suggestion he spends much of his work day taking it easy, as the White House kept up the hunt for the person behind an embarrassing leak of the president's schedule.

According to details published last week by Axios, 60 percent of Trump's work life is categorized as "executive time," meaning unstructured time to make phone calls, read newspapers, tweet and watch television.

Seeking to set the record straight, the president said such free time should be viewed as "positive, not negative."

"When the term Executive Time is used, I am generally working, not relaxing," Trump tweeted. "In fact, I probably work more hours than almost any past President.

"The fact is, when I took over as President, our Country was a mess," Trump continued.

"Depleted Military, Endless Wars, a potential War with North Korea, V.A., High Taxes & too many Regulations, Border, Immigration & HealthCare problems, & much more.

"I had no choice but to work very long hours!"



added the president, who rarely has official work before 11:00 am, according to the daily guidance issued to the media by his press office.

Quizzed about what appeared to be a rather easy typical day at the office for the world's most powerful man -- acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney also pushed back on Sunday.

"That executive time is on there to allow the president to prep for the next meeting, to debrief from the previous meeting," Mulvaney told NBC's "Meet the Press."

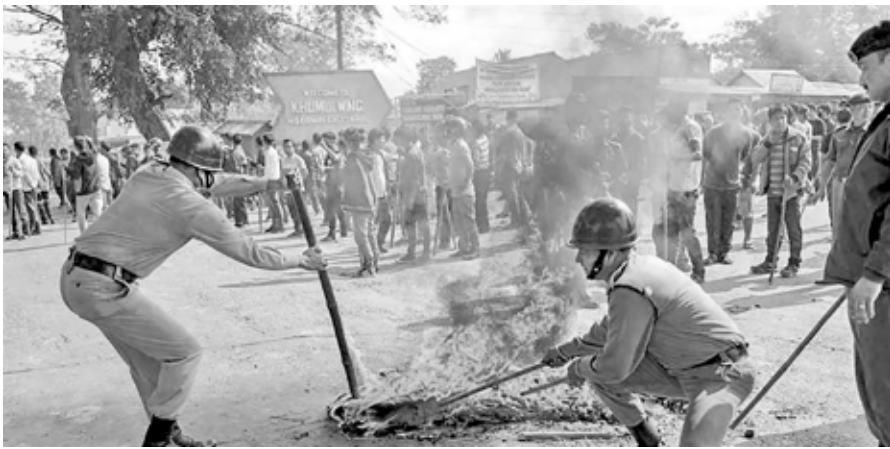
"The phone calls start at 6:30 in the morning, and they go until 11:00 at night. So I can assure you that the gentleman is working more than what's on that calendar," he said. Trump has reportedly ordered an aggressive search for the source of the leak. Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," Mulvaney said the White House was hoping to identify the culprit "this week."

Citizenship bill stir: Six women injured in clash with cops

Imphal, Feb 11 (PTI): Six women sustained injuries when the police fired tear gas shells and smoke bombs at a marketplace here to disperse protesters, who had enforced a road blockade demanding withdrawal of the citizenship bill, according to a vendors' association at the market. There was, however, no immediate official confirmation about the incident.

Shantidevi, the president of an association of women vendors at Khwairamband market here, claimed that the police on Sunday used force on the agitators, who had been protesting peacefully.

The women vendors at the market here had put up posters and banners and set up tents, blocking roads, to press for their demand, she said. Prohibitory orders under section 144 of CrPc have been imposed



in the area in the wake of agitations against the contentious bill.

Shantidevi said the police tried to pull down the tents and tear apart the posters and banners that sought the unconditional revocation of the bill. The women, however, refused to cow down, following which a clash broke out between the two sides, she said.

"The security officers fired tear gas shells and smoke bombs, which left six women injured. The sit-

uation turned uglier when they tried to take one of the injured women into custody and the agitators had to thwart the attempt," Shantidevi claimed.

The injured women were then taken to Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIIMS), she added.

Criticising the use of "excessive force", Y Dillipkumar, the convenor of Manipur Peoples Against Citizenship Amendment Bill (MANPAC), said the women were "protesting

in a democratic manner".

"The assault on the women vendors indicates that the state government is acting under the command of the Union government," he said. MANPAC is an umbrella body of civil societies and organisations that had been protesting against the passage of the legisla-

tion. Dillipkumar asserted that the agitation against the bill will intensify in the days to come.

"The members of MANPAC, along with common people, will hit the streets seeking withdrawal of the bill and implementation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in the state to weed out illegal immigrants," he added.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh had earlier said that the BJP-led government in the state would not support the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill unless there was a provision to protect the people of the northeast.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up across Imphal Monday in

the wake of the agitation.

A large number of security personnel belonging to state and paramilitary forces have been deployed in Imphal to avoid any untoward situation.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, passed by Lok Sabha on January 8, seeks to grant nationality to non-Muslims who fled religious persecution from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and entered India before December 31, 2014.

Protests against the bill have rocked the entire northeast over the past six weeks, with several organizations and political parties claiming that the bill threatens the identity, language and culture of indigenous people.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey caused by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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SIKKIM STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No.: 318/SSERC/2017-18/27

Date: 30/01/19

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

The Energy & Power Department, Government of Sikkim, a deemed licensee engaged in distribution and retail sale ,generation and transmission of electricity in the State of Sikkim has filed " Petition for Truing Up for the F.Y 2017-18, Review for F.Y 2018-19 and Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) & Tariff Proposal for the Financial Year 2019-20 under Multi Year Tariff Control Period F.Y 2018-19 to F.Y 2020-21 before the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SSERC).The Petition has been registered by the SSERC as Case No. MYT/2019-20/P-01/EPDS. The Petition can be viewed and downloaded from the SSERC website (www.sserc.in/Tariff/TariffPetition) and also from the official website of the Energy & Power Department (power.sikkim.gov.in).

The Energy & Power Department (EPDS) has already issued "Public Notice" on the Petition soliciting objections and suggestions from the consumers and stake holders on the proposed ARR and Tariff proposal. As per the said "Public Notice" issued by the EPDS , any person who intends to file objections or suggestions on the Business Plan, ARR/Tariff Petition of the Energy & Power Department may do so by filing statement of objections or comments before the Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission. Objections or comments shall be submitted in 5 (five) copies by registered post or in person , which should reach the **Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission**, Old SITCO Complex, Deorali, Gangtok-737102 **on or before 9th February 2019**.

The objections or comments shall be submitted with copies of relevant documents and evidences in support thereof alongwith **Affidavit** as per **Form SSERC-3 of Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2012**. Form SSERC-3 can be downloaded from the SSERC Website.

SSERC therefore proposes to hold a Public Hearing on the Petition filed by the Energy & Power Department on the date, time and venue mentioned below:

Date	Time	Venue for Public Hearing	Category of Consumers.
28 th February 2019	10.30 AM to 2.00 PM	Meeting Hall , Chintan Bhavan, Gangtok, East Sikkim	All categories of Consumers

Interested parties/persons who intend to be heard in person may appear before the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission for the purpose and would be heard as per the above schedule.

Sd/-
Secretary
Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission

Barca give fresh hope to La Liga rivals after Bilbao stalemate

BILBAO, FEB 10 (AFP): Lionel Messi was short of fitness and Barcelona lacked spark as a goalless draw away to Athletic Bilbao on Sunday offered fresh hope to their rivals in the title race.

A thigh injury had limited Messi to 27 minutes against Real Madrid on Wednesday and while he played the full match at San Mames, Barca's assistant coach Jon Aspiazu had admitted before kick-off he was not yet 100 per cent.

In all likelihood, he stayed on because his team needed him but Messi was not at his best and neither were Barcelona, who would even have lost had it not been for Marc Andre ter Stegen's stunning late save to deny Inaki Williams.

The draw makes it three games without a win for La Liga's leaders, whose advantage is still six points but now with Real Madrid their closest challengers, after they beat Atletico on Saturday.

That was Real's fifth league victory on the bounce and just as they have gained momentum, Barca appear to be losing theirs, at a crucial juncture, with more stern tests to come.

After Real Valladolid at home next weekend, Ernesto Valverde's



side travel to Lyon in the Champions League and Sevilla in the league. They then face two Clasicos in four days, one in the Copa del Rey, and both at the Santiago Bernabeu. Injuries have not helped. Messi was picked but not fully recovered while Ousmane Dembele was fit enough only for the bench, having shaken off an ankle injury.

The struggling Philippe Coutinho retained his place alongside Luis Suarez and Messi up front but Arturo Vidal came in for the

injured Arthur Melo and Nelson Semedo started at left back, with Jordi Alba suspended.

Bilbao had the better of the early stages as Yuri Berchiche flashed just wide after a poor pass from Vidal while Markel Susaeta's drive forced the leaping Ter Stegen into an acrobatic save.

Barcelona settled into the game but were never in control. Still, they twice should have scored, with Messi and Suarez both guilty of missing. First, Suarez peeled free at the back post but glanced

wide from Messi's cross and then Messi hit the crossbar, the goal gaping after Iago Herrerin had rushed out to intercept Nelson Semedo.

The game was frantic and Bilbao were more than holding their own. Raul Garcia's finish was blocked and Mikel San Jose's effort whistled inches outside of the post.

In between, Barca had enjoyed their best spell at the start of the second half but the gaps always seemed to close around the penalty area and they struggled to

find a way through.

Dembele replaced Coutinho with just over 10 minutes left but Bilbao had the best chance to win it. Iker Muniain squared for Williams, who looked certain to score after wriggling free of Gerard Pique. Instead, Ter Stegen shot out his right hand, somehow denying the striker from eight yards.

De Marcos received a second yellow card in injury-time for a handball but there was no time for Barce to feel the benefit. Bilbao held on.

Bremen routs Augsburg 4-0 in Bundesliga to keep party going

BERLIN, FEB 11 (AP): Werder Bremen continued its birthday celebrations with a 4-0 rout of Augsburg in the Bundesliga on Sunday.

Bremen, which marked its 120th anniversary as a club on Monday, followed up its dramatic penalty shootout win over Borussia Dortmund in the German Cup on Tuesday with its biggest league win of the season.

Milot Rashica scored two goals, getting Bremen off the mark in the fifth minute and claiming his second a minute after Johannes Eggestein made it 2-0 in the 27th.

Kevin Moehwald got Bremen's fourth in the 83rd.

The win helped Bremen consolidate 10th spot and put it within striking distance of the teams chasing European qualification. Eintracht Frankfurt and Bayer Leverkusen, fifth and sixth respectively, are just three points clear.

Augsburg stayed 15th, three points above Stuttgart in the relegation playoff spot.

On Saturday, Borussia Dortmund squandered a three-goal lead and drew with Hoffenheim 3-3 at home, then watched Bayern Munich cut its lead in the Bundesliga to five points by beating Schalke 3-1.

STUTTART IN FREE-ALL
Stuttgart coach

Markus Weinzierl's job was on the line after his side's 3-0 capitulation at promoted Fortuna Dusseldorf, a relegation rival that now appears safe, 10 points clear of Stuttgart.

Dusseldorf, previously bottom, appears a side reborn after five wins and two draws from its last eight league games under Friedhelm Funkel, who celebrated his 800th Bundesliga game as a coach against Stuttgart.

Stuttgart, which has five defeats in its last six games, saw Argentine forward Nicolas Gonzalez sent off late through VAR for an off-the-ball incident with Dusseldorf's Kaan Ayhan, who was booked.

McMillan to quit as Black Caps batting coach after World Cup



WELLINGTON, FEB 11 (AFP): Former international Craig McMillan announced Monday he will step down as New Zealand batting coach after this year's World Cup in England and Wales.

McMillan said the conclusion of the showpiece tournament was the right time to move on after five years in the job, including helping New Zealand reach the final of

the 2015 World Cup. "It's been a privilege to be able to work with the likes of Brendon McCullum, Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor day-in and day-out and to see the records they've accomplished has been very satisfying," he said.

McMillan, who played 55 Tests and 197 one-day internationals for the Black Caps, was given the role of batting mentor by former head coach Mike Hesson, who was replaced by Gary Stead last year. The 42-year-old said he would pursue other coaching opportunities after the World Cup but did not specify what they might be.

The tournament runs from May 30 to July 14 and New Zealand Cricket said McMillan's replacement would be announced before the team depart for a tour of Sri Lanka in August.

China rejects Turkey criticism on Uighurs, denies poet died

BEIJING, FEB 11 (AFP): China hit back on Monday at Turkish criticism over its treatment of Uighurs and denied Ankara's claim that a renowned poet from the Muslim minority had died in custody, calling it an "absurd lie". Turkey's foreign ministry had released a statement on Saturday severely criticising China's mass detentions of its Turkic-speaking Uighurs, and claiming that poet Abdurehim Heyit had died serving an eight-year Chinese prison sentence imposed as punishment over "one of his songs".

But China on Sunday released a video showing a man who identified himself as Heyit and saying that he was alive and well.

"China has made solemn representations toward Turkey. We hope the relevant Turkish persons can distinguish between right and wrong and correct their mistakes," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said during a daily press briefing.

She called the Turkish statement "vile" and urged Ankara to withdraw its "false accusations". "I saw his (Heyit's) video online yesterday, showing that he is not only alive but also very healthy," she said.

A UN panel of experts has said that nearly one million Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking minorities had been herded into "re-education camps" in China's north-western Xinjiang region, where most of the country's more than 10 million Uighurs live. Turkey had said China's treatment of Uighurs was "a great embarrassment for humanity" -- perhaps the strongest condemnation



yet from a Muslim country. The Muslim world has been conspicuously quiet on the Uighur issue, possibly to avoid Chinese diplomatic or economic retaliation.

The plight of China's Uighurs is closely followed in Turkey due to

shared linguistic, cultural and religious links and the presence of tens of thousands of ethnic Uighurs there.

In its statement on Saturday, Turkey did not say how it had learned that Heyit died, but said the "tragedy has fur-

ther reinforced the reaction of the Turkish public opinion towards (the) serious human rights violations" in Xinjiang.

But state-controlled China Radio International (CRI) released a 26-second video on its Turkish service on Sun-

day. "My name is Abdurehim Heyit. Today is February 10, 2019," the man in the video says, according to the English subtitles. "I'm in the process of being investigated for allegedly violating the national laws," he added, in what appeared to be the Uighur language.

Wearing a black and white sweater over a collared shirt, he said he was in "good health" and has "never been abused", according to the subtitles. AFP was unable to immediately verify the authenticity of the video or when it was shot. CRI said it was released to state media by Xinjiang's regional government. Xinjiang has come under intensifying police surveillance in recent years following repeated riots, bombings and attacks on Chinese security forces and civilians.

Romania stun champions Czech Republic in Fed Cup

PARIS, FEB 11 (AFP): Romania reached the Fed Cup semi-finals for the first time on Sunday with a 3-2 win over defending champions Czech Republic as Irina-Camelia Begu and Monica Niculescu stunned Wimbledon and French Open winners Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova in a marathon doubles decider.

Begu and Niculescu triumphed 6-7 (2/7) 6-4 6-4 in a thrilling rubber in Ostrava which lasted just seven minutes short of three hours.

Krejickova and Siniakova, the world's leading pair, trailed a break early in the final set before hitting back to 4-4. But the Romanian pair broke straight back for 5-4 before Begu, ranked at 35 in doubles, served out the tie.

The result ended the 10-time champions Czechs' hopes of making the Fed Cup semi-finals for an 11th successive year and represented their first home defeat in a decade.

Earlier Simona Halep won the battle of the former world number



ones with an epic 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 triumph over Karolina Pliskova, the Czechs' highest-ranked player in the absence of world number three Petra Kvitova.

"I am happy to have won against such a tough opponent," said Halep after winning her second singles of the weekend.

"It was my best and biggest win

in the Fed Cup." Siniakova, who won both her singles rubbers in the 2018 final triumph over the United States, pulled the Czechs level by seeing off Mihaela Buzarnescu 6-4, 6-2.

French Open champion Halep had said that winning a first Fed Cup for Romania was now the top priority on her "bucket list" having finally broken her Grand Slam drought in

brushed aside Belgium's top player Elise Mertens 6-2, 6-3 to follow her opening day three-set win over Alison Van Uytvanck. Her win gave two-time champions France an unassailable 3-0 lead in the tie before Belgium grabbed a consolation point in the dead doubles rubber.

"Two years is not that long in a

Paris last year.

Romania will now travel to France in April's semi-finals while the other last-four clash sees Belarus up against either the United States or Australia.

In Liege, Caroline Garcia crowned her comeback from a two-year Fed Cup exile by leading France past Belgium and into a fourth semi-final in five years. French number one Garcia

tennis career," said Garcia who opted out of the Fed Cup in 2017 following an ugly public spat with her teammates. "But I always said that I would come back and that it was important to me."

At Asheville in North Carolina, Ashleigh Barty notched up a 10th successive win in the tournament by seeing off Madison Keys 6-4, 6-1 to give Australia a 2-1 lead over 18-time champions the United States.

Danielle Collins then levelled the tie when the Australian Open semi-finalist, making her Fed Cup debut, saw off Daria Gavrilova 6-1, 3-6, 6-2.

Belarus coasted into the semi-finals when world number nine Aryna Sabalenka defeated Laura Siegemund 6-1, 6-1 for an unassailable 3-0 lead over Germany in Braunschweig.

"I am so happy and our team is so happy. It's unbelievable to win," said the 20-year-old Sabalenka who dropped just five games in four sets all weekend. The semi-finals take place on the weekend of April 20-21.

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Thai princess disqualified from list of candidates for PM



BANGKOK, FEB 11 (AFP): Thai Princess Ubolratana was on Monday formally disqualified for running for prime minister, ending her brief and ill-fated political union with a party allied to the powerful Shinawatra clan, just days after a stern royal command rebuking her candidacy was issued by her brother, the king.

Uncertainty and conjecture have coursed through Thailand since Friday when the Thai Raksa Chart party made the explosive announcement of Princess Ubolratana, King Maha Vajiralongkorn's elder sister, as their candidate for premier after the March 24 election.

Her tilt appeared to come to be a master-stroke of back-room dealings by Thaksin Shinawatra, the billionaire self-exiled ex-premier, just weeks before the poll.

But just hours later it fell apart.

A royal command from the king put a pin in her unprecedented political aspirations, insisting the monarchy was above politics and describing his sister's candidacy as

“highly inappropriate.”

Thailand's incredibly wealthy and powerful monarchy is revered by Thais and protected by a draconian lese majeste law. The king's word is seen as final.

On Monday the Election Commission formally scratched her candidacy.

“The EC today has announced the name of candidates excluding Princess Ubolratana proposed by the Thai Raksa Chart party,” it said in a statement, explaining “all royal family members are above politics.”

Despite its brevity, the princess's foray into politics has electrified the political landscape of the country, as speculation over who wins and loses from her tilt ricochets across the kingdom.

Chatter of an impending coup against the ruling junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha and a major change in army top brass has billowed out, with the hashtag #coup trending in the top 10 on Thai Twitter.

On Monday junta chief Prayut on Monday was forced to dismiss ru-

mours of an impending coup as “fake news”.

“Rumours...? We're investigating. Fake news,” he told reporters at Government House.

The gruff former general, masterminded a putsch against the government of Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin's sister, in 2014.

Meanwhile, a chastened Thai Raksa Chart, a key pillar in Thaksin's election strategy, agreed to comply with the royal command.

It may face censure by election authorities that could ultimately see it dissolved, although it was not clear if any ban could be in place before the election takes place.

Thailand's generals have a penchant for coups, backroom plotting and factional struggles.

They have grabbed power 12 times since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932, including against existing juntas seen to have overstepped their mark.

Prayut has agreed to stand for premier after the election and is aided by an army-scripted constitution.

But critics say he has

personalised power and outstayed his welcome with a public wearied by his finger-jabbing style.

The king appointed a new army chief, Apirat Kongsompong, last year from a rival faction of the army to Prayut and his junta allies.

Recent days have seeded unease, with the first election in eight years now seemingly dependent on behind-the-scenes power plays by the elite.

Meanwhile, the fate of Thai Raksa Chart hangs in the balance.

The party, a second to the Thaksin political powerhouse Pheu Thai, was expected to help the Shinawatra machine secure a majority in the 350-seat lower house.

But it is under intense pressure following its bid to bring in the princess.

“I think the party leader and board should take a responsibility by resigning,” said Srisuwan Janya of the Association for the Protection of the Constitution, a royalist activist group, who submitted a petition to election authorities Monday calling for the party's censure.

After criticizing vote, US charts careful course on Bangladesh

WASHINGTON, FEB 11 (AFP): Bangladesh faced widespread international criticism over the conduct of recent elections, but the United States looks set for business as usual as it sees strong common interests with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

As the eighth most populous nation in the world, with a moderate Muslim population that largely welcomes cooperation with the West, Bangladesh has a warming relationship with the United States - yet not one so close as to give Washington significant leverage.

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League won an incredible 288 seats in the 300-seat parliament in the December 30 election, with opposition leader Khaleda Zia -- her bitter nemesis for decades - in jail on charges her opponents say are politically motivated while the press faces draconian new restrictions.

The US State Department voiced concern ahead of the election, accusing Bangladesh of foot-dragging on letting in electoral observers and urging greater efforts to ensure a free vote.

The United States followed up after the election with a letter by President Donald Trump that wished Sheikh Hasina success but asked her to “renew her commitment to protecting human rights, individual freedom of expression and democratic institutions,” a US official said.

Sheikh Hasina is a sworn enemy of Islamists, mounting a crackdown on the Jamaat-e-Islami party that included hanging five of its leaders over charges related to Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence from Pakistan.

She has also earned widespread praise in Washington for taking in more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees who fled from neighbouring Myanmar in a brutal campaign the United States has called ethnic cleansing - stopping the crisis from become more regional in dimension.

Michael Kugelman, senior associate for South Asia at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, said that Bangladesh was effectively becoming a one-party authoritarian state -- but one whose orientation largely suits Washington.

“I think the bottom line is that the US sees Sheikh Hasina as a useful partner. She's very tough on terror and she's presided over a remarkable degree of economic growth,” he said.

“I think, in that regard, the US sees her as a supporter and practitioner of stability in Bangladesh in spite of the tradeoff of having a very troubled domestic political situation in Bangladesh.”

Bangladesh's government has shown no sign it takes seriously the concerns about the election, also voiced by the European Union.

Sajeeb Wazed, Sheikh Hasina's US-based son who serves as her adviser on information and communications technology, said the pre-election US statement was “disappointing” and blamed it on what he called opposition supporters among local staff at the US embassy in Dhaka.

But he saluted the relationship with the United States and voiced hope for further ties, saying a top priority was to draw greater US investment in an economy that has been growing by more than six percent annually.

“We have a huge consumer market. You have almost 80 million people in the middle class,” he said.

He said that Bangladesh has been “phenomenally successful in combatting terrorism,” calling it “one of the few Muslim countries that is considered relatively terrorism-free.”

Wazed added that the government felt a genuine empathy for fleeing Rohingyas in light of Bangladesh's plight at independence and noted that the refugees have not seen the type of backlash experienced by migrants to Europe.

The United States see a friendly rapport with Bangladesh as vital to Washington's goal of an open, US-friendly Indo-Pacific region. Unlike neighbors such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has not drawn high-profile infrastructure deals with China.

Another country is even more critical to the US relationship with Bangladesh - regional power and emerging US ally India, which has staunchly supported Sheikh Hasina, limiting the scope for Washington to take another approach even if it so chose.

Malaysia's Najib in last-ditch bid to delay trial

KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 11 (AFP): Malaysia's former prime minister Najib Razak was making a last-ditch bid Monday to delay the start of his trial over the 1MDB scandal, which contributed to his government's shock election defeat. Najib is due to go on trial Tuesday for the first time over allegations that he was involved in the looting of Malaysian sovereign wealth fund 1MDB in a fraud that stretched

around the world. Billions of dollars were allegedly stolen by Najib and his cronies from the fund, which was set up to help develop Malaysia's economy, and spent on everything from high-end real estate to expensive artworks.

The scandal was a major factor in his long-ruling coalition's loss at polls in May. Since losing power, Najib has been arrested repeatedly and hit with a total of 42 charges linked


to 1MDB. He has denied wrongdoing. The trial due to begin Tuesday is on seven charges related to allegations Najib pocketed 42 million ringgit (USD 10.3 million) from SRC International, a former unit of 1MDB.

But his lawyers have filed an application for the trial to be delayed pending an appeal on a technicality related to the transfer of charges between different courts. The Court of Appeal is

due to rule on the application later Monday.

It is just one of several trials Najib is expected to face over 1MDB and involves a fraction of the total purportedly stolen from the fund. But the start of the first trial will be a key moment, and may relieve pressure on the new government following criticism that it has been slow to act over 1MDB.

Far from keeping quiet, Najib has gone on a bizarre publicity blitz in recent weeks.



NAMCHI SMART CITY LIMITED

UDHD OFFICE BUILDING

KAVI AGAM SINGH ROAD

NAMCHI – 737 126. SOUTH SIKKIM

Tender No. 13/NSCL/WORKS/2019

Date: 02.02.2019

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Chief Executive Officer, Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL), Namchi, South Sikkim invites percentage rate tender among the eligible bidders for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid security 2.5% of the bid value (in Rupees)	Bid Value (in Rupees)	Cost of tender/ bid form (in Rs.)	Completion Period.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Improvement of Strom water drainage from DC office to Subba Jhora	2,95,820/-	1,18,32,763/-	30,000/-	12 months.
2.	Improvement of Storm water drainage system at Devithan Jhora, Debrung (Job-A)	2,21,007/-	88,40,265/-	15,000/-	12 months.
3.	Improvement of Storm water drainage system at Devithan Jhora, Debrung (Job-B)	2,09,927/-	83,97,049/-	15,000/-	12 months.
4.	Improvement of Storm water drainage system at Devithan Jhora, Debrung (Job-C) –				
	Part -I	2,10,000/-	84,00,000/-	10,000/-	12 months.
	Part-II	1,84,124/-	73,64,936/-	10,000/-	12 months.

Tender Schedule

(i)	Sale of Bidding documents	:	14.02.2019 up to 1600 Hrs.
(ii)	Last date & Time for seeking clarification regarding bids	:	15.02.2019 up to 1600 Hrs.
(iii)	Venue of the Submission of the bids	:	Office of the CEO Namchi Smart City Limited, UDHD Office, Bhanjyang Road, Namchi-737126 South-Sikkim. Tel No:- 03592-264088
(iv)	Last date for submission of completed bids	:	16.02.2019 up to 1330 Hrs.
(v)	Date of opening of bids	:	16.02.2019 up to 1400 Hrs.

Eligibility Criteria:

This Invitation for bids is eligible to the contractors enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department and eligibility criteria as per the Govt. Order (R&B, GoS) 373/S&B/Secy dated: 01/05/2017 except the mode of Tender.

NOTE:

The tender forms to the intending bidders will be issued on the dates specified above, after production of the Demand Draft in favour of Chief Executive Officer, Namchi Smart City Limited, or payment through National Electronic Funds Transfer(NEFT)/ Over the counter payment (OTC) as cost of tender forms duly deposited in any nationalized / Commercialized Scheduled bank. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) / Bid Security value shall also be deposited in favour of Chief Executive Officer, NSCL in the form of Demand Draft (DD)/ Cashier's Cheque (CC) / Banker's Cheque (BC) drawn in any Nationalised/ Commercialized Scheduled Bank.

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer,
Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL)
Namchi, South Sikkim



DARK FLOWER: Singer Katy Perry wears a sheer dark floral cape over matching dress and boots while attending the MusiCares Person of the Year honoring Dolly Parton in Los Angeles.

AR Rahman attends Grammy Awards with daughter Raheema

LOS ANGELES, FEB 11 (PTI): Music maestro was present at the 2019 Grammy Awards ceremony with his daughter Raheema.

The composer, who won two Grammy awards in 2009 for his work on "Slumdog Millionaire", posted several pictures from the awards night, which saw Kacey Musgraves, Childish Gambino, Cardi B and Quincy Jones create history in various categories.

Rahman opted for a black and grey suit for the ceremony, while Raheema chose an all-black ensemble.

The Oscar-winning music director was attending Grammys with London-based Prashant Mistry, New York-



based Falguni Shah and US-based Satnam Kaur, who were nominated in different categories for their albums 'Symbol', 'Falu's Bazaar' and 'Beloved' respectively.

None of them could register a win at the biggest music awards night of the year.

shift in a proactive direction. If you fixate on the negative, you'll miss the opportunities that are all around you. Set a limit for cathartic venting time so you don't drown in the drama.

CANCER: Today's powerful connection between the moon and alchemical Pluto infuses all your collaborations with magic. The only catch? That also means that you'll have to take a step back and listen to your intuition before you leap. You have a vision, Cancer, and an exciting one at that. The thing is, you don't want to steamroll your collaborators with your plans. Ask for feedback and drink it in.

LEO: "Martyr" is NOT the role for zodiac royalty to play! Hit the brakes if you find yourself cast as the selfless helper and redirect that energy toward your own realm. Under today's alchemical moon-Pluto trine, you don't have to make apologies for taking care of number one. These draining situations have a way of working themselves out on their own. Plus, people will actually respect you more when you set clear boundaries.

Drake critiques Grammys, gets cut off mid-speech

LOS ANGELES, FEB 11 (PTI): Drake made a surprise appearance at the 2019 Grammys to accept his best rap song trophy for "God's Plan" and used his time on stage to throw shade at the Recording Academy's apparent lack of diversity, but was cut off mid-speech.

Big names in the industry such as Childish Gambino, Kendrick Lamar, Ariana Grande, Jay Z and Kanye West were absent from the this year's ceremony, which honours the best of the music world.

Critics have interpreted it as the artistes' tacit call out to the Grammy's as the organisers struggle to diversify the award.

Drake in his speech alluded to being misunderstood by people deciding the winners.

"For the first time in Grammy history where I actually am who I thought I was for a second, so I like that," he said.

"This is a business where sometimes it is up to a bunch of people that might not understand what a mixed race kid from Canada has to say"

The R&B star said that awards do not always match up with the talent of an artiste.

"You've already won if you have people who are singing your songs word for word, if you are a hero in your home-



town. If there is people who have regular jobs who are coming out in the rain, in the snow, spending their hard-earned money to buy tickets to come to your shows, you don't need this right here, I promise you, you already won," he added.

The show cut to a commercial break while Drake was still finishing his speech. It was not immediately clear whether he was aware of it or not.

Later a representative for the Grammys clarified that producers did not intentionally cut off Drake but were under

the impression that he had finished his speech. "During Drake's speech, there was a natural pause and at that moment the producers did assume that he was done and then cut to commercial.

"However the producers did speak with Drake following his speech and did offer him to come back on stage to finish whatever his thoughts were. But Drake said he was happy with what he said and didn't have anything to add," Sunshine Sachs' Michael Samonte said in a statement given to Variety.

Was told I only belonged to commercial cinema: Madhuri Dixit Nene



Mumbai, Feb 10 (PTI): In her 35th year in Hindi film industry, Madhuri Dixit Nene is content, for she has done films of "all kinds" despite being told that she would be suitable for only commercial cinema and would fail in others. The actor has featured in blockbusters like "Hum Aapke Hai Koun!", "Saajan", "Dil To Paagal Hai" and has also starred in critically-acclaimed projects like "Mrityudand", "Lajja" among others. "From the beginning of my career, I've done different kind of films. But I was always told I should do only commercial films because I belong to that set up, specially when I was doing 'Mrityudand'. People said I cannot do an art film but I did," Madhuri told PTI.

"It may not have been a big hit but people liked me in that space and it gave other's the opportunity to do the same. You need to breakthrough, not only for yourself but for others," she added. Madhuri said doing the cinema one believes in can often be tricky as one "has to go against pre-conceived notions on what a star should be like".

"You've to keep your head on your shoulders while working in films and keep working with a lot of belief in yourself, without thinking so much about failure or success. You need to push the envelope. If it fails, it's ok. If it works, it gives others the opportunity to do something different. For women it's wonderful to take risks," she added.

Since her comeback to films with "Aaja Nachle" in 2007, Madhuri will be seen in a comedy for the first time with "Total Dhamaal". The actor said she boarded the project as it gave her the opportunity to do something she hadn't done in a while: let her hair down and submit to an "outlandish, crazy world" of director Indra Kumar's comedy.

"You can't have 'sensibilities' when you're doing a film like this. You've to leave your intelligence behind and just enjoy what you're doing. Take things at face value and just have fun, without thinking too much. "There has to be spontaneity when you're doing comedy. You can't hesitate. You have to just go for it. We all did just that: had a blast, laughed a lot while making it and hope it translates on screen," she added. The film stars Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor, Arshad Warsi, Javed Jaffrey, Sanjay Mishra among others.

"Total Dhamaal" will release on February 22.

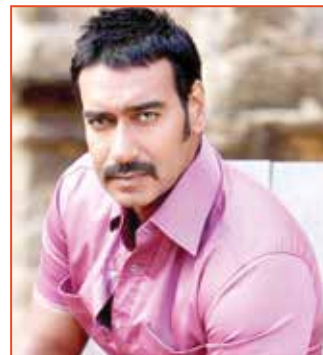
Ajay Devgn to have cameo appearance in 'RRR'

MUMBAI, FEB 11 (PTI): Ajay Devgn will have a guest appearance in "Baahubali" director SS Rajamouli's next ambitious project "RRR".

"He is doing a cameo appearance, it is an interesting character. He will shoot for it after "Taanaji: The Unsung Warrior", source close to the actor told PTI.

"RRR" marks the second collaboration between Rajamouli and Ajay.

The 49-year-old superstar had earlier given the voice overs for the Hindi version of his 2012 Telugu blockbuster "Eega" titled "Makkhi". "RRR" is an upcoming Indian period action film film scripted and directed by Rajamouli. It stars N T Rama Rao Jr. and Ram Charan in the lead roles.



As per reports, the film is made on a budget of Rs 300 crore.

Reportedly, Ajay was also approached to play the main antagonist in Kamal Haasan's "Indian 2" and he said no to the offer. "He hasn't given a thought of working in another industry as it is a bit difficult for him. In Rajamouli's film it was a cameo so he has taken it up," the source said.

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ARIES: No need to rush it, Aries. As the moon in your security-seeking second house forms a helpful trine to potent Pluto, look within and make sure you've got a stable framework for your dreams. If you want to go for the gold, you have to play by the rules. Don't let restlessness get the best of you. You may have to take a few steps backward in order to get yourself on track and playing by the books.

TAURUS: Don't abandon self-care simply because it's a busy Monday. With a metamorphic trine between the Taurus moon and potent Pluto, you may finally feel motivated to make a healthy transformation. Walking three blocks out of your way to grab donuts on the way to work doesn't exactly fulfill the fitness quota for the day—but a 30-minute trek (on sidewalk or trail) and a sushi lunch or nourishing salad will be revitalizing.

GEMINI: Obsessing again, Gemini? Old anxieties may come back to haunt you under today's deep-diving moon-Pluto trine. Instead of letting those demons endlessly torment you,

shift in a proactive direction. If you fixate on the negative, you'll miss the opportunities that are all around you. Set a limit for cathartic venting time so you don't drown in the drama.

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LIBRA: Honesty is one of your best qualities, Virgo—as long as you don't crush people's egos with your critiques. Under today's penetrating moon-Pluto connection, you won't do a very good job of pretending to be pleased. But it is possible that the person who has "failed" you might need a little more guidance or training in your precise methodology?

VIRGO: You've been making progress on all your "new year, new you" plans, Libra, but in the process, have you neglected your inner circle? Today's intimacy-boosting trine between the moon and soulful Pluto sends a Code-Red alert to check in with your loved ones. Give your nearest and dearest the quality time they deserve, even if you don't have massive quantities of it.

SCORPIO: Does your cup runneth over, Scorpio? Everyone wants a piece of you today, as the moon gets in a flowing formation with your co-ruler, magnetic Pluto. Because of this hyperkinetic influence, you might feel like you're being pulled in a million different directions. But easy does it! It's only Monday, and far too soon

to run out of fuel!

SAGITTARIUS: Get organized, Archer! Until you have an efficient system figured out, you'll only be spinning your wheels (and maybe getting stuck in a rut—eck!). If you're already operating at max capacity, take stock of your tasks: What can you outsource? Which projects need your attention today, and what can you put off until tomorrow? Take a critical look at your calendar for the rest of the week. Instead of juggling everything at once, dedicate blocks of your schedule to specific action items!

CAPRICORN: Today's transformational moon-Pluto trine could bring rapid developments—or much-needed closure—around a romantic situation. Maybe you've been waiting for bae to be honest with you, for better or for worse! Here's hoping you get nothing but the best news, Capricorn, but whatever the case, you're going to feel a thousand times better once you know the truth. From there, you can get into action, be it leaning in for that first kiss, shopping for rings or booking an

emergency couples' therapy session!

AQUARIUS: Are you at wit's end, Aquarius? Today's revelatory trine between the moon and perceptive Pluto shines a light on the ways in which you've been holding yourself back. Don't be afraid to try new things, especially if they might help you climb out of any ruts you've fallen into. It can be scary to break out of trenchant routines, even for an imaginative Aquarius. But you won't be alone this time: An influential female friend or mentor will support your exploration of new frontiers!

PISCES: Is trouble brewing with an old friend, coworker or relative close in age? Under today's transformational trine between the moon and volcanic Pluto, conflict may erupt like hot lava. It's likely that this issue has been suppressed for a while and is finally rising to the surface. Here's the most important question: Is the bond important enough to save? This crisis might actually be an opportunity to set healthier boundaries, especially if you two are on different pages.