



SummitTIMES

BJP forges alliance with SKM for Sikkim polls

GANGTOK, MAR 8 (PTI): The BJP Friday forged an alliance with opposition Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) to contest the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the state.

The details of seat sharing between the two parties would be announced soon, BJP's Sikkim in-charge Nitin Nabin said.

SKM president PS Tamang [Golay] and BJP's North-East in-charge Ram Madhav finalised the alliance in New Delhi, he said.

"The two parties have decided to form an alliance for the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha polls in Sikkim," Nabin, who was present during the meeting between Tamang and Madhav, said over phone from New Delhi.

In an identical post on Facebook and Twitter, Madhav announced that the two parties joined



SKM President PS Tamang with BJP's NE in-charge Ram Madhav in New Delhi on Friday. [foto: From Mr Ram Madhav's Facebook page]

hands for the polls and described the SKM as the "main opposition party" in Sikkim.

Elections will be held simultaneously for the 32-member Assembly and the lone

Lok Sabha seat in Sikkim later this year.

In the 2014 Assembly election, the SKM had won 10 seats but now it has only two MLAs in the House.

Seven of the MLAs had defected to the ruling

Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) in 2015, while Tamang was disqualified from the membership of the Assembly in 2016, following his conviction for a year in a corruption case.

The ruling SDF did

not want to comment on the SKM-BJP alliance.

"We have nothing to say on this issue as of now," SKM spokesperson KT Gyaltzen said.

On the SDF's status in the BJP-led Nation-

al Democratic Alliance (NDA), Gyaltzen said his party continues to be a part of the coalition at the national level.

The BJP's Sikkim in-charge, however, denied this.

"No...the SDF is not part of the NDA," Nabin said.

The SDF, led by the country's longest serving Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, has 29 MLAs in the Assembly.

More clarity is however awaited on the alliance with sources in the SKM stating that the party has set some pre-conditions for the tie-up and that the process has only begun for the possible alliance. No official word from SKM had arrived on the BJP announcement till the time of going to print.

[with additional inputs from SummitTimes reporters]

2 injured in SDF-SKM clash at Melli

BIKASH CHETTRI

MELLI, 08 MAR:

Sikkim Democratic Front and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha workers clashed today at

Sadam-Suntaley under Melli constituency in South Sikkim. Two SDF workers are said to have been injured in the clash and have been referred to Siliguri for treatment.

Both parties are blaming each other for starting the violence with SDF claiming that

SKM workers questioned SDF workers who were checking on road carpeting work going on at Sadam Suntaley.

According to SDF South Working Committee president, Ganesh Rai, a group of SKM supporters led by CLC president, Suren Tamang, Tilak Basnet, Anil Gurung, Gopal Tamang started arguing with SDF workers, Deo Prakash Pradhan, Amar Khulal, Om Agarwal, JE Saunak Bhandari and some others, alleging that villagers were not consulted before starting the carpeting work.

After the intervention of the concerned Junior Engineer, Saunak Bhandari, the SKM youth went off but returned later in a larger crowd and began attacking those present. He informed that the JE and others managed to escape but Amar Khulal and Deo Prakash Pradhan got badly beaten up by the SKM group.

On the other hand, SKM South District president In-charge, Ganesh Rai informed that SKM had door-to-door visit programme at Sadam-Suntaley area today when SDF workers started taunting the SKM workers calling them 'goonda' and 'chor ko party'. One SKM worker was recording all this when one SDF youth snatched the phone and threw it away. This was followed by heated altercation which soon escalated into a fight.

SP South, Manish Verma, when contacted, informed that police received information about the clash at around 12:30 PM.

Meanwhile, an FIR has been lodged by SDF and family of those injured against the attackers at Melli Police station and a case has been registered under sections 186/147/148/326/34 IPC. The police has started search operation to arrest the accused but no arrests have been made so far.

SKM selling itself, can also sell Sikkim: Chamling

NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

"SKM is in Delhi to sell itself," said Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling today while addressing the gathering at the inauguration of the Academic and Administrative block of Government Pharmacy College at Rumtek today.

He added that the opposition party is in Delhi and within one week there will be news of SKM "being sold".

Till today they were selling party tickets but now they are selling the party, said the CM. A party that can sell almost everything will sell the

future of the state if they come to power, he added. "There is no alternative at present," said the Chief Minister.

He also said that Sikkim now has a well-respected and well recognised mature leadership who can steer the developmental journey of the Himalayan state maintaining the peace, development and tranquillity the state enjoys.

Referring to the protest against Alembic Pharmaceuticals where in a group of protestors led by Laten Sherpa of BJP had performed the

turn to pg02

CM inaugurates Government Pharmacy College at Sajong Rumtek

RUMTEK, 08 MAR (IPR): Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling inaugurated the new Academic and Administrative Block of First Government Pharmacy College, here at Sajong Rumtek today in the presence of

Students of Pharma College and IHM to also get free laptops

Minister Health, AK Ghatani and area MLA, Dr Mechung Bhutia.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister expressed his happiness on inaugurating the first Government Pharmacy College of the state.

He announced free laptops to all the students of Government Pharma College and IHM, Rumtek. He also announced a grant of Rs 3 lakh each to both the Institutes.

"The State government is committed to impart value based quality education along with development of positive empowerment attitude, skills and abilities to meet the emerging challenges of present competitive modern era. The speed and scale made by the state government in education sector set a new paradigm in providing free education from primarily level



to higher studies. I believe in power of knowledge and education as we live in an artificial intelligence age where there is a need to keep pace with this changing technology," said the CM.

The Chief Minister further stated that this college will emerge as a centre of excellence for higher education and will be serving the society, state and the nation. He mentioned that the establishment of Pharmacy College in this region will create a gamut of opportunities for every individual from education to research as well as the people residing in the region.

Talking about the importance of education, the Chief Minister said "education is very decisive for overall development, without education no development can take place. Realizing the importance of education in the state, the government has made education free up to college level and has a vision to provide free education till university level as well. He urged the students to understand the importance of education and take studies very honestly".

The Chief Minister urged the students to maintain a sense of

turn to pg02

Jai Maha Bharath Party to contest elections in Sikkim



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

Jai Maha Bharath Party founder and national president, Bhagawan Shri Ananthavishnu Deva Prabhu, announced today that his party will contest the upcoming elections from all 32 assembly seats in Sikkim and all Lok Sabha seats of the country.

He asserted that only a national party can take issues of the State effectively to the Centre and further announced to form a committee here to select party candidates from Sikkim and start the election campaign very soon.

Addressing a press conference here today,

Mr Prabhu mentioned that the State's agendas include the safeguard of the Article 371F, better roads, transportation and other infrastructure in villages and towns, best facilities for local farmers, best government colleges in medical and engineering and technical institutions in the State, employment, medical facilities, tourism development and others. Likewise, he mentioned about national agendas of the party in the upcoming election.

Mr Prabhu mentioned that local leaders have not been able to reach in the national level politics due to regional party governments in the State.

SAGAR CHHETRI

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

Two office bearers of Sikkim Democratic Front joined Hamro Sikkim Party on Friday.

The ruling party secretary [political affairs], Anush Rai, and secretary [organisation], Rudra Khatiwada, joined HSP here at its party office in Development Area. They were warmly welcomed in HSP by its president Dr Bina Basnett, working president Bhairung Bhutia and spokesperson Biraj Adhikari.

Addressing a press

conference, Mr Rai contended that SDF does not have the right guidance or vision for younger generation. "So, we have decided to join HSP seeing its young leadership and its programme and vision for the youth and work for the State and betterment of the coming generation," he said.

Likewise, Mr Khatiwada alleged that it was very difficult to work freely or with any seriousness for the people in the SDF. He further alleged that there was

no place for serious suggestions or ideas in the ruling party. "So, instead of continuing in such a situation, we decided to join HSP to work with intellectuals and clean people who have a vision for Sikkim and its people," he said.

While welcoming them into the party, Mr Bhutia expressed happiness with the young leaders joining the party, and said that the party still has place for young leaders, something that the other parties in the State have no room for.



Int'l Women's Day celebrated at Lingi Payong school



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

International Women's Day was observed in Lingi Payong Secondary School today. The theme for this year was 'Balance for Better'. School in-charge, S Singh offered khadas to all the lady teachers of the school for their immense contribution towards growth of school family. Speeches were presented by students highlighting the

importance of the day.

Teacher, Pemkith Lepcha and CK Dahal spoke elaborately on women's empowerment and the need for observing the day. A small skit was also staged by the students that focused on women's empowerment and emancipation. Few women who arrived at ICDS centre to attend to their children were also invited and offered khadas.

Organic farming training for farmers from Haryana



GANGTOK, 08 MAR (PIB): ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute (ICAR-NOFRI), Tadong organized a 5-day "Inter State Training on Organic Farming for Farmers and Officers of Kurukshetra, Haryana" from 04 to 08 Mar in collaboration with North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM), Tezpur, Assam. The program was sponsored by Haryana Irrigation Research and Management Institute (HIRMI), Kurukshetra, Haryana. A team of 22 farmers and officers visited ICAR-NOFRI to get equipped with Organic Farming technologies. During the program,

ICAR-NOFRI Joint Director, Dr RK Avasthe, highlighted the importance of organic farming and motivated the Haryana farmers and officers to adopt organic farming on a large scale.

He said that pesticide and fungicide consumption is very high in Haryana and to avoid the ill effect of these chemicals, organic farming was the best option.

Senior Scientist (Horticulture), Dr Ashish Yadav, coordinated the five-day training. He spoke on 'Organic fruit production techniques; and 'Organic vegetable production techniques'.

Assistant Professors Dr Manjunath and Dr Victoria Devi, NERIWALM,

coordinated the visit of Haryana farmers and played an important role in organizing the training program. In their address, both thanked Joint Director, ICAR-NOFRI in organizing this training program in Sikkim in collaboration with NERIWALM.

Assistant Directors Gurjinder Singh and Mandeep Singh, HIRMI, also thanked Joint Director, ICAR-NOFRI for organizing the training program in Sikkim in collaboration with NERIWALM and appreciated the module.

Ex-CEO, Dr Yashoda Pradhan, Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency, discussed Organic Certification and Traceability.

GANGTOK, 08 MAR [PIB]: In order to strengthen the organic maize production through farmer participatory mode, ICAR-Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ranipool, organized a Farmer-Scientist Interaction cum input support programme on 07 Mar, 2019. The meet, held at Phenzong, East Sikkim, under MGMT programme, was attended by 39 farmers.

Improved maize variety, RCM 1-1, plastic for construction of low cost poly tunnel, black polythene mulch, organic nutrients were distributed to farmers during the programme.

An Animal Health Camp cum awareness programme was also held the same day at Phenzong under the National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project. The main aim behind the animal health camp was to make farmers "aware about animal health as well as providing necessary treatment to their livestock".

More than 43 farm-



ers attended and received treatment for their livestock.

This camp covered treatment of more than 35 cattle, 34 goats, 28 pigs and more than 160 poultry birds.

The common disease problem of livestock was recorded during the health camp were parasitic infestation, digestive problems, debility, repeat breeding, anoestrus and mastitis.

Besides, the health check-ups and treatment

of livestock, several essential veterinary medicines including mineral mixtures and vitamins, liquid calcium supplements, anti-diarrheal, liver stimulants and stomachic powder were distributed among the farmers.

The farmers were also provided a demo on application of pour-on technology to reduce parasitic infestation in livestock.

Joint Director, Dr RK Avasthe, ICAR-NOFRI, Tadong, briefed the farmers about the importance

of maize with diversification of its use through value addition and developing maize-based cropping sequences for increasing cropping intensity in the State which would help in doubling the farmers income.

He also emphasized the importance of the livestock sector for livelihood security of farmers as well as sustainable organic agriculture in Sikkim.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of Sr Scientist and Head (I/c) KVK, Dr

Raghavendra Singh.

Dr PK Pathak (SMS-Animal Sc), Boniface Lepcha (SMS-Horticulture), Dr JK Singh (SMS-Plant Breeding), Dr Manoj Kumar (SMS-Agronomy), Dr Mukesh Bhatt (Scientist-Veterinary Public Health) and Dr Amit Kumar (Scientist-Agronomy) interacted with the farmers to share their expertise on the improved production technologies of kharif crops and livestock disease management to enhance the production and productivity of agriculture farming in the village.

The animal health camp was successfully conducted by Dr PK Pathak and Dr Mukesh Bhatt. Panchayat of Phenzong, Pem Tshering Lepcha, expressed happiness with the endeavour and assured better cooperation on behalf of the farmers towards the organization through development of other agricultural activities for the welfare of the farming community.

E-Waste Management and Disposal training for industrial units



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

National Institute of Electronics & IT (NIELIT), Gangtok, the training arm of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), in collaboration with Sikkim State Pollution Control Board, conducted an awareness training programme on Environmental Hazards of E-Waste and its Management for the officials of various industrial units in Sikkim on 07 Mar at the the Sidkeong Tulku Forest Conference Hall here in Deorali.

The training program was attended by 47 trainees representing around 35 firms in Sikkim.

The training was conducted under a MeitY ini-

tiative keeping in view the "Digital India" programme of the government.

The programme was inaugurated by Principal Secretary, PCCE, Forest Department, ML Srivastava, accompanied by Principal Scientist, Member Secretary Dr Gopal Pradhan of the SPCB as the guest of honor.

Scientist-E and Director-Incharge, Arup Chatopadhyay, NIELIT-Gangtok, while welcoming the guests and participants, presented an overview on initiatives of the GoI in generating awareness on e-waste and its scientific disposal.

Sikkim has been covered under phase-II of the project covering 19 states and UTs after successful implementation

of the programme in phase-I which covered 10 states/UTs.

The Forest Principal Secretary, in his address, highlighted the importance of proper management and disposal of e-waste in today's age of technology and encouraged the participants to take full advantage of the training.

Dr Pradhan, in turn, emphasized the need for awareness on e-waste management among employees of various industrial units considering the E-Waste Management Rules 2016 of Government of India. He also highlighted the current e-waste management scenario in the State and efforts of the State Government in this direction.

Second annual general meeting of NOFPOCS

BIKAS CHETTRI

NAMTHANG, 08 MAR:

The second annual general meeting of Namthang Organic Farmers Producers Organisation Cooperative Society (NOFPOCS) was held here at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Namthang in South Sikkim today.

The programme was funded by NABARD and 100 members of the society were provided with marketing subsidies and ploy pipes.

DDM (S/W) NABARD, Tempa C Bhutia, was present as chief guest for the programme which was also attended by Joint Registrar Cooperative Department, DR Sharma, Programme Coordinator KVK, IP Shivakoti, Auditor Cooperative Department Deptt., Hari Bhattra and other officers from the department and ward and Zilla Panchayats members.

During the programme Auditor, Hari Bhattra presented a brief report on the society.

PC KVK-Namthang, Mr Shivakoti, in his address, encouraged the farmers to focus on increasing produce from their farms.

He informed that organic certification had made marketing easier, so much so that growers were being unable to meet the demand.

He assured to extend technical support from KVK to help increase production and requested all progressive farmers to update themselves by attending training and workshops.

Mr Bhutia, in his address, commented that working under the society has many benefits for farmers and remarked that when they work together, they are assured better profits in the long run.

President NOFPOCS, Bikash Tamang, also placed a brief report on the society and thanked NABARD and the state government for supporting farmers.

SKM selling..

last rites of the Chief Minister, the CM said that such low level politics is being practiced in the state.

He added that these people have politicised an issue that was between workers and management.

"Private industry is not controlled by the government. Government just lays down policy," he said.

Adding that the state government has a policy of giving 35 years lease to all industries coming for business in the state he said that 90% jobs in those factories is to be given to locals which has been the prime policy of his government.

He said that it is due to the good governance of the state government that all leading pharmaceutical companies have their units set up in Sikkim despite the challenges of being a landlocked border state.

Addressing his party members he asked them not to indulge in any form of groupism and work together for the party candidates.

"Being a pro-poor government with a thrust on social justice for all sections of Sikkimese, people should be aware to select the right party in power," he said.

The Chief Minister has congratulated the students and staff of Government Pharmacy College stating that the government's decision to make education free is guided by the policy to give equal opportunities to all Sikkimese to grow and flourish.

He asked the students to focus on capacity building and build a pool of manpower so that locals can avail all jobs that are created in the private sector of Sikkim.

"If manpower is ready then 90% jobs are for locals," said the Chief Minister.

NYK District Level Youth Convention at Namchi



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

District Level Youth Convention (DLYC) was organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra Namchi (NYKN), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, at a local hotel today. The program had the presence of more than 70 participants from different NGOs, a press release informs.

Sangita Dahal, UNV-DYC briefed about the objectives of DLYC which is to provide opportunity and platform to rural

youth leaders in order to express themselves. She shared experiences and suggested best practices for youth empowerment. She also highlighted the new ideas by NYKN in District Youth convention and also how information technology is helpful in today's society, role of youth in election process and child line.

SDM (HQ), Hemant Rai from Namchi spoke about the right to vote, how EVM machine works and about the significance of our votes.

Founder of Multime-

dia, Neelam Subba and Ravi Khaling, Namchi spoke with the youth on how IT is important for us and how to be a successful person.

The program was attended by Kishor Baniya [district youth awardee], Suyog Pradhan [NYK youth] and Hement Rai. On the same day, the three-day residential training on Youth leadership and Community Development training from 05-07 March also concluded and sports kits were also distributed to the youth clubs.

CM inaugurates...

respect and dignity of work and labour to meet the inclusive demand in this competitive world. He also exhorted students to rise above caste, creed and religion and take into count talent and knowledge.

The Chief Minister informed that a new university will be coming up in Sikkim where artificial intelligence will be taught.

Referring to the importance of 08 March (International Women's Day), Chief Minister said, "Sikkim is the first state in the country at the forefront of women empowerment and providing various schemes and opportunities is the key in achieving cent percent women empowerment in the state. In other places women are significantly left behind but in Sikkim, women are relatively advanced because there is no gender discrimination

and disparity." Chief Minister exhorted the students not to compare themselves with others and to have faith in their own abilities.

The total area of Pharmacy College is 1.007 acres, where four-storied Administrative and Academic block is constructed in an area of 44,491.32sqft. This new Administrative and Academic block have administrative section, medical room, lecture hall, library, pharmaceutical analysis laboratory, machine rooms, pharmacognosy laboratory, museum, pharmaceutical biotechnology laboratory, conference hall, computer room language lab etc which will facilitate B-Pharm students of the state.

Besides, five-storied hostel block (boys and girls) will be constructed to accommodate 152 students.

During the pro-

gramme, students of Rumtek Senior Secondary School expressed their gratitude and thanked the Chief Minister for providing free laptops in schools.

Earlier, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Health, Vishal Chauhan in his welcome address thanked the Chief Minister for setting up the first Pharmacy College which will benefit hundreds of students of Sikkim.

The programme was attended by MLA, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, Advisor of Health Department, Dr AD Subba, Chairpersons, Zilla Panchayats, Panchayats, officials of health department, head and faculty members of Government Pharmacy College and Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), students of Government Pharmacy College and Institute of Hotel Management, dignitaries and local gentry.

KVK South observes International Women's Day



SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 08 MAR:

KVK South Sikkim observed International Women's Day at KVK Campus today. The programme was chaired by Senior Scientist and Head, IP Shivakoti.

SMS (Extension),

Meena Pradhan briefed about celebration of International Women's Day across the globe and spoke about this year's theme i.e. Think equal, Build Smart and Innovate for Change.

IP Shivakoti in his address stressed on women's empowerment and

contribution of women in building a society. Farm women of KVK farm were honored with gifts for their tireless effort in farm development.

The programme ended with vote of thanks by SMS (Horticulture), Yangchenla Bhutia.

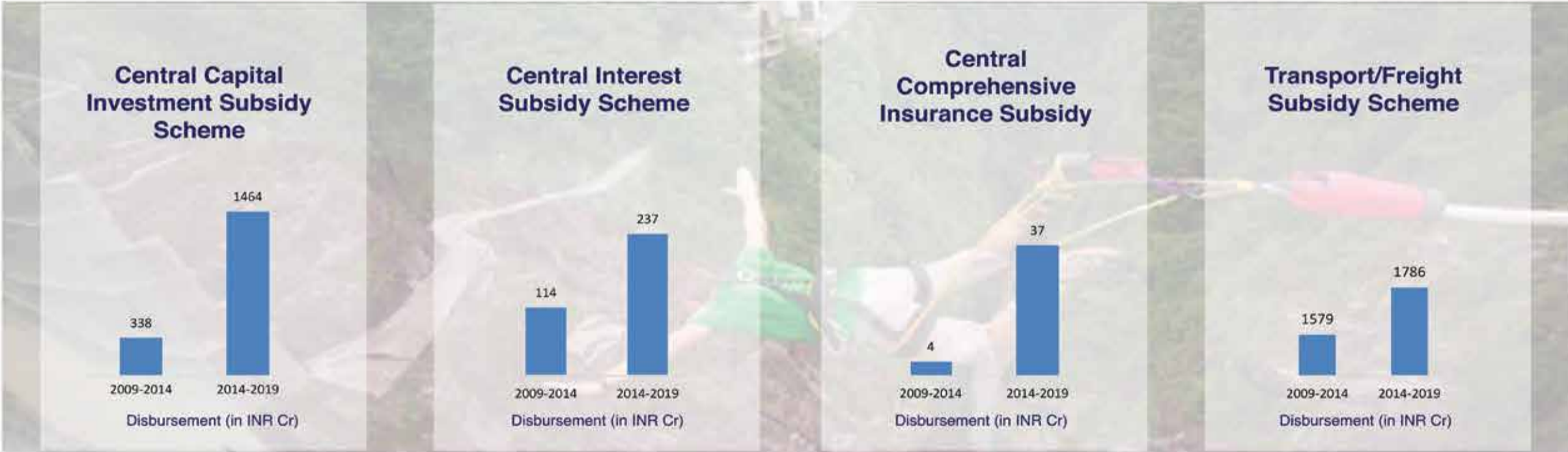


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Over 1300 industrial units provided financial support of ₹ 3524.03 Cr during 2014-2019 to promote industrialisation in the region as compared to ₹ 2033.91 Cr during 2009-2014.

About 1 Lakh employment opportunities created in 2014 - 2019



NAMUMKIN AB
MUMKIN HAI

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Native Speakers Without a Language

Unfortunately, that could happen sooner than we feared

In August 2017, the People's Linguistic Survey of India released 11 volumes of its planned 50 volume survey of the country's languages. The volumes, published by Orient BlackSwan, covered languages from the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Karnataka. Yes, Sikkim is not in this initial set, but several of the languages spoken in the region must have figured in the linguistic survey. What should also be worrying is that the regional languages, what we also know as mother tongues, here must be in as precarious state as the survey has found in the ten states in question. The People's Linguistic Survey of India (PSLI) raised the alarm during the launch of the volumes when it shared that as many as 780 languages are spoken in India, at least 400 of which are at risk of dying in the next 50 years. That's an average of eight languages every year! That should have everyone worried, but clearly, the disinterest and the indifference which brought so many languages to the brink is too pervasive. There is not much happening, anywhere, at any level to save the languages at risk of being lost. May be whatever little is being attempted to avert such extinction is driven by the emotion of "save" and that is why it is failing. Perhaps we should consider nurturing instead of saving or protecting because while the latter can make the efforts insular and imperil the language even more, the former option of "nurture" allows languages space and opportunities to grow, adapt and remain relevant.

The PSLI surveyors also discovered that 250 languages were lost in the last five decades in India. The extinction is obviously picking up pace, and who knows, the timeframe of 50 years for 400 languages might actually shrink as the extinction snowball gathers more momentum as it hurtles to the abyss and who knows, maybe even obliterates more languages along the way. It is a worrying scenario. But is it? Because, as mentioned earlier, it does not appear to have generated too much concern.

The Survey, now already eight months old, might or might not resuscitate the fate that awaits regional languages, but offers us a chance to ponder more seriously on where we are going wrong with our efforts at keeping languages and dialects alive. Languages are essentially about communication and then they take on aspects of culture and invariably underline the very ethos of a people. That said, a language obviously ceases to be one when there is no one left speaking it. This does not necessarily happen with the complete annihilation of a people and is most times caused by the language becoming redundant as a communication tool. There is also the whole generational challenge. While it is not rare to, say, catch some old folk from different communities chatter away in Limboo language in parts of West Sikkim, it is already rare to find even Limboo kids speaking to each other in their mother tongue. The same applies to some other languages as well, all of which appear to be surviving, but because they are not being passed on, are already imperiled.

But there has to be more to it. How does a language die? Past experience proves that the moment "outsiders" stop trying to learn a language, it is already on death-row. It is not enough for only native speakers to continue using a language because we do not lead closed lives anymore and need to interact all the time with people from other communities, speaking different languages among themselves. And outsiders stop learning a language when they feel no need for it as a tool for communication. For instance, all old members of the plainsmen business community speak fluent Tibetan. They had to pick up the language if they wanted to trade with Tibet which is what most of them were engaged in till six decades ago. Everyone in Sikkim, including those who have been here barely a year, speaks Nepali. They have to because they need to get their message across. Similarly, any Sikkimese going out for studies comes back equipped with at least passable Hindi-speaking skills. The Chinese are introducing English in their schools because they want to now converse with the world. That more or less settles what is actually a settled argument that language is first about communication.

Being solely about communication, however, imperils a language because the link-language keeps changing as our networks widen or as new technologies become popular. Languages, hence, also need to remain relevant and important, and this they can achieve by patronizing high literature and the sharing of important thoughts and ideas in their respective languages. One misses that in Sikkim. There is so little quality literary work in regional languages that even the aesthetic appeal of learning them is being lost. We have to strive to make it worth the while for those learning regional languages by making it about more than just chatting. For that, those who complain about losing their language need to create more awareness, produce more literature, get a pop-culture going in their languages, make it more vibrant.



Women have been written out of power – time is ripe for a new language of equality

ELLA TENNANT
theconversation.com

As we mark International Women's Day after a year of renewed media attention to issues of gender inequality, it could be that there are more important threats facing women and the survival of our planet, than mere words. But after the #MeToo campaigns, exposure of the gender pay gap, and recent publication of yet more research that challenges the idea of a gendered brain, it is mindboggling to see how "gendered blindness" – described as "the one-size-fits-men approach" in design and tech culture – lives on.

Meanwhile women's equal contribution to society and culture is ignored. Visible women – those in the public eye or who call out unfair treatment – are subject to scrutiny and treated suspiciously in a way that men are not.

Gender scholars have argued that English is a language made by men for men with the sole purpose of representing and perpetuating their point of view. The way we see the world is therefore shaped by patriarchal traditions and this is evident in most areas of arts, culture and society. It is no surprise then, to see that women are marked as deviant and deficient, or worse, made invisible. In *Women and Power*, Mary Beard discusses "countless examples of attempts to write women entirely out of public discourse".

The words we use play a role in this because language has the power to perpetuate gender determinism and, in doing so, to marginalise women. But our words can also be used in inclusive ways to promote equality and social justice. So it can't be fair that there are more derogatory terms for girls and women than for boys and men (whore, hussy, spinster, hag, are some examples) and that the continued use of generic words or forms – man, mankind – are supposed to be all-inclusive and designate human beings in general. Meanwhile when "woman" is used as a label, it is a category with limiting criteria.

Nevertheless, any discussion about the link between language and gender discrimination often results in predictable comments about the trivial nature of the issue. It is this attitude that contributes to perpetuating male power and authority at the expense of women.

DEFINING STATUS

Language defines women's position as inferior in relation to men. Unlike some other languages, English is not a gendered language – but gender is still often arbitrarily used for some things. Cognitive research suggests that language and the way people use it has a profound influence on the way we see the world.

The way we communicate with others can be influenced by a number of things, including the relationship of the speakers, their age, social status and gender. If we view language as a form of social practice, then the way in which words – whether spoken or written – are received and interpreted by the listener reveal a great deal about how power relations are established and reinforced.

Even the allocation of names and titles can be seen as an act of power. A name or a label denotes a person's social place and women are still often singled out by marital status, or "nobility titles" – Mrs or Miss – despite the fact that other options exist.

Although Ms, the preferred form of address for many women, is provided as a choice on a number of forms and drop-down menus, it is not used as a default. Another alternative, Mx, is gaining in popularity among transgender and non-binary communities and can be used by everyone as a way to go beyond gender labelling. An interviewee on a radio podcast explained:

"What's nice about Mx as a title is that it tells you nothing about a person. It doesn't tell you their gender; it doesn't tell you their marital status; it doesn't tell you their qualifications or not. In the widest possible sense, it is for everyone."

Nevertheless, this does not yet appear to have yet caught on in mainstream communication, and

women tend to be addressed based on their apparent gender and the speaker's own assumptions and cultural conditioning. These assumptions can also be challenged by the use of gender-neutral or preferred pronouns. The most popular alternatives – along with "they" – are "ze", or "hir", from Marge Piercy's 1976 feminist sci-fi utopia *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Hundreds of other possibilities are available and some institutions allow people to self-identify with whatever pronoun they feel comfortable. However, adoption of the gender-neutral pronoun, such as "ze" has been described by linguists as an "epic fail". It is hard to pronounce naturally and there are few signs of it becoming widely used.

Women are also more likely to be addressed by their first names than men, which is an indicator of perhaps unconscious, but no less patronising, gender politics. It could be argued that this might be a way of avoiding offence, for those who might not know the person's marital status, but this just supports the point that men are not subject to the same categorisation.

For hundreds of years only women suffered discrimination on the grounds of their sex (as opposed to sexual orientation). This is emphasised in early feminist writing, such as that of Germaine Greer and Florynce Kennedy to illustrate this, and that it happens in situations that demand the sharing of power – when a more powerful group is asked to make concessions to a less powerful group, resistance is the likely outcome.

It is not easy to change culturally conditioned ways of behaving and thinking, but the continued perpetuation and reinforcement of cultural and social stereotypes through language cannot be dismissed as something trivial. The need for a conscious change or awareness of how words are used has become ever more urgent – for inclusivity in communication and to support gender equality.

[the writer is Teaching Fellow, Language Centre and Liberal Arts, Keele University]

Long before #MeToo, women in many parts of the world organized successful campaigns against sexual violence

ALKA KURIAN
theconversation.com

Just two months after allegations of sexual abuse against Hollywood film mogul Harvey Weinstein came to light in a 2017 New York Times article, women in at least 85 countries began using the the hashtag #MeToo, to speak against sexual harassment.

In China, sexual misconduct accusations led to the firing of a professor at a top university and the resignation of a high-profile Buddhist monk. In Egypt, it was a highly regarded leader of the Arab Spring who was forced to resign. And in India, sexual misconduct accusations caused a major uproar in Bollywood and forced the resignation of a leading politician and minister.

While the success of #MeToo testifies to the power of social media in putting the spotlight on the culture of misogyny across the world, as a scholar who studies feminism, I know it's not the first movement of its kind.

Women in countries such as India, Pakistan and others have long organized successful campaigns against sexual harassment.

CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA

In 2009 Indian women organized a successful campaign called #PinkChaddi, or "pink underwear," against the culture of moral policing by Sri Ram Sene, a right-wing group that attacked young women in bars and young unmarried couples in public spaces on Valentine's day.

Through a Facebook campaign, Nisha Susan, an employee of India's leading investigative political magazine Tehelka invited women to send this right-wing group pink underwear on Valentine's Day. The campaign caught women's attention across the country and resulted in more than 2,000 women sending pink underwear to the group.

In another campaign called #Pin-

draTod: Break the Locks, female students in Delhi came together in 2015 to protest sexist curfew rules in university halls. The students said the rules were used to stifle the freedom of women as the only way to deal with the culture of sexual violence.

At the time, the campaign forced university authorities to relax some of the rules. And today, it has grown into a larger movement across India's major cities for bringing in meaningful policies against sexual harassment.

The biggest campaign came in 2012, in the aftermath of the gang rape and murder of the 23-year-old medical student Jyoti Singh on the streets of Delhi. The brutal rape triggered an unprecedented nationwide outcry, mostly by middle-class India. The protests forced the government to change its law against rape. They also led to enhanced penalties for offenders and criminalization of stalking, voyeurism and acid attacks on women.

Central to this protest was the role played by social media in urban India where women had long been frustrated by corruption and rising rapes. Since early 2000s, young tech-savvy millennial women had been agitating online against the culture of sexual violence in the country. The 2012 incident became a flashpoint.

While mainstream media coverage of the rape intensified the movement, it was digital activism that moved people from online protests to street demonstrations. Text messages, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter hashtags such as #Nirbhaya and #StopThisShame were used to express a collective rage and mobilize people.

CAMPAIGNS IN PAKISTAN

Similarly, in neighboring Pakistan, women have been fighting to stop sexual harassment. The 2009 anti-sexual harassment bill drafted

by AASHA, the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment is one of the earliest such examples.

Another such campaign #GirlsAtDhaba, launched in 2015 by a group of feminists, called on women to be more visible in public spaces. It invited Pakistani women to post their pictures having tea at roadside tea stalls.

The #GirlsAtDhaba campaign was inspired by the #WhyLoiter campaign in India, that advocates for women's right to be on the streets of India for pleasure. Both these movements challenged the domination of public spaces by men, which often results in women's increased sexual harassment.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Similar digital campaigns against sexual harassment took place in many other emerging economies before #MeToo.

In Latin America, women led powerful movements such as #MeuAmigoSecreto and #MeoQueridoProfessor against everyday sexism at home and in public places, including universities.

In China, a 25-year-old woman Li Maizi was arrested in 2015 for distributing pamphlets on sexual harassment in urban public transport, prompting a global social media outcry.

In the Middle East, since the 2011 Arab Spring, women have used personal blogs to protest the social and political policing of gender. Examples include Tunisian Amina Shoui's uploading of pictures of her topless body inscribed by "We Don't Need Your Di-mocracy." She deliberately parsed the word democracy to protest against the "mock" democracy and also to indicate that she was prepared to "die."

THE ISSUES THAT REMAIN

Despite the success of many of these campaigns, there are many

complex issues that need to be addressed.

For example, media reports from India show that women from the lower castes continue to face sexual assault, often violent, for daring to refuse sexual advances of upper-caste men.

In Pakistan, women have faced serious backlash over public accusations of sexual harassment. A leading pop star Meena Shafi and the two-time Oscar-winning filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid faced abusive online trolling when they tweeted about sexual harassment.

A stigma around rape and a sexist legal system often discourages most women in Pakistan from calling out their sexual abusers.

RECOGNIZING GLOBAL CAMPAIGNS

In projecting #MeToo as a global phenomenon, the international media often implies that it was the West that helped mobilize women around sexual violence and gave it a name.

This belief reinforces what Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole has referred to, in a different context, as the "white-savior industrial complex" – a colonial mindset that does not acknowledge to this day the role played by Western dominance in reinforcing women's subordination in the non-Western world.

Further, it obscures a large number of anti-sexism movements that have long been led by women in different parts of the world.

As Ghanaian writer and women's rights activist Nana Darko Sekyiamah says: Rather than a movement, #MeToo is only a moment – albeit an important one – which has a long way to go.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, University of Washington, Bothell]



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
JORETHANG SUB DIVISION
SOUTH SIKKIM

Memo No: N.I.T No:- 06/R&B/Jor/2018-19 Date: 06.03.2019
For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, Jorethang Sub Division , invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of **Class IV Grade** enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No. 515/R&B/Secy, dated 12.06.2018 and notification no. 556/R&B PWD/Secy dated : 28.08.2018 & 584/R&B/PWD/Secy, Dt:08/10/2018 through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of **Gram Panchayat / Urban local bodies** where the work is to be executed.
The works are listed as under:

Sl.No	Name of Work	Value put to Tender (Rs.)	Completion time (in Months)	Cost of Tender Docu- ments (Rs.)	Amount of Earnest Money @2.5% for issue of tender form	Grade of Contract or	Name of G.P.U	Name of Constitu- ency.
2	Construction of road from Lower Gom PWD road to Meli Jorethang PWD road.							
a.	KM: 1 st (o.oo- 500m)	2,118,833.00	6 months	1500.00	52971.00	Grade IV	32-Sorak Shy- ampani GPU	Poklok Kamrang.
b.	KM: 1 st (500m-1000.00m)	2,118,833.00	6 months	1500.00	52971.00	Grade IV	32-Sorak Shy- ampani GPU	Poklok Kamrang.
c.	KM: 2 nd (00.00- 500.00m)	2,118,833.00	6 months	1500.00	52971.00	Grade IV	32-Sorak Shy- ampani GPU	Poklok Kamrang.

TIME SCHEDULE:-

1.	Date of submission of application with Bank receipt for issue of Tender Documents,(excluding Tender Form)	25th March, 2019 (from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm) at respective GPKJ).
2.	Date of issue of Tender Form and submission of TDR (As Earnest Money)	26 th March 2019 (from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm) at respective GPKJ).
3.	Last Date and Time of submission of Tender	27 th March 2019 (from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm) at respective GPKJ).
4.	Date and Time of Opening of Tender	27 th March 2019 (1.30 pm at respective GPKJ).

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT.

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors / Firms of appropriate Class/ Area.
- The intending tenders/ 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 Validated / Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/ Updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/ issue of the Tender Document for verification. Selected bidder should produce No objection certificate/ Tax clearance certificate from the commercial taxes division, Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department prior to the issue of Work Order.
- The prescribed Non- Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (As above from the respective Gram Prasasan Kendra, cost of Tender Document form shall be deposited to the revenue of respective GPU. 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 (TDR) in favour of the Accounts Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, Namchi. Tender Form shall be issued from the respective Gram Prasasan Kendra, only on production of the deposit receipts 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. Supporting documents listed at SLNo. 3e should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of the concerned Gram Prasasan Kendra, 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 of GST all other 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 documents rates as per approved Scheduled 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 Principal 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.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractor shall be at his own risk and cost. The Department shall not be liable for payment of such damages(if any), including accidents to labourer at site.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the 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% of the value of work done.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The recoveries of 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.
- 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 neighbouring 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 transportations, 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 arrangement 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 raod 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 us per rules.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the CONCERED GRAM Panchayat unit where the work is to be executed.**

Sd/-
Assistant Engineer
Roads & Bridges Department.
Jorethang Sub Division



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

Memo No: 584/R&B/PWD/Secy.

Date:08/10/2018

NOTIFICATION

The State Government is hereby pleased to notify the following further to amend the Sikkim Public Works Manual, 2009, published in Extraordinary Gazette Number, 381 dated: 8th October 2009 namely:- In the said Manual, in 'Annexure B', in the Notification No 07/Fin/Acctt dated: 18th September, 2009 for the existing entries under the items A, SLNo. 1, the following entries shall be substituted, namely:-

A.	ELIGIBILITY OF CONTRACTORS		
Sl No.	GRADE OF CONTRACTOR	LIMIT	JURISDICTION
1.	All Class IV Contractors enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department	UPTO Rs.1.00 Crore	Competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of the concerned Ward of the GPU/ ULB where the work is to be executed.

NOTE:

- Further, all the other details except the above in Notification No. 515/R&B/PWD/Secy, dated 12/06/2016 remains unchanged.
 - This amendment shall be deemed to have come into force w.e.f the 8th day of October, 2018.
- Sy order and inthe name of Governor.

Sd/-
(G.T. Dhungel)
PCE cum Secretary
Roads & Bridges Department.



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

Memo No: 556/R&B/PWD/Secy.

Date:28/08/2018

NOTIFICATION

The State Government is hereby pleased to notify the following further to amend the Sikkim Public Works Manual, 2009, published in Extraordinary Gazette Number, 381 dated: 8th October 2009 namely:- In the said Manual, in 'Annexure B', in the Notification No 07/Fin/Acctt dated: 18th September, 2009 for the existing entries under the items B(1,2) and C(1,2), the following entries shall be substituted, namely:-

B.	CALL OF TENDER	
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION
1.	For work costing UPTO Rs.1.00 Crore	Assistant Engineer concerned. The tender shall be held in the premises of the GPU Office/ ULB in the jurisdiction of Assistant Engineer concerned.
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned. The tender shall be held in the premises of the GPU Office/ ULB in the jurisdiction of Assistant Engineer concerned.
C	OPENING OF TENDER	
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION
1.	For works costing upto Rs.1.00 Crore	Committee comprising of BDO/Municipal Commissioner/Municipal Executive Officer/ Any Gazetted Officer within their respective jurisdiction, concerned Assistant Engineer and Accounts Officer or the respective as nominated by the above Officers and representative of respective GPU/ULB.
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Committee comprising of BDO/Municipal Commissioner/Divisional Engineer, concerned Assistant Engineer within the Sub-Division and Accounts Officer or the respective as nominated by the above Officers and representative of respective GPU/ULB.

NOTE:

- The cost of tender form circulated by respective Department would henceforth be deposited to the revenue of the respective GPU for works costing upto 2.00 crores.
 - Further, all the other details except the above in Notification No. 515/R&B/PWD/Secy, dated 12/06/2016 remains unchanged.
 - This amendment shall be deemed to have come into force w.e.f the 26th day of August, 2018.
- Sy order and in the name of Governor.

Sd/-
(G.T. Dhungel)
PCE cum Secretary
Roads & Bridges Department.



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

Memo No: 515/R&B/PWD/Secy.

Date:12/06/2018

NOTIFICATION

The State Government is hereby pleased to notify the following further to amend the Sikkim Public Works Manual, 2009, published in Extraordinary Gazette Number, 381 dated: 8th October 2009 namely:- In the said Manual, in 'Annexure B', in the Notification No 07/Fin/Acctt dated: 18th September, 2009 for the existing entries under the items A, B,C, D, E, F, G and H the following entries shall be substituted, namely:-

A.	ELIGIBILITY OF CONTRACTORS		
Sl No.	GRADE OF CONTRACTOR	LIMIT	JURISDICTION
1.	All Class IV Contractors enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department	UPTO Rs.1.00 Crore	Competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of the concerned Ward of the GPU/ULB where the work is to be executed.
2.	All Class II Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of the concerned Ward of the GPU/ULB where the work is to be executed.
3.	All Class I-B Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE Rs.2.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Within the district through e-tendering system.
4.	All Class I-A Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE Rs.5.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.7.00 Crore	Within the district through e-tendering system.
5.	All Class I-B Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE Rs.7.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Within the district through e-tendering system.
6.	All Class I-A Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.20.00 Crore	Within the district through e-tendering system.
7.	All Class I-AA Contractor enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department.	ABOVE 20.00 Crore	Within the district through e-tendering system.
8.	E-tendering is mandatory for all works costing above Rs.2.00 Crores.		
9.	For works costing more than 10.00 Crore and up to 30.00 Crore, tender under two-cover systems shall be invited from the eligible class of Contractors elisted with Sikkim Public Works Department.		
10.	For works costing crore than 30.00 Crore, pre-qualification of contractors shall be invited from the eligible class of Contractors.		
11.	For all works awarded to the Co-operatives Societies, the onus of third party Physical Monitoring shall be with the Department of Co-operation.		
12.	In due regard to the existing system of the traditional institution of Dzumsa prevalent in the two villages of Lachen And Lachung in the North District of the State, the existing rule of Dzumsa's may be followed.		
13.	e-tendering is not mandatory by tendering of works falling within Dzumsa area of Lachung and LAchen costing upto Rs.20.00 Crore.		

B	CALL OF TENDER		
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION	
1.	For works costing upto Rs.1.00 Crore	Assistant Engineer concerned.	
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned.	
3.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.2.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer concerned.	
4.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.5.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer/ Additional Chief Engineer	
5.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Chief Engineer/PCE/PCE cum Secretary.	

1.	For work costing upto Rs.1.00 Crore	Committee comprising of BDO/Municipal Commissioner/Municipal Executive Officer/ Any Gazetted Officer within their respective jurisdiction, concerned Assistant Engineer and Accounts Officer within the jurisdiction.
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Committee comprising of BDO/Municipal Commissioner/Divisional Engineer, concerned Assistant Engineer within the Sub-Division and Accounts Officer within the jurisdiction.
3	For work costing ABOVE Rs.2.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Committee comprising of Superintending Engineer/Divisional Engineer, and Accounts Officer and Assistant Engineer concerned.
4	For work costing ABOVE Rs.5.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Committee comprising of Additional Chief Engineer/ Superintending Engineer, Divisional Engineer, and representative of the Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department.
5	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Committee comprising of Chief Engineer/ Additional Chief Engineer, Superintending Engineer, and representative of the Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department.

D.	ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER		
Sl.No.	LIMIT		
1.	For tenders received AT PAR on works value upto Rs.1.00 Crore where no additional financial implication is involved, the tender opening committee shall accept the tender.		
2.	For tenders received AT PAR on works value upto Rs.2.00 Crore where no additional financial implication is involved, the tender opening committee shall accept the tender.		
3.	For tenders received AT PAR on works value exceeding Rs.2.00 Crore where no additional financial implication is involved, the tender inviting authority shall forward the tender documents to the next higher authority for acceptance.		
4.	Where additional financial implication is involved and the same can be met up from the overall provision of the project approved and sanctioned by the Government through Development Planning, Economic Reforms and NEC Affairs Department and Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department approval of the Head of the Department is necessary.		
5.	Where additional financial implication is involved and does not have approval/ sanction of the Government approval/ sanction of the competent authority is necessary.		

E.	TECHNICAL SANCTION: NOTE: It is mandatory to submit a copy of the technically sanctioned estimates in the Office of the Chief Engineer and Additinal Chief Engineer.		
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION	

1.	For works costing upto Rs.50.00 Lakhs	Divisional Engineer concerned. For works to be executed under BAC's Assistant Engineer concerned subject to confirmation by the Divisional Engineer during passing of bills.
2.	For work costing UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned.
3.	For work costing UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer concerned.
4.	For work costing UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer/ Additional Chief Engineer
5.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Chief Engineer/ Principal Chief Engineer /Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary.

F	WORK ORDER.		
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION	
1.	For works costing upto Rs.1.00 Crore	Assistant Engineer concerned.	
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned.	
3.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.2.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer concerned.	
4.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.5.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer/ Additional Chief Engineer	
5.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Chief Engineer/ Principal Chief Engineer /Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary.	

G	CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENT		
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION	
1.	For works costing upto Rs.1.00 Crore	Assistant Engineer concerned.	
2.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.1.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned.	
3.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.2.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer concerned.	
4.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.5.00 Crore and UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer/ Additional Chief Engineer	
5.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Chief Engineer.	

H.	PASSING OF BILLS		
Sl No.	LIMIT	JURISDICTION	
1.	For works costing upto Rs.2.00 Crore	Divisional Engineer concerned.	
2.	For work costing UPTO Rs.5.00 Crore	Superintending Engineer concerned.	
3.	For work costing UPTO Rs.10.00 Crore	Additional Chief Engineer	
4.	For work costing ABOVE Rs.10.00 Crore	Chief Engineer/ Principal Chief Engineer /Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary.	

I	EXIGENCIES		
	In case of exigencies like natural calamity, immediate restoration, urgent works, the Department may carry out mitigation of such damages either through engaging labourers, resourceful Contractors/agencies, Job order or by calling Short Notice item rate quotations (one week)/ Supplying materials to work etc. On account of funds not being available with the Department for such works, the Chief Engineer would give approval for execution of such work through Job Order in anticipation to sourcing of funds. The works in all cases shall be initiated only after prior approval of the Head of the department.		

Sy order and in the name of Governor.

R.O. No. 771/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date: 7.3.2019

Sd/-
(G.T. Dhungel)
PCE cum Secretary
Roads & Bridges Department.

SMU signs MoU with SP2 University of Pennsylvania and NITTE

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 MAR:

Researchers and academicians from NITTE (Deemed to be University) in India and SP2 University of Pennsylvania visited Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) for undertaking a Research Survey on "Digital Banking in Rural Areas of Sikkim".

Around 30 students from the Department of Arts & Humanities of SMU under the guidance of Prof Madan Chettri were part of the two-day



Research Survey Activity. The Researchers include Dr MS Moodithaya [Pro Vice Chancellor

of NITTE Deemed to be University], Dr Ganesh Bhat, Dr Prabhakar and two researchers Dr Dan

Heist and Prof Marquisha from SP2 University of Pennsylvania.

As part of this Research on "Digital Banking in Rural Areas of Sikkim", they will be visiting two villages namely Martam and Payong. This research is an inquiry into whether India is moving towards "Less Cash Economy."

During this visit, Dr MS Moodithaya gave a wonderful insight into the topic "The Challenges of financial inclusion in India" for the benefit of students of Arts and Humanities of Sikkim Manipal University.

He talked about how

this type of field work and research activities will help students to sharpen their skills in this demanding world. He apprised the students about the global economy and also the future of Asian economy which is very bright according to him.

During the visit, Sikkim Manipal University, NITTE (Deemed to be University) and SP2 University of Pennsylvania signed a Memorandum of Understanding for future collaborative activities covering Research, Publications, Student Exchange Program and other connected activities in the space of Education & Research.

Present during the signing of the MoU were Dr MS Moodithaya [Pro VC of NITTE (Deemed to be University)], Brig. Dr VK Mehta [Dean of SMIMS], MS Sridhar [Head-HR], Dr Dan Heist of SP2 University of Pennsylvania, Prof. Madan Chettri and other officials and faculty of SMU.

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STATE INSTITUTE OF CAPACITY BUILDING

(An Autonomous Institute of Govt. of Sikkim)

Karfector, South Sikkim- 737121

Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Department

(Registered under SI.No 1978 Vol No.1 datd 03/02/2011 under Sikkim Regulation of Societies

Association and other Voluntary Organization Act, 2008)

Ref No. GOS/SICB/2016-17/20(57)/B/20

Dated: 05th March, 2019

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

State Institute of Capacity Building (SICB), under the aegis of the Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of Sikkim, is the nodal agency for implementation of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Garmeen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) Scheme, a skill development program under Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India for skilling of 3400 rural youth from Sikkim state with placement linkage.

State Institute of Capacity Building (SICB) invites proposal from interested Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) for conducting the training under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) scheme in the state of Sikkim.

Interested agencies may submit their proposals online at <https://www.ddugky.gov.in> / <http://www.erp.ddugky.info> as per the format prescribed by MoRD along with the application fee of Rs.25,000/- to be paid to the following bank account.

i. **Name of the Bank:** Axis Bank.

ii. **Address of the Bank:** Gangtok(SK), MG Road, Gangtok, East Sikkim.

iii. **Name of the Account :** Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojna.

iv. **Account Number:** 916010023833459.

v. **IFSC Code:** UTIB0000112.

Project duration is for a period of three years. As per the targets available with the state at present, PIA should submit the proposal for a span of 3, 6 and 9 months. PIAs are requested to submit their proposals on or before **5th April, 2019**.

Preference will be given to PIAs with registered office and working experiences in the State of Sikkim for conducting the training programme.

Incomplete proposal in any respect shall be summarily rejected. For any further clarifications, the PIAs may contact + 91-94341-53100/+91-81451-47108 or email your queries to chief.sicb@gmail.com please.

Sd/-

(Mr. Sumita Pradhan), SCS

Additional Secretary/ COO(DDUGKY-Sikkim)

State Institute of Capacity Building,

Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Department

Government of Sikkim, Shram Bhawan, Sokaythang,

Tadong, Gangtok.

Memo No. GOS/SICB/2016-17/20(57)/B/Dated: 5th March 2019.

R.O. No. 768/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19

dt. 06.03.2019



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

Memo No.299/MSD R&B/2018-19

Date.02/03/19_____

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, the Assistant Engineer (Mangan), Roads & Bridges Department Government of Sikkim, invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of class IV Grade enlisted with Sikkim Public Works **Department vide Notification No: 556/R&B/PWD/Secy dated 28/08/2018, & 515/R&B/PWD/Secy dated 12/06/2018**, for the construction of **Fair Weather road** through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of Ward Panchayat / Urban Local Bodies where the work is to be executed.

The details of works and time schedule are as follows:

SL. NO	NAME OF WORK	AMOUNT PUT TENDER (in Rs)	TO	EARNEST MONEY @2.50% (in Rs)	COST OF TENDER DOCUMENTS (in Rs)	COMPLETION TIME
1	Construction of road from Manikhol to Monthom Changrang via Phantam Gumpa km 0.00 to 1.00	4238496.00		1,05,962.00	1,500.00	12 months
2	Construction of road from Manikhol to Monthom Changrang via Phantam Gumpa km 1.00 to 2.00	4238496.00		1,05,962.00	1,500.00	12 months
3	Construction of road from Manikhol to Monthom Changrang via Phantam Gumpa km 2.00 to 3.00	4238496.00		1,05,962.00	1,500.00	12 months

TIME SCHEDULE:

1	Date of submission of application with Bank receipt for issue of Tender Document (excluding Tender Form) from the Office of the Assistant Engineer, Mangan Sub-Division, Roads & Bridges Department, Mangan, North Sikkim.	11 th March 2019 (10.00am to 4.00pm)
2	Date of issue of Tender form on submission of TDR (as Earnest money) from the office of the Assistant Engineer, Mangan Sub-Division, Roads & Bridges Department, Mangan, North Sikkim.	13 th March 2019 (10.00am to 4.00pm)
3	Last Date and Time for submission of Tender in the village Administrative Centre of respective Gram Panchayat Unit.	
a	For works from Sl. No.01 to Sl. No.1,2,3,4	15 th March 2019 (10.00am to 1.00pm)
4	Date and time for Opening of Tender in the village Administrative Centre of the Respective Gram Panchayat Unit.	
a	For works from Sl. No.01 to Sl. No.1,2,3,4	15 th March 2019 (1.00 pm to 4pm)

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT:

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors/Firms of appropriate Class/Area.
- The intending tenders/contractors should apply in writing for issue of tender documents. The application would be invariably be signed by the contractor himself/herself. The tender documents will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDERER. The application shall be submitted initially for each works listed above with all required documents.
- The application should enclosed attested copies of the a) latest No objection Certificate/tax Clearance Certificate from Commercial Taxes Division, FRED, b) Validated/Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate and Professional Tax Clearance Certificate along with the application. It is mandatory to produce the original validated/Updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/Issue of the Tender Documents for verification.
- The prescribed Non-Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (as above from the office of the Assistant Engineer (Mangan), Roads & Bridges Department, Mangan, North Sikkim on production of requisite Bank receipt of the State Bank of Sikkim towards the cost of Tender Documents (Non-Refundable) under the revenue head of the respective GPUs where the work is to be executed.
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.50% in the State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedule Bank which includes deposits in the form of Temporary Deposit Receipt (TDR) in favour of the Account Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok, Tender Form shall be issued only on production of Temporary Deposit Receipts of 2.50% earnest money.
- The Tender Documents, including the Tender form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with he name of the tenders and the name of work superscribed on it, supporting documents listed at Sl. No: 3 (a), 3 (b) and 3 (c) above should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed Tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the Gram Prasad Kendra of the respective GPUs where the work is to be executed on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders shall be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the presence of the tenderers on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderers should sign on every page of the tender documents as Acceptance of the General Direction and Conditions of the contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of Value Added Tax and all other Taxes and Levies. Over writing and corrections 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 documents, rates as per approved Schedule of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the Schedule of Rates (SOR), the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the PCE-cum-Secretary Head of the Department will be final in this regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of the work are subjected to change; the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account is entertained whatsoever. If any claim is made, it shall be as per the agreement rates.
- The Department reserves the rights to hold 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 contractor shall be at his/her own risk and cost. The Department shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labour at site.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period for 90 (ninety) days. The work should commence within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of issue of Work Order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to 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 @ 5.00% of the value of work done.
- The department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigned any reason thereof.
- The contractors are also required to submit Xerox copies of PAN card.
- The recoveries of Royalties on Forest Produce 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 on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- Subletting of contract work is against the norms and if it comes to notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
- 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.
- In case the man power employed by the contractor are from outside the State or neighbouring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractors to get them registered with the Labour Department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant labour Laws.
- Use of explosive shall be regulated as under:
 - Transportation, Handling, storage and use of Explosives (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provision of the India Explosive Act and General Guidelines, 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, storage, handling and use of explosive shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangement to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period i.e. beginning, middle and completion stages.
- Damages of 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.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his/her bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The cost of stock materials and bridge parts supplied from the Department store will be deducted from the contractor's bills as per rules.
- The bidders shall produce a certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat Unit where the work is to be executed.

R.O. No. 774/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19

Date: 8.3.2019

Sd/-
Assistant Engineer
 Roads & Bridges Department
 Mangan Sub-Division

Amazon tribe accuses Brazil army of atrocities



WAIMIRI-ATROARI RESERVE, MAR 8 (AP): First the helicopters arrived, dropping chemical bombs. Then came armed men in green uniforms who proceeded to slaughter members of an Amazon tribe to make way for a major road.

Bare Bernaldo Waimiri, at the time a teenage member of the Waimiri-Atroari tribe deep in Brazil's Amazon, said the day of that attack, many years ago, was the last he saw his family alive.

Now elderly, Bernaldo described the horrific scene last week during a historic hearing that put a spotlight on Brazil's military, which denies attacking the tribe. His testimony underscored the constant tension between development and conservation in Latin America's largest nation and comes as far-right

President Jair Bolsonaro gives a prominent role to the military in his government and ends new indigenous land demarcations in the Amazon.

"I lost my father, my mother, my sister and my brother," Bernaldo said in a very low voice, wearing shorts and tapping his flip-flops on the ground as two translators put his words into Portuguese.

The hearing took place in a thatched, cone-shaped hut where the Waimiri-Atroari normally hold colorful festivities and long storytelling sessions. For one day last week, it transformed into a gloomy courthouse where six elders told a judge how over many years the 1964-1985 military dictatorship tried to eradicate them with arms, bombs and chemicals.

The Associated Press and one local newspaper

were the only media allowed to attend the hearing. Non-tribal members in general are usually forbidden to enter the sprawling reserve that is the size of Israel and straddles the states of Amazonas and Roraima.

Tribe members and prosecutors said it marked the first time a judge was allowed on Waimiri-Atroari lands to hear witnesses tell of several alleged attacks over the years. Leaders said their aim was to deal with the past and avoid future incursions.

"To turn this page, we all have to read the book," tribal leader Mario Parwe Atroari said.

Most indigenous tribes that allege atrocities during the dictatorship are reluctant to give a full accounting of incidents in urban courthouses because they don't trust

non-indigenous peoples. Some also fear being prosecuted for their own attacks against state agents and missionaries.

While tribesmen nodded during Bernaldo's testimony, a half-dozen military personnel in uniform stood in silence. Retired Col. Hiram Reis e Silva, dressed in a white collared shirt and jeans, shook his head as the witnesses spoke.

Reis e Silva, who said he worked near the reserve after 1982, was at the hearing to represent the military.

"My version of the story is very different," Reis e Silva told the AP. "There are some exaggerations. We hope truth is re-established." "I also have several witnesses who are the pioneers of the highway and counter everything (the tribe members say)," Reis e Silva added, though

when asked to share contacts with any such person he reclined to.

Before ruling, federal judge Raffaella Cassia de Sousa was expected to wait for forensics, which could include a determination of what chemical may have been used in the bombings witnesses described, and possibly more testimony and pieces of evidence.

There is no final date for a decision.

Federal prosecutors, who accuse the Brazilian state of genocide in their civil suit, said hundreds, if not thousands, of tribe members died between 1968 and 1977, when highway BR-174 was built. The deaths either happened by military strikes or because of diseases that came after the forceful construction of the road through the reserve, prosecutors said.

Hindu Dalit woman chairs Pak Senate session on Women's Day

ISLAMABAD, MAR 8 (PTI): Krishna Kumari Kohli, Pakistan's first female senator from the Hindu Dalit community, on Friday chaired the session of the Upper House of Parliament on occasion of International Women's Day.

"Chairman Senate of Pakistan decided to make our colleague Krishna Kumari Kohli aka Kishoo Bai to Chair the Senate for today on Women's Day," Senator Faisal Javed tweeted. Krishna, 40, was elected as senator in March 2018 after spending many years working for the rights of bonded labourers in Muslim-majority Pakistan. She is the first Thari Hindu woman

to be elected to the Pakistan senate.

She belongs to the Kohli community from the remote village of Dhana Gam in Nagarparkar area of Sindh province where a sizeable number of Hindus live.

"I consider myself very fortunate today to be sitting on this seat..." she said before starting the session.

International Women's Day is observed across the world on March 8.

Born to a poor peasant, Jugno Kolhi, in February 1979, Krishna and her family members spent nearly three years in a private jail owned by

the landlord of Kunri of Umerkot district.

She was a grade 3 student at the time when held captive. She was married to Lalchand at the age of 16, when she was studying in 9th grade.

She pursued her studies and in 2013 she did masters in sociology from the Sindh University. She had joined the Pakistan Peoples Party as a social activist along with her brother, who was later elected as Chairman of Union Council Berano.

Krishna's election to Senate represented a major milestone for women and minority rights in Pakistan.

NASA captures first images of supersonic shockwaves colliding in flight

WASHINGTON, MAR 8 (PTI): NASA has captured groundbreaking images of shockwaves from two supersonic aircraft, as part of its efforts to develop planes that can fly faster than the speed of sound without producing thunderous sonic boom, the US space agency said.

The images were captured during the fourth phase of Air-to-Air Background Oriented Schlieren flights, or AirBOS, which took place at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in the US.

The flight series saw successful testing of an upgraded imaging system capable of capturing high-quality images of shockwaves, rapid pressure changes which are produced when an aircraft flies faster than the speed of sound, or supersonic, NASA said in a statement.

search," Heineck said.

Shockwaves produced by aircraft merge together as they travel through the atmosphere and are responsible for what is heard on the ground as a sonic boom.

The system will be used to capture data crucial to confirming the design of the agency's X-59 Quiet SuperSonic Technology X-plane which will fly supersonic, but will produce shockwaves in such a way that, instead of a loud sonic boom, only a quiet rumble may be heard.

The ability to fly supersonic without a sonic boom may one day result in lifting current restrictions on supersonic flight over land, the US space agency said.

The images feature a pair of T-38s from the US Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, flying in formation at supersonic speeds.

The T-38s were flying approximately 30 feet away from each other, with the trailing aircraft flying about 10 feet lower than the leading T-38.

With exceptional clarity, the flow of the shock

waves from both aircraft is seen in the images, and for the first time, the interaction of the shocks can be seen in flight.

"We are looking at a supersonic flow, which is why we are getting these shockwaves," said Neal Smith, a research engineer with Aerospace Computing Inc at NASA Ames' fluid mechanics laboratory. "What is interesting is, if you look at the rear T-38, you see these shocks kind of interacting in a curve," he said.

"This is because the trailing T-38 is flying in the wake of the leading aircraft, so the shocks are going to be shaped differently. This data is really going to help us advance our understanding of how these shocks interact," Smith said.

The study of how shockwaves interact with each other, as well as with the exhaust plume of an aircraft, has been a topic of interest among researchers. Previous, subscale schlieren research in Ames' wind tunnel, revealed distortion of the shocks, leading to further efforts to expand this research to full-scale flight testing.

Finnish government resigns over failed reforms

HELSINKI, MAR 8 (AFP): Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipila tendered his centre-right government's resignation on Friday after it failed to push a through a social and health care reform package, the president's office announced.

"Prime Minister Juha Sipila has submitted the resignation of the government to President of the Republic Sauli Niinisto... today," Niinisto's office said in an announcement made just five weeks ahead of legislative elections scheduled for April 14. "The president has accepted the government's resignation and asked it to continue on a caretaker basis until a new government has been appointed." Sipila has since 2015 headed a coalition made up of his Centre Party, the conservative National Coalition, and Blue Reform, a moderate faction spun off from the far-right. Sipila, a former businessman who earned millions as an IT entrepreneur before becoming prime minister in 2015, has made health and social reform one of his top priorities in office, seeing a shake-up as necessary to cut the ballooning costs of treating a rapidly ageing population.

The proportion of over-65s in the Nordic country, which has a population of 5.4 million, is expected to reach 26 per cent by 2030.

China's imports, exports tumble more than expected in February

BEIJING, MAR 8 (AFP): China's exports and imports plummeted much more than expected in February, official data showed Friday, adding to worries about slowing growth in the world's number two economy as it fights a trade war with the US.

Its politically sensitive trade surplus with the US narrowed to USD 14.7 billion for the month from USD 27.3 billion in January, the data from China's customs administration showed.

China's total overseas shipments sank 20.7 per cent on-year and imports fell 5.2 per cent, much worse than the 5.0 per cent and 0.6 per cent drops forecast in a Bloomberg News poll.

"Today's trade figures reinforce our view that China's trade recession has started to emerge," said Raymond Yeung of ANZ bank in a note. "Looking ahead, we find little reason to expect a rebound in the near term on the back of a sluggish global electronics cycle," said Yeung, adding it would weigh on China's first quarter GDP growth.

Recent economic data point to the difficulties China faces with growth in the last three months of 2018 clocking in at 6.4 per cent.

In January, an important barometer of prices in the country's industrial sector neared contraction territory while manufacturing activity saw its worst performance in three years in February.

China's premier on Tuesday laid out a lower growth target of 6.0 to 6.5 per cent this year in a report to the country's annual parliamentary session underway in Beijing, down from 6.6 per cent growth in 2018.

The government outlined major tax cuts, fee reductions and looser monetary policy to combat the slowdown.

Worries have grown about



slowing global growth with the European Central Bank slashing its 2019 eurozone growth and inflation forecasts on Thursday, citing "uncertainties" around geopolitical risks and trade rows.

However, analysts caution it is difficult to compare trends in China's data at the start of the year due to the Chinese New Year holiday, which came in early February this year and can affect business activity.

China's exports for the first two months fell 4.7 per cent, and imports were down 3.1 per cent, estimated Yeung of ANZ.

An end to the months-long US-China trade dispute would help China's hurting exporters -- shipments to the US fell about 29 per cent last month.

Washington and Beijing last year exchanged punitive tariffs on more than USD 360 billion in two-way trade but have recently indicated they are close to coming to terms.

America's trade deficit with China hit a record USD 419.2 billion last year, US data released this week showed. China put its surplus at a lower but still record USD 323.3 billion.

Exports of soybeans, a crucial crop across vast expanses of the US, fell 18 per cent for the year as the tit-for-tat tariffs sent Chinese buyers elsewhere.

US President Donald Trump said Thursday negotiations were making progress, telling reporters at the White House that the talks were "moving along pretty well".

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted Friday that the two sides had made "significant progress" recently and blasted hawks in Washington who have advocated a "decoupling" between the two countries' economies.

"To decouple from China is to decouple from opportunities, decouple from the future, and in a sense, to decouple from the world," Wang said at a news conference in Beijing.

Earlier in the week Commerce Minister Zhong Shan told reporters "there is still lots left to do" in trade negotiations.

In a move that could help the negotiations, China's parliament will next week pass a new law regulating foreign investment and barring the forced transfer of technology by foreign firms to Chinese joint venture partners.



I have an opinion, but I'll keep it to myself: Alia on Kangana



MUMBAI, MAR 7 (PTI): After Kangana Ranaut slammed Alia Bhatt for not speaking over contemporary issues, the actor said while she respects the “Queen” star for voicing her opinions, she would like to keep hers private.

Kangana had called Alia and her “Gully Boy” co-star Ranveer Singh’s comments of being apolitical “irresponsible” and lashed out at the duo for refusing to speak on politics.

Asked about Kangana’s comments, Alia told reporters, “I definitely don’t have the ability to speak as candidly as Kangana does, and I really do respect her for that and maybe in a way she is right, sometimes we do hold back.”

“My dad also says that there are already so many opinions in the world that it can do with one less opinion. So, I have an opinion but I’ll keep it to myself. But, kudos to her as she genuinely speaks really well,” she added.

Alia was speaking at the fourth edition of ‘Outlook Business Women of Worth’ on Wednesday night. The actor recently turned producer and launched the banner, Eternal Sunshine Productions. “I am somebody who loves being an actor, I love acting. But in life I want to do so much more. I want to produce films, I won’t ever direct though. I want to work on social causes. I can do so much more with my life, this is just a beginning.”

Alia will next be seen in “Brahmastra” and “Kalank”, both the films’ journey she described as “beautiful”

“‘Kalank’ is an unbelievable journey. It is an honour to be a part of such a great cast. The film’s director, Abhishek Varman is a dear friend. We all have really put in a lot of hard work for this one.

Demi Lovato Sends Herself Flowers and Inspiring Note After Henry Levy Split



Demi Lovato is practicing some powerful self-love. One day after news broke that the pop star and her boyfriend of several months, fashion designer Henry Levy, had gone their separate ways, Demi decided to share the personal way she’s moving upward and onward from the heartbreak.

“Cause sometimes you gotta send yourself flowers...” the 26-year-old captioned a photo of the pink and white roses that were delivered to her doorstep. Accompanying the gorgeous bouquet was a sweet note meant to remind Demi just how special she really is.

“You’re beautiful, you’re loved and you’re worthy of a happy and healthy life,” it read.

Lovato recently returned home to Los Angeles following a stay at a treatment facility. A source told E! News that the singer was taking “precautionary measures” by seeking professional help for an ongoing struggle with mental health issues. Explained the insider, “She never wants to get to a place where she was last year when she relapsed.”

Demi was first romantically linked to Henry last November, more than three months after she was hospitalized following a drug overdose.

And despite Henry’s romantic Valentine’s Day tribute to his “beautiful soul,” our source would ultimately reveal that their relationship may have progressed faster than they were prepared for.

“Demi and Henry decided to split because none of her family members approved of her getting into a relationship so quickly and wanted her to focus on herself and her health. Demi felt distracted and overwhelmed, and wanted to take a breather and truly get healthy,” the source shared.

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Chris Pratt talks about playing villain in ‘The Kid’



LOS ANGELES, MAR 8 (PTI): Actor Chris Pratt says he agreed to play the bad guy in upcoming western feature “The Kid” as it presented him the opportunity to do something different. Pratt, who has mostly played the protagonist or supporting character in films, such as “Jurassic World” and “Guardians of the Galaxy” series, is portraying the villain in the new film which has been directed by his “The Magnificent Seven” co-star Vincent D’Onofrio.

The film also features Ethan Hawke, Dane DeHaan and Jake Schur, among others.

Appearing on “Jimmy Kimmel Live!”, Pratt said he enjoyed playing the bad guy in the film. “It was really an opportunity to do something different. I liked it,” he said.

Pratt revealed that he had previously discussed with D’Onofrio his desire to play

a negative character. “I had said to him that I don’t think I would ever be able to play a bad guy. The characters I’ve played, they haven’t really been bad... Early in my career if I had tried to be bad, people would be like, ‘Oh, he’s not that bad,’” the actor said.

Pratt said D’Onofrio, who has himself played villain many times on-screen, is a direct person.

“Some directors are deferential and allow the process to happen and only gently guide you one way or the other. It’s an amazing style, and I’ve worked with a lot of people like that, and it’s really effective. (But) Vince is not that way,” Pratt said.

“You get to do really amazing things when you just trust somebody, when you know they’re not going to leave you hanging,” he added.

Netflix’s ‘Leila’ to start streaming from June 14

MUMBAI, MAR 8 (PTI): Huma Qureshi and Siddharth-starrer miniseries “Leila” will debut on Netflix on June 14, the streaming giant announced on Friday.

The dystopian drama, co-directed by Deepa Mehta, Shanker Raman and Pawan Kumar, is based on Prayaag Akbar’s book of the same name. The six-episode series follows Shalini (Huma), a mother in search of her daughter Leila whom she lost one tragic summer. Shalini deals with various hardships in the course of her search, in a story of longing, faith and loss.

“‘Leila’ has been a fantastic Netflix project to work on. I’m thrilled to be essaying Shalini, whose unique mix of strength, grace and optimism is what gets her through all kinds of obstacles. So it really has been an honour to portray a character that has not only pushed me as an artist but I believe will resonate with a lot of young women.

“It is unlike anything I have done before and I can’t wait for Netflix to take this story to the world,” Huma said in a

statement. Deepa, who is also serving as the creative executive producer on the series, said apart from showing Shalini’s quest to find her daughter, the show is also about finding your own identity.

“‘Leila’ is about awareness, about paying attention, about looking at the world around us and asking pertinent questions about our future. That’s what makes it so perfect on a platform like Netflix with its global reach and ability to address a range of audiences with relevant, resonant stories,” she said.

The series will also feature Rahul Khanna, Sanjay Suri and Arif Zakaria, among others.

Siddharth, who is playing Bhanu in the series, described his character as “complex” and said portraying it on screen was an “intense yet fruitful journey”.

“Although the story ‘Leila’ is set in a dystopian age, it is about human emotions. The team on set was wonderful which made this journey even more memorable. I am very excited to see how a global audience on Netflix reacts to this story,” he added.



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