

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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"I wish all the women of Ladakh even more strength, sensibility and sensitivity. Women's day is just one day to celebrate yourself but I urge you to make the most of every day. Be free, be good and work hard."

Avny Lavasa

Avny Lavasa, the 48th Deputy Commissioner of Leh is the first woman DC of Leh district. She is a 2013 IAS batch, J&K cadre. She is the daughter of Ashok Lavasa IAS (retired) 1980 batch, Haryana cadre. She did her schooling from Delhi Public School, Delhi and graduation from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. She is also a sports and fitness enthusiast and took part in various marathons including Ladakh Marathon.

After serving as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur she assumed the charge of Leh district as Deputy Commissioner on September 14, 2017.



"Wishing women and girls in Leh all the very best, you should play important and active role in the development of the region and moving Leh forward."

Sargun Shukla

Sargun Shukla is an IPS officer of the 2012 batch and is the first woman SSP of Leh district. She was first posted as ASP (Under Training) in Srinagar and then, SDPO Nowshera. She also served as Additional SP Bhaderwah and SSP Traffic in Srinagar. She completed her post-graduation in Psychology from Patiala University.



"Define success on your own terms, achieve it by your own rules and built a life you're proud to live. The pain of today we are feeling is the strength we will feel tomorrow and for every challenge encountered there is an opportunity to grow."

Rigzin Angmo

Rigzin Angmo is a second in command CRPF officer honoured among the 13 role models of the J&K state by the Governor on 26 January 2019.

She was a Gold medalist in Kuala Lumpur international marathon in 1994, Kathmandu International Marathon in 1995, Bangkok International Marathon 1995. Silver Medalist in International Marathon Indonesia in 1997. In nationals, Rath marathon gold medalist of 1995&1996 and gold medalist in Imphal 1995 and Vadodara 1998 Marathon. She also stood first in South Asian Federation game in the year 1999 and bronze medalist in 1995.

She joined as CRPF Officer on General duty in 2004 and in 2011 she was promoted to the post of Deputy Commandant. In 2013, she was selected as one of the Indian representatives of the United Nations Peace Keeping Force to Liberia.



"To begin any great journey, we should be confident, grateful and appreciate precious human life and the tremendous opportunities. Every individual should inculcate helping and caring nature without any expectation."

Venerable Dr. Tsering Palmo

Venerable Dr. Tsering Palmo was honored with FACE International Women Leadership Award 2017. She has done research on the nuns and their pressing problems. She was also the in charge of the Mahabodhi Nunnery till 1994- 95. Worked for the establishment of Nunnery at Thiksay Nyerma and Sakya Nunnery in Choglamsar. In 1996, she established the Ladakh Nuns Association.

She is the first Ladakhi nun trained in herbal medicine at the Tibetan Medical Institute in Dharamsala, India.

HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY

Women who made a difference

Artist: Jigmet Wangchuk



"I wanted to convey to every Ladakhi girl to understand the responsibility and to take the decision of life carefully."

Padma Shri awardee Dr. Tsering Landol

Dr. Tsering Landol is the first woman Gynecologist from Ladakh. She received Padma Shri awardee in the field of medicine in the year 2006 for her contribution to Indian medicine. Her name is listed among the thousand peace women of the world.

She pursued her matriculation from Government High School, Leh and studied medical science from Government Girls Medical College, Srinagar. She joined SNM hospital in the year 1979.

She is also featured on the 'Wall of Fame' which features those who have exhibited excellence throughout their career or existence have exemplified glory and greatness.



"Women of Ladakh have to work hard in the economic and political system. In recent times, because of reservation, there are women representation in Panchayat and Municipal election but that is not enough. More women have to come out actively in politics so that policies for the women upliftment can be made."

Gyamo Diskit Wangmo

Rani Parvati Devi of Khangsar Palace, Lahaul, Spiti is the wife of King Kunzang Namgyal of Stok village. She was elected as the first woman Member of Parliament from Ladakh in 6th Lok Sabha from 1977-80. She was the Chairperson of Welfare extension project. During the time she sets up Anganwadi centres in Nimoo, Basgo, Thiksey, Chuchot and Stok. She was also the founder and president of Namgyal Institute of Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture (NIRLAC).

Rani Parvati Devi invited Britain's Princess Anne, President; Save the Children Fund to Ladakh and was able to introduce Save the Children in Ladakh around 1978.



"Even though the women of Ladakh are quite empowered as compared to other parts of the country they are not represented in decision making bodies like the Hill Council."

Prof Tadin Joldan

Prof Tadin Joldan has worked in the Government Higher Education Department, J&K for almost thirty-five years. In addition to being a professor of English for almost twenty years, she has been an administrator, working as a Principal of various colleges in the state including Women's College MA road Srinagar. She is the first women lecturer and principal of college from Ladakh.

She has worked as a member of the university council and university academic council, Kashmir University for many years.

She was the founder Principal Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Leh which is named after her father Eliezer Joldan, whose contributions to the education of Ladakhis is immense.

She has worked as a member of Operation New Hope, SECMOL, Advisory Board on Education Hill Council Leh. Also, Founder member Darashiko Foundation, member WICOMP Dalai Lamas peace initiative, member centre for dialogue and reconciliation India.



"You will become whatever you wish to. Don't undermine your capabilities."

Ovessa Iqbal

Ovessa Iqbal is the first Muslim girl in the J&K state to crack All India Civil Services exam. She joined Indian Foreign Service in 2011. She had also qualified the Kashmir Administrative Service examination in 2009.

Born in Chuchot village she did her schooling from Moravian Mission School, Leh and pursued Chemical Engineering from Panjab University Chandigarh. From August 2013 to June 2015, she was posted in Amman, Jordan as a Third Secretary (Language Trainee) in the Embassy of India, Amman. From July 2015 to February 2019, she served as First Secretary at the Embassy of India, Beirut, Lebanon.

At present, she is posted as Under Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

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Brief News

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Artist: Jigmet Wangchuk

DC Leh orders to deposit licensed arms/weapons with police station

LEH: District Magistrate Leh, Avny Lavasa ordered all the persons possessing licensed arms /weapons within the territorial jurisdictions of district Leh to immediately deposit their arms/weapons with local police stations in pursuance of section 21 of Arms Act 2016 on March 12. The weapons/arms of such license holders who do not comply with this order shall be impounded.

The order has been made to ensure free and fair elections and to maintain law & order during the general Lok Sabha elections 2019.

District Administration Kargil safely evacuates patient from Ralakung Zanskar

ZANSKAR: A 31 years old woman who had recently delivered a baby was evacuated from Ralakung village of Zanskar Sub Division on March 13

Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary, DC Kargil said that a team was immediately rushed by the Administration to airlift the patient as soon the message was received.

The patient is presently undergoing treatment at Sonam Nurboo Memorial Hospital Leh.

Correction and clarification

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

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Women who made a difference



“Women should be bold and confident to work equally with the men. We all must work collectively and should never lose opportunities. There is no work that women can’t do and we all should actively participate in all fields.”

Thukjey Dolma

Thukjey Dolma is a singer and work as a traditional folk song instructor at SECMOL. In 1992, she used to sing in All India Radio and know almost 120 folk songs. In 2002, she joined in education campaign with Sonam Wangchuk and joined SECMOL campus in the year 2003. She also participated in the 20 days training for the disabilities organised by Namgyal Institute For Research On Ladakhi Art and Culture (NIRLAC) held in South India in the year 2004-05. In 2007, she completed the Stok Kangri Expedition.



“Women should come forward and equally work as men do. There should not be any discrimination and should support each other for one’s upliftment. We should come forward and know about our potentials.”

Thinles Chorol

Thinles Chorol is the Ladakh's first professionally trained female trekking guide. She started Ladakhi women’s travel agency and won “Women Transforming India” award along with 14 female entrepreneurs from India.

In January 2014, she received Jankidevi Bajaj Puraskar, for her contribution in promoting homestay business in rural areas of Ladakh. In January 2015, the Indian news website, The Weekend Leader in collaboration with Vellore Institute of Technology named her ‘Person of the year’ for creating job opportunities for Ladakhi women. On January 11, 2016, she received Sunday Standards Devi award. In 2007, she was awarded Sanjoy Ghose Ladakh Women Writers award by Charkha Development Communication Network.



“People say that Ladakhi women are more liberated than other rural areas, but I wish we would see more Ladakhi women stand for elections, and also win.”

Rebecca Norman

Rebecca Norman, Becky first came to Ladakh in 1992 as a volunteer for Helena Norberg-Hodge and LEDeG and soon shifted to volunteering at SECMOL. She wrote Getting Started in Ladakhi: A Phrasebook for Learning the Language and edited Baba Abdul Hamid's Ladakhi-English-Urdu Dictionary. She helped with editing Ladags Melong magazine and taught hundreds of Ladakhi students various topics including English, computers, basic life-skills maths, Ladakhi history and literacy, and science related to daily life. She is one of the few women in Ladakh who can type in Ladakhi.



“A woman is an epitome of beauty, wisdom and care. She has climbed the mountains and dived into the ocean, she has matched steps with every man in the world.”

Tsering Ladol

Tsering Ladol is the first woman from Ladakh and the youngest woman from the J&K state who scaled Mount Everest in the year 2005 from the Tibet side at the age of 18. She climbed 7000-meter peak six times which include peaks of Garhwali KAMET, Utrakhand, Darjeeling, Sikkim, and Nubra Siachen, 6000-meter peaks thrice including Golab, Stok Kangri, and Shansher in Changthang.

In 2006, she received a state award. In 2008, she was honoured with Raksha Mantri Padak by the Defence Minister. She was also awarded as the NCC best cadet in the year 2008. She has also participated in National Ski competition (Alpine) held in Gulmarg and Utrakhand in the year 2013 and 2014. Also, stood 4th position in National Nordic Ski championship Cross Country held in Gulmarg and Auli in Utrakhand in the year 2018 and 2019.

Jigmet Wangmo

Jigmet Wangmo started the fusion couture venture ‘Jigmet Couture’ with her husband Jigmat Norbu. The duo was titled as 50 people to know in Himalaya by Condo nast travel.

She worked at Reebok as a men apparel and accessories designer. Jigmat couture is the first qualified designer and the first brand in Ladakh taking Ladakhi textile art and craft at the global market.

Jigmat couture was specially featured in Lakme fashion week Mumbai and in many national and international magazine promoting art, costume and royalty of Ladakh.

They have also come up with Textile museum in Ladakh which is one of a kind in Himalaya.

All Ladakh Women’s Association celebrates International Women’s Day in Leh

Rigzin Wangmo & Dawa Dolma

LEH: Celebrating and reflecting the progress made on women’s rights and calling an end to gender inequality, International Women’s day themed, ‘Women Empowerment’ was celebrated with great enthusiasm on March 8 at the main market.

It was organised by All Ladakh Women’s Association which includes Ladakh Buddhist Association Women’s Wing, Ladakh Women Welfare Network, Ladakh Women Alliance, Anjuman-E-Imamia Women’s Wing, Christian Women Wing, Anjuman-Moin-Ul-Islam Women Wing, and J&K Cultural Academy Leh.

Avny Lavasa, Deputy Commissioner, Leh was the chief guest while Dr. Yangchen Dolma, Retired Chief Medical Officer, Leh was the guest of honour.

Avny Lavasa appreciated women’s of Leh for taking action on their promises for progressing Leh forward.

She said, “Women’s in Leh plays a greater role in uplifting social issues in Leh including the ban on polythene and clarified that women’s day is not about men versus women rather moving towards a gender-balanced society. She further added that society can progress only if we have a holistic approach and both male and female should work along towards a single goal”.

She further requested women to come forward in political representation by exercising their vote in coming election.

Traditional dance performances and a skit on the im-



Avny Lavasa and other dignitaries during the International Women’s Day celebration at Main Market, Leh.

portance of voter’s right was showcased.

Dr. Yangchen Dolma said, “In Ladakh, the male and female ratio in schools, colleges and jobs are equal. But in business and politics, women participation is rare. In a few parts of Ladakh, women remain in their home despite having higher education qualification as they simply look for government jobs. Rather than emphasizing on government jobs one should challenge themselves to do business, join politics and can also become contractors.

“Women have capabilities to work; we should motivate ourselves and have confident to achieve the goal. With the celebration of women’s day, there must be an outcome”, she added.

She requested all women to ensure the right food hab-

its and discourage the societal system of giving expensive gifts on the wedding which is not a part of Ladakhi culture.

Women representatives of the religious organization, NGO’s and departments also spoke on the occasion.

Thinlas Chorol, Co-Founder of Ladakh Women Welfare Network of Ladakhi Women’s Travel Agency submitted a copy of memorandum demanding measures and better facilities to ensure safety for the women’s of Ladakh to Avny Lavasa, DC.

Memorandum includes:

- Development of fully equipped and staffed shelters for women who are victims of different forms of abuse and different circumstances.
- To develop an empowerment centre where women can learn different skills.
- Man and Women should have equal opportunities at work and demanded safe environment for women.
- Demanded more toilet facilities in Choglamsar and Skalzangling market.
- Urgent requirement to move wine shops from religious worship places.
- To take strict action against people smoking in public places.
- Allocate land to All Ladakh Women’s Association to develop office.

Recent women achievers in different fields at various levels were also honored.

Peace rally for UT status for Ladakh held in Leh



People from all walks of life participating in the rally demanding UT with Legislature for Ladakh at main market, Leh.

Stanzin Dasal

LEH: Shouting the slogan ‘Free Ladakh from Kashmir’, thousands of people joined the peace rally demanding Union Territory status with legislature for Ladakh on March 13.

The peace rally was called by Ladakh Buddhist Association supported by all the religious organisation and political parties.

The entire business establishment remained closed for half day.

PT Kunzang, Vice President LBA informed that the rally was scheduled in the month of February but because of unrest situation in the valley it got postponed. He said, "UT for Ladakh is a long pending demand and is asking for the status within the framework of the Indian constitution."

Talking about the importance of UT status for Ladakh, Ashraf

Ali Barcha, President, Anjuman Imamia said, “Ladakh has its own distinct identity, culture, and strategic importance because of which we are demanding the UT status. UT is not about benefiting one community but for the whole region”.

He expressed the need of making people understand the importance, pros and cons of Union Territory status for Ladakh to avoid any doubts and rumours.

“There are many people who are in doubts and against the UT status. It is very important that if anyone is against it there must be a reason after understanding it clearly. It shouldn’t be a decision based on misunderstanding and rumours”, he added.

He further said that the demand for UT should not just be of political interest rather make people understand the pros and cons of the demand and let them de-

cide whether they want it or not.

Also, he stressed upon the need for unity, peace and brotherhood to carry out the demand effectively.

Tsewang Thinles, President, LBA informed, “A committee for UT demand will have a dialogue with the people of Kargil district to understand the demand more precisely and clearing all doubts and confusion. We are demanding UT status to get free from Kashmir and save our identity and culture which is always under threat.”

Ven. Shedub Chamba, President, All Ladakh Gompa Association, Deachen Chamga, President, Christian community also expressed the need of UT status for Ladakh.

Later, a copy of the memorandum was also submitted to the Governor of J&K.

SSA, RMSA teachers demand to clear pending salaries



Stanzin Dasal

LEH: Shouting the slogan ‘No pay No Work’, masters of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and head teachers of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) staged a protest for the release of pending salaries on March 5 at Chief Education Office, Leh.

Around 42 Masters of RMSA and 72 Head-teachers of SSA joined the protest.

Tsewang Phuntsog, SSA Head teachers said, “The problem of salary is from a very long time and they ask us to run the school without even getting our salary paid from the last five to six months. It’s difficult to work and

manage things without payment of salary on time”.

He further added that many have taken loan from the bank and cannot reimburse on time.

Talking about the excuses and continuous delay, he said, “All this time we were assured that the issue will be sorted but has not been resolved till date.”

When asked about the issue, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC informed that ₹ 1000 crore has been earmarked by State Government to pay off the pending salary of all the teachers and will be released after getting uploaded on Budget Estimation, Allocation & Monitoring System

portal. The reason for the delay is the intense situation and interrupted internet connection in the valley, hopefully, it will be solved within a few days”.

He further added, “This problem shouldn’t be generalized as it is only with the teachers engaged with the RMSA.”

Tashi Dolma, Joint Director Education Ladakh said that the issue is caused because of the procedural delay which will be sorted within a day or two.

The protestors threatened the authorities that they would not resume their duties until the salary cases are resolved.

60th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day observed in Leh



60th years of resistance and resilience among Tibetans in Leh.

Dawa Dolma

LEH: On the 60th anniversary of Tibetan National uprising day, Tibetans in Leh observed peaceful march from Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute of Leh to Polo ground on March 10.

Thousand of Tibetans including Tibetan Children Village students gathered to commemorate the solemn occasion which connects their history, memory, culture, resistance and resilience.

Tibetan National uprising day is to call to mark the illegal invasion of People Republic of China in Tibet since March 10, 1959.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC

expressed solidarity with Tibetan freedom struggle for peace and non-violence. He also extended solidarity to Tibetans brothers and sisters who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet.

Tsetan Wangchuk, Chief Representative Officer, Sonamling Settlement read out the statement of the President of the Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala. Similarly, Tsering Wangchuk, Vice President of Local Tibetan Assembly shared the statement of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Dharamsala.

P.T Kunzang, Vice President, Ladakh Buddhist Association assured to extend every possible

support from their end for the welfare of Tibetans in Leh and Tibet cause at a larger scale.

Konchok Ishey Stak, President, LBA Youth wing urged Tibetan youths to never forget their roots and struggle their parents/grandparents went through.

He further added that need for freedom of expression and press in Tibet is highly crucial as according to Freedom House, Tibet is the least free country in the world under Chinese Communist Party rule.

Ven Shedup Chamba, President, Ladakh Gompa Association gave assurance to continue to stand for Tibet cause as Ladakhi and Tibetan have significant relation in terms of culture, religion and language.

Norbu Dorjee, President, Tibetan Freedom Movement requested Tibetans youths to give priority to education to gain Tibet independence. He extended gratitude towards the first generation Tibetans in exile for their struggle and hard work in establishing successful settlements and schools all over India in preserving Tibetan ethnic and cultural identity.

Tashi Dhondup a local Tibetan said that the Tibetan government in exile should continue to convene delegations with the Chinese authority to progress Tibetan national struggle.

10-day training held on ‘Integrated Joyful Learning’ for teachers in Phey

Rigzin Wangmo

PHEY: With the participation of about 32 teachers, a 10-day teacher training themed ‘Integrated Joyful Learning’ concluded on March 7 at Government Middle School, Phey.

The training started from February 25 and was sponsored by Aktion Ladakh.



Dr. Tsering Norboo and others during the concluding day of teacher training.

The resource person and experts during the training include Tsewang Norbu Vivek, Motivational and inspirational speaker, Stanzin Dorjay Gya, Filmmaker, Tsetan Angchuk, Former Headmaster of Spituk School and Urgain Yangphel, Teacher, Phey School.

Dr. Tsering Norboo, Coordinator, Aktion Ladakh said, “It is very important to have faith in oneself and identify the skills. People should seriously think and have a broader perspective. One must ask the smallest doubt to have clarity on the subject. In these 20 years, I have observed changes in the teachers and thrilled to see all the development that has taken place”.

“With less participation of people, there will definitely be no development. Public and the government both should take responsibility and when collective contribution comes example can be set for many”, he added.

He further recommended the government and people to have equal participation mainly in the education sector.

Tsering Mutup, Goba, Phey said,

“The teachers of council model school and primary teachers of Phey, Nimmo, Spituk took the training. The main purpose of the training was to help teachers advance their teaching skills and aim to have the same standard of teaching as private schools.”

Talking about the training he said that such training should be a continuous process and we hope that the teachers have taken full advantage of the training.

Highlighting the declining enrollment rate in Govt. schools, Tsewang Nurboo, Sarpanch, Phey said, “People prefer to send their children to private school in Leh city. The members of the village are trying to strengthen the school and to increase the enrolment in the Govt.school. We are also working to provide awareness among the villagers to increase enrolment.”

He further added that it is necessary to give training to the teachers to keep themselves updated.

Stanzin Toldan, a volunteer for

the training programme said, “Our aim is to make the foundation strong, the education system should improve from the grass-roots level. The volunteers from foreign countries come every year to give training but this time we have invited local experts. Teachers from both government and private school joined the training. Also, two-day training on parenting was imparted to the parents.”

Phunchok Dolma, Teacher, Primary School, Spituk said, “In this training, we learned about the joyful learning and the tactics of teaching which helped in advancing our skills and boost our confidence. They taught us to be faithful to our work. Also, we had theatre workshop.”

Padma Yangzin, Zonal Officer, Nubra, Urgain Yangphel, Teacher, Tsewang Dorje, member, Social and Educational Welfare Association (SEWA), Shara and Rinchen Dolma, Head Master Phey School also spoke on the occasion.

EXPERT TALK

Women’s Day: Balance for Better

By Dawa Dolma



Sargun Shukla, Senior Superintendent Police, Leh: The status of women in Leh is comparatively better than the rest of India as it can be measured by their participation in many sectors. Women are seen actively taking part in trade and businesses, management companies, educational institutions and many more. The percentage of girls education is higher than boys and women have proved their potential in every field.

District Police Leh celebrated Women’s day with nomads of Kuyul and Chumur to create awareness and distribute sanitary products. Women in Leh are empowered, not necessarily in terms of making financial contribution to their family. It is reflective from their participation and say in decision making, lifestyle, and their independence to do what they please.

The major challenges that women in Leh are facing is that of channelization of energy. They are educated but they are not aware of where and how to channelize their potential, acumen, and educational achievements. Jammu and Kashmir police is trying to step in as our endeavor is always about constructive engagement with youths such as career counseling with students, vocational training for women and sports tournament for women. These are important for the holistic development of an individual and the region.

Gender-balanced society is a concept that has a different implication for different people. Being a woman and District Police Chief, the workplace majorly constitutes male force and yet has a very cohesive team in Leh which is parity in a way. Everyone’s experience of dealing with society, hindrances, turbulence are different but it is also on how your social makeup and support system have made you overcome those challenges. That could be your family, teachers, peers, and most importantly your own determination helps you overcome these challenges.

As an officer, you have to fulfill your roles and responsibilities. Over and above your identity as a woman makes you take a few steps extra. Therefore, gender equality is not only about empowering women but also empowering society.

Cognizable offence is cognizable offence; you should not be a victim, a silent victim. We as women have a tendency to hesitate when it comes to speak out against issues like domestic violence, divorce



and other forms of crime. The aim behind the opening of the women police station was more of playing the role of the reconciliatory agent rather than penalizing agency.

Our objective is very clear if a small adjustment issue or misunderstanding is causing a family to break, our first role is to try to mediate between them. Family as an institution, if it is taken away, we lose a lot from our lives. We are not advocating one person to suffer the atrocity of another rather be the bridge between the two.

Solution

- Awareness is most important in any particular situation. Women in Changthang are self-sustained. They make income by weaving and selling wools. However, there are certain things that need to be done in terms of hygiene.
- Women should not hesitate to open up their issues with their partners, family members, peers and above all visit police station when something happens.
- Women’s participation in family decision making is essential.

Message

“Wishing women and girls in Leh all the very best, you should play an important and active role in the development of the region and moving Leh forward.”



Thinles Angmo, Senior Advocate, District and Session Court, Leh: International Women’s Day has been celebrated since 1909, yet women are still not treated equally despite their huge contribution in taking the world forward. International Women’s Day 2019 is celebrated with the campaign theme of ‘BalanceforBetter’ instead it should be Balance forever’ by giving recognition to women’s contribution.

The status of women in Leh is significantly better compared to the other parts of India mainly because of cultural upbringing and absence of female feticide. In many Ladakhi households, a girl child is pre-

ferred over a boy child and girl is never seen as a burden. Leh was a safe place for women. However, with the coming of technology and internet, the issues of teenage pregnancy, domestic violence, and divorce cases has increased.

The occurrence of such issues can be blamed on limited access to quality education. Quality education plays a crucial role in addressing these issues. With this, equal opportunity, equal representation, recognition of women’s achievements, equal participation and many more can be fulfilled. Needless to say, parents do not have to send their children for better education in metropolitan cities to study.

Another challenge is to change the mindset of people regarding women. Women are seen inferior in many fields and not given importance while expressing their, and often denied equal opportunity in decision making. For instance, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council was created in 1995 that constitutes Chief Executive Councillor, followed by four Executive Councillors representing different geographical regions in Leh to form equal representation. Sadly, they failed to accommodate equal representation in Executive Councillors by disregarding women’s representation, weaker section of the society and religious minority.

The status quo of male-dominated society has resulted in observing Women’s Day since the lapse of 100 years and still living in gender-imbalance society. There are many movements initiated by women to end gender-disparity society including “Me Too” movement, a movement to raise voice against sexual harassment of women of every kind.

Solution

- Know your rights including; protection from domestic violence, representation Act, maternity benefit, sex determination, protection of rights on divorce, sexual harassment of women, forced labor, national commission for women, and many more.
- With rights come duties, women have certain responsibilities to fulfill. The utmost duty of a woman is to stand for herself in any given situation, respect womanhood, and duties towards family, community, and society.
- Fundamentally, women empowerment begins with women themselves. We need to break the notion that ‘women are enemies of each other rather should support each other.

Message

“Many congratulations to women of Leh on this very special occasion of International Women’s Day. To the sisters of Leh, to make sure to be proud of being a woman and never underestimate your potential, capability, and stand with each other to bring change in the society at large. Treat every day as women’s day.”

IN FOCUS

Zanskar demands district: A long pending demand not met yet



Punchok Dawa

The Zanskar region, a remote and backward area, remains inaccessible by road for nearly 6-7 months a year. It is also one of the oldest sub-divisions in the

Ladakh region, formed in 1979. Now there are some more sub-divisions in the district, but unfortunately, there is no change in the administrative system of Zanskar sub-division.

The people of Zanskar have been demanding Zanskar to be incorporated with the then Tehsil Leh since 1953, when the late Bakula Rinpoche landed at Leh airport along with two cabinet ministers of Jammu and Kashmir Government, viz. Girdaharilal Dogra, the then finance minister, and Mola Mir Qasim Musheer Mal. At that time a delegation led by my late father had proceeded to Leh to submit the demands of the Zanskari people. The two cabinet ministers, while addressing the general public at Leh, said that the demand of Zanskari public was a difficult one but can be achieved if attempts continued.

Massive changes have taken place everywhere in the world. Even in our own country, new states are being created, and new districts are also being carved out. Countries, states and districts are varied in size, and population. When district status is denied merely due to the size of a limited population, it is merely an excuse on the part of the State and Central governments.



In 2006, during the Chief Ministership of Ghulam Nabi Azad, eight new districts were created but the Zanskar sub-division was neglected. In 2013-2014, the Govt. of India had nominated three individuals as special interlocutors but the demand of the people of Zanskar was again neglected by them.

The new generations are mostly educated but they are deprived of employment opportunities especially in the revenue department due to the discriminative attitude towards the minority Buddhists of Kargil district. In the last decade, interviews for various posts were conducted but very few got jobs. In the revenue department of Zanskar, not a single applicant has been taken since 1979.

The demand for a separate district is a genuine and long-pending one on the basis of the following facts:

1. Zanskar is the most backward region in the whole region of Ladakh, and remains inaccessible with its district headquarter Kargil for nearly 6-7 months a year.

- 2.The population of Zanskar is nearly 16,000, out of which Buddhists constitute 98%.

3. Ancient rock carvings are found in different parts of the valley, which can be possible to preserve in a fair condition only by its followers.

- 4.The culture and tradition of the people of Zanskar are totally different from those in the Kargil district.

5. The Zanskar region covers an area of nearly 7770 sq. Km, which is comparatively very large in size.

Keeping in view all these facts, we request the J&K Government to grant of district status to Zanskar at the earliest.

I sincerely and earnestly request all the stakeholders to support this genuine issue, specially the educated youth and students, whose future is at risk.

The writer is a retired teacher from Padum, Zanskar.

SoulSpeak

P. P. Wangchuk

A life with a mission is what we need to relentlessly work for



The most crucial issue in life is to understand the meaning of life. There can be different versions, depending on one’s thoughts and understanding of life. But one point common to all is: To have a mission and give it a happy ending with positive attitude and determined willpower.

The word ‘LIFE’ can be taken to mean ‘Live In Full Efficiency’. That is because, we, as human beings, have this unique and highly gifted life with sharp intelligence only in order to make full use of it, and make a difference with care, love and compassion.

According to French author Anais Nin, there is not one big cosmic meaning for all; there is only the meaning we each give to our lives, an individual meaning, an individual plot, an individual novel...”

We have to use our capability to see how far we can go in evolving a life that is fulfilling and helpful for all. Normally, one makes it a point that one has the means of going through an endeavour so that life’s mission gets accomplished the way it is planned.

To begin with, one has to have a definite goal, and then the means to arrive at the goal has to be meticulously planned. It takes time and great effort to reach one’s goal. Life’s mission can be said to be fulfilled when one’s dreams realise into reality and a happy ending. And such a pass does not come one’s way merely by wishing for, and leading a life of ease and comfort. Life as such has to be lived necessarily with meaningful activities, no matter what the hurdles are.

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

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

In Conversation with

Captain Sameena Masood, Air India Express

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal

Q. Tell us about yourself. What sparked the interest in you to become a pilot?

I am Sameena Masood, currently working with Air India Express as a first officer. I was born in Leh and studied till 2nd grade in Moravian Mission School. At the age of 8, I was sent to boarding school and completed most of my education from Delhi. I pursued my graduation from Ramjas College, Delhi University after which got enrolled in Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) for a flying career.

I always fancied the life of a pilot but after joining IGRUA the passion to become one of it got higher. The sense of discipline and responsibility that is required for an individual to deliver the best way possible is something that I have learned during my training in IGRUA. Also, my family and friends who have never failed to show their constant support and encouragement.

Q. Aviation being a male-dominated industry, was there any challenge you faced on your journey to becoming a pilot?

India has a maximum number of female pilots as compared to other countries. And I think it is more of an individual's capacity. I would not say that it is difficult for a woman to become a pilot because the training process is the same for everyone irrespective of gender. There is no difference in pay scale for a male or a female pilot and we are given equal opportunity to progress purely based on our experiences and performances.

The idea of anything being difficult or easy, by virtue of your gender, most often than not, is instilled in us by the society we live in. I am fortunate to be brought up in a family where gender was never thought of as a barrier or a license for something.

Q. Share us your experience when you first started flying.

When I started flying I was an apprehensive and a nervous beginner but was blessed with the best of instructors who helped me to learn the skills better and become a confident professional.

In every walk of our life, we will meet many who will discourage



and discredit us. In a male-dominated society like ours, there will be at every step, someone questioning your ability to do your job well. Your work may not get fervent a cheer as that of a male counterpart. As a woman, we are made to feel that female achievement is not manifested in skills or hard work. There are times when your colleagues will doubt your abilities and you will stop believing in yourself for a while. But you should know that while you are self-doubting, there are many people who are intimidated by your potentials and capabilities.

I think it is your failure that defines who you are rather than success. You should get back on your feet each time life knocks you down with challenges and fight the battle without fearing to win or lose. This at least will prove to yourself and the world your conviction and bravery that for accomplishing a dream you ought to take up the task to reach there, no matter the circumstances and outcome.

Q. What attributes and qualities should women have or bring to walk and lead along with men?

I think you have to fight your own battle with courage and respect by giving yourself all the needed love and care. When the whole world screams echoes of pessimism in your ears you should never strangle the motivated and positive inner desires.

Always stay inspired and spirited. Be kind and always have a learning attitude. You might have to leave homes, cities, and countries to pursue greater ambitions. You might have to leave friends, lovers, and possibilities for a chance to roam around the world and make deeper connections. It will be scary at first but trust me, you will most definitely find love, adventure and freedom and more than anything else you will find your own self.

Don't get discouraged by your failures while pursuing your dreams just because it doesn't fit into so-called "Approved" conventions of the society for a woman. Trust me there are many hooting for us, waiting for us to step up and break through the glass ceiling and most importantly, be grateful.

MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“As Sara Henderson quoted, “Don't wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel, stride down there and light the bloody thing yourself”. This stands true for all the aspiring and desirous woman folks like us. Be your own hero and cheerleader. You must defy the fear of change, hold your head high and do what you once thought was unthinkable. Be truthful to what you believe in and work on it with utmost sincerity and confidence. I am sure you will make it.”

60 years of peaceful resistance by Tibetan Women observed in Leh



TCV Ladakh students joined the peaceful demonstration on the 60th anniversary of Tibetan National Women's Uprising Day.

Dawa Dolma

LEH: Commemorating the 60th anniversary of Tibetan Women's National Uprising Day, Regional Tibetan Women Association, Leh organised a peaceful demonstration from Men-Tsee-Khang to Pologround on March 12.

After a peaceful march, a minute of silence was observed in solidarity to Tibetan martyrs.

Tsering Dolkar, General Secretary, Ladakh Women Buddhist Association, chief guest spoke about the difficulties that Tibetans have been through in foreign lands and inside Tibet but still maintain to preserve their culture and ethnic identity.

Tsetan Wangchuk, Chief Representative Officer, Sonamling Settlement focused on the significance of observing this day as Tibetan women plays equally important roles in the national struggle. He also mentioned about harsh policies against Tibetan women in Tibet under Chinese authority including forced abortion of Tibetan women to cleansing Tibetan national

identity in Tibet and women imprisonment.

He requested Tibetan women in exile to come up in political decision making as they are more capable of taking a better and rational decision.

Zahida Bano, Vice President, Anjuman Imamia Women's Wing aspire that Tibetan will soon return back to their homeland and free from Chinese illegal invasion.

Tsering Wangchuk, Vice President, Tibetan Local Assembly talked about the movement initiated and led by courageous women like Kunsang, Galing Shar Choe la, Penpa Dolma and many more.

He urged Tibetans to not only value material comfort rather take a moral duty and responsibilities towards Tibet cause.

Tsewang Dolkar, President, Regional Tibetan Women's Association read out the statement issued by Tibetan Women's Association on the 60th anniversary of Tibetan Women's National Uprising Day, 1959.

Leh district to go fully organic by 2025

Hill Council approves 'Mission Organic Development Initiative' plan



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Aiming to convert Leh into an organic district by 2025, Hill Council, Leh unanimously passed the Mission Organic Development Initiative of Ladakh on March 9.

A special General Council meeting was called to discuss and approve the draft policy and action plans of the Mission Organic Development Initiative of Ladakh.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, Chairman/ CEC LAHDC, Leh chaired the meeting.

Reminding the time of self-sufficient and self-reliant Ladakh when people produces its own food and clothing through agriculture and livestock, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal said that the new economy is overtaking the essence and originality of Ladakh. He said that the present LAHDC Leh has felt the need for reviving the ancestral glory of organic farming for self-sustenance as well as to ensure better public health.

He informed that a research committee was formed who studied and compiled up their research work with detail policy, strategy and action plan.

Phuntsog Stanzin, EC Agriculture/ Chairman, Mission Organic Initiative Committee spoke about the potential, feasibility, and possibilities of making Ladakh fully organic. He gave a detailed future work plan for recognising the existing fully organic villages, and total eradication of chemical fertilizers and pesticides use.

Dr. Tsering Stobdan, Sr. Scientist DIHAR presented a power-point presentation based on overall study and

research. The presentation highlighted actual agricultural scenario, future prospects, and possibilities to convert Leh district into a fully organic region.

Constructive criticism on the current state of soil health, livestock population, and preparation of compost manure and other relevant topics and issues were discussed in the house.

A locally grown kidney bean named 'Leh Rajma' was also launched. The production was initiated by the Agriculture Department, Hill Council, Leh to promote and increase production of the high-quality beans or Rajma in the district. Procurement of locally grown Rajma from various growers of the district for processing, packaging, and marketing also started. The aim is to promote locally grown organic Rajma as a high-quality product of Ladakh, to generate farm income in remote villages by growing low-risk crop and to check migration from villages towards Leh town.

Tashi Tsetan, Chief Agriculture Officer, Leh explained their research study and the process of supplying seeds to the growers, procurement of the Rajma, and packaging by the department.

Talking about the marketing strategy, he said that the department will be promoting it as a souvenir of Ladakh by making 'Leh Rajma' available at all hotels, restaurants, and airport which will not only help growers but would also generate job opportunities.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal congratulated the Agriculture Department and said that such innovative ideas will play a pivotal role in taking Ladakh towards self-reliant and self-sustained.

Documentary film on keeping Leh clean and safe released

It aims at promoting quality tourism in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A documentary film titled 'Keep the fragile environment of Leh clean and safe' was launched by Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC on March 7 at Conference hall, Council Secretariat.

A thirty-minute long documentary film at an estimated cost of ₹2 Lakh was made by J&K Tourism Department in collaboration with LAHDC. The aim is to promote tourism in Ladakh and also to convert quantity tourism into quality tourism.

Lauding the efforts of Tourism Department, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal said that the tourism sector has evolved as a major contributor in terms of a new economy to Ladakh.

He said, "Since the opening of Ladakh to the outer world, we have achieved the required quantity and now the time has come when it is important to convert quantity tourism towards quality tourism. The Council is making conscious and well-thought plans in this direction."

He informed that the district budget for tourism has increased from ₹4 Lakh to ₹25 Lakh when the tourism portfolio was handled by Tsering Sandup, the then EC Tourism. He added that effort is being made to increase it further.

He further urged upon the trade fraternity of Ladakh to promote winter tourism in Ladakh by highlighting the important and vibrant month-long festival of

Losar on a trial basis. While, we can explore other avenues like wildlife, bird viewing, and other aspects.

He also appreciated the entire Ladakh Trade Alliance for their cooperation in following the regulations for Chadar Trek which was highly useful and lifesaving for the host and the tourists.

Using locally grown organic vegetables and fruits in hotels and restaurants to help the farmers along with the promotion of healthy food was also suggested.

P.T. Kunzang, President Ladakh Trade Alliance submitted a copy of a memorandum to the CEC and requested to address the issues related to airport and airlines.

Arhat hall of wisdom inaugurated in Spituk

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

SPITUK: A newly built building 'Arhat Hall of Wisdom' was inaugurated by Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC on February 27 in Spituk.

The building was funded under Rurban Mission, MP-LAD, 14th Finance Commission, and Councilor Constituency Development Fund and executed by the Rural Development Department, Leh.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal reiterated the enormous contributions of the 19th Kushok Gyal-sras Bakula Rinpoche towards upliftment of the entire Ladakh region stressing on education in particular.

He said that the construction of hall comes under the GoI Rurban Mission targeted to deliver integrated project-based infrastructure in the rural areas. Thupstan Chhewang, Former Member of Parliament introduced the scheme.

He assured help from Hill Council for further completion of the hall.

Talking about the blacktopping of Spituk-Markalaga to Choglamsar via Agling, and street lighting, he said that it will be completed in the summer sea-



son. Also, the parking space at Spituk monastery will be completed in a phase manner.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal also spoke about the importance of organic and sustainable farming practice. He said that the council has plans to provide a market for locally grown vegetables ensuring good health and also benefiting the farmers economically.

He also spoke about bringing Bhoti language in letter and spirit for its preservation and promotion.

Dr. Tsering Norboo was also honoured on behalf of the entire people of Ladakh for his continuous medical service and being conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award.

Appreciating a general sense of social equality at Govt. Primary School Spituk Thugue Ldumra, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal stressed for a similar environment in all schools of the district.

Phuntsog Dorje, Councillor recounted the funds where former MP Ladakh Thupstan Chhewang had given ₹5 Lakh, ₹68 Lakh from Rurban Mission, ₹4 Lakh from CCDF, and ₹9.85 Lakh from 13/14th Finance Commission.

He also spoke about the installation of 13 hand pumps and distribution of 10 cattle to Spituk village and other major and minor projects.

Cultural programme was presented by the students.

ICDS, Leh, celebrates International Women's Day



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Along with the world, International Women's Day was also celebrated with enthusiasm by Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Leh in collaboration with ICDS Kharu on March 8.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana

Yojna and Poshan Pakhwada schemes were also inaugurated.

Kunzes Angmo, District Programme Officer was the chief guest while Tashi Chosdol, District Social Welfare Officer was the guest of honour.

Shakila Bano, Child Development Project Officer Leh, Zarina

Bano, Child Development Project Officer, Kharu, supervisors, and Anganwadi workers were also present on the occasion.

Similarly, the day was also celebrated at Anganwadi Center Mudh, Changthang.

Sonam Nilza, Child Development Project Officer, Nyoma spoke in detail about International Women's day, Poshan Abhiyan and its objectives.

Dechan Yangdol, Health nutrition mobilizer talked about the importance of good nutrition for the eradication of malnutrition in children. The programme was also organised at ICDS Durbuk.

Pension scheme registration for unorganised workers starts in Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Marking the launch of Pradhan Mantri Sharm Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)—a pension scheme for unorganised workers by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister in the country, PM-SYM card was also distributed to some applicants by Sachin Kumar, ADC, Leh on March 5 at DC Office Conference hall.

Tsering Paldan, Deputy Director Employment, and Tsering Angmo, District Manager Common Service Centre (CSC) detailed

about the PM-SYM scheme.

They said that it is a voluntary and periodic contribution based pension system meant for unorganised workers with income up to ₹15,000/- per month. The Central government would deposit matching contribution (50%), every month in the pension account of the worker. Ministry of Labour and Employment in partnership with LIC would administer PM-SYM. LIC will be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for pension payout.

The unorganised worker with

age between 18-40 years can join the scheme. The unorganised workers as defined includes home-based workers, street vendors, head loaders, brick kiln workers, cobblers, rag pickers, domestic workers, washermen, rickshaw pullers, rural landless labourers, own account workers, agricultural workers, construction workers, carpenters, masons, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers and other unorganized sector workers.

The scheme provides for a fixed pension of ₹3,000 after attaining the age of 60 years on a monthly contribution of a small affordable amount during their working age (between 18-40 years).

The registration process has started and the applicants can get themselves registered at various camps being held at different villages and at District Employment Office Leh.

CEC inspects 1000-metric-ton capacity cold storage building work progress

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

AGLING: Work progress of 1000 metric ton cold storage building worth ₹11.70 crores was inspected by Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, CEC on March 5.

It was informed that out of the total, works worth ₹5.54 crore has been completed and for the remaining completion of work, funds of ₹6.18 crore have been

approved under the languishing programme.

Jamyang Tsering Namgyal instructed executive engineer and concerned engineers to complete all tendering process within a week time and sets June end as the deadline for completion of the building.

He further added that the building should be made functional

this year so that the benefit of this cold storage would reach to the farmers of Ladakh.

Phuntsog Stanzin, EC Agriculture and Tsering Morup, Councillor Temisgam, Ghulam Sultan Tak, Deputy Registrar Cooperative Society, Leh, Nisar Hussain, Executive Engineer Construction, AEE Tsering Angchuk, JE Deen Mohd and concerned officials were also present.

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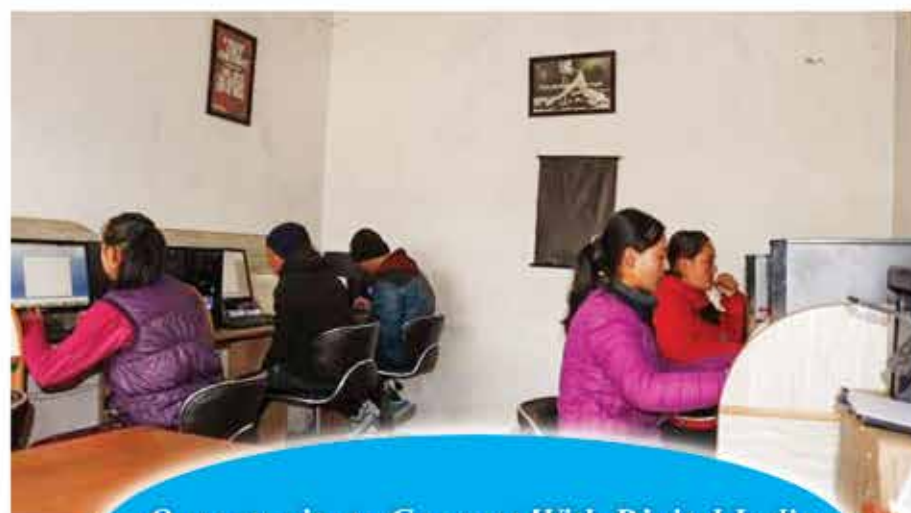
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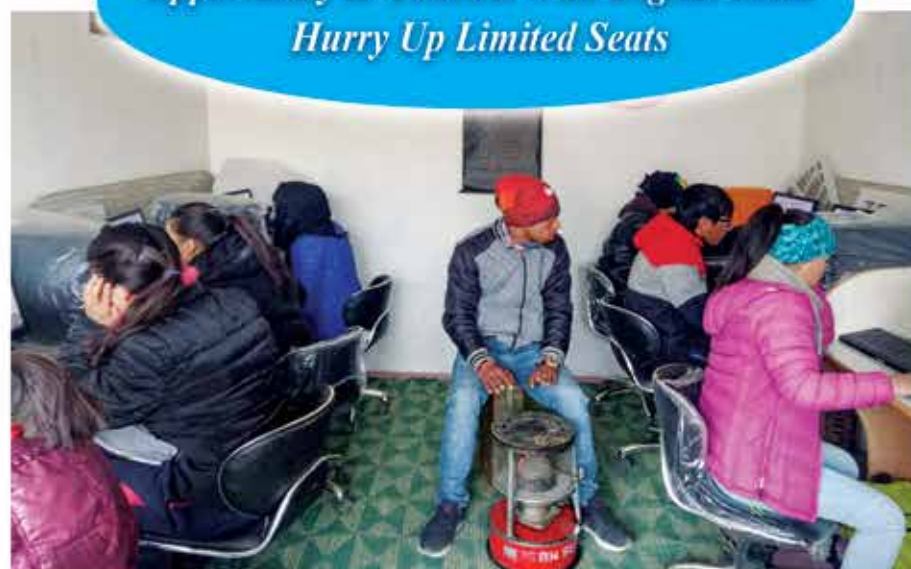
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