

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

VOL. 8 ISSUE 11 PAGES 8

June 16-30, 2020

Fortnightly Special

COVID-19: An unprecedented challenge faced by Ladakh

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Brief News

127 young recruits of Ladakh Scouts take oath

LEH: A batch of 127 well-trained recruits of Ladakh Scouts pledged to serve the nation on June 13 at Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, Leh.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the attestation parade was conducted following all norms and safety guidelines. The parade was reviewed by Col Rinchen Dorje, VSM, Commandant, Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre.

Col Rinchen Dorje congratulated the young soldiers and stressed to strive hard in pursuit of excellence in all spheres.

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Courtesy Tsetan Angmo



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REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

Owner, Publisher & Printer: Tundup Dorje

Editor: Stanzin Dasal

Sales & Marketing: Tsering Morup

Layout: Raul Chhokkun

Published at: Reach Ladakh, Skara Yokma, Airport Road, near Councillor Quarter Contact: 9858394403

Printed at: Archana advertising Pvt Ltd. C-78 Okhla Industrial Area Phase I. New Delhi, India 110020

Covid-19 pandemic puts tourism industry in dire straits

Recovery of the sector looks difficult; stakeholders urge government to initiate relief measures



Stanzin Dasal

LEH: Tourism industry, one of the major economic engines of the region, has been crippled in the wake of Coronavirus pandemic. The industry that contributes more than 60 percent of Ladakh's GDP and has an annual turnover of around ₹600 crore is facing the toughest challenge yet. Tour operators, travel guides, commercial vehicles, hoteliers and guest houses have been severely affected. Small businesses and services related to tourism are also facing the heat of the nationwide lockdown. Since around 70% households are directly dependent on tourism industry, the pandemic has affected all segments of the industry. Today, the tourism industry is finding it hard to cope with the situation.

Tsetan Angchuk, President, All Ladakh Tour Operator Association (ALTOA), said, "COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a major challenge for everyone, and it is a matter of great concern for people in the tourism sector. We have a limited earning season and many people here are dependent for their livelihood on seasonal businesses."

Talking about the revival of the industry, he informed that the situation is dependent on the global circumstances and the increase in number of patients. According to him, the tourism industry in Ladakh would take 12-18 months for its revival. He added, "Until and unless a vaccine for the virus is found, it is very difficult to say that the industry will recover fully. There is a fear among the people as they are afraid to travel. Also, apprehensions of locals whether to welcome the tourists or not cannot be ignored".

Rinchen Dorjay, Owner, Ladakh Art Palace said, "The pandemic has affected the biggest and the most established economies throughout the world and our homeland Ladakh is not an exception. We all know that our economy is predominantly dependent on tourism. As of

this year, we don't have any hope, but we are hopeful that probably things will return to normal next year."

The economy of Ladakh is in a grim state. The usually vibrant summer and crowded streets of Leh have fallen silent. Most of the shops are closed and those in operation are finding it hard to sustain due to less number of customers. Daily wagers have been affected the most by the pandemic.

Stanzin Sedol, a travel guide said, "I have been working as a travel guide since last year and the money I earn helps me and my family to meet our daily expenses. Now, because of the pandemic, I have to find an alternative job for livelihood."

Tashi Tundup, an owner of a travel agency owner, said, "Youth have taken loans from the banks to start their own ventures in the tourism industry. Also, many students work as travel guides during summer break to earn some money so that they could sustain their studies. The pandemic has put everyone into a difficult situation."

As the industry has been hit hard and the recovery of the sector looks distant, the stakeholders are urging the administration for some relief measures such as soft loans and relief incentives. On May 4, representatives of Ladakh Tourist Trade Alliance met Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur and discussed the issues faced by the tourism industry of Ladakh. The delegation requested a moratorium of 24 months and the loan interests for this period to be borne by the government. They requested a fast track process to provide DIPP industrial subsidy for early disbursement of finances, waiver of registration and other annual fees, applicable to the hospitality industry for the current year and complete withdrawal

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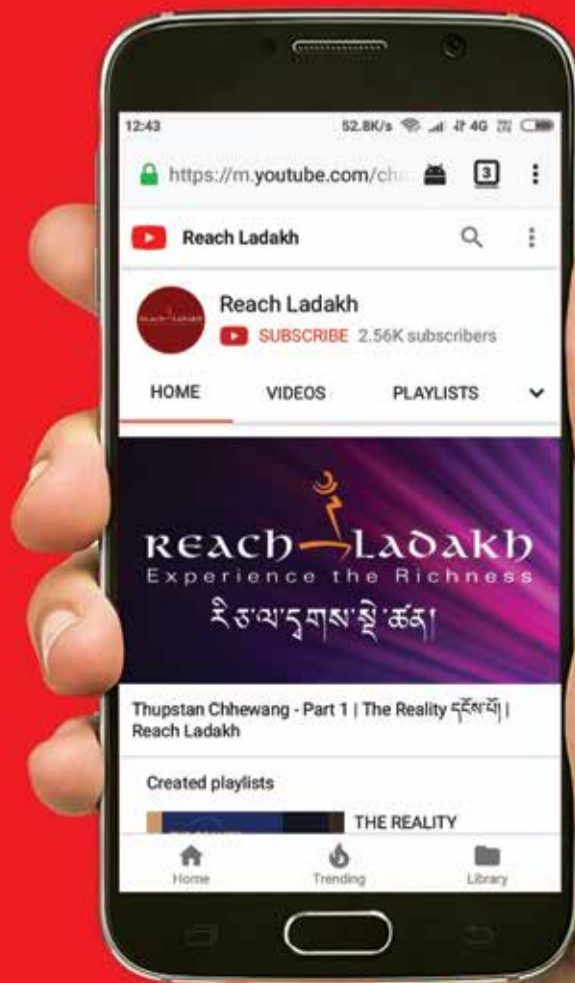


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Question rises on administration lapses in adhering COVID-19 protocol in Leh

Stanzin Dasal

LEH: More than 200 people, including officials from District Administration, Hill Council Leh, politicians and the health department were placed under home quarantine in Leh due to lapses in adhering to the COVID-19 protocol.

This incident took place after the body of former Union Minister P Namgyal, who tested positive for COVID-19, was being shifted following his death on June 1. The sample tests of both the daughters of the late minister came back positive.

As per reports, the former minister reached Leh from New Delhi on May 28. The minister complained of health complications on June 1 and was rushed to the SNM hospital where he was declared brought dead. However, the authorities failed to adhere to medical protocols and allowed the family to take the body back home even though the results of the deceased were still awaited.

Medical Superintendent, SNM Hospital, Dr. Tsering Samphel said, "COVID-19 sample of the deceased was taken since he came from the red zone. Because he was a suspected case, the body was sanitized and wrapped properly before handing over to the relatives. However, there is a rumour going on that the lapses happened at the hospital which is absolutely absurd. There is no SOP's regarding not handing over the body to the relatives."



"I personally ensured all the needed precautionary measures in the hospital. The medical staff who came in contact with the deceased are put under quarantine immediately on the same day followed by which fumigation of ICU and hospital area was carried out", he added.

He further added that the medical department ensured all the needed precautionary measures as per protocol.

When news of the demise of the minister went viral, people came in large numbers to pay condolences to the family. Those who came to pay homage to the former minister included government officials, politicians and elected representatives. According to reports, 24 doctors and medical staff were out under home quarantine as they had come in close contact with the family members of the deceased.

Questions are being raised on the administration's serious lapses as the incident has put hundreds of people at risk of contacting the deadly virus and increased the risk of a sudden surge in the number of positive cases in Leh district.

Officials refused to comment when they were approached by the media to comment on the issue.

However, District Magistrate, Leh, Sachin Kumar Vaishya order the constitution of two committees on June 2 to enquire the lapses in the adherence to protocols and alleged irregularities while handling a Covid-19 suspect. The outcomes of the report of the committee are yet to be ascertained.

A similar lapse was also reported earlier in Chuchot Gongma when the body of a deceased who was a COVID-19 suspect was handed over to the family members before the sample reports were out. The family of the deceased went through hardships to perform the last rites of the deceased. Later, the sample result of the suspect came out negative. An enquiry committee was initiated, but the report of the committee has still not been released.

Efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the district will go in vain if such serious lapses by the administration continue.

ITBF, Jt Dy Director violates COVID-19 guidelines, puts many at risk

Administration remains silent on the issue



ITBF Officers Mess, near Moti Market contained by District administration, Leh.

Stanzin Dasal

LEH: Chaos and panic broke once again when the Joint Deputy Director of ITBF and his five-year-old child tested positive for COVID-19 on June 8 in Leh district. The officer is alleged to have violated COVID-19 protocols and guidelines.

Sources said that the sample of the child was collected after the child complained of fever. However, the child has not been shifted to COVID-19 hospital despite testing positive. Earlier, a 2-3 year old child tested positive and was shifted to a hospital in Kargil. Similarly, a mother who tested positive was kept along with her breastfeeding baby in a hospital in Leh. Also, a 10-year-old child was also admitted to the hospital upon testing positive for

COVID-19. The question is why a special treatment was given to the child of an officer?

The family members of the officer, including mother and child, had reached Leh on May 30 by an Air India flight from a red zone in Delhi. According to sources, the officer managed to get his family out of the airport without undergoing the screening process. The family was reportedly seen visiting different places despite strict guidelines from the District Administration to stay in home quarantine for 14 days. The family was allegedly seen celebrating a birthday with a crowd of 15 people at the Sindh Ghat on June 4.

It is also alleged that the officer met Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh on June 5 at Raj

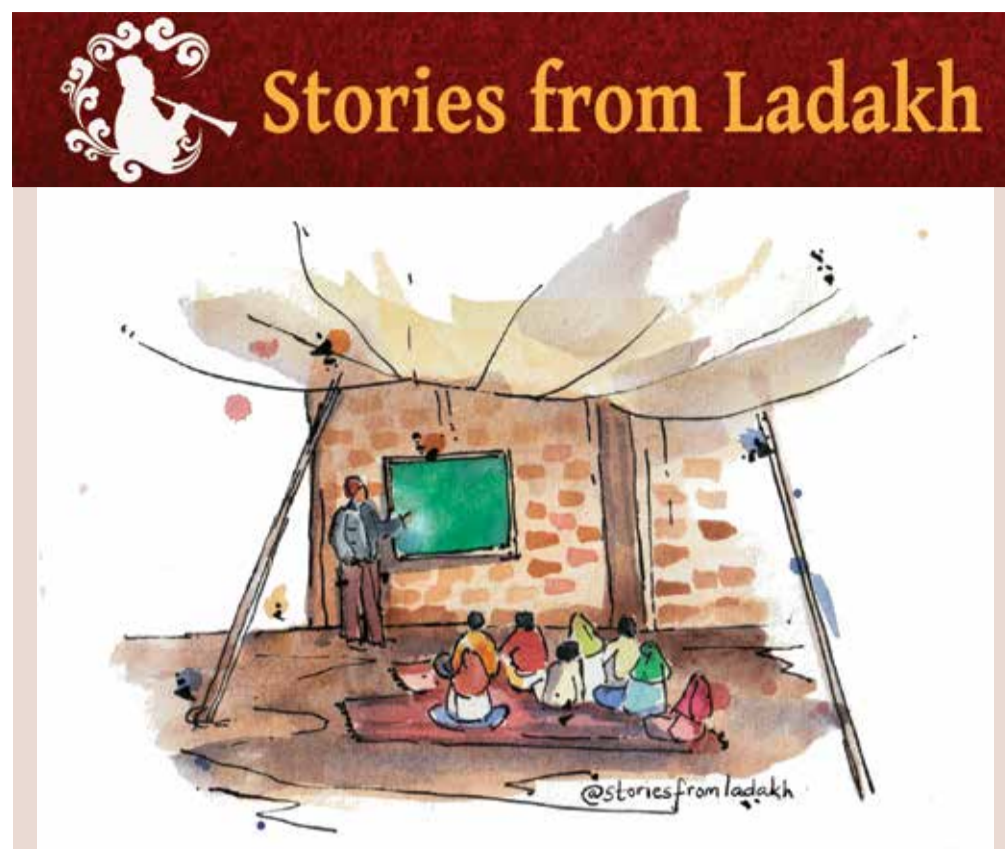
Niwas and many other officials of other organizations.

The Joint Deputy Director refused to talk when this correspondent tried to contact him.

When the senior officials from the administration were approached by the media to comment on the issue, they chose to stay silent on the issue. However, District Magistrate Leh, Sachin Kumar Vaishya issued an order on June 9 placing the ITBF Officers Mess near the main market Leh under containment. However, employees from the Officers' Mess allegedly violated the order from the District Magistrate by joining the office on June 9.

The samples of close contacts have been taken and seven people were tested positive.

The incident shows the sheer negligence and irresponsible attitude of the officer who has put many people at risk of contracting the deadly virus. It was a clear violation of COVID-19 protocols. So, shouldn't the guidelines be the same for everyone? Is the officer being given a VIP treatment by the administration? Also, will the administration take any action against the defaulters?



By Richa Maheshwari & Athulya Pillai

We were sitting in class when suddenly, we heard a loud bang. You will not see it in Leh, but a lot of roofs here are made with tin. We thought that a strong gust of wind had made one of them come loose. But shortly afterwards, there was an even louder bang. This time we all knew that something was happening. There was a problem. I must have been in the 3rd or 4th standard at the time.

Many of us burst into tears. Children, when they are startled with fear, they cry. We asked ma'am to take us to the ground floor where some of our younger brothers and sisters were, but she refused. Instead, she went into the corridor to join the other teachers that had gathered outside. We were scared and curious, so we peeked outside. That's when we saw them carrying something.

One of my classmates screamed, "They are bringing Ka Abdullah's body." He was our peon. Ma'am tried to reassure us that he had just fainted, but we were all still crying. We still wanted to be with our brothers and sisters. Later, we found out that Ka Abdullah had been hit by a mortar shell and had passed away immediately. He was only seventeen or eighteen years old.

Last year after Pathankot, there were people across the country enthusiastically advocating war. The atmosphere in Kargil became so tense. We were scared not just for ourselves, but also our families. We thought that we would have to run away again. During the Kargil war, my family and I lived in the cattle shed of my aunt's house in a nearby village. Our schools kept shifting too, and we were taught out of make-shift tents.

There is a particular firecracker that makes a loud sound. It reminds me of those times. It affects not just me, but also a lot of people who lived through those times. One day, that firecracker went off and I got scared. My little brother asked me what happened, and I had to tell him it was the same as the sound of shelling. He asked me what shelling was and I felt so grateful that he did not know that sound.

Storyteller: Parveen Fatima, Sando Chiktan

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World Environment day: L- G Mathur stresses developing Ladakh sustainably

Appeals people of Ladakh to nurture the nature



Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur planting an apple sapling at Raj Niwas on World Environment day.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Celebrating World Environment Day themed 'Celebrate Biodiversity', Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur planted an apple sapling on June 5 at Raj Niwas and appealed people to nurture the nature.

R K Mathur said that the day is also known as People's Day and each one of us plays a vital role to

preserve and promote the rich biodiversity of Ladakh. He urged every Ladakhi to plant indigenous plants and fruit-bearing trees that will not only give an additional income but will also help to build a healthy ecosystem for every species to thrive and survive.

He emphasized on realising our responsibilities to achieve the sustainable developmental goals for UT Ladakh.

Talking about the region's richness in agro and natural biodiversity, he stressed upon every Ladakhi to take great care of these environmental hotspots. He added that the rich biodiversity of Ladakh is a unique asset of the region and sustainability should be the core of all developmental activities in Ladakh.

Reiterating the Prime Minister's aim towards a carbon-neutral Ladakh, he said that it is a step to preserve and restore the natural environment of the region.

Electrical employees opposes privatization of power sector

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

CHOGLAMSAR: J&K Central Non-Gazetted Electrical Employees Union protested against the Union Government's decision on Electricity-Amendment Bill, 2020, and privatization of the Power Sector on June 1 at Union office Choglamsar Leh.

The protestor demanded immediate withdrawal of such orders and intentions by the union government.

District President, Phunchok Wangtak said "State government has first unbundled the JK Power Development Department into a various corporation and now the entire privatization of PDD would be both anti-employee and anti-consumer move. The next step would be a rise in tariffs and duty on electricity by private companies who are none less than capitalistic exploiters bothered about their profit. The consumer services will be badly affected due to the handover of state establishments to corporate companies."

He said that 103 Daily Wager of Leh has been engaged in the Power Development Depart-



ment, who have been waiting for regularization and are unpaid for several months. These daily wagers are working tirelessly in every calamity or situation, including in the current global pandemic COVID 19 situation. Regularization of these wagers under the provision of SRO 381 is pending from more than 10-15 years.

"Instead of providing any relief and rehabilitation to millions of labourers, hit by the COVID 19 pandemic, the government is experimenting with the introduction of new loss and unnecessary changes to exploit the poor labour class only. This is a sheer attempt to loot the basic rights of these workers", he added.

He further appealed Lieutenant

Governor, R.K. Mathur, and Commissioner Secretary, Rigzin Samphel to personally intervene.

The protestors decided to fight unitedly for their safeguards and rights.

In support of the protest, All Ladakh Electrical Employees Association wore a black badge on their arms to vindicate their clear stand against the decision of Union Government on Privatization of Power Sector of Union Territories/States and Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

The Employee's Association raised the issue with MP Ladakh and CEC, Hill Council, Leh, and Kargil, for further taking up with the Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, and Lieutenant Governor, UT Ladakh.

Hill Council, Leh condoles demise of former Union Minister P Namgyal

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Hill Council, Leh expressed heartfelt condolences on the demise of former Union Minister and Member Parliament of Ladakh P Namgyal on June 1.

A two-minute silence was also observed to show respect to the departed soul.

Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh along with Executive Councillors remembered P. Namgyal's contribution to the welfare and development of Ladakh. He served the region as a Member of Parliament three times and Union Deputy Minister for Surface Transport and Parliamentary Affairs and Union Minister for State, Chemicals and Petrochemical and Parliamentary Affairs.



Covid-19 pandemic puts tourism industry in dire straits

...Continued from Page 1

of GST for a period of five years to reinforce the much-affected tourism industry till the situation gets back to normal.

Tashi Tundup said, "Because Tourism Industry is excluded from the Central Govt's Atma-nirbhar (Self Reliant) bailout packages, we are left to rely on ourselves. We are left with no option but to work on our own to find out alternatives for economic problems faced by all of us and also the staff. UT Administration and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council should work on the unemployment issues first rather than focusing on new projects."

Talking about the financial aid, Tsering Sandup, EC, Tourism, LAHDC, Leh said that final estimates of the loss and relief measures are yet to be ascertained. So far, a rough estimate of nearly ₹250 crore is needed from the government as a relief package.

Commissioner/Secretary, Tourism, Rigzin Samphel expressed the importance of focusing on commercial and developmental activities along with the handling of crisis. He said that as per the SOPs/Guidelines issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, for tourism department, Ladakh is now open for tourists. He said, "We are ensuring strict pre-

cautionary and safety measures such as screening and registration at all the entry points (roadways and airports), vehicle sanitization, safety and hygiene protocols for hotels/ guest houses".

Prior to the outbreak of this pandemic, tourism industry of Ladakh had been flourishing. With the heavy influx of tourism increasing every year, the question of sustainability was often overlooked. The Covid-19 crisis is looked upon as a testing time for the industry.

President ALTOA discussed about a post-Covid task force, where new trekking routes, lakes, mountain peaks and other potential areas will be explored. The survey report of these new avenues is expected to be completed during this year. Later, this report will be submitted to the UT administration as well. The prime focus will be on promoting homestays in far-flung villages, agro tourism, certified skill development training for youths and updating the tourist map of Ladakh. The main aim of this survey is to make tourism industry more holistic in nature and to outreach the benefits to every nook and corner of the region.

While, the stakeholder are seeking help from the government for their survival, they also want to utilize this time of crisis as an opportunity to re-invent the tourism sector in a sustainable way to cope with such unanticipated scenario in the future.

KVK-Leh issues advisory for Locust control



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: After the havoc created in many parts of the country, a locust attack is also reported in Ladakh. Krishi Vigyan Kendra-Leh has issued an advisory for the farming community of the region on June 13.

The farming community of the region is advised to be alert, monitor, and inspect their fields, crops, trees, and bushes around their vicinity regularly.

They said that the Locust swarms move and damage the crops during daytime and rest on trees and vegetation at night. When on rest, the swarms can be destroyed using the insecticidal spray in the morning between 6 to 10 am or in the dusk. The locust swarm can also be pushed away by making high pitch sounds by beating drums, bursting crackers, clanging utensils, playing music, producing smoke all around the crop, or by running tractor without silencer. Locating the egg laid areas is always very important, then trench them round, so as to entrap the young hoppers as they move

out after hatching. Even actual destruction of eggs on an organized scale may be carried out by ploughing, harrowing, and hand digging.

The chemical control of this destructive pest can also be done by the use of insecticides like Chloropyrifos 20%EC @2.5 ml per litre of water, Fipronil 5% EC @ 0.25 ml per liter of water. Insecticides like Malathion EC, Malathion WP, Lamda Cyhalothrin EC, and Deltamethrin EC can also be used to control them. The wind speed acts as a catalyst in locust dispersal. The farming community is further advised to constantly monitor the speed and direction of wind flow to predict the trajectory of locust swarms.

According to Dr. D. Namgyal, Head, KVK-Leh, there are four species of locust present in the country and the desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) is the most destructive and common. The locust swarm currently affecting parts of India was responsible for crop infestation in 2, 80, 000 hectares across 13 countries prior to arrival in In-

dia. It entered India through the western state of Rajasthan on May 13, 2020.

He said that this year's attack is the worst seen in 27 years and scientists predict that the crisis will increase as we enter monsoon season.

Parveen Kumar, SMS (Ag. Extension) further elaborated that even the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) deems them to be the most dangerous migratory pests in the world due to their ability to change behaviour and form swarms that consume everything in their path. These insects can fly up to 150 km daily. One square km of a locust swarm contains up to 80,000 adults that, each day, consume the equivalent of food for 35,000 people. Locust attack can occur as solitary, localized or migratory swarms.

KVK-Leh advised the farmers that it is better to take preventive measures to control the locusts and to avoid such a situation where they have to go for chemical control.

National Research Institute for Sowa Rigpa launches video on Yoga Asanas



Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur during the release of a video on Yoga Asanas.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A video on Yoga Asanas in Ladakhi language by National Research Institute for Sowa Rigpa (NRISR), Leh was released by Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur on June 10 in Leh.

The aim of the video is to aware people of Ladakh about the importance of practicing yoga in daily life to ensure a healthy mind and body.

The event was convened via video conferencing and Advisor Umang Narula; Divisional Commissioner, Saugat Biswas; Director, NRISR Leh, Dr. Padma

Gurmet attended.

R K Mathur said, "Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition and exhorted to inculcate the habit of practicing yoga daily to keep oneself physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy."

He said that the celebration of International Yoga Day scheduled to be held in Ladakh is cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was informed that the Ministry of AAYUSH has decided to celebrate the day using digital platforms to discourage social gatherings.

R K Mathur lauded the NRISR,

Leh for their efforts in making the video on Yoga Asanas in Ladakhi, and to bring awareness among Ladakhis about International Yoga Day on June 21. He exhorted the people of Ladakh to join in this national celebration from homes with their families.

He said that in this pandemic situation, yoga would be a vital way to build our endurance and stay fit and healthy.

Dr. Padma Gurmet, Director, Sowa Rigpa, Ladakh said that it is the first video on yoga made in Ladakhi language based on the common yoga protocol of the Ministry of Aayush. The theme for this year's International Yoga Day is "Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family".

He said that their objective is to teach yoga to the people of Ladakh through this video through electronic and social media and to ensure maximum participation of people on International Yoga Day that will be telecast live at 7:00 A.M. on June 21.

For the next 10 days, one yoga asana will be shown on DDK, Leh as an alternative teaching platform.

Lockdown restrictions tightened in Kargil after spike in COVID-19 cases

Zero tolerance against SOPs and guidelines violators, District Magistrate said



District Magistrate, Kargil, Baseer ul Haq Choudhary and SSP, Kargil, Dr. Vinod Kumar during a press conference.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: To contain the spread of coronavirus, Baseer ul Haq Choudhary, District Magistrate, Kargil further tightened the lockdown restrictions in the district following the increase in the number of cases.

The restrictions will continue to remain in force till 30 June 2020

In a press conference convened on June 12, he said that the decision has been taken after approval of the UT Administration, discussions, and deliberations with the CEC, Kargil, and other concerned stakeholders.

Baseer ul Haq Choudhary said that the decision can

be reviewed as per the situation that unfolds in the days to come and further relaxations can be given if the situation improves.

While emphasizing the need to further strengthen precautionary measures and urging people to follow the SOPs and guidelines religiously, he said that the Administration will adopt zero-tolerance against those violating the SOPs and guidelines and the violators will be dealt strictly as per law.

The DM said that all shops except those dealing in essential commodities like grocery shops, chemist shops, hardware, carpentry, and other establishments of essential commodities will remain open. The shops will operate with proper SOPs in place with a focus on due care of wearing masks, the use

of sanitizers, and maintaining 6 feet distance between customers while shopping.

“A separate roster will be issued regarding the category, days and timings of the establishments and services permitted to open”, the DM said.

There will be a complete ban on the movement of all kinds of public transport and private vehicles. Only vehicles dealing in essential services like health, PHE, and other services of essential nature will be allowed to ply only after prior permission from the DM Office.

In case of any issue related to seeking of permission or in case of emergencies, people can contact the three 24x7 Control Rooms established at DM Office, SSP Office, Police Control Room (PCR) Kargil, respective SDMs, Tehsildars, and Duty Magistrates.

Underlining the need to put check on the to and fro movement of vehicles and people from Kargil Town and rural areas, the DM said that the SDMs, Tehsildars and Duty Magistrates will ensure that there will be no such unnecessary movements from now onwards.

While allaying the concerns and apprehensions of certain people as to why the test reports are not made available in time, he said testing of people for COVID-19 is a time-consuming process that has to be carried out systematically while ensuring strict observance of the SOPs and guidelines involving the collection and preservation of samples and then sending off from Kargil to NCDC New Delhi via Leh for testing and receipt of reports from there.

“Testing at the national level dealing with samples from Northern areas and other parts the country no doubt takes time and the safety of the lives of the personnel involved in taking swab samples also needs to be taken into consideration, and hence the testing of cases is possible only in a phased man-

ner”, the DM said.

He appealed people whose test results are awaited to be patient and said that there are only a few backlogs and the results are expected in 2 to 3 days.

He further added that the Administration is fully committed to ensuring the institutional and home quarantine of around 16000 stranded residents and students who have arrived in the district from different parts of the country since May 5, 2020, collection of samples for testing, surveillance and all measures related to the prevention of COVID-19 as per the SOPs and guidelines of the Government from time to time and continued tangible steps are being taken in this regard.

He said that based on the level of vulnerability, areas have been demarcated based on continuous inputs from the surveillance staff, and all recent returnees and other persons, especially the suspected cases have been kept under strict quarantine and surveillance.

He further said that revisions in case of the scaling down and de-containment of containment zones are also being done systematically and professionally which is based on the ground situation and the inputs from the health agencies, Police, Revenue, and the surveillance staff.

Regarding the conduct of official work in Government offices, the DM informed that all offices will remain open and employees will be allowed to attend their offices on the production of I cards.

He urged people not to panic as all persons turned positive were already under the strict surveillance of the Administration and have been put under institutional quarantine. Also, he appealed them not to get complacent and ensure the observance of the social distancing, hygiene, and other necessary aspects of the SOPs and guidelines in letter and spirit.

COVID-19: An unprecedented challenge faced by Ladakh

By Dr. Tashi Motup



LEH: It has been around four months now since Ladakh, the cold desert of the Himalayan region is

battling against the deadly virus. The coronavirus pandemic has plunged the region into a crisis. A major jolt in the field of education, tourism, construction related works resulted in a steep economical drift. People have faced immense hardship in their day to day lives due to lockdown situation. Today there is a surge of COVID-19 positive cases especially among students and locals who are returning back from various parts of the country.

Recent twist in the scenario is evident from the community spread of COVID in various parts of Ladakh. Contact related disease spread i.e. Iran returnee and predictable evidence in terms of policymaking in disease management and preparedness for disaster situations has already proven ineffective and the perspective of COVID disease is emerging as new challenges. Community spread with unpredictable and poor evidence is posing a real challenge to the management people and the community at large. Difficulties are more than the initial phase, in terms of contact source identification, contact tracing, safe transportation, quar-

antine, and sampling of mobile populations.

It is fortunate that in Ladakh so far deteriorated conditions are minimal and a mortality rate is very low. Various presumptive statements of Inherited pulmonary bronchoalveolar pathophysiology in people residing at high altitude and low atmospheric oxygen, widespread herd immunity to a wide spectrum of pathogens, Ultraviolet radiations, Universal BCG vaccination at birth may be playing a protective role. None of these are evidence-based and any alteration in the environmental and viral strains cannot be ruled out, thereby leading to a different and dreadful situation in the time to come.

The need for a vigilant policy system in dealing with today's scenario of COVID disease is most desired. On the other hand with a motive to give some relief from the prolonged lockdown period on the part of the administration and taking a bit of casualness on the part of the common man may invite a bigger problematic situation in the coming time. In this context, it is relevant to be extra vigilant and careful in following the universal precautionary measures by every citizen in maintaining social distancing, frequent hand washing, sanitization, using a face mask, and keeping away from unnecessary outings, gathering, and movements. Though the government has given relaxation in lockdown and curfew



to relieve the hardships of the people we must not forget that Coronavirus has given no relief on its part as evident from the deteriorating status and deaths due to the disease worldwide. Be vigilant, careful, and obedient to the guidelines because these are the primary and only weapon available to combat coronavirus infection.

The recent incidents of COVID infection amongst the Healthcare workers reveals lack of vigilance, shortcomings in management and casualness in following universal precautionary measures in executing comprehensive, coordinated and scientific approach toward a highly contagious, newer diseases.

Exponential Phase of COVID-19 has just knocked the doors, highly infectious & symptomatic patients reaching Ladakh, mass population movements facilitated by Air & Road transport in the form of defence personnel, officials and laborers from Red Zones of the country poses an extreme threat to people of Ladakh in general & litmus tests for the administrative management.

Reporting of a very large number of COVID-19 cases in both Leh & Kargil clearly indicates a major lapse in terms of following standard guidelines of quarantine, casual approach by common man, and leniency on part of the management system. These numbers of cases are extraordinarily problematic for a small population of Ladakh. A concrete and foolproof approach is needed to combat the COVID-19 situation in Ladakh because epidemiology and clinical sequel of Coronavirus infection is a subject of study with no treatment or vaccine available at this stage

Lessons the world has learned so far from COVID-19 are:

Good health is greater than all our savings.

Future is not clear, treatment or vaccine is not available at present. Readiness only can save.

Humanity only can save humans.

Stay home stay safe, fight disease, not the patient, stigma can only help spread the disease

(The writer headed COVID Combat Team, Leh.)

SoulSpeak

P.P. Wangchuk

Never underestimate yourself



Just as it is good to feel good and happy, it is important to understand that you should not underestimate yourself. Never ever! That is to say, you need to realise that your potential is unlimited, and that you can do anything provided you work for it with great determination and affirmation.

Affirmation has the power of waking up your sub-conscious mind and making it 'believe' that you can do things that can be bracketed among achievements called 'wonders'. Brian Tracy, the author of The Power of Self-confidence, says, if a smoking person affirms repeatedly that he is a non-smoker, then his sub-conscious mind forms a clear picture of a non-smoker, and will eventually adjust his habits and tastes to a point where he will stop smoking forever.

Therefore, take it for sure, that you can create affirmations for each of your goals, and you have to use your affirmations as your daily 'mantra' for success. Of course, you have to do that very consciously and honestly.

One such powerful 'mantra' is: 'I can, I will.' I have used this 'mantra' all through my life to boost my motivation and to convince myself that indeed I can and I will. Once you are motivated, you develop positive thoughts that drive you onto the right path to your destination.

We must also remember that our subconscious mind will work as per our command to an extent that it has come to be known as our 'faithful slave'. But it is also important to remember that the 'faithful slave' is never a 'weaking'. It is strong enough to face any challenge or difficulties so that its master (i.e. you) does not feel left out in the race of life.

So, the crucial point is to affirm and use our 'faithful slave' to brave all the odds in the journey of life! After all, there is nothing more powerful and a greater joy than in believing in yourself. Of course, there is a caveat: Never overestimate yourself.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

District Library, Kargil launches collection for civil service exam aspirants



Feroz Ahmed Khan, CEC, Hill Council, Kargil and Baseer ul Haq Choudhary, DC, Kargil launching the Civil Services Examination section at District Library, Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: A separate section for Civil Services Examination in District Library, Kargil was inaugurated by Feroz Ahmed Khan, CEC, Hill Council, Kargil in presence of Baseer ul Haq Choudhary, DC, Kargil on June 11.

Feroz Ahmed Khan the CEC appreciated DC Kargil for the initiative in establishing the first-ever Civil Services Examination Section. He said that the centre will give an ideal opportunity to the Civil Services aspirants who have reached back home from different parts of the country due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

He also urged Civil Services aspirants and students to take full benefit from the repository

of noteworthy books of the Civil Services Section. He said that they can avail facilities after proper registration while students can also take books home and return back after a week's time.

Feroz Ahmed Khan assured to restructure and facelift District Library Kargil for more reading space and infrastructural facilities to the readers.

Baseer ul Haq Choudhary informed that different varieties of books on Civil Services Examinations including General Studies, Geography, History, Economy, Polity, Current Affairs, Mental Aptitude, Reasoning and Logic, subject-specific books in Science, Arts and Commerce besides books for other examinations like IIT, JEE, NEET, Bank-

ing Services and other variety of exams have been made available. The collection of books includes the best available in the market and which are used by the top-most Civil Services institutes in the country.

As regards to the procedure of registration, membership, and issuance of books in favour of the aspirants, he informed that students have to follow a simple registration process by furnishing their details to the official email ID of the District Librarian Kargil kargillibrariesandresearch@gmail.com following which a separate Civil Services Section I Card will be issued in their favour. To facilitate registration of aspirants and students, a separate link of District Library will also be created on the official website of District Kargil.

He said that for the issuance of books, students have to authenticate their details from the concerned Lambardar of their respective areas.

Zahoor Ahmad, Librarian, District Library Kargil was asked to bring out a notice inviting interested Civil Services aspirants and to create reading space for maximum 40 readers while ensuring proper social distancing norms and other related protocols like wearing of masks, gloves, hand washing and use of sanitizers.

Deputy Chairman reviews 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme implementation in Leh



Tsering Sandup, Deputy Chairman, Hill Council, Leh convening meeting with the department of Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs at Council Secretariat.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department plans to implement 'One Nation, One Ration Cards' was reviewed by Tsering Sandup, Deputy Chairman, Hill Council, Leh on June 4 at Council Secretariat.

Director, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Dept. Ladakh, Anil Kaul; AD FCS&CA department, Leh, Sherap Gyalson; Chief Inspector, FCS&CA Dept. Leh, Lamchung Jigmet, and TSO Leh Rinchen Tundup were also present in the meeting.

Discussion on implementation of major schemes/projects under SDP, State Sector, and Capex budget 2020-21 in Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs sector in Leh district was also carried out.

Briefing about the One Nation, One Ration Card scheme, Anil Kaul said that Govt. of India has

announced for the inclusion of all the States and Union Territories under One Nation, One Ration Card scheme on Integrated Management of Public Distribution System in a phased manner.

Under this system, nation-wide portability of the benefits under National Food Security Act (NFSA) through One Nation, One Ration Card plan is implemented to enable the NFSA ration card holders to lift their entitled quota of subsidized food grains from any e-PoS enabled Fair Price Shop of their choice anywhere in the country. They can lift ration by using the existing and same ration card after Aadhaar authentication.

By 31st March 2021, all states will be added to One Nation, One Ration Card scheme.

Tsering Sandup stressed on proper issuance and verification of BPL ration cards in the district

so that deserving poor families could get the benefits.

He directed AD FCS&CA department, Leh to ensure continues exercise in correcting ration cards including updation of shifted and deceased cases by mobilizing their storekeepers and concerned staff so that all relevant data could be kept ready for Central Repository Data at a national level for implementation of One Nation, One Ration Cards in Leh district.

Regarding timely stocking of kerosene oil in the district, Sandup directed AD FCS&CA department, Leh to give detailed requisition to Director FCS&CA, Ladakh at the earliest. He also asked them to keep a provision of supply of sugar from govt. ration stores on market-rate especially in rural areas where people are facing difficulties due to the non-availability of sugar.

It was informed that under Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY), 4731 Qtls of rice was distributed @ 5 kg per soul to about 45459 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Household category (PHH) beneficiaries in last three months. Likewise, 140 Qtls of pulses @ 1 kg per household was distributed to about 4695 AAY and PHH families in Leh district.

Advisor Narula discusses implementation of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Discussion on the plan of action to implement Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package in Ladakh was convened by Advisor Umang Narula on June 9.

Commissioner Secretary, Rigzin Samphel; Divisional Commissioner, Saugat Biswas; Director Industries and Commerce, Moses Kunzang; Director Tourism/Social Welfare, Mumtaz Hussain; Director

Finance, Tahir Hussain and Director Horticulture, Tarvinder Singh were present.

Umang Narula reviewed the transfer of benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. It was informed that all the benefits announced under the scheme are being implemented in Ladakh.

Director Social Welfare informed that issues related to transfer of funds to NSAP beneficiaries has been resolved and invoice for transfer of benefits to beneficiaries has been sent to the banks.

Umang Narula asked the Director of Social Welfare to ensure 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries under the scheme. Also, he asked him to conduct a fresh survey in Ladakh, particularly in remote areas such as Zaskar.

Discussion on the implementation of various measures announced under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package was carried out.

While discussing the measures about the health sector, Director Health informed that the package

provides for the establishment of Infectious Disease Hospital Blocks in all districts to prepare for future pandemics. Also, the necessary infrastructure for implementation of E-Sanjevani Tele Consultation Services will be installed shortly by ISRO and the facility of telemedicine will be available to the residents of remote areas.

It was informed that there are 398 registered MSMEs in Ladakh. While taking note of the low registration of hotels on the Udyog Aadhaar Portal, Umang Narula asked Director Industries to conduct a registration drive for hotels. He further asked Chairman UTLBC to improve awareness regarding the Collateral Free Automatic Loans announced for businesses including MSMEs so that the businesses impacted due to lockdown can avail such benefits.

Administrative Secretaries were asked to convene meetings at their level with all the stakeholders particularly the banks and prepare time-bound action plan for implementation of the announced measures.

Commissioner Secretary, Ladakh discusses tourism sector issues and plans

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A meeting regarding tourism-related issues as well as capacity building/training of hoteliers, guest house owners, taxi drivers, and other individuals engaged in the tourism sector was convened by Rigzin Samphel, Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Ladakh on June 10.

Rigzin Samphel said that in the wake of current situation triggered by COVID-19, as per the SOPs/Guidelines issued for tourism sector by Ministry of Home Affairs GoI, Ladakh is now open for tourists to enter Ladakh with stringent follow-up

of all the precautionary measures to contain the spread of COVID-19,

The meeting deliberated about the tourism-related projects in both districts such as the riverfront, conventional centre, beautification projects, and conservation & heritage projects and other issues related to simplification of registration policy. Designing of calendars, maps, and apps for tourists were also discussed.

He enquired about tourist registrations in Leh and Kargil districts. Concerned officials were directed to provide capacity building/training of



hoteliers, guest house owners, taxi drivers, and other persons engaged in the tourism sector.

The travel & trade representatives of Ladakh raising their concern regard-

ing issues such as safety measures, plan of action in the wake of detection of COVID-19 positive guests at their hotel/ guest house, inner line permits, vehicle sanitization, social distancing, and other issues.

Department of School Education, Ladakh launches YouTube channel for students

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Department of School Education Ladakh launched a YouTube Channel to provide academic activities digitally to the students on June 12.

The channel is named 'Department of School Education UT Ladakh' on which video lessons for class 12th (Science stream) and class 10th (Math & Science) already telecasted/broadcasted on DD Kashir are uploaded. The channel is being updated regularly to make it more resourceful for the students.

Hill Council, Leh stresses need of comprehensive S.O.P to contain COVID-19 spread



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Hill Council, Leh discussed the ongoing prevailing situation in Leh district due to the sudden rise of COVID-19 cases on June 12 in Leh.

The meeting was convened by Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh. Religious heads of Leh, Executive Councillors, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal were present.

Taking a serious note of the abrupt rise in COVID-19 cases

in Leh, the meeting discussed at length about various issues related to containment of COVID-19 spread in Leh district.

Lapses in the handling of COVID-19 positive cases in the district need of strict implementation of home quarantine especially by civil society in view of the limited reach and manpower of Administration and Police were also discussed.

The need for a comprehensive S.O.P as per the situation in

UT Ladakh by involving all the stakeholders was discussed. In such a pandemic situation, the responsibility of civil society increases the main fold to assist the Administration in the containment of the various.

Gyal P Wangyal in a letter to Lieutenant Governor, R.K Mathur requested his intervention in the matter on priority for framing a comprehensive S.O.P by involving all the stakeholders at the earliest.

Dy Chairman reviews new projects of Handicraft & Handloom department, Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Chairman, Hill Council, Leh, Tsering Sandup reviewed the execution plans of projects approved under SDP, State sector, and Capex Budget 2020-21 in Handicraft and Handloom sector on June 5.

The meeting was attended by A.D Handicraft Leh, Sonam Gyurmet; Superintendent Handloom, Leh, Rinchen Namgyal,

and Architect engaged for designing the craft market in Leh.

Tsering Sandup highlighted the importance and need of a craft market in Leh for traders as well as for tourist attraction to boost local handicraft and handloom products. He said that to provide modern marketing facilities to the artisans of Ladakh, Hill Council is trying best to construct a craft market in the premises of Handicraft & Handloom

department, Leh.

He informed the approval of ₹ 65 lakh under Capex Budget 2020-21 in the first phase for the construction of the market. He said that the architect is already engaged and the design with traditional touch with modern facilities is at the approval stage.

Major projects under SDP, State Sector, and Capex Budget 2020-21 were also discussed.

EC, Konchok reviews projects of Rural Development Dept.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Discussion on the execution of plans for projects approved under the Rural Development Department in Capex Budget 2020-21 was held on June 11 at Council Secretariat.

The meeting was convened by EC Rural Development Department, Konchok Stanzin with Assistant Commissioner Development, Leh, Sonam Chosjor.

Konchok Stanzin informed that the Rural Development Dept. got a major jump in the allocation of funds with about 410% hike as ₹ 24 crore was approved including ₹ 16.69 crore in CD Normal and ₹ 7.30 crore under Development



of Panchayat this year.

To ensure maximum progress in the remaining working season, he directed ADC Leh to mobilize BDOs and field staffs and execute the works by using time and resources wisely and judiciously.

For the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY) in the district,

ACD Leh was asked to prepare a new design of the house as per Ladakh's environment and hardships under PMGAY which will be submitted to higher authorities for final approval.

Konchok Stanzin said that this year's number of new schemes and projects under CCDF was also proposed, including houses for poor families in line with PMGAY and traditional water mill (Rantak).

For proper use of V-Sat under the Rural Development Dept in areas where no internet connection is available, he asked them to formulate a strategy to fetch maximum benefit.

Hill Council, Leh inspects Upshi screening point

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Gyal P Wangyal, CEC along with Councillor Igoo, Tsering Paldan inspected screening point established at toll post Upshi on June 13.

All inbound passengers and vehicles coming from Manali road are being screened at the Upshi point.

SDM Kharu, A.G Zargar and Incharge Upshi Screening Point, Dr. Tsering Lamchung briefed about the screening and registration process of the passengers and vehicles. It was informed that till date about 1409 Tankers/Trucks, 65 LMV, 18 buses and 527 passengers have crossed



Upshi screening point.

Hill Council, Leh handed over sanitizers, gloves and masks to corona warriors at Upshi screening point and thanked them for working tirelessly in combating COVID-19.

He stressed corona warriors to

ensure strict screening of vehicles and passengers so that no suspected person enters Leh via Upshi saying that Leh is already dealing with sudden rise in COVID-19 cases.

Sarpanch Shara, Sonam Thardos and Sarpanch Gya-Meru, Tsering Dawa was also present.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of general public that we, Konchok Tobdol S/o Skalzang Punchok R/o Tar, Leh UT Ladakh & Stanzin Gyaltsen S/o Sonam Tsewang R/o Tar, Leh UT Ladakh Partners of M/S Konchok Painting Plot No 97, Industrial Estate Leh, UT Ladakh wants to transfer the firm M/s Konchok Painting in the name of Stanzin Gyaltsen S/o Sonam Tsewang R/o Tar, Leh UT Ladakh.

Now, objection if any may be report to General Manager District Industries Center Leh within 10 days from the date of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We the following persons, propose to register a Non-profitable society under the name and style as **Himalayan Art Preservers (HAP), Matho, Leh, Ladakh** with the Registrar of Societies, Ladakh under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

List of Executive members of the Society:

S.No	Name	Parentage	Residence	Designation
1	Urgjan Chodol	W/o Jamyang Tashi	Matho	President
2	Thinles Angmo	W/o Rigzin Namgyal	-do-	Vice President
3	Kunzes Dolma	W/o Jigmet Wangchuk	-do-	Secretary
4	Rinchen Dolma	D/o Late Tsering Angchuk	-do-	Joint Secretary
5	Dechen Angmo	D/o Late Tsering Angchuk	-do-	Cashier
6	Tsering Spaldon	W/o Tsering Stanzin	-do-	Joint Cashier
7	Ishey Dolma	W/o Kunchok Gyaltsen	-do-	Member

Objection if any, in this regard may kindly be submitted to the Registrar of societies, Ladakh within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice.

President
Himalayan Art Preservers (HAP), Matho, Leh, Ladakh

WANTED SKILLED/ UNSKILLED LABOUR ON CONTRACT BASIS

Defence Estates Office, Leh Circle

Sealed Quotation are invited from reputed registered agencies/ contractor for providing 1 skilled labour (Minimum qualification 10+2 with computer knowledge) and 2 unskilled labour to work in the office of Defence Estates Office, Leh circle, GH road, Skara Leh- 194101 during July, 2020 to July 2021 on the per day rates approved by the Govt. of J&K (LAHDC, Leh)

Quotation form, terms and condition will be available free of cost from the office itself till June 28, 2020 on any working day by 1700 hrs. Last date of submission of sealed quotation is June 30, 2020 and the same will be opened at 1500hrs next day.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Padma Tashi S/o Tsering Nurboo R/o Saboo, Leh, Ladakh have lost my Contractor Card bearing No "C-649". Now I want to apply for the duplicate card, objection if any may be report to District Superintending Engineer PWD circle with 7 days from date of the publication of this notice.

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