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Chamling promises Limboo-Tamang reserved seats in assembly shortly



Chief Minister Pawan Chamling at the Kyongsa ground — Shekhar Khawas

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, JULY 7/--/ The Limboo-Tamang community will soon get their reserved seats in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling promised on Saturday. The Limboos and Tamangs of Sikkim, despite being declared as a scheduled tribe community by the Centre in 2003, have not yet got reserved seats for them in the state assembly. Addressing the final of the inter-constituency football

tournament at Kyongsa Ground, Geyzing, during the day, Chamling said the L-T community would get their reserved seats in the coming two to three months. The tournament was organized by the West District Committee of the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front.

Chamling said that the tribal seats would be provided to the Limboo and Tamang communities within three months for the coming 2019 Assembly elections. "All the arrangement have been made to ensure the seat reservation for the

Limboo and Tamang communities. It will not take more than two to three months," he said. "The Centre will pass the Limboo-Tamang seats in the cabinet. After this, a Presidential ordinance will be issued or it will be passed in the Parliament. Nobody can stop it as it is a Constitutional right. Don't worry," said the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister said the opposition parties were using the issue of the Limboo-Tamang seats just to instigate and mislead the Limboo and Tamang communities. The

State government has been pressing the Centre for providing Assembly seat reservation to the Limboo and Tamang tribal communities. The State government is seeking expansion of the Assembly from 32 seats to 40 seats so that five seats can be reserved for the Limboo and Tamang communities. In the existing 32 seats, 12 are reserved for the Bhutia-Lepcha community and one for the 'Sangha.' The B-L community would not like to lose their reserved seats. It may be mentioned that West Sikkim has a predominance of Limboo population. Significantly, SDF has chosen to focus on West Sikkim in the lead up to next year's assembly elections. The West district has eight Assembly seats and the Limboos, the majority of the population, generally votes en masse for one party. In fact, during the last Assembly elections, West Sikkim and South Sikkim, which also has eight seats, were instrumental in ensuring the fifth consecutive term for the SDF as the party had made a clean sweep of all the 16 seats in the two districts while losing nine out of the 12 seats in East Sikkim and one out of the three seats in North Sikkim to its rival Sikkim Krantikari Morcha. In his address, the Chief Minister also commented on the Sherpa land protection issue taken up by the Denzong Sherpa Association (DSA). Chamling informed that the State government was making a law which would prohibit other communities from buying the land of the Sherpa community. The sale and purchase of Sherpa land would be within the Sherpa community only, he said. He informed that the law would be passed in the forthcoming assembly session.

Modi, Tobgay discuss Doklam, hydro-power co-operation

NEW DELHI, JULY 7/--/ In wide-ranging talks in Delhi covering a host of bilateral and regional issues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay have resolved to reaffirm their resolve to enhance co-operation in all areas of mutual interest. This year, the two countries are celebrating the golden jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.

Tobgay also had meetings with President Ram Nath Kovind and Congress president Rahul Gandhi. It is understood that the two prime ministers in their meeting deliberated on various strategic issues, including ways to deepen defence and security cooperation, as well as situation on the Doklam plateau. Bhutan is a strategically important country for India due to its location, and both sides have been ramping up overall cooperation, including in areas of defence and security, over the past a few years. During the



Doklam standoff between troops of India and China last year, Bhutan had extended support to New Delhi. "They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen collaboration in the hydro-power sector in the spirit of close friendship and co-operation that characterize relations between India and Bhutan," the Ministry of External Affairs said. "They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen collaboration in the hydro-power sector in the spirit of close friendship and co-operation that characterize relations between India and Bhutan."

The two prime ministers held wide-ranging talks in Delhi covering a range of bilateral and regional issues of "mutual interest" and expressed satisfaction at the "excellent" state of bilateral relations, the Ministry of External Affairs said. They wanted to take the "exemplary" bilateral partnership to "new heights". It said Modi reaffirmed that, as a friend and close neighbour, India will continue to partner with Bhutan in pursuit of its development goals. "Happy to have met my friend, PM @tsheringtobgay in New Delhi. We had extensive discussions on further increasing India-Bhutan cooperation," Modi tweeted. He hosted a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary. In a tweet, Tobgay, who arrived here yesterday on a three-day visit, said "hydropower is not just the cornerstone of the economic cooperation between India and Bhutan; it is the very foundation of our strong bonds of friendship." The MEA said Modi complimented Bhutan government on its imminent graduation to a middle-income country, and for achieving economic progress while preserving its traditions and values, and combining sustainable development with enhanced happiness quotient of its people. "PM Tobgay thanked the Government of India for its invaluable support and partnership for Bhutan's socio-economic development. PM Modi conveyed that India deeply values its development partnership with Bhutan," the MEA said. It said India was looking forward to the state visit of the King of Bhutan to India. President Ram Nath Kovind said today that India is "firmly committed" to partnering with Bhutan in its socio-economic development journey and that both the countries are natural friends as they share historical and cultural linkages. India was determined to support its 12th Five Year Plan of the Himalayan kingdom, based on Bhutan's priorities. "Bhutan has made rapid economic progress in recent years. It has made advances on social indicators in pursuance of happiness as a national philosophy," the President said. He expressed happiness that many of the projects under Bhutan's recently concluded 11th Five year Plan have been implemented in a timely manner. Kovind said the two countries share an "exemplary bilateral" partnership and the bilateral relations are unique and special. "Our historical and cultural linkages make us natural friends," he said. Congress president Rahul Gandhi met on Friday and discussed ways to further strengthen the "special bond" between India and Bhutan. "I met with Bhutan's Prime Minister, Tshering Tobgay, in New Delhi today. Our discussions covered a wide range of subjects including ways to strengthen the special bond our two countries share," he said on Twitter after the meeting. (PTI)

Majnu-ka-tilla rings in Dalai Lama's birthday

NEW DELHI/DHARAMSHALA, JULY 7/--/ As the Dalai Lama turned 83 on Friday, Majnu-ka-tilla, the quaint Tibetan locality, also known as the mini-Tibet here, rang in the spiritual leader's birthday on Friday by thanking India for its support. The Tibetan Children Village school in the colony, decorated with Tibetan and Indian flags, was host to a cultural event organised by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The event saw traditional dance performances including 'Chol Kha Sum' and 'Tum Chen Kampa', complemented with Tibetan delicacies like sweet rice and butter tea. Lauding the struggles and hardships of the Tibetan community to establish themselves in a foreign country, Member of Parliament Udit Raj said they had mixed so well with the locals here that they had "become Indians". However, he said they had not "asked for" enough land for their community in the past, and offered to support them if they decided to raise the concern in future. "Somewhere or the other you were at fault. When you came to India, there was a lot of land in Delhi, and you should have asked for larger land for your settlement. "You can do that even today. Your children will grow up, your families will expand...there is still a lot of land in Delhi. You start the process, I will support you," Raj, who is a Buddhist, said. The event was organised as part of a larger initiative "Thank You India" that began on March 31 this year to mark the beginning of the 60th year since the Dalai Lama set foot in India. The pan-India initiative that aims to publicly express the gratitude of Tibetans to the government and people of India, features an event every month to promote their rich ancient culture and unique identity.

IN BRIEF

Unrest over shifting of border pillar in Moreh, prohibitory orders imposed

IMPHAL, JULY 7/--/ Prohibitory orders were imposed on Saturday in some areas in Moreh sub-division after unrest over the alleged shifting of an India-Myanmar border pillar well into the Indian territory. Tengenoual District Magistrate A Tombikanta ordered imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC during the night hours for the next six months in some parts of the sub-division. It was imposed after rising tension in the area over "shifting" of border pillar No 81 three kilometres inside the Indian territory, officials said. PTI

20 workers killed in Nepal road accident

KATHMANDU: At least 20 people, including six women, were killed and a dozen others injured when a truck ferrying construction workers skidded off a road in Western Nepal's mountainous Mustang district on Friday. The truck transporting workers to a road construction site veered off near Mustang Korala road and plunged 50 metres down the road, police said. PTI

15 years on, no succour to landslide-hit Mirik villages

DEEP MILAN PRADHAN

MIRIK, JULY 7/--/ It has been 15 years since a devastating landslide ravaged a number of villages under Ghaiyabari tea Estate in July 2003; yet the victims are still reeling under the burden of the devastation. A total of 24 people were killed in various villages, including MandirGaon, Rohini, Rambharey, Naya Kaman and Dakhal Zero. Many houses and other infrastructure were also damaged in these villages. Since then the people have been living in the fear of another landslide to strike.

While the memory of the landslide is still fresh in the memory of the villagers, people affected by the landslide have not been properly compensated by the government even after 15 years. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and the West Bengal government had provided support for the construction of 40 houses along with clothes, ration and other basic amenities. But the houses are in a dismal condition now with sinking floors and cracked walls. The landslide had even washed away the small plots of land where the villagers used to grow their vegetables and crops while the towers of high tension wire which pass through some of the villages have led to many health complications. The villages also lack proper electricity supply, drinking water, sanitation facilities, a community hall and roads to connect with the towns. The government had provided power connectivity but due to poverty many villages could not avail of the facility. Villagers feel it is imperative the area MLA, SDO, BDO, and the M.P. along with other administrative bodies will have to look into the issue at the earliest and provide support to the landslide victims.



Ghaiyabari village that had been washed away in a landslide in 2003 — EOI Photo

2nd batch Kailash—Mansarovar pilgrims return to Gangtok



The reception to 2nd batch of pilgrims --- EOI Photo

EOI CORRESPONDENT

GANGTOK, JULY 7/--/ Luck continued to hold with Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrims proceeding to the Tibet plateau via Nathula, Sikkim, as the second batch of yatis who had crossed the international border into China on June 25 completed their pilgrimage and returned to Gangtok on Friday. The batch had a total of 45 pilgrims, including two liaison officers. Two yatis could not complete the pilgrimage, however, because of health problems, said an IPR release. The 43 pilgrims who managed successfully to complete the yatra were felicitated at Mount Sinolochu by mayor Shakti Singh Chaudhary. For pilgrims proceeding to Kailash—Mansarovar through other routes, however, it was a different story. According to a PTI report from Kathmandu, over 340 Indian pilgrims stranded in the higher reaches of the Himalayas because of landslides were moved to

safety from Nepal's mountainous Simkot region on Friday, with flights and choppers being used for the evacuation. Those rescued have been moved to Nepalgunj and Surkhet, towns close to the Indian border. The number of stranded pilgrims in Hilsa, near Tibet border, was now "almost nil," an Indian embassy official told PTI. On Saturday, the last batch of 160 pilgrims were airlifted to safety from mountainous regions of Nepal. A total of 1,430 pilgrims were stuck for the past five to six days as continuous downpour in western Nepal had blocked transportation. The Amarnath yatra resumed on Saturday from Jammu after being suspended for two days due to inclement weather in Kashmir. But pilgrims registered for the Baltal route were not allowed to leave the Bhagwati Nagar base camp due to slippery conditions and incidents of shooting stones along the shorter 12-km track. Pilgrimage through the traditional 36-km Pahalgam route resumed on Friday.

SDF plays ball with Hamro Sikkim Party, politically

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, JULY 7/--/ On a year the World Cup football is on, political rivalry in Sikkim is fast spreading to the soccer field. This has happened shortly after ace footballer Baichung Bhutia launching his Hamro Sikkim Party to take on the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front, led by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling. SDF is leaving no stone unturned to take on the challenge of Hamro Sikkim Party and that's why it has organized a month-long football tournament, the final of which was held on Saturday in Geyzing in the presence of the Chief Minister.

The tournament was organized by the SDF Party, West District Committee, to encourage young football players of the District. It had the participation of over 6000 players, right from the ward level. The tournament commenced on June 1. For the first time this kind of tournament was organised after Baichung Bhutia launched Hamro Sikkim. This can also be interpreted as Bhaichung-led Hamro Sikkim party throwing a challenge to the ruling SDF reciprocated by taking Bhutia on in his own game by consolidating the support base of the SDF in the crucial district which has eight out of the 32 Assembly seats in the state. The Chief Minister said in his facebook page: 'I was extremely pleased to know that over 6000 players, right from the ward level participated in this tournament that commenced from 1st June, 2018. The Party functionaries of West District have done a praiseworthy job. I called upon the Party workers to hold this function annually. I also urged the other District cadres to organize similar functions in order to encourage our budding talents in football.' The post further read: 'In today's world, sports has also become a medium to link societies and countries together. In the ongoing FIFA World Cup, we can see how people are being connected mentally and emotionally while they cheer for the teams of their choice. Among other numerous benefits, sports can be

lucrative profession. I urged the youths to take up sports like badminton, volleyball, archery and football.' The Chief Minister also announced the setting up of a football academy in the West District next year and fund for the construction of a stadium and completion of Kyongsa Ground. All registered 'A' and 'B' institutes/academy related to music, dance and literature would be provided with annual grants of Rs. 5 lakh and 3 lakh respectively. Chief Minister Pawan Chamling during state-day function had also made some crucial announcements for the sports. He had announced an annual grant of Rs 12 lakhs to A-Grade football, archery, badminton boxing clubs and other sports clubs and five per cent reservation in State government jobs for local sports personalities of national and international repute. This had happened due to only after the entry of footballer Bhaichung Bhutia in the political arena, said an observer. However, SDF said that the tournament was only about promoting football.



An umbrella rally of the Sikkim Democratic Front --- Shekhar Khawas