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For the last three decades, Ladakh (made up of Leh and Kargil districts) has been readily accessible for academic study. It has become the focus of scholarship in many disciplines including the fields of anthropology, sociology, art history, Buddhist studies, history, geography, environmental studies, ecology, medicine, agricultural studies, development studies, and so forth. After the first international colloquium was organised at Konstanz in 1981, there have been biannual colloquia in many European countries and in Ladakh. In 1987 the International Association for Ladakh Studies (IALS) was formed to establish contact and disseminate information and research findings among those interested in the study of Ladakh. Membership is open to all, by writing to the membership secretary or using Paypal through the IALS website.

Please go to: <http://www.ladakhstudies.org/membership.html>

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LADAKH STUDIES
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From the Editor

This issue goes to press months after what many have identified as the worst natural disaster in the modern history of Ladakh. It is only the beginning of what I imagine will be a very long and protracted process of rebuilding and repair as well as the reconceptualization of how climate change will impact Ladakh.

In the days following the flood, the Prime Minister of India, the President, the Dalai Lama, and the Chief Minister of J&K visited Ladakh and promised relief. The Dalai Lama spoke of how the disaster is an opportunity to fuel interdependence between those needing and those offering relief as much as a moment to reflect on the significance of our increasingly fragile global ecology and climate. In October, over 9000 people gathered at Karu to plant a record number of saplings and break the Guinness World Record. The effort was intended to dispel the misconception that plantations are harmful to the ecosystem while touting their benefits in limiting erosion. An accurate understanding how humans are shaping and being shaped by climate in places like Ladakh, Tibet, and India may only be apparent in hindsight. Yet it is obvious that we ignore this knowledge to our peril.

As the devastating news poured in during those first few days following August 5th, there were frantic emails between IALS members and our friends in Ladakh. The media reported on the difficult situation of foreigners trying to get out of Ladakh or Zangskar after being stranded for days. Yet there was far less news of the frantic Ladakhis both outside and inside Ladakh who were stranded and unable to return to their homes or contact families and friends whom they had lost contact with when communication lines were down.

The mainstream media dwelled on Leh and Choglamsar but nearly forgot Skyurbuchan, Hanu, Markha, and other valleys that were badly hit. The news stories that Nasir Khan has submitted for this issue represent only a fraction of global and local news that attempted to 'cover' the Ladakh floods. Yet they represent a vivid testimony of how the flood was viewed by the local press in J&K. On August 9, the *Daily Exelsior* story listed 150 deceased and 71 injured who could be identified. The Ladakhi names sandwiched between Bihari and Nepalese names bore witness to a suffering that knows no religious or regional boundaries.

And yet we must get on with our lives and work; in my case, edit this journal.

This issue gives me great pleasure in featuring interesting essays by younger authors, Vladimir Pellicardi and Simon Ozer, alongside an essay by John Bray and Tsering Gonkatsang. Pellicardi's essay on tourism in Ladakh is timely as the combined rise in both tourists and natural disasters may require newer thinking about how these two relate to one another. Ozer's essay on karma and guilt is apposite given the tendency of popular views of karma to slip into an ideology of 'blame the victim'. We should be wary of a process that seeks meaning in natural disasters by using marginalized or vulnerable groups or causes as scapegoats. Bray and Gonkatsang's essay provides some interesting reflections on what a 19th century letter from the Dalai Lama can and cannot

tell us about the history of the *lo phyag* mission. Shorter essays include two detailed and first hand accounts of the flood by Tashi Morup and Juliane Dame, and two essays by Sonam Wangchok about the arrival of Bakula Rinpoche and the return of the recently enthroned Sras Rinpoche as 102nd Gaden Tripa. This issue also includes an interesting dialogue between Patrick Kaplanian and Martijn Van Beek on recent trends in publishing and book prices that should be required reading for our discussions in Aberdeen around IALS publications. The issue closes with a book review by John Bray and Abdul Nasir Khan's digest of news stories from Ladakh. Due to the issues length---this may be the longest issue of LS ever published---we have decided to hold over the Bibliographical supplement until our next issue, due out in spring of 2011.

In representing the disciplines of history, anthropology, and geography, these essays nicely display some of the diversity within the IALS. It is hoped that our upcoming conference in Aberdeen in August of 2011 will reflect and refract a much wider diversity of interest around Ladakh and the theme of climate change. As the call for papers and recent emails from the Executive Committee has made clear, the conference theme is in no way intended to exclude or alienate traditional members or topics within the IALS. A close reading of the Conference Statement and Call for Papers indicate that papers on a wide range of traditional IALS topics are welcome---art, history, culture---provided they make some, minor attempt to engage with the conference theme. As this is first IALS conference to have an explicit theme, it may provoke a slight shift in how we think about our work and studies. It is hoped that this shift will be productive and prompt more not less exchange of ideas within the IALS community whilst providing a more focused outlet for subsequent publications.

On a personal note, from April of next year, I will have academic homes in both Europe and the US, as I assume a Professorship at the University of Göttingen. Ladakh specialists may recall that Alexander Csoma de Koros studied at Göttingen, although I don't know if he had any affiliation with the Institute of Ethnology where I shall be based, in addition to an affiliation with the Center for Modern Indian Studies. I look forward to being closer to my European colleagues in the IALS.

In the meantime I look forward working with IALS members in helping make the Aberdeen conference a great success and urge you all to be involved as much as you can until we gather in August next year.

Kim Gutschow
Williamstown
October 2010

From the Secretary

The flood disaster happened just a day after I drafted this letter. All of us on the Executive Committee have been deeply distressed over the impact of this disaster on the Ladakhi membership of the Association, their families, and all our other friends in Ladakh. We salute all those, from our membership and beyond, who have been devoting time and money to the essential tasks of relief and rehabilitation, and are confident that the resilience and robust good sense of the Ladakhi people will enable them to recover, and even to bring some good out of the catastrophe.

*

In the meantime, life must go on.

Last year the General Body of the IALS, at its meeting at Leh, ratified the Constitution drafted by several members of the then Executive and Advisory Committees; and elected new committees under the Constitution. This marked a milestone in the Association's development from a loose ad-hoc group of like-minded scholars to a more professional body with a claim to be taken seriously by our peers in the fields of Himalayan studies, mountain studies in general, Buddhist and Islamic studies, Tibetan studies and South and Central Asian studies, to say nothing of development studies and climate-change studies. Just listing these is a reminder of how Ladakh remains a crossroads, if no longer of trade and pilgrimage routes, then of intellectual interests.

In the wake of the constitutional ratification, elections were held to the Executive and Advisory Committees; thus for the first time the Association is being run by fully elected representatives of the membership. Another first is our website. The website was actually established several years ago, but we had no-one to run it with the commitment it required. Now under the energetic management of Seb Mankelow, it has all the potential to be a vibrant part of the IALS operation; but for this we need the co-operation of the membership. I urge you all to go to the website, send in photos and other material, and in particular to contribute to the IALS blog. A digital issue of *Ladakh Studies* is planned for 2011.

The announcement of the forthcoming Conference of the IALS has already been circulated, and is also published elsewhere in this issue. This is the 15th such event, though the earlier ones were called Colloquia, a term which, in one of their first decisions, the newly elected Executive and Advisory Committees unanimously voted to abandon. It is being held, courtesy of Martin Mills, at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and we hope to have a good turnout of international members, and as many Ladakhi members as are able to make the trip, with or without whatever financial assistance the Association may be in a position to offer. While we decided for several reasons that the Conference should have a central theme, defined as 'Responding to Climate, Biodiversity and Resource Changes', we hope that members will not find this unduly restrictive, and will be able to fit their papers to one of the proposed sub-themes. In any case, we've also invited proposals for panels outside the scope of the central theme, so we hope that in effect this Conference will be as inclusive as previous ones.

In connection with the Conference, I'd like to take this opportunity to push a particular hobby-horse of my own—the vital importance of allowing time for discussion of each and every paper. If we're simply going to sit through a succession of papers one after the other, why go to the trouble and expense of having a conference at all? Publish them on the website, and be done with it (a virtual conference?). We plan to instruct the chair of every session to be ruthless in cutting off speakers who overrun their time; but it would

be greatly preferable that the speakers should discipline themselves, and limit the length of their presentation to not more than half their allotted time-slot. This is the context in which, in our guidelines for submissions, we invite the authors of papers to consider 'presenting' their papers (indicating the trend of the argument and highlighting the more important pieces of evidence) rather than 'reading' them (in their entirety). If authors also post their papers on the secure space provided on the website, accessible only to other conference-participants, then all participants can have the opportunity to read the papers in which they're interested, and having done their homework be in a position to engage the authors constructively in the time allotted for discussion. Please do consider tailoring your presentation accordingly.

As always, the General Body meeting of the IALS will take place at the Conference, and this time we'll be publishing the agenda on the website along with formal notice of the elections and the call for nominations to the various posts up for election. We would urge members to take the matter of elections seriously, and to be proactive about nominating candidates, & standing for election themselves to the posts that are to be filled.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Aberdeen next August, and to our all having a fruitful and enjoyable Conference.

Janet Rizvi

The Understanding of Karma and Etiology in Buddhist Ladakh in Relation to the Theory of Locus of Control

—*Simon Ozer*

A central concept in Ladakhi and Tibetan Buddhism is the theory of karma (*las*), which can have a fatalistic character. There are different concepts of karma and this paper deals with the most prevalent understanding, which states that karma is “[t]he universal law of cause and effect; the volition behind each action, which produces favorable and unfavorable results in the future” (Kornfield 1993, p. 349). Fatalism is “a doctrine that events are fixed in advance for all time in such a manner that human beings are powerless to change them” (Webster 1967, p. 303). Fatalism and karma are related theories when the present situation is understood as a result of karma accumulated in the past. Approximately half of the Ladakhi community is Buddhist. Their religious assumptions are now frequently challenged by other understandings that are introduced in Ladakh by tourists, immigrants, the military presence, governmental policies, modern commodities and technologies etc.

With the rapid socio-cultural changes now happening in Ladakh, many intellectuals point towards a decrease in the influence of “traditional culture” and religion. In a questionnaire survey¹ among Ladakhi youth, 59 % (n=67) reported that young Ladakhis were less religious than their parents. This view was opposed by 31 %. Yet in comprehending these results, one ought to be careful not to assume that Ladakh is moving towards agnosticism. In the same survey 90 % (n=68) of the youth reported that religion was important to them and only 4 % said that religion was not important.

Although the conception of misfortunes like illness and disability has changed dramatically in Ladakh with the introduction and popularization of allopathic medicine, the more traditional understandings of the etiology of illness still prevail. This is especially the case in the villages. The Buddhist understanding of etiology connects illness and disability with karma for the Buddhist people. Therefore it becomes essential to clarify how karma is discussed and understood in Ladakh. In this paper the understanding of karma is critically examined in relation to the etiology of misfortune and illness, and analyzed in relation to the psychological attribution theory of *locus of control*.

The fatalistic understanding of karma

There are fundamentally different understandings of karma in Buddhism and Hinduism. It is commonly said, that karma in Hinduism is fatalistic, while karma in Buddhism acts in feedback loops which stress the importance of present actions and thus is not fatalistic. This allows the possibility to influence ones karma, thereby the notion of “free will”. The misunderstanding ascribing a fatalistic karma to Buddhism is by some recognized to be a misinterpretation by Westerners (Thanissaro 1997). Thus it is a temporal difference in the understandings of karma that underlies the discussion of fatalism, in which the focus is placed on either the past or present in the understanding of causality.

¹ The questionnaire survey was done with 70 young people in Leh; half of them were studying at Eliezer Joldan Degree College and the other half were found by convenience sampling at an event at the polo-ground. The mean age of the respondents was 22 years and 80% of them were born and raised in villages and then moved to Leh. 69% were Buddhist and 67% were males.

In Buddhism, karma is the principle that all beings are reborn in different realms according to the nature and quality of their past actions. For example an action such as injuring other beings is said to lead to frequent illness in the succeeding rebirth (Harvey 1990, p. 39). This could easily be ascribed to fatalism, but at the same time the understanding of karma is not so temporally one-sided. Karma implies “the effect of actions in a past life on one’s present existence, and (more especially) of one’s present actions on future existence within a continuing cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*)” (Samuel 1993, p. 200). Buddhism stresses that “Poor, ill or ugly people are not to be presently blamed for their condition, however, for the actions of the past life are behind them, and the important thing is how they act and others treat them now” (Harvey 1990, p. 39). And even though the understanding of karma in Buddhism can sometimes degenerate into a form of fatalism, it is important to note that the Buddha emphasized that deterministic fate² and karma are very different concepts. In the understanding of karma, people create their own destiny by their actions (ibid. p. 40).

In Ladakh it is said that the state of the soul depends on the results of karma which is decided by the accumulation of merit (*gewa*) and sin (*digpa*). From this it is determined in which of the six realms a rebirth will take place. If people commit sinful actions, they risk not attaining a proper life. For example they can be reborn as one of the unhappy spirits that the villagers keep away with offerings (Day 1989, p. 212-221). Tibetan Buddhism states that individuals can only transcend the laws of karma through enlightenment. However, there is always a possible liberating potential wherein conscious choice can determine the future. With this perspective, karma can be viewed as a constraining factor limiting the possible choices. This emphasizes the individual responsibility for intentional actions; it is deliberate acts that have consequences on the present and the future. In the tantric path there are many purifying practices that can eliminate bad karma before it even takes effect. This long list of practices includes: remorse, receiving teachings, reciting mantras and making offerings (Gutschow 2004, p. 14-16 & 135).

With the focus on intentional acts, the laws of karma provide a theodicy that allows room for mediation by stressing individual responsibility. There is compensation for suffering in the karmic theory (Gutschow 2001). Related to this theory of karma is the Ladakhi notion of pollution (*dip*) and purification. It differs from karma in being applied to only the human realm, in being restricted to one incarnation and in being aroused by both intentional and unintentional acts. To maintain a good relationship to the deities, it is important to eradicate pollution and engage in purification rites and virtuous acts. Religious pollution occurs naturally through everyday life especially in major life cycle events like birth and death. Dislocation of the established hierarchal structure causes further pollution. Accumulation of pollution causes vulnerability to misfortune and the negative consequences can vary from undermining the health of an individual through attacks of vengeful spirits to communal affliction such as natural disasters (Mills 2003, p.206-232 & Mills 2005, p.356-362). If calamity strikes it can be understood as a discordant relationship with the deities. In this situation the justice of the deities is always righteous. The suffering caused by the devastating flash flood in Ladakh on the 6th of August 2010 is by some Ladakhi Buddhists ascribed to the wrath of the water spirits (*lu*) roused by the new impure way of living and the pollution of the environment. Karma is seen as the most logical theodicy by two recognized sociologists Max Weber and Peter Berger. Berger states that theodicy, as a social construction of the world, is used to create

² Named *niyati*.

cosmos out of chaos. In this understanding the theodicy makes difficult situations become more tolerable and thereby constitutes a cultural explanation for the problem of suffering (Fazel & Young 1988, p. 239).

The understanding of karma, disability and illness in Ladakh

In Ladakh there seems to be different understandings and use of the notion of karma. These differences are denoted by the geographical distinction of city and village and also by the generational change.

A reputable elder Ladakhi Buddhist scholar, Tashi Rabgyas writes, “The Karma theory states that the type and quality of life is determined by one’s own Karma i.e. action.....if the individual person has done more serious negative actions, he or she may fall down to condition of low miserable life next time” (Rabgyas 2009, p. 29). This notion of karma shows a clear causality between the condition of your present life and actions done in past lives. At the same time there is no exclusion of the influence of present actions on karma. “One has....to be responsible for his or her conduct in life” (Rabgyas 2009, p. 34). This sentence stresses the merit-earning of present actions.

Tashi Rabgyas also warns against the misuse of the karma theory, which can be found elsewhere in India, depriving the lower castes of any opportunities in life (Rabgyas 2009, p. 38). There ought to be a similar caution regarding the tendency to blame the unfortunate in Ladakh which deprives them of their opportunities.

During fieldwork for this paper in July 2009, an NGO working with disability and mental health in Ladakh, held a meeting with the leaders of a village in the Sham area. When asked how the villagers could help the disabled, a leader replied that even though they try not to discriminate against the disabled, their problems are this way because of karma from their former lives. In this answer the etiology of disability was defined, and with this focus any chance of and opportunity for change was refused. A younger Ladakhi scholar from Leh later emphasized that the understanding of karma observed in the village is wrong and that the true understanding should include an understanding of causality based on 50 % karma from the past and 50 % free will.

A foreign informant³ reported that karma could cause problems in relation to developmental work because the notion of karma is intrinsically linked to the assumption that “things can’t change”, and this opposes the efforts for improvement and development. The informant appreciates the karmic belief that accepts life as it is and therefore makes the best of what has been dealt out in this life (personal communication). The informant told about problematic situations where karma has been used to blame patients for unfortunate occurrences at the hospital. In one report a pregnant woman from a village came to the SNM hospital to give birth to her child. She experienced some complications and insisted that the baby should be delivered by caesarean operation. The doctor refused and the baby died during birth. Afterwards the woman was blamed by the doctor and nurses for her bad karma being the cause of the baby’s death. The woman subsequently developed symptoms of depression. In another report a woman came to the same hospital insisting that her delivery was in critical progress. The doctor refuted this saying that there were no empty hospital beds, and

³ The informant was a NGO worker in Ladakh and has been living in Ladakh for many years.

consequently the baby was born in the corridor of the hospital and the baby died at birth. The woman was afterwards blamed for having bad karma which caused the baby's death. Both incidents happened during the fall/winter of 2008/09. These stories present the women's phenomenological experience of the event, and as isolated instances they can not be considered an adequate description of the general practice at the SNM hospital. However, they do point towards a problem created by the karmic understanding of women.

It is therefore relevant to consider the Tibetan Buddhist understanding of women and impurity in Ladakh. In this worldview women are seen as polluting and unclean in situations of menstruation, childbirth, miscarriage and abortion. In this sense they are related to death and decay. Women often internalize the understanding, that their words are unreliable and insignificant, which magnifies the problems in the karmic understanding of women. Women are temporarily excluded from sacred places and religious rites during their times of impurity because this offends the subterranean spirits. After childbirth the mother and child are kept in the house for up to one month, so that they will not pollute the village. The female body is viewed as a punishment for previous misdeeds and a "lower rebirth" compared to men, and therefore women also need more merit to avoid the lower rebirth as an animal (Gutschow 2004, p.208-218 & Aggarwal 2004, p.139-145). One elder Ladakhi Buddhist woman told that her daily hours of prayer were an effort towards being born as a male in her next rebirth which would be one step on her striving journey to become a monk. This understanding of women considers them to be destined by birth to counteract impurity and "bad karma".

The foreign informant also knew stories from several parts of Ladakh where stillbirth is ascribed to the bad karma of the woman by the ANM⁴. In the remote areas of Ladakh qualified doctors and medical supplies are scarce and the medical assistants and nurses have little training and are said to be absent a considerable part of the year. The entire Himalayan region experiences the severe problem of a high infant mortality rate. Many people choose to rely on non-allopathic treatment. This is based on a Buddhist discourse where karma is seen as the underlying causality in conjunction with secondary causes such as demonic forces, behavior, season and diet (Gutschow 1997, p. 183-187 & Gutschow 2004, p. 38).

From a psychological perspective these problems, where misfortune is linked to a personal causality beyond agency, could be injurious to mental health. In the first example, psychological pressure and the subsequent grief were magnified when the mother was blamed for the death of her child, and especially when it was understood to be intrinsically determined. Because Ladakh is a changing society and composed of different religions, there are alternatives to the karmic notion of etiology in the health sector. Doctor Iqbal, who is trained in psychiatry and is working for a better treatment of the disabled and mentally ill, clearly stresses a neurological etiology for mental illness (personal communication). He is working at the SNM hospital and for the "District Mental Health Program" (DMHP). In cooperation with the NGO "Health Inc." he has written a mental health primer for Ladakh, in which biological and environmental causes of mental illness are stressed, and the fairly common misunderstanding⁵ that people are to blame for their own illness is rejected (Ahmad & Jayaprakashan 2010, p. 14-23).

⁴ ANM stands for "Ancillary Medical Nurse".

⁵ The primer mentions a survey in which 20% believe that people are to blame for their illness.

Psychological theorizing of karma to locus of control

Locus of control is a concept describing the perception of responsibility for an event in life. It describes whether a person tends to locate responsibility internally, within themselves, or externally, in fate, luck or chance (Larsen & Buss 2005, p. 390). In this concept a more fatalistic understanding of karma can be ascribed to an *external locus of control*. This can lead to a feeling of not being in control of the outcome of life. Research has shown that people with *internal locus of control* tend to be more active in taking charge, and take more responsibility for the outcome of actions, compared to people oriented towards an *external locus of control* (ibid. p. 393). Furthermore, studies also show that people with *internal locus of control* are more likely to engage in behaviors that facilitate physical well-being (Wallston & Wallston 1978, p. 108). So in relation to health, it seems that an *internal locus of control* is associated with a healthier way of dealing with various problems including illness.

In religions with the concept of karma the understanding of karma can be associated with differing *loci of control*. People with a more fatalistic understanding of karma can be ascribed an *external locus of control*⁶, and people with an understanding of karma as in the Buddha's teachings can be ascribed a more *internal locus of control*. In Buddhism difficult situations are not to be passively accepted, a person should do his best to improve them. And in this way, it is only when things happen in spite of efforts to avert them, that they can be ascribed to past karma (Harvey 1990, p. 40). In indigenous Ladakhi treatment internal disorders such as mental illness can be ascribed to a disturbance in the balance between the self and the universe. In this understanding the different Buddhist realms of existence are linked by the law of karma; actions in one realm can have effect on the other realms. Consequently an offence against one of the countless beings can result in an attack by an offended deity or daemon and furthermore in illness. Every person is ultimately responsible for their own karmic path, but the beings, including deities and daemons, intersect with their karmic energies. Because this karmic causality is so complex, a patient's diagnosis based on blaming bad karma is unfalsifiable, and the cure for this karmic caused misfortune is atonement and purification (Gutschow 1997, p. 196-197 & Mills 2005, p. 354-362). In this perspective the person has some influence on his life; yet life events can retrospectively be comprehended in relation to the other five realms. Therefore the *locus of control* in this Ladakhi understanding is based on a – for the unenlightened - only partly comprehensible dialectic relationship between individual agency and karmic response.

In an empirical study⁷ Fazel and Young (1988) found that in a comparison of Tibetan Buddhists and Indian Hindus, the Tibetans scored significantly higher on a life quality scale (p. 233). This finding was ascribed to a proactive attitude among the Tibetans as opposed to a reactive fatalism among the Indians. It is stated that this difference in their self-evaluated quality of life is due to the Tibetans unique application of the behavioral and attitudinal facet of the concept of karma. With this comprehension Tibetans are more prospective in their understanding of karma than they are retrospective. This can be seen in that the Buddhists emphasize the aspects of their daily life that can help them

⁶ This is understood as external because of the focus on causality of the present state, even though karma is generated by actions formerly done by the individual.

⁷ In this study both the Tibetan Hindus and the Indian Hindus are said to be subscribing to the fatalistic attitude of karma.

gain positive karma while the Hindus find reasons for misfortune in their karmic constraints (ibid. p. 240). As a critique of this study, it can be said that the perspective on Tibet and Tibetan refugees romanticize the Tibetan culture with an essentialist approach. The study also uses a western test (QOL), which has an individualistic foundation, and furthermore its universal validity is questionable. This test does not seem to have the necessary inclusion of socio-cultural conditions. Still, the findings are worth mentioning.

The Indian scholar S. Omprakash (1989) views the doctrine of karma as constituting and perpetuating the caste system and poverty. From qualitative studies he concludes that karma can interfere with efforts for modernization and development. In such a view karma restricts social mobility to rebirth and thereby retains a rigid social structure (p. 133-135). Even though the understandings of karma are different in the plains from that in the Buddhist Ladakh, some of the same notions are valid in an overall perspective. Omprakash's study concludes that a fatalistic understanding of karma and the caste system leads to negative self-attributions for persons lower in the social hierarchy. This causes low self-esteem, low initiation, low need for achievement, fear, powerlessness and distrust. This again leads to a stronger belief in a fatalistic karma and with that starts a vicious circle (ibid. p. 141).

In the case of Ladakh, there are different understandings of karma leading to different consequences. Situations in which karma is explicitly used in the etiology of misfortunes such as illness and disability create a psychologically problematic attribution orientation. Many acts of intentional change for a better Ladakh are impeded by an *external locus of control* that doesn't allow an opportunity for change driven by internal motivation. From a fatalistic viewpoint things do not happen because we make them happen, but because they were destined to happen. This theodicy sustains the religious order as well as the social hierarchy.

Discussion and conclusion:

An understanding of karma is important in comprehending the etiology of illness and misfortune in Ladakh. It also has important psychological consequences on how people conduct their lives and how they deal with misfortune and illness. In this period of rapid cultural change it is important to reflect on how religious understandings are interpreted and used in the conduct of daily life.

Many of the studies and perspectives included in this paper point toward a correlation between the belief in fatalism and psychological vulnerability. Seen from another perspective, the understanding of fatalistic karma provides a theodicy that eases the burden of responsibility. It can be interpreted that people with this worldview are prevented from taking final responsibility for their own actions; any illness that strikes an individual was destined to happen because of karma. This can be said to take away the sting and the stigma of suffering. From this perspective no blame is directed towards the afflicted individual. Thus with this logic, fatalistic determinism then engenders a spirit of passive or resigned acceptance which prevents a person from falling into despair (Laungani 1989, p. 2429). In the case of the Ladakhi woman who lost her child at birth, the notion of karma did not seem to ease her sorrow and her depressive symptoms could very well be caused by the blame of being the cause of her own child's death.

The attribution theory used in this paper represents a cognitivist approach in psychology, and can be criticized for being individualistic and universalistic in its foundation. A complete and comprehensive treatment of a subject should also include a more socio-cultural orientation which takes into consideration that the mind is constituted in culture. This approach can be found in the cultural psychology which has been described by Michael Cole (1996). However, this paper maintains a more narrow focus and will therefore only mention this alternative approach.

In conclusion, the Buddhists in Ladakh differ in their understanding and use of the notion of karma. The main difference in understandings seems to be the temporal orientation, where the fatalistic notion is the more retrospective. Studies point toward a consensus saying that the fatalistic retrospective understanding of karma can be problematic in relation to the psychological quality of life and social improvement. In relation to the attribution theory of *locus of control*, the differing opinions balance a retrospective understanding of karma that entails an *external locus of control* with a proactive understanding of karma stressing the importance of present actions, entailing an *internal locus of control*. Tibetan Buddhism is normally ascribed to the latter understanding; however the former understanding seems to prevail in some unfortunate examples in present Ladakh. Where this usage of the notion of karma comes from is unsolved. One guess could be that it is the theodicy that calls for this fatalistic notion of karma in which there is given a resolved interpretation of life events and thereby creating cosmos out of chaos. It is important to note that these understandings are not dichotomic, and there is no conflict or contradiction between fatalism and free will (Solomon 2003, p. 444). To conclude, the notion of karma is not erroneous, but it is important to reflect on the usage of this notion and the appropriateness of the consequences. It would be ironic if the understanding of karma used for pointing out the causality of others' misfortune resulted in bad karma for oneself.

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Tourism Traffic Volumes in Leh District: An Overview. **—Vladimiro Pellicciardi**

Introduction

Initiated in 1974, tourism in Ladakh is 36 years old. During this period approximately 750.000 tourists have visited Leh District of which 500.000 are foreign and 250.000 are Indian. An increasing number of visitors are attracted to its landscape, culture, tradition, and environment.

The tourism industry is now an important socio-economic factor for the district. Tourism is generating revenue and creating employment opportunities and jobs on a large scale basis in related sectors such as hotels, guest houses, restaurants, catering services, transport, guides and mule porters, shops, retailers, handicrafts etc.. According to some sources, today tourism is a major contributor to the local economy (around 50% of the local GDP)⁸ but the benefits of the tourism industry are still concentrated mostly in and around Leh town. However, all infrastructural systems (water, sanitation, disposal, power, etc.) are under parallel increasing pressures.

The only aim of this essay is finding evidences, patterns and trends through deep investigation and analysis on available statistical data on tourism traffic volume in Leh District but also to show how sometimes policy makers and planners attempt to gloss over important data in order to promote a reassuring perception of stability of the region. Moreover, a statistical overview on tourism will be useful for future qualitatively oriented investigations like impacts on Ladakh's fragile eco-system, traditional values and cultural heritage⁹.

1. Data collection

One important factor resulting from the overview of the tourism in Leh District is the basic state of data collection and statistical analysis on tourism. Also professional associations within the tourism industry like hotels, travel agents, taxi and transport sectors¹⁰, do not systematically collect or show data. The following data was received at Tourism Department, Leh, May 2010:

- Annual tourist arrivals (International and Domestic) from 1974 to 2009, but lack of domestic visitor numbers for the years 1981 to 1984;
- Monthly arrivals, 2009, categorized by air and road (International and Domestic);
- International arrivals from 1998 to 2008;

⁸ Working Paper No 2, Travel & Tourism, pg. 5, by M. Chatterjee, S. Kohli, A. Singh, Center for Development of Corporate Citizenship S. P. Jain Institute of Management & Research Mumbai; LAHDC, Leh, 2005, in *Enterprising Ladakh, Prosperity, Youth Enterprise and Cultural Values in Peripheral Regions*. Unpublished

⁹ *"First of all, there should be a thorough assessment of the carrying capacity of the land and the people."*, Chapter III, Tourism, pg.22, in *Ladakh 2025 Vision Document*, a road map for the progress of the region prepared by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Leh, 2005. Downloaded at http://leh.nic.in/VISION_DOCUMENT.PDF

¹⁰ ALHGA, All Ladakh Hotel & Guest House Association; ALTOA, All Ladakh Travel Office Association; ALTCU, All Ladakh Taxi Cooperative Union; a new Tourism Federation of Ladakh (ALHGA + ALTOA + ALTCU) is founded on 2010

The data organized in government offices relies heavily on two categories, domestic and international, in order to classify the demography of tourists visiting Ladakh. But why else do these categories matter? Domestic and international tourists have different conducts, activities and destinations that put different kinds of strains on land and people that needs further investigations.

Complete and up-to-date information of tourism industry (e.g. average length of stay, average nights spent in different categories and class of Hotels or Guest Houses, revenue generated by different segments, preferred type of activities like conventional, eco, adventure, cultural, sightseeing tourism, profile of visitors like class, region, gender, occupation, education, etc..) can assist in responsible tourism development and provide valuable feedback for the formulation of well-informed policies and programs.

2. 1 Tourism traffic volume analysis: history and current status

The unique geo-climatic and topographical conditions, high altitudes, cold deserts, barren mountains and rivers provide a great place for adventure sports such as trekking, rock climbing, hiking and rafting. Beautiful villages nestled in picturesque valleys provide scenic panoramas. Buddhist heritage sites, coupled with the local traditional culture, attract tens of thousands of tourists every year. In addition, domestic tourists also come to escape from the heat and humidity of Indian plains. The demographics of these tourists have been analysed below to find statistical patterns and trends in this sector.

Tourist arrivals¹¹ in Leh District have witnessed substantial growth from 527 tourists in 1974 to 79,087 in 2009 (48,517 domestic and 30,570 international). The diagram below depicts the data collected for the past 25 years:

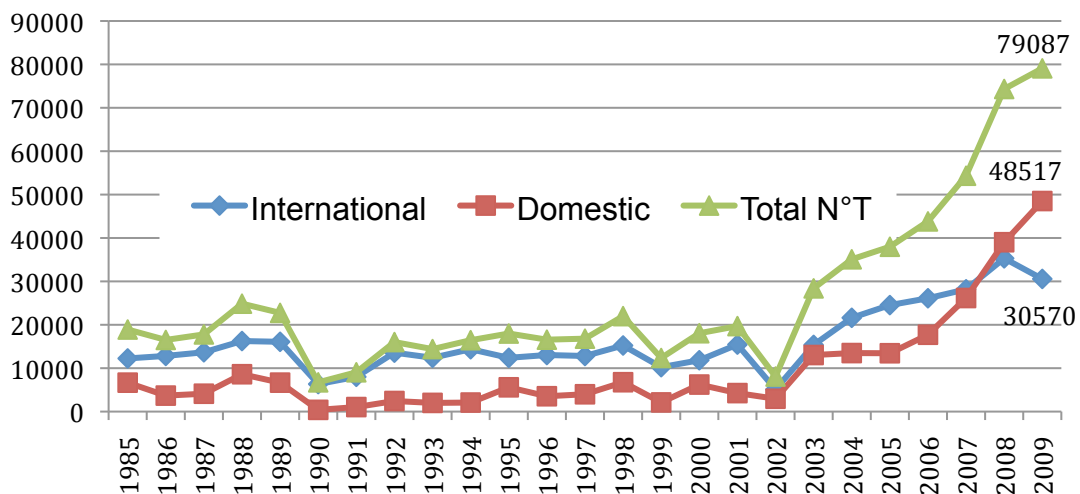


Diagram 1

In this diagram it is possible to recognize two long period trends:

¹¹ Refer to the Annexure 1, on last page, for yearly arrivals data given by Tourist Department, Leh;

- first: from 1985 to 2001, with total tourist inflow oscillating approximately an average of 17.000 yearly, with a peak of approximately 25.000, during 1988, which coincided with the Kalachakra ceremony;
- second: starting in 2003, showing a consistently upward trend indicating exponential growth on total arrivals with domestic visitors as a driving force¹² with percentages in double digits 32, 48, 49, 24 % in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Moreover, the diagram shows, during the first trend, three steps downward of both international and domestic tourist arrivals due to geopolitical turmoil and terrorism¹³:

- minus 70% (from 22.748 to 6.738) in **1990** due to the 1989 militancy in Kashmir;
- minus 44% (from 21.996 to 12.344) in **1999** due to the India – Pakistan war;
- minus 59% (from 19.699 to 8.079, minus 67% for international and minus 30% for domestic) in **2002** due to international and national reasons, the 2001 September 11 terrorist act in USA and the attack on Indian parliament and the looming threat of a India – Pakistan nuclear war.

During the second period two more minus are recorded:

- In 2009, when total international tourist arrivals decreased 13 % (5.000 less), due to western economic problems in opposition to a positive trend of a 24 % increase (10.000 more) for domestic arrivals;
- In 2008 when American tourists dropped to 290 in comparison to 2.313 visitors in the previous year (decreasing of 698%) due to US economic problems.

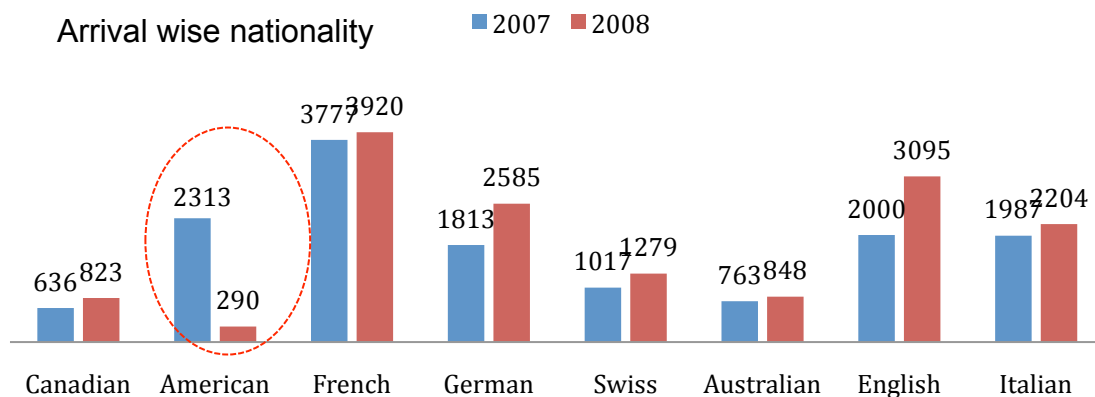


Diagram 2

¹² Total arrivals reproducible with the algorithm $y = 23379 * e^{0,1762x}$, regression coefficient $R^2 = 0,9748$ and domestic arrivals $y = 9483,3 * e^{0,3357x}$, $R^2 = 0,9914$

¹³ divided in three main categories: Terrorism and political instability, Communalism and Indo-Pak tensions, see Dhariwala, R., 2003. Tourist Arrivals in India How important are Domestic Disorders. Paper is a part of the author's Dissertation at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, India

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=390666, downloaded 13/09/2010

Michaud stated that: “Reliance on external economies, particularly through tourism, has exposed the local economy to fluctuations on a regional and international market”¹⁴.

It becomes evident that there is a “non-resilient” tourism market in the District that depends on disturbances, terrorism, economic slowdowns, fleeting nature of global capital, tourist habits and new trend destinations, potential future weather or climate changes and recent natural disasters, for instance¹⁵.

Sikkim, another Himalayan state, shows a “more resilient” tourism market¹⁶ with a constant 95% domestic presence due to the fact that it is a less sensitive geopolitical region. Over the past decade domestic arrivals show a continuous growth at an annualized rate of 11% and triplicate from 116.500 in 1997 to 331.263 in 2007. In the same period international tourism counts doubled in figures, but remained historically low, from 8.068 to 17.837 at an annualized rate of 8%.

Another important consideration is that at the beginning of the tourism history the overwhelming proportion of international tourist arrivals in Leh District was constant. But it has since then come down from 94% in 1990 to 39% in the 2009; domestic arrivals increased from 6% to 61% for the same period (Diagram 3). The numbers of foreign tourists predominates from 1974 to 2006. In 2008, for the first time, domestic tourism exceeded the international (39.000/35.000) which seems to be the near future trend; the international/domestic ratio falling from 7,7 on 1991 to 0,6 on 2009 (Diagram 4).

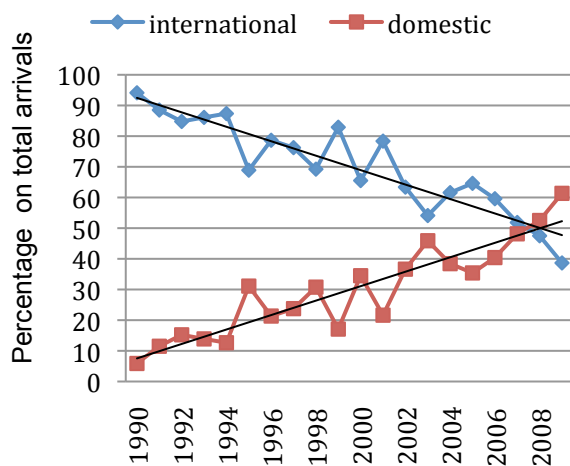


Diagram 3

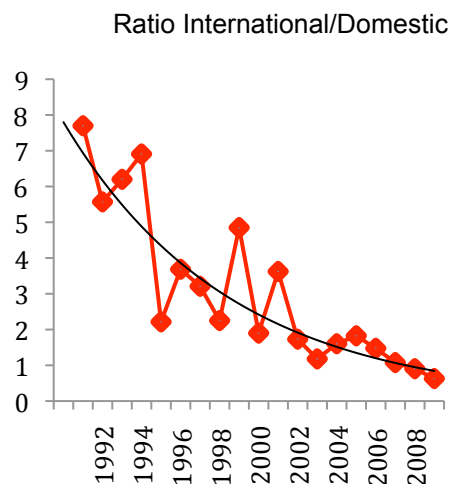


Diagram 4

¹⁴ Michaud, J. (1996). A historical account of modern social change in Ladakh (Indian Kashmir) with special attention paid to Tourism. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 37:286–301

¹⁵ “After going through the sequence of events of the weather that led to the cloudburst on August 6 (2010), it has been reinforced that the catastrophe was due to prolonged winters being witnessed in the region, sources in Leh-based Defence Institute For High Altitude Research (DIHAR) said.” Read in Cloudburst in Leh may be due to climate change, By PTI, New Delhi, August 25, 2010; downloaded at:

<http://news.reachladakh.com/news-details.php?&20771004816414835811414774977&page=1&pID=470&rID=0&cPath=5>

¹⁶ Sikkim Strategic Plan May 2008, view on <http://scstsensvis.nic.in/Tourism-udhd.pdf>

2.2- Arrival mode of transportation during 2009

Almost 100% of the visitors came by air or road, with only a very limited number trekking in from Himachal Pradesh or Kargil District. Tourism Department Statistic reports 41.751 arrivals by Air (53% of total), 18.685 internationals versus 23.086 domestics (45% and 55% of air). May and June are peak months for domestic arrivals with respectively 4.860 and 6.286 arrivals at an average of 5.600 with a sudden drop down to 1.544 in August. July and August are peak for international arrivals with an average of 5.700, showing a symmetric curve sloping down before and after these months (Diagram 5).

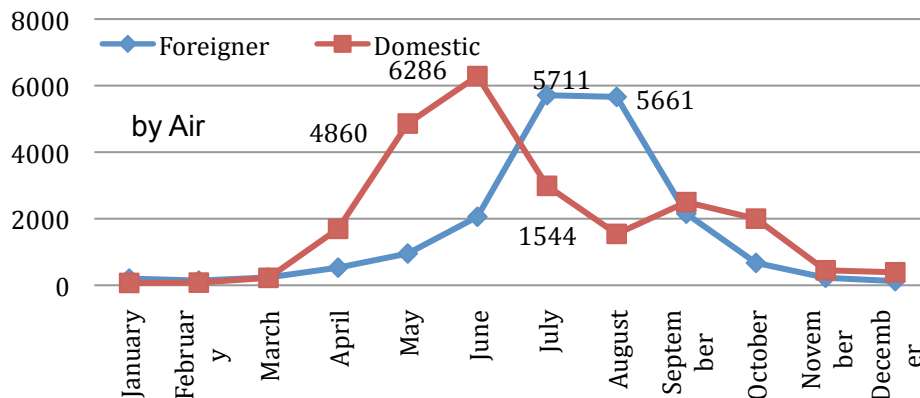


Diagram 5

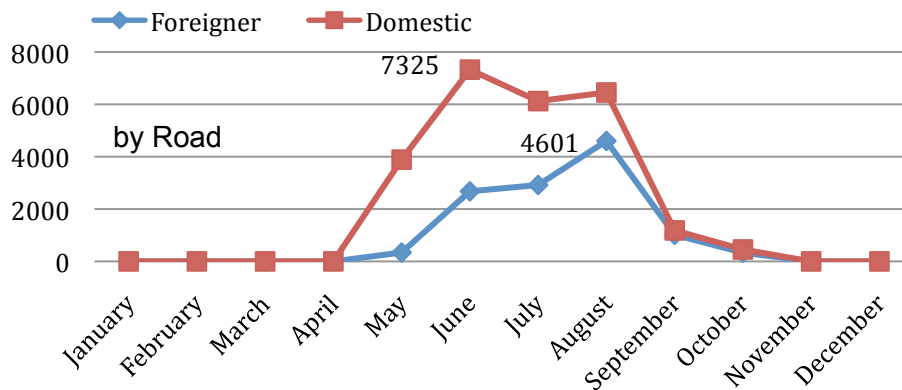


Diagram 6

Those arriving by road numbered 37.313 (47% of total), international/domestic 11.885/25.431, showing a respectively percentage of 32 and 68%. The peak month is June for Indians (7.325) but remains high during July and August while August is peak for international visitors (4.601). Note that no tourist arrival is reported during January - April and November - December due to heavy snow and bad weather forcing the closure of the high passes from Manali and Srinagar to Leh (Diagram 6).

2.3- Arrival nationalities for international tourists¹⁷

¹⁷ Statistical Hand Book for the year 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, issued by District Statistics and Evaluation Office, LAHDC, Leh

Data regarding the nationalities distribution of foreign tourists is analysed for the second main period from 2003 to 2008. French tourists seem to remain steady with approximately 3.600 visitors in the last years; English tourists double in number during this period from about 1.500 to 3.000 with the same pattern for Germans: 1.250 to 2.500; Italian: 1.000 to 2.000; Canadian: 250 to 500; swinging figures for American, lowest 184/290 on 2004/2008 and highest 2.123/2.313 on 2006/2007; Swiss and Australian oscillating respectively around 1.000 and 500 visitors.

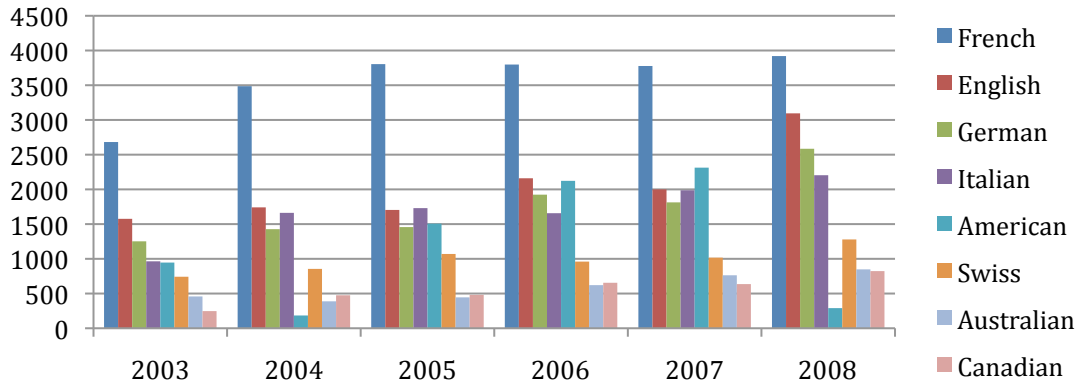


Diagram 7

2.4- Monthly international and domestic tourist arrivals during 2009

The extreme weather conditions and high altitude makes seasonality a major factor in this sector. Moreover, unlike other parts of the Himalayas (Sikkim, Bhutan, particular area of Nepal, etc.), the tourist season in Ladakh coincides with the busy agricultural season.

Total monthly tourist arrivals in 2009 confirm that the tourist season is still very short and lasts for only 3 months, June-July-August, totalling 69% (54.347) of the total arrivals (79.087) at an average of 18.000 visitors per month, followed by April-May, 16% (12.269), 13% (10.312) in September-October, a mere 2% (1.189) in November-December and 1% (950) in January-February-March.

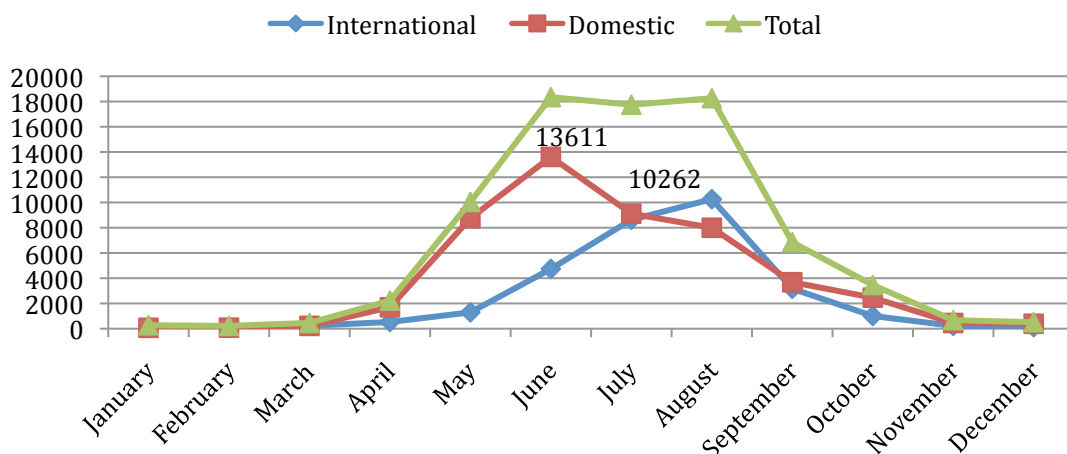


Diagram 8

Generally, Indians visiting Ladakh, come to enjoy the landscape, to do shopping, to play with the snow and to escape from the hot and humid plains, during May, June, July and August totalling 39.500 (81% of domestic, 50% of total arrivals). Internationals, that prefer mountain activities such as trekking, rafting, mountaineering, discovering local culture, etc., come mostly during the European holiday months of June-July and August (23.500, 77% of international, 30% of total arrivals).

Indian and international tourists have different peak seasons of arrival: June for domestics (13.611, 28.1% relative to Indians) and August for internationals (10.262, 33.6% relative to foreigners). This research provides an opportunity for targeting the tourist population separately, resulting in the potential levelling of the impact of peak visitor numbers on the local infrastructure and fragile environment during the short tourist season. Currently, the uneven spread of demand during the year causes stress on the tourism and public amenities and also creates a supply glut during the months of fewer visitors.

3. Projections and future perspectives

One official report that attempts to estimate the future tourist inflow to 2020 is the *Working Paper n° 2, Travel & Tourism*¹⁸, prepared as part of a project entitled '*Enterprising Ladakh*', produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, and presented on July 2005 in Leh. The Paper seeks to identify economic opportunities available to Ladakhis in local, national and international markets.

In the "*Outcomes of the Project*" we can read: "We have tried to give a very realistic and relevant study of the Ladakh Tourism Industry and the potential it holds for the next 20 years. The demographics of the tourists have been thoroughly analysed to know which market needs to be targeted and focused upon. Through this report we have tried to address the issue of non-availability of data by extensive empirical analysis and provide a realistic view of the data that we have obtained from various sources."¹⁹

The "*Annexure 5*" in the Paper²⁰ shows tourist arrivals from 1992 to 2004 divided into domestic/international with projections from 2005 to 2020. From the method utilized to study the sector and make projections, it is possible to observe:

1) Arrivals for the years 1999 and 2002 has been omitted. Why? In my opinion, those figures (minus 44% and 59%), could invalidate the vision/paradigm of the linear and continuous growth commonly used by planners and economists to show the future potential;

2) Total projected arrivals were calculated using a linear trend at a constant annualized growth of 5.3%²¹ but none numerical evidence of this constant growth rate can be found

¹⁸ see note 2

¹⁹ ibidem, on Executive Summary, pg ii

²⁰ Refer to the Annexure 1 of this essay, last page

²¹ Tourism Policy and Development in Ladakh, by L. Thinles, Deputy Director Tourism, Leh, recorded an increase of 5.6% in tourist arrivals in spite of all available data from the Department confirm an oscillation, since 1985 till 2000, around an average of 16700

in the data recorded by the Tourist Department (see Diagram 1 or column “Total” on Annexure 1);

3) The proportion between international and domestic arrivals was clearly converging for many years (see Diagram 3). The historical sequence for the ratio of international/domestic arrivals showed that it was trending down (see Diagram 4) from 7,7 in 1991 to 1,6 in 2004 (to 0,6 on 2009) but a constant ratio of 2,04 is applied to calculate the projections up to 2020 with the inflow supposing the prevalence of internationals on domestics as a constant pattern for future references.

4) In the Working Paper around 79.000 total arrivals are estimated to be reached on 2020 but it has been achieved during 2009 (Diagram 9).

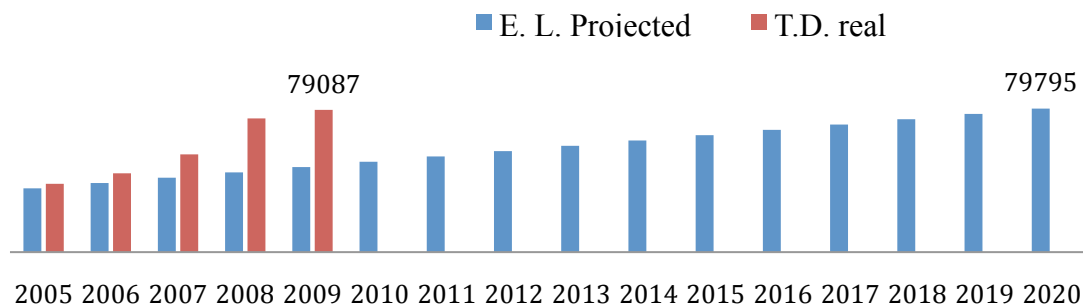


Diagram 9

5) Comparing projection with the real data for years 2005 to 2009 (see Annexure 1) we can observe that scenario for international arrivals are realistic but not for domestic inflow. An important factor not taken into consideration is the new trend in the domestic tourism industry all over India due to the rampant Indian economy which provides bigger travelling budgets to many Indian families.

Is the well-known Butler²² concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution and the implications for the management of resources applicable in Leh District?

total arrivals; pg 24, Workshop Report, Ecotourism Opportunities in Rural Ladakh, May 2nd – 4th May, 2001, LEDeG Centre, Leh, Ladakh, Organized by The Mountain Institute (TMI), Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG); Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)

²² Butler, R. W. 1980. The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: implications for management of resources. Canadian Geographer 24:5-12

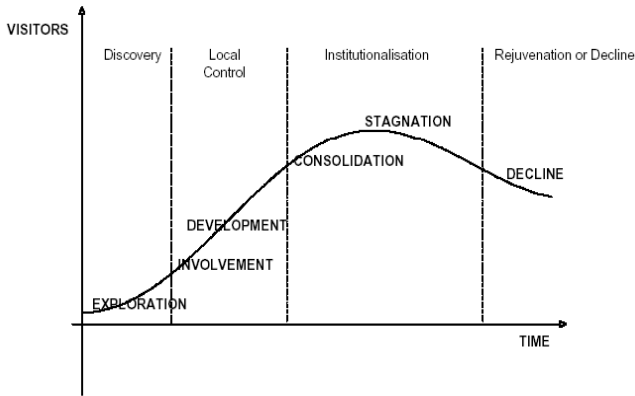


Diagram 10

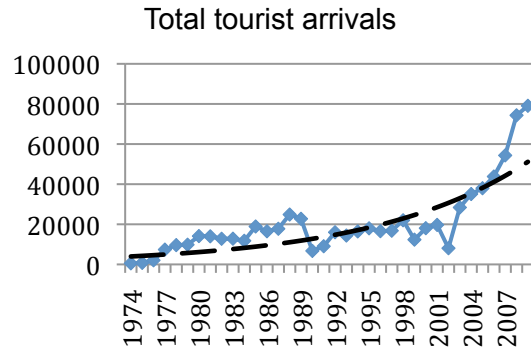


Diagram 11

If we superimpose the Leh District demography curve (Diagram 11) over the Butler theoretic curve (Diagram 10) we can state that the tourism industry in the District has already passed through the “Exploration” phase and has progressed to the “Development Involvement” but any indications can be extrapolated from the available data regarding the duration of each phase and the time of the changes. So it is necessary to handle with care existing data and the consequent interpretation as false projections would be similar to reading a misleading crystal ball.

4. Conclusions

Correct analysis on available statistical annual data on tourism traffic volume shows that Tourism System in Leh District is “**complex and non-linear**”. The system conveys a “**non resilient**” market dependent from several factors or different issues (see page iii), not under local control, that can occur at unpredictable time and determine the “growth” or the “fall” of the annual tourist inflow.

Moreover policy makers, administrators and planners sometimes attempt to gloss over important data and events, in order to promote a simple linear vision of the development of the area. Cautiously scaling up tourist arrivals, to contribute to the economic and social well being of the people of this district, is a big challenge because heavy economic and monetary dependence on only one, although promising, sector can be problematic for the sustainability of the local development process.

Therefore there is a need for a future scientific/practical assessment, supported by statistical analysis, on the “quantity and quality” of tourism industry that Ladakh can handle without getting into the social and environmental problems that many other tourist destinations in India have experienced.

Annexure 1: Tourist Arrivals in Leh District

Recorded arrivals by Tourist Dept.			
Year	Intern.	Domest.	Total
1974	500	27	527
1975	650	128	778
1976	1798	253	2051
1977	7127	266	7393

1978	8748	873	9621			
1979	9213	621	9834			
1980	13104	1013	14117			
1981	14000	NA	NA			
1982	12786	NA	NA			
1983	12833	NA	NA			
1984	11785	NA	NA			
1985	12245	6666	18911			
1986	12828	3683	16511			
1987	13668	4114	17782			
1988	16256	8608	24864			
1989	16079	6669	22748			
1990	6342	396	6738	Recorded Data Used by Enterprising Ladakh		
1991	8014	1041	9055	International	Domestic	Total
1992	13580	2438	16018	13580	2438	16018
1993	12401	2000	14401	12401	2000	14401
1994	14369	2080	16449	14369	2080	16449
1995	12391	5594	17985	12391	5594	17985
1996	13036	3537	16573	13036	3537	16573
1997	12810	3991	16801	12810	3991	16801
1998	15229	6767	21996	15229	6767	21996
1999	10234	2110	12344	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>
2000	11828	6227	18055	11828	6227	18055
2001	15439	4260	19699	15439	4260	19699
2002	5120	2959	8079	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>	<i>nil</i>
2003	15362	13031	28393	15362	13031	28393
2004	21608	13483	35091	21608	13483	35091
				Projections by Enterprising Ladakh		
2005	24536	13444	37980	23824	11640	35464
2006	26114	17707	43821	25810	12610	38420
2007	28178	26168	54346	27794	13580	41375
2008	35311	39023	74334	29780	14550	44330
2009	30570	48517	79087	31766	15520	47286
2010				33750	16490	50241
2011				35736	17460	53196
2012				37721	18430	56152
2013				39706	19400	59107
2014				41692	20370	62063
2015				43677	21341	65018
2016				45663	22311	67973
2017				47648	23281	70929
2018				49634	24251	73884
2019				51619	25221	76839
2020				53604	26191	79795

A Letter From the Dalai Lama
—John Bray and Tsering D. Gonkatsang

The letter in the illustration below was published by the Moravian missionary scholar A.H. Francke in *Geistesleben in Tibet* (1925). In this book Francke presents a selection of his Ladakhi and Tibetan research findings to a general audience. However, he does not discuss this particular text in any detail beyond stating that it is a 19th century letter from the Dalai Lama to the Ladakhi authorities, and that it was transmitted via the regular trade caravan between Lhasa and Ladakh. He also notes that it acknowledges gifts sent from Ladakh, and draws attention to the Dalai Lama's large red seal at the bottom of the text.

The letter is of special interest to the present authors because it complements our earlier article on "Three 19th Century Documents from Tibet and the *lo phyag* (Lopchak) mission from Leh to Lhasa".²³ In this essay we place the letter in its wider historical context, present a translation of the text, and show how it relates to our previous research.

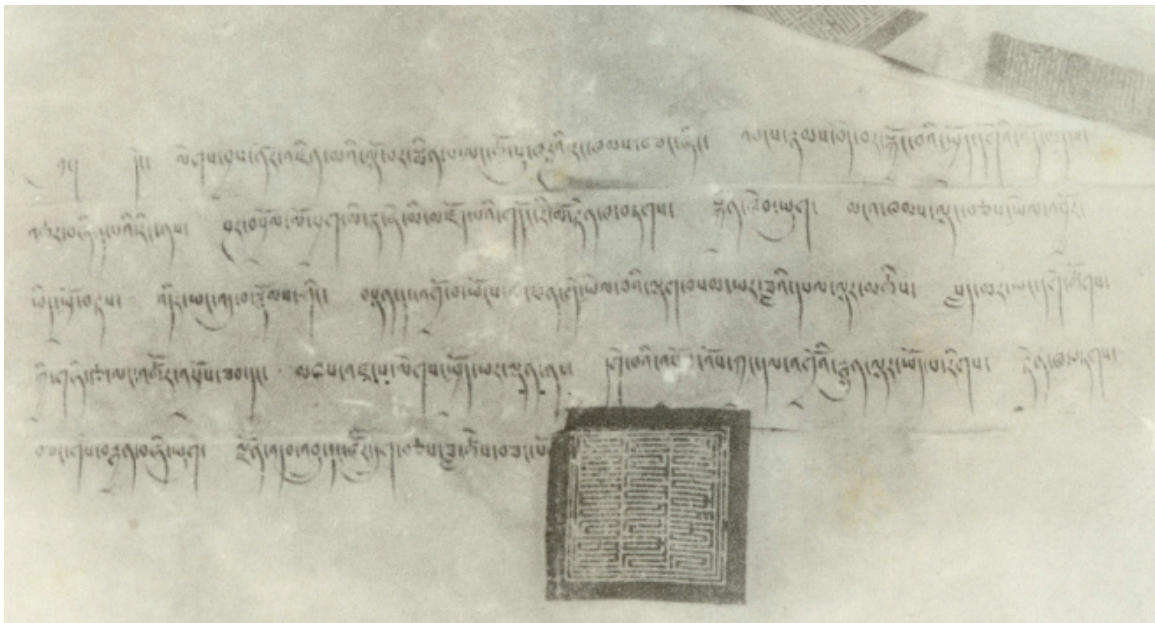


Fig.1. Letter from the Dalai Lama, reproduced in Francke (1925).

The *lo phyag* and La *dvags gzhung tshong* missions

As will be seen below, a close reading of the letter shows that it refers to gifts presented through the offices of the treasurer of Hemis monastery (*He mi mdzod pa gdong*) as part of the *lo phyag* (Lopchak mission) from Ladakh to Lhasa.

The *lo phyag* was set up under the provisions of the 1684 Treaty of Temisgang between Ladakh and Tibet, which followed the Ladakh-Tibet-Mughal war.²⁴ Under the terms of

²³ Bray & Gongkatsang (2009).

²⁴ See the bibliography below for a select list of books and articles referring to the *lo phyag*.

the treaty, Ladakh ceded control of what is now Western Tibet. At the same time it agreed to send a prescribed set of gifts to the Treasurer of the Office of the Dalai Lama every three years. According to the *La dvags rgyal rabs* (the Ladakh royal chronicle), these were:

ten *thur zho* of gold;
ten *srang* of perfume (saffron);
six rolls of cloth of Hor (Mughal or Mongol) manufacture; and
one roll of *bab-sta* (soft cotton) cloth.²⁵

Lo-phyag has often been translated as 'Annual Salutation' or similar. However, given that the mission set out at three-yearly intervals rather than annually, Zahiruddin Ahmad argues that a more appropriate translation is the 'Salutation of the New Year'.²⁶ The leaders of the Ladakh *lo phyag* attended the second day of the Tibetan government's New Year celebrations in an official capacity.

The official leader of the *lo phyag* was generally a Buddhist dignitary representing the king of Ladakh but, according to 19th and 20th century sources, the practical management of the mission was in the hands of Muslim merchants. The *lo phyag* benefited from compulsory transport labour (*'u-lag/begar*) amounting to the provision of 200 animals by Ladakhi and Tibetan villagers en route, and the fact that transport costs were covered meant that the mission was particularly profitable for the traders who took part. The last *lo phyag* of which we have any record travelled to Lhasa in 1945/1946, and was led by Kalon Rigzin.²⁷

A reciprocal Tibetan government mission travelled to Ladakh every year, carrying tea and other trade goods: its arrival was timed to coincide with the Ladakhi New Year. The Tibetan mission was known as the *La dvags gzhung tshong*. The leader of the mission was known as the *cha ba*, or tea person, a reference to the tea that it carried.

A large number of monks, private traders and other local leaders also accompanied the *lo phyag* mission. Hemis monastery had special privileges, and was entitled to *'u lag* provisions amounting to 60 luggage ponies, five riding ponies, and five riding yaks when travelling on official missions through Tibet.²⁸ A representative of Hemis travelled to Lhasa with the 1945/1946 mission.²⁹

The presentation of formal gifts was a key aspect of both the *lo phyag* and the *la gzhung tshong* missions. In addition to the gifts to the Dalai Lama's government prescribed by treaty, the leaders of the *lo phyag* mission presented further symbolic gifts to leading monasteries en route. The *gzhung tshong* carried a return set of presents, notably

²⁵ Ahmad (1968), p. 354, citing the *La dvags rgyal rabs*.

²⁶ Ibid. As noted in Francke's caption to the illustration in *Geistesleben in Tibet*, it seems that for some periods in the 20th century the *lo phyag* travelled to Lhasa every other year instead of once every three years.

²⁷ Lhasa Letter for week ending 3rd March 1946. British Library Oriental and Indian Office Collection (OIOC), L/P&S/12/4202.

²⁸ Kar Begar in Ladakh. Copy of a letter No. 1387 of 19-12-1901 from the Settlement Officer Baltistan and Ladakh to the Settlement Commissioner, Jammu & Kashmir state. Leh government archives.

²⁹ Lhasa letter for week ending 10th February 1946. OIOC, L/P&S/12/4202.

including tea, cloth and sacred pills for the king of Ladakh. Many of the monks, merchants and aristocrats who took part in the mission gave and received symbolic presents on their own account.

The three documents in the Jammu & Kashmir archives

The three texts discussed in our 2009 article fit into this pattern of gift-giving. All three are now in the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) archives in Jammu.³⁰

The first text is written in flowing *dbu med* script and consists of a receipt from the Tibetan government to Kalon Tshupal (presumably a member of the Kalon family in Changspa) in the Water Monkey year (1872). The receipt lists the gifts of *kha btags* (ceremonial scarves), and the gold, saffron and cloth prescribed for the *lo phyag* in the 1684 treaty. It is accompanied by the small seal illustrated below.



Fig 2. Seal on the 1872 *lo phyag* receipt (enlarged).

A similar seal appears in a document from the Earth Tiger Year (1878) in the Digital Tibetan Archives Material at Bonn University where it is ascribed to the *rtse 'phral bde las khung*.³¹ This office was located at the Potala, and its main responsibilities included attending to any requisitions made on behalf of the Dalai Lama.

The other two documents are both addressed to W.H. Johnson, who served Maharajah Ranbir Singh as *wazir* of Ladakh from the early 1870s until 1883. The first is from a senior lama: it acknowledges gifts sent by Johnson, and sends return presents of a *kha btags* and three bricks of Chinese tea. The second is a similar text acknowledging a present of a *kha btags* and a pair of brown shoes/boots. It sends a *kha btags* in return. Both letters are written in very flowery language.

The Dalai Lama's letter

This letter is written in a fine ornamental *'bru tsa* letters rather than the everyday *u med* script used in the three documents in the J&K archive. However, there appear to be some spelling errors, and it was most likely written by a government scribe rather than the Dalai Lama himself. One peculiar feature of this letter is the use of spacing instead of a *shad* to mark the end of a sentence. Our reading of the text is as follows.³²

³⁰ We gratefully acknowledge Martijn van Beek's kindness in sharing photocopies of the three documents.

³¹ The Bonn document's reference number is: 0603_AA_1_1_60. See: www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/tibdoc/php/sct_show.php?groupid=63.

³² Letters in square brackets represent suggested corrections to suspected spelling errors by the original scribe.

(header mark)³³ deng legs byas nor 'dzin mai' lto bar smin pa lang tsho su warNa'i³⁴ rang khams bzang zhing 'bangs rnams bde bar skyong ba'i spyod dgai' 'od mdangs

'char bzhin pa'i ring nas sngar [b]srol lo phyag mi sna he mi mdzod pa'i gdong ri mo³⁵ rten kha btags sky[a]n kheb yug mnga' kham[s] ltang³⁶ bcas spel 'byor

yid spro brtas 'dir yang 'du ba snyoms shing bstan dang 'gro ba yongs la phan bde spel ba'i lhag bsam yar zla'i dpal ltar³⁷ mchis slad mar yang dge tshogs

kyi gzhi rtsa langs 'tshor 'phros zab dang mkhas mdzangs legs spyod yar ldan nas dge ba'i 'phros 'os kyang dal 'gro'i rgyun ltar yod pa rigs rten kha btags

bzang [ga]s³⁸ [b]rgyan³⁹ bzhi yug ljon 'dab 'bru dang [khor] drug bcas zla tshes bzang por.

The letter uses formal language, with figurative expressions that are often hard to interpret. We offer the following liberal translation:

Recently, whilst enjoying good health of the worldly body attained through past good karma and radiating the brilliant light of [your] noble deeds in sustaining the subjects in peace and happiness, [you] had despatched through the Treasurer of Hemis, in accordance with the *lo phyag* mission custom: a symbolic token of *kha btags*, a bolt of *skyan kheb*,⁴⁰ [and] a bale of apricots from Ngari, that were received with great delight/pleasure.

Here, too, [my] constitution is in good harmony/balance with [my] altruistic motivation to promote the well-being of the Buddha Dharma and the benefit of sentient beings, in ascendance like the rising moon.

In future, too, kindly take good care of your health which is the basis of undertaking virtuous actions, and with your scholarship, wisdom and noble activities in ascendance, keep me posted/updated like the continual flow of the river about any worthy concerns [that you deem fit].

With a token *kha btags*, four bolts of quality brocade, loose tea leaves and packets of *khor-duk* tea-cones/bricks,

On the auspicious date and month. SEAL

As noted above, the gifts listed in the 1872 *lo phyag* receipt in the Jammu archive correspond with those in the 1684 treaty, showing that the treaty's provisions were followed in close detail some two centuries later. By contrast, this letter lists a different set of gifts - for example there is no reference to gold or saffron - and it must therefore refer to a supplementary set of presents.

³³ *Dbu khyud*, marking the start of the text

³⁴ *Su warNa* - meaning 'golden' in Sanskrit, here referring to 'your golden health' etc.

³⁵ *ri mo* - token

³⁶ *ltang* - bale or sack

³⁷ *yar zla'i dpal ltar* - like the glory of the waxing moon.

³⁸ *bzang gos* - quality brocade

³⁹ *brgyan* - spelling should be *rgyan* meaning decoration and not *brgyan*

⁴⁰ *skyin khab* - possibly Chinese satin

The outside of the letter, which is not shown in the photograph, would presumably have given the full title of the intended recipient. Francke states that the letter is addressed to the Ladakhi authorities, but does not give further details. From the text available to us, it is not clear whether the Treasurer of Hemis had presented the gifts as a representative of his own monastery or of the secular authorities of Ladakh. Hemis was in any case closely identified with the kings of Ladakh, having been founded through the sponsorship of King Senge Namgyal in the 17th century. Although the letter reportedly was written on an auspicious day – perhaps the 8th or the 15th of the Tibetan month - we do not know the precise date or year.

The seal

By contrast with the 1871 receipt, the large seal makes clear that the letter is written in the name of the Dalai Lama himself, rather than one of the offices that reported to him. In the top right of Francke's photograph we can see what appears to be a strip of cotton, evidently marked with the same seal, and this was presumably used to wrap the letter.

The seal is written in the *'phags pa* script, which was developed by the Tibetan monk 'gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa for the Chinese Emperor in the 13th century. Although the script was never widely accepted, the Tibetans continued to use it on seal inscriptions and on currency notes until the 20th century.



Fig.3. Enlarged image of the Dalai Lama's seal

The Bonn University database contains an image showing another impression of the same seal, ⁴¹ and notes that it dates back to 1578 when Sonam Gyatso, the Third Dalai Lama, converted the Mongol ruler Altan Khan to Buddhism. On the same occasion Altan Khan conferred him with the title 'Tale Lama' ('Ocean of Wisdom') and gave him the seal. According to the database, examples of different impressions of the seal are known from between 1642 and 1899, during the reigns of the Fifth to the Thirteenth Dalai Lamas.

⁴¹ www.dtab.uni-bonn.de. Reference No. 0835_LTWA_27, page 7. The database cross-refers to Schuh (1981), p. 7.

Francke was the first Western scholar to decipher the 'Phags pa text on the Dalai Lama's seal, drawing on a single-sheet wood-print discovered in Ladakh which served as 'a kind of abridged primer' of the script.⁴² The transcription reads *rdo rje 'chang ta la'i bla ma yi tham ka rgyal* meaning the 'Victorious Seal of the Vajradhara Dalai Lama'.

The use of the seal, together with the ornate script and honorific language, suggest that the Dalai Lama attached some considerable importance to his relationship with the Ladakhi authorities.

Conclusion

Although Ladakh never came under the political authority of the Dalai Lamas, it long enjoyed close religious and commercial relations with Tibet. For 260 years, the *lo phyag* missions played a key role in sustaining those relationships.

As discussed, the basis of the *lo phyag* was a formal treaty between the Ladakhi and Tibetan governments. However, besides official government representatives, a number of monks, merchants and representatives of leading families took part in the *lo phyag*, and the giving and receiving of presents was a key part of the rituals that accompanied it. Other examples of such gift-giving include:

- An 18th century letter recently published by Dieter Schuh lists a series of presents sent to the monastery of Drigung and to the Karmapa, apparently as part of the *lo phyag* mission.⁴³
- In 1921, Francke noted that Tibetan missions from Lhasa regularly brought a symbolic present of tea for the nearly defunct bKa-od-che monastery near Spituk.⁴⁴
- Senior lay people also seem to have participated in these exchanges. For example, Nono Tsetan Phuntsog, who came from an aristocratic family in Sabu, reportedly exchanged salutation letters with the 13th Dalai Lama via the *lo phyag* in the early 20th century.⁴⁵

The Dalai Lama's letter therefore constitutes one small but significant piece in the wider fabric of the historical relationships between Ladakh and Tibet. It is quite likely that further similar texts survive in private houses and monasteries in Ladakh. The recording and study of all such documentary evidence remains one of the major tasks for present and future historians of the region.

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⁴² Francke (1910).

⁴³ Schuh (2008), p. 330.

⁴⁴ Francke (1921), p. 167.

⁴⁵ Interview with Mrs Sungkil Phuntsog, Tsetan Phuntsog's widow, 29 September 2008.

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15th IALS Conference, Aberdeen, Scotland, 24–28 August 2011

Call for papers

We are pleased to announce that the 15th Conference of the International Association for Ladakh Studies will be held at the University of Aberdeen from 24 to 28 August 2011. The central theme of the conference is defined as 'Responding to Climate, Biodiversity and Resource Changes in Ladakh and elsewhere in the Western Himalaya'. We hope, as always, to make this a multidisciplinary event, where scholars from different fields may interact fruitfully.

Ladakh, together with the adjacent Western Himalayan regions of Baltistan, Lahaul, Spiti and Western Tibet, has for much of the last century existed on an unstable fault line between crucial cultural, religious and political blocs of South and Central Asia. Lying in the rain-shadow of the Greater Himalaya, these regions are now experiencing freak weather events more associated with the Indian monsoon. Centred on the Indus Valley, the region, which is also home to rare species of flora and fauna constituting a globally important biodiversity, has been substantially affected by recent economic development and population shifts occurring all along the Himalayan massif, and faces a challenging future. Changes in climate, rainfall and biodiversity have had a dramatic impact on human habitation, resource use and the prospects for cultural and economic development in the area and its environs.

This conference will bring together a multidisciplinary range of scholars, scientists and local specialists to examine not only the changes themselves, but the social, economic and political responses to them. Because of the complex and multi-faceted nature of the processes and challenges associated with this theme, the conference will be organized according to a series of sub-themes:

- Development and its relationship with biodiversity, natural resource use and conservation;
- Climatology and hydrology;
- Medicine, health, and ethno-botany;
- Migration and socio-economic change;
- Indigenous responses to change;
- Cultural change and heritage conservation;
- Cultural, religious, and political responses to these changes.

For a fuller exposition of the conference theme, please see the conference statement below. While the conference organizers will give priority to papers addressing the various aspects of the conference theme, we also welcome papers on more general topics associated with the study of Ladakh. We invite a range of analyses from various disciplinary perspectives (historical, art-historical, anthropological, sociological, ecological, medical, political, geographical and geological) to shed light on the complex and shifting relationships between Ladakhis and their social, economic, and political environments.

Proposals for panels relevant to these themes will be welcomed. As well as full-length papers, we welcome proposals for poster displays, and short papers or reports on research-in-progress. We also welcome proposals for films or other audio-visual presentations.

Registration fees and costs of accommodation &c. will be posted on the website <http://www.ladakhstudies.org/aberdeen2011.html> as soon as they become available.

Registration will be done after that on the website, where payment can also be made through our PayPal account.

We hope to be able to arrange part- or full-funding for some participants from Ladakh or elsewhere in South Asia whose papers have been accepted, but whose means would not permit them to attend the Conference without a subsidy. Preference will be given to those proposing full-length papers. Applicants for funding will be required to submit a full draft of their paper as well as an abstract.

Deadlines for submissions:

- 1 February 2011: last date for receipt of abstracts from applicants seeking funding.
- 1 March 2011: last date for receipt of draft papers from applicants seeking funding.
- 1 April 2011: last date for receipt of abstracts from all participants; last date for decision on papers by applicants seeking funding.
- 1 May 2011: last date for decision on presentations by all applicants.

We should like to point out that it is in the interests of all participants, especially those from South Asia, to submit their abstracts and papers well before these deadlines so that the conference committee can reach its decisions early, in order to leave time for organizing passports, visas, &c., and to make travel bookings far enough in advance to take advantage of lower airfares.

Membership of the IALS is essential for participating in the Conference, and papers will be accepted only from paid-up members. You can join the IALS and pay all membership and conference fees using PayPal at our website www.ladakhstudies.org. There will also be provision for local guests to sign up as members and pay the registration fee at the conference. Current IALS annual membership fees are INR 400 for citizens of India and South Asia countries; and UKP 14, Euro 20 or USD 30 for international members. Full-time students receive two years' membership with a single year's subscription.

Guidelines for submission of papers

All submissions will be screened before acceptance. Please submit your abstracts (300–500 words) or draft papers (2000–4000 words) (if you are requesting funding) as double-spaced Word documents, by e-mail to submissions@ladakhstudies.org. Abstracts should include name and title/affiliation of the participant, and a summary of the paper's main arguments.

All abstracts/papers should be in English. Papers submitted must present an original argument and substantive analysis, rather than merely repeating or summarizing findings already published elsewhere. They should adhere to formal scholarly standards, citing all sources and secondary literature consulted in the research as appropriate. Final papers should include footnotes and a bibliography and be edited, spell-checked, and otherwise proofed before they are presented or submitted for funding review.

Papers should fit in one of two slots:

- Longer Papers (15–20 minutes or 3000–4000 words) with 10–15 minutes for discussion.

- Shorter Papers (10 minutes or up to 2000 words) with 5 minutes for discussion.

Any films are to be sent as DVDs by post or courier, with an email address and a short paper describing the merits of the film to the following two addresses:

1. Janet Rizvi, F-2601 Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, 122017, Haryana, India. Please mark the outer cover 'IALS, Aberdeen 2011'. And
2. Kim Gutschow, Hollander Hall, Williams College, 85 Mission Park Drive, Williamstown, MA 01267, USA.

DVDs will not be returned. Presenters using power-point are reminded that slides are a useful adjunct for displaying headings, tables, or pictures that support the text; but that they do not substitute for the presenters' own words.

In order to allow as much time as possible for discussion, we invite the writers of papers to 'present' their paper (indicating the trend of its argument and highlighting the more important pieces of evidence) rather than 'reading' their paper (in its entirety). We plan to provide a space on the website, accessible only to conference participants, where papers may be posted for circulation before the Conference. Alternatively, presenters may bring a number of hard copies of their papers for distribution at the conference. The organizers will make every effort to publish all or most of the proceedings of the Conference, but can make no commitment in respect of any particular presentation.

Guidelines for applicants for funding

Please indicate at the time of submitting your abstract if you want to be considered for funding. Please also indicate whether you are applying for funding to any other source. The Association will gladly provide letters of reference endorsing such applications, or applications for departmental clearances &c. Requests for such letters should be made as early as possible.

Decisions about funding will be based in the first place on the quality of the draft paper submitted. Eligible applicants will be required to furnish personal details such as age; educational qualification; occupation; and some indication of their financial circumstances to show why they may not be able to attend the conference without financial help. All information relating to an applicant's personal finances will of course be kept strictly confidential.

It will be some months before we have any idea (a) how much money is available for funding individuals; and (b) how many applicants for funding there are. In order to make the best and most equitable use of available funds, we may give preference to those who are prepared to meet a proportion of their expenses from their own resources. We hope that this will not preclude our giving full funding in cases of genuine need.

Martin Mills
Convener

Janet Rizvi
Secretary

September 2010

15th IALS Conference Statement: Aberdeen, Scotland, 24–28 August 2011

—Janet Rizvi and Martin Mills

Throughout its history, the ruling powers, cultures and populations of Ladakh and the Western Himalaya have had to contend with difficult terrains, variable natural resources, and changing patterns of climate, disease and biodiversity, of which recent natural disasters such as this year's Leh-area floods are merely one example. Both at a local and regional level, human responses to these changing conditions have helped to shape the society, economy and religions that we know today. Trade routes have shifted in response to shifts in rivers, the availability of passes and the vagaries of local climate. Villages and towns have expanded, contracted and been extinguished in response to the availability (or over-abundance) of water and the possibilities of agriculture and nomadism. Royal families, governments and religious and medical institutions have responded to the needs of populations struck by diseases, floods and earthquakes as much as they have to the possibilities of new products and trading conditions. These responses have included everything from the performance of rituals for both wealth and adversity, the development of medical institutions and practices, the provision of tax breaks, the negotiation of treaties and the siting and architecture of towns, palaces, and monasteries. In more recent times, the protection of archaeological and art-historical treasures have also focused minds on the questions of the region's distinctive climatic conditions.

As well as being a standard IALS meeting with its usual range of papers, the 2011 conference in Aberdeen wishes to encourage participants to focus their regional expertise on the broad questions of (i) the actual nature and conditions of environment and landscape that influence life in the region, and (ii) how people respond and have responded to a changing and often extreme climate and landscape, at a social, economic, religious and political level. In this regard, the conference can include papers aimed at understanding this issue in three frames: firstly, the historical frame; secondly, the conditions and responses presently at work in the region; and thirdly, the possibilities for the future. It is envisaged that addressing this issue in its fullness will require expertise from all fields of academic study— anthropology, archaeology, art-history, epidemiology, history, hydrology, medicine, political science, religious studies, sociology—whilst also maintaining that distinctive interaction between international and local perspectives and scholarship that is, and always has been the hallmark of the International Association for Ladakh Studies.

The conference theme, 'Responding to Climate, Biodiversity and Resource Changes in Ladakh and elsewhere in the Western Himalaya' is intended to attract papers that will address the relationship between biodiversity and its ecological, social, historical, and political contexts. We also welcome papers on other Ladakh-related themes, as well as papers on the central theme but relating to other Himalayan regions.

The interdisciplinary nature of the theme is intended to shed light from many different perspectives on pressing questions of environmental and human sustainability in the face of dramatic economic and political transformations. We welcome presentations that explore issues of biodiversity and conservation by embedding their scientific analyses within political, economic, historical, or cultural processes. Our theme encourages analyses that deconstruct the false distinction between nature and culture, biology and society, or politics and science, in order to provoke a deeper understanding of how these themes and their divergent discourses are related within Ladakh. As such, it challenges

the distinctions between disciplines that create artificial divisions, thus obscuring the fundamentally dialogic relationship between nature and culture, or environment and politics, in this part of South Asia. Because of the complex and multi-faceted nature of the processes and challenges associated with this theme, the conference will be organised according to a series of sub-themes:

- Development and its relationship with biodiversity, natural resource use and conservation;
- Climatology and hydrology;
- Medicine, health, and ethno-botany;
- Migration and socio-economic change;
- Indigenous responses to change;
- Cultural change and heritage conservation;
- Cultural, religious, and political responses to these changes.

In the global imagination – from scholarly discourses to travel writings – Ladakh has exemplified the myth of ‘pristine nature’. This construction has fuelled a considerable travel industry while recasting its various subcultures or communities as tourist attractions. Among other topics, the conference will examine how this industry, development in general, and other drivers of change—e.g. enhanced natural resource use, the warming climate—affect the biological and socio-cultural diversity of Ladakh. It will explore how discourses of biodiversity or conservation may have served to create and/or reinforce perceptions of ‘nature’ and ‘purity’ that further disenfranchise populations either by relegating them to the margins of science, or by reinventing them as ‘primitive’ and ‘primordial’.

This conference will explore the complex field of the ‘biosocial’ in Ladakh by asking how global discourses shape, or help produce, perceptions of nature, culture, biodiversity, and sustainability among the Ladakhi people. How, and in what ways, have discourses of biodiversity and conservation reconfigured social relationships in Ladakh in recent history? How do multiple actors within the household, village, district, or any of the governmental and non-governmental bodies perceive the intersections between people and their environment and with what ecological, political and social consequences? How do such perspectives differ across boundaries of class, caste, religion, gender and ethnicity?

Call for Participation: www.ladakhstudies.org

If you are not aware of our website, or if you haven't had a look for a while, please have a quick browse when you are next online.

ladakhstudies.org represents the IALS online, raises the profile of the IALS and its conferences and publications, serves as a 'shop front' to recruit new members, and offers new and existing members services such as online subscription payment, conference registration and Ladakh news and events updates. There is even space for members to publicise their new book or post interesting photographs or short essays.

The website currently receives over 700 visits a month of which 400 are unique visitors. The bulk of visits are from India, followed by the UK, Germany, USA, Denmark, Switzerland and France. Nearly 50% of traffic originates from search engines, 25% from referring sites and the remaining 25% is direct traffic. Aside from our homepage the most visited website content is the Gallery, followed by Publications, News, and our Aberdeen Conference page, the latter receiving 96 unique visitors in the last month.

I am constantly looking for ways to improve the website and the website design and content is being updated this autumn with a view to streamlining the copy and improving the layout and formatting. I am always keen to hear from anyone who has suggestions or would like to contribute to this process.

I am especially interested to receive regular content for our news and events page. Whilst there are currently several good websites that regularly post Ladakh news stories there is a niche for the IALS website to post more unusual stories, perhaps with commentary from informed IALS members, along with forthcoming events and reports of events attended by members.

I am also keen to illustrate the website with more images of Ladakh, and I am particularly short of photos from Kargil area. Indeed, if there are any budding photographers in Kargil with a digital camera please email me any landscape or cultural pictures that you would be happy to have published online. I am also keen to receive content for our Gallery and Essay page.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Seb Mankelow

Email: webmaster@ladakhstudies.org

Little harvest, less land to till

—*Tashi Morup*

[Previously published on Down To Earth 2010-10-31]

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/node/2066>



Floods destroyed agricultural land in 15 villages along the Indus (Tashi Morup)

Two months after a cloudburst and floods destroyed their crops and land, hundreds of farmers in Leh are struggling to make a living. Farmlands in the district of Ladakh are covered with thick layers of dried mud and boulders.

Stanzin Dorjey, 48, of Taru village, one of the worst affected by floods, could not reap any yield from his fields. His 1.4 hectares (ha) of land was damaged by flash floods that followed the worst cloudburst in Ladakh on August 6. Dorjey used to earn over a lakh rupees by growing wheat, barley, pulses and peas but now he is forced to work as a labourer. Similar is the story of the 74 households in Taru and 14 other worstaffected villages along the north bank of the Indus river. The cloudburst in the Himalayan town has left people skeptical about their future. “We were at the peak of progress, with every house having electricity and water supply.

Suddenly it took us several decades back,” said a Taru resident. Others like Sonam Wangchuk, a farmer at Tia village, are scared to live in the area and want the government to provide alternative accommodation. Floods destroyed 1,500 ha of agricultural land, showed an assessment of the 15 worst-affected villages by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The report added that with most of the land under debris and boulders, resumption of farming will be difficult, making those solely dependent on it, vulnerable. The administration is yet to prepare a concrete plan to help people reclaim their land. Officials from the agriculture and soil conservation department who assessed the nature and extent of the damage have divided the affected land into three categories. The division is based on the amount of debris accumulated on the land: less than three feet (A), between three and five feet (B) and more than five feet (C).

Sonam Wangchuk is scared to live in Tia village. He wants the government to give alternative accommodation. Debris can only be removed mechanically. The department officials estimate it would cost Rs 3 lakh for clearing one ha of land under category A, Rs 4 lakh under category B, while it is not feasible to remove hardened mud in fields under category C. The total cost of clearing debris from 900 ha of fields would be crores of rupees. The administration has no funds except Rs 300 per kanal (1 kanal = 0.0496 ha) under the Calamity Relief Fund. "Rs 300 per kanal is peanuts in recovering the agricultural land buried under thick mud and boulder," said S S Kapoor, cabinet secretary, Jammu and Kashmir.

In Taru, the administration is clearing debris using the Prime Minister National Relief Fund. The challenge is to clear the land for fresh crop before winter arrives, which seems impossible given that only a few machines are at work. For some like Lobzang Thinless, the wait may be longer. He lost a fifth of his 0.8 ha, but the government's priority is to provide relief to farmers who lost all their land.

Another concern is that flash floods could be regular in Leh due to increased levels of humidity. The Defense Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) analysed the weather data for the past five years. It found bright sunshine during June and July was melting snow and causing high relative humidity (72 per cent) as compared to previous years (50 per cent). Since snow absorbed the heat, the monthly maximum and minimum temperatures remained low and did not rise when compared to previous years, the DIHAR study said. The low temperature and high humidity led to dense low clouds. As the vapour content in the clouds was high while crossing the glaciers, they further condensed. The clouds could not retain the water and this led to the cloudburst, the study stated.

"Frequency and intensity of torrential rains have been increasing in Leh. Cloudbursts mainly occur in July or August and since the valley has loose soil, a 30 mm rain can cause havoc," Sonam Lotus, a meteorologist with the India Meteorological Department, said.

Torrential Rain and Flash Floods in Ladakh, August 2010.

—*Juliane Dame*

This report aims at giving an impression of my experience of this year's visit to Ladakh, which coincided with the catastrophic flash flood events. It thus does not claim to be exhaustive, but is a note from the field, which gives a glimpse on what has happened. All facts and details included are based on my own impressions and personal communication unless otherwise mentioned.

It is strange to remember the small talk on the bus to the plane in the early morning at Delhi airport. An Indian tourist guide accompanying tourists to Ladakh was asked about the weather in Ladakh. As some travelers had heard of friends cancelling a trek due to precipitation a few weeks before, they doubted how their own plans would turn out. The guide explained in length that it *never* rains in Ladakh. I was too tired to comment more than: "It does. And if it rains, it rains" to the tourist sitting next to me who hesitated smiling back. But I remembered the 2006 floods and my trekking plans that needed to be cancelled in August 2008 after rains had destroyed some bridges. Albeit the generally arid conditions in Leh district, a small peak of precipitation is during the summer, so I was again expecting some drops. But nobody could imagine this year's August rains and its catastrophic outcome.

According to current news from the district's official website (<http://leh.nic.in/>, accessed on 16.09.2010), 233 people including 7 international tourists have lost their life in the flash floods on August 5th and 6th, 79 persons are still missing. About 1400 hectares of land have been destroyed and around 1200 houses have been partially or completely damaged. The events have turned things upside down.

What has happened? Shortly after the arrival in Leh, the first night of thunderstorms (4th to 5th August) let us wake up and wonder about the loud noise of thunderstorms and rainfall on the guesthouse's corrugated sheet roofs. I had not known such thunderstorms from Ladakh. The next morning, our host family informed us about flash floods in Nimo and Nye/Basgo. The following night (Thursday 5th to Friday 6th August), we again woke up by the extremely strong thunderstorms with torrential rains. I expected the glass of the window to burst and the poplars outside on the fields to break (surprisingly only one did so). The lightning was worse than what I had ever seen before. We started to check the house and found water in the basement corridor. Together with some other guests and the host family we spend two hours trying to get the water out of the house. Electricity had collapsed. We tried to get some sleep as rains got less and couldn't imagine what else had happened.

The next morning, our Ladakhi family was hysterical and stunned due to first reports on the dimension of the rains, floods and debris flows. Some rumors spread the old town being "washed away". The atmosphere in the streets was dismal, people sad and shocked and shops closed down. We checked with Leh Old Town Initiative/ Tibet Heritage Fund (LOTI/THF), but albeit some buildings had been damaged the old town was in a comparatively good shape. Water had come down from the road leading to the palace and also from Skampari side where several houses suffered damages.

Walking down towards the city gate and new bus stand area showed the catastrophic consequences of the cloudburst. In Manetselding a mudslide triggered by the rains had

come down from a small side valley and reached the road in the bend between the city gate and the bus stand. From there, the mudslide continued towards the new bus stand, BSNL offices, and Sonam Norboo Memorial (SNM) hospital. People walked up to the platform and the *gonpa* area watching down at the destruction – quietly and stunned. Until today it remains an unbelievable impression from up there. The force of the mudslide had destroyed houses and shops along the road and flattened the bus stand area. If one thinks about how busy this place generally is in the day.

Those who could tried to help as people were still looking for missing persons in the collapsed houses. In the early hours, some people had been rescued. The army had organized sniffer dogs and a bulldozer, but in the end there was not much that could be done to save lives in these afternoon hours. First trucks with megaphones passed by, announcing that the situation in Choglamsar has been even worse. They further announced that more precipitation was expected for the next 48 hours and told people to move to high points for the night. Flocks of people with blankets and little provision, gathered at Shanti Stupa, Tsemo and *gonpas* for the night - mostly under the open sky. Luckily, this night remained calm. Others constructed minor dams in front of the houses to prevent water flows from the roads (e.g. palace road, Chanspa road near the bridge). During the whole day, the army was busy to clear up the landing strip at the airport that was covered with mud and stones. Thus, on Saturday army planes reached with doctors, medicine and relief material on board. Tourists panicking to leave Ladakh fought for tickets on extra planes that had been send from Delhi on that day and the followings.

In Leh, the communication infrastructure was down. As BSNL had been flooded and the electricity net broken down, no landlines, no internet and almost no mobiles were functioning. Airtel continued to operate, but it was difficult to get the battery recharged and new money added. Everybody tried to allocate relatives and friends. As the radio station had been affected news only spread from mouth to mouth. Information from the villages reached the town through people who came to Leh on foot. It became clear quite soon, that the disaster had not only hit Leh and Choglamsar, but several Ladakhi villages including Phyang, Sabu, Taru, Shey and Igo among others (see the flood report from August 20th provided on www.reachladakh.com for a complete list). In main bazaar, LBA and Anjuman Society (among others) started to collect money and goods for relief aid.

The road network and bridges were heavily damaged. Both connections to lowland India via Srinagar and Manali remained closed. Although additional flights were sent from Delhi, the scenario at the airport was chaotic. Flights also carried relief goods (kitchen kits, hygiene kits, blankets) and other items (including packed drinking water) to Leh. It took until Sunday, that some telephone shops opened and the internet started to work, very very slowly.

In these days after the flash floods, we tried to do the best that we could. We were happy to share the guesthouse with other visitors who had a similar attitude and neither panicked and tried to leave Leh as soon as possible nor pretended that nothing had happened. We tried to be a helping hand where possible and get and distribute information where helpful (e.g. to embassies, people who lacked information about villages etc.). We mostly worked at the hospital.

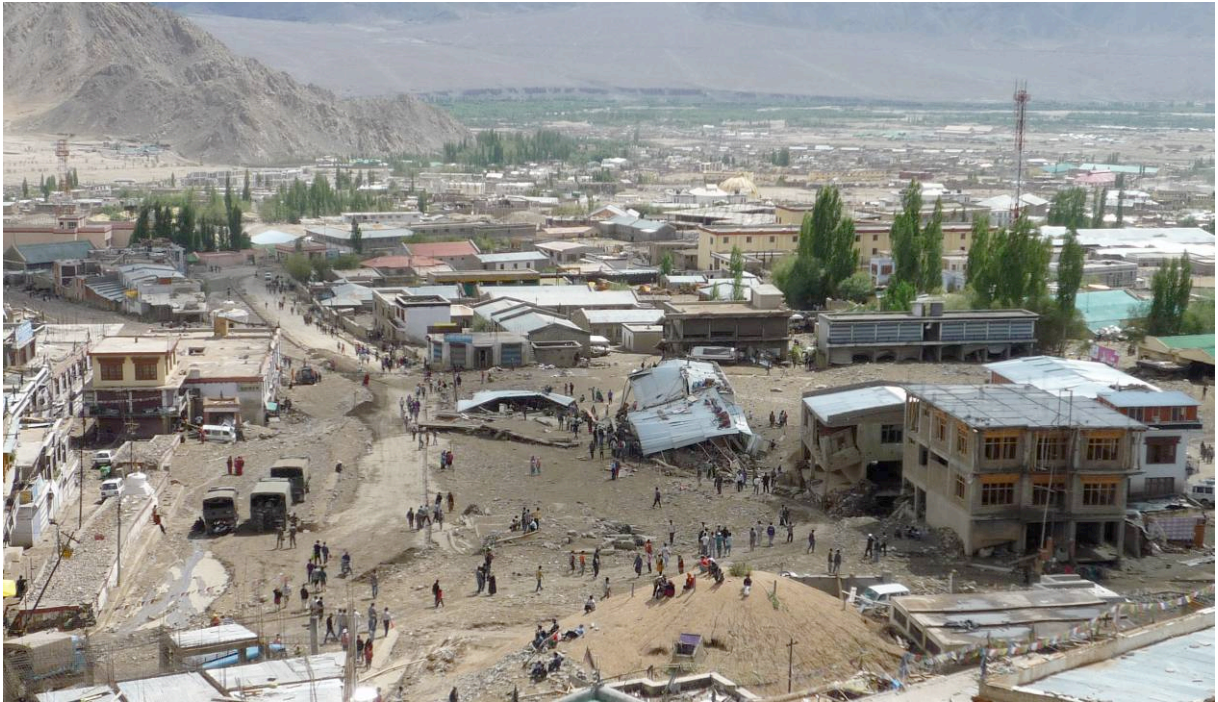
SNM Hospital in Leh suffered significantly from the mudslide. The entire hospital was filled with mud – about knee-high. Patients had been evacuated to Leh’s military hospital where the flood victims were also treated. Two tents that were put up next to the construction site for the new SNM building served as a provisional Out Patients Department (OPD). Although this new hospital building was still under construction and was filled with mud, a small section was reworked for provisional use. Tourists and Ladakhis were helping to get the mud out of this new hospital building using anything available such as bowls and even doors to doze the material out. Food and drinks were provided to the volunteers.

After a few days, the first panic calmed down, weather cleared up a bit with only eventual light rains, shops reopened, and relief aid got more and more coordinated. DC, government departments and NGOs had coordination meetings, Medicins sans frontiers (MSF), Save the Children and other agencies started their relief operations, army bulldozers cleared up roads and provisional bridges were installed. I had the chance to come along to Choglamsar where relief kits have been distributed.

I was happy to witness the progress at the hospital, see the first buses going, hear that trekkers stuck in Skyu have been rescued by helicopters (although they had to leave their guides behind) and especially to know that my friends are safe and healthy. Although superficially things started to recover bit by bit, everybody was still shocked by the events. I am lacking words for the atmosphere in town and the emotions of those who had suffered from a natural disaster that Ladakh had not experienced before. It will need some time for Ladakh to recover.



Manetselding, August 6, 2010



View of bus stand area, August 6, 2010



Choglamsar, August 11, 2010



Driving through Choglamsar, August 11, 2010



Bus stand area, August 7, 2010



Volunteers at the new hospital, August 8, 2010



Relief aid, August 11, 2010

ARRIVAL OF 20th BAKULA RINPOCHE IN HIS MONASTERY **—Sonam Wangchok**

Most Venerable Bakula Rinpoche, who passed away at the age of 86, was a distinctive Lama of great endowment and exceptional talent. Born into a noble family of Matho on 14th May, 1917 in Ladakh, India, he was recognized by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama as a reincarnation of Bakula, one of the sixteen Arhats of Shakyamuni Buddha's time. He received education in the great monastery of Drepung in Lhasa.

Kushok Bakula, the most respected Lama of Ladakh, statesman, and international diplomat of India, rendered his invaluable services and dedicated his own life for number of wellbeing and minorities' right issues of Scheduled Casts and Tribes in India. His support, passion and determination played an important role in the field of education to help the Ladakhi people to fight for their rights and sustain their own ancient Himalayan cultural heritage in the contentious political environment of the State of J&K. He was a rare combination of scholar, monk and politician, guided Ladakhi people to develop their way of life through an amalgamation of traditional and modern education. These positive qualities earned him the most deserved title "Architect of Modern Ladakh".

As an accomplished administrator and Member of Parliament, he held some of the most important posts in the Government of India, including being member of the National Minorities Commission. In 1986, in appreciation of his distinguished services of high order to the nation, the President of India awarded him the nation's second highest honour, "Padma Bhushan". In 1990, he became the Ambassador of India to Mongolia and rendered his service for over 10 years not only as ambassador but also as a guiding spirit for Mongolian people. He passed away in New Delhi on 4th November, 2004. It was a great loss to the nation and especially to the world of Buddhist community. At this moment, it was difficult for Ladakhis to imagine Ladakh without Bakula Rinpoche.

Nevertheless, to the delight of many, the identification of a two year old boy, Stanzin Nawang Jigmed Wangchuk from among several children as the reincarnation of Bakula Rinpoche was confirmed by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in 2008. The 20th Bakula Rinpoche was born to parents Dorje Tsering and Sonam Dolkar with many auspicious signs, on Monday, the 23rd January, 2006 at Kyagar village in Nubra, Ladakh.

Since Nawang, was too young to be brought to Pethup Monastery, he was inducted into the monastic atmosphere at Samstanling Gonpa. However, the monks from his monasteries wanted to see their Lama on the throne as soon as possible and they decided to bring him to Leh. With the advice of Ganden Tri Rinpoche, he was brought to Leh on 6th August 2010 in a massive motorcade. Among the people who went to bring him were the President, Ladakh Buddhist Association, representative from All Ladakh Gonpa Association, representative from Mongolia, Monks of Pethup Gonpa and many devotees from different villages. However, due to the unfortunate incident caused by flash flood and cloud burst in previous night, all the enjoyments and ceremonies of Bakula's arrival were dashed in to the ground. It was difficult for the people standing along the road side to receive Bakula Rinche to make their mind up whether to express their happiness to witness the return of their Lama or to cry for the people who lost their lives and others fighting for life in the hospitals.

The long-time planned grand enthronement ceremony was also reduced to a simple religious ceremony. The religious ceremony of enthronement was held on 12th August 2010 where the Rinpoche formally took seat of Bakula at Pethup Gonpa. The religious ceremony was presided over by the Most Venerable Gaden Tripa Rizong Sras Rinpoche and attended by several venerable Rinpoches, Government officers, political leaders, representatives from NGOs and Tsoqspas, guests from Mongolia, China and Japan, monks from several monasteries and lay devotees. In this way, the “Architect of Modern Ladakh” is back and will start his mission for the happiness and wellbeing of all sentient beings from where he left in his previous life. From the innermost chords of my heart, I pray for success of 20th Bakula Rinpoche, Stanzin Nawang Jigmed Wangchuk in his entire educational career and mission for the wellbeing of all sentient beings.



CELEBRATIONS ACROSS LADAKH IN HONOUR OF THE 102ND GANDEN TRIPA.

—*Sonam Wangchok*

Changtse Chosje Rizong Sras Rinpoche has been appointed as the 102nd Ganden Tripa, the supreme head of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, becoming the first Indian to receive this great honour. This son of Ladakh's soil has become the lineal successor of Je Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) in the ecclesiastical throne of the great monastery of Ganden. The Ganden Tripa (*dGa'-lDan Khri-pa*, "Holder of the Ganden Throne") is the title of the spiritual head of the Gelugpa (*dGe-lugs-pa*) school of Tibetan Buddhism. The Ganden Tripa is not necessarily a reincarnation lineage. This highly esteemed position of Ganden Tripa is awarded on the basis of extensive studies, services and competitive examinations. Thus it is said, "If the son of mother possesses wisdom, the throne of Ganden has no precise possessor". After the passing away of Tsongkhapa in 1419, the scholar Gyaltsab Je Dharma Rinchen was enthroned as the first ever Ganden Tripa in Tibetan history and became the head of all followers of Je Tsongkhapa. Since the position is held for seven year term, a new Ganden Tripa is selected, but sometime in special case few Ganden Tripa carried on their authority for several more years and this is accredited as Ganden Trichen. In essence, there has been 102 Ganden Tripa till now.

The 102nd Ganden Tripa, the most venerable Rizong Sras Rinpoche Jetsun Thupten Nyima Lungtok Tenzin Norbu was born in 1927 in the royal family of Matho Palace. His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the Maha Pandita Tsultrim Chosphe of Rizong monastery. Rinpoche received the layman's vows from previous Ngari Tulku and obtained novice's vow from Bakula Rinpoche and named him as Thupten Nyima Lungtok Tenzin Norbu. Before leaving for Lhasa in 1945, he studied under Bakula Rinpoche and Kachen Yeshe Tundup. When he was twenty years old, he took full ordination vows from then Gaden Tripa Shangpa Jetsun Lhundup Tsondu. Then Rinpoche received teachings on scriptural studies, Buddhist philosophy and meditation from well known Gurus. However, the Chinese invasion of Tibet enforced Rinpoche to return to Ladakh but he continued his study in Dalhousie. Then Rinpoche was appointed as a disciplinarian head of Gyudmed Tantric collage in 1974 and the abbot of Loseling monastic college in 1984. Subsequently Rinpoche served several other Buddhist centers as head, disciplinarian, abbot and tutor. In 1995-96, Rinpoche was designated by the Dalai Lama as Jangtse Chosje, the record highest rank in the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. In October, 2009 His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced Rinpoche to be appointed as 102nd Ganden Tripa. A grand ceremony was held at Norling Institute on 26th of the same month with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama as the chief guest followed by many others dignitaries. After the formal ceremony at Norling the enthronement ceremony was held at Ganden Nampar Gyalwe Ling in south India and there Rinpoche was enthroned on the great Lion Throne of Je Tsongkhapa in presence of large number of monks, representatives from Tibetan Government in Exile and followers from Ladakh and other parts of Himalaya.

When the most venerable Sras Rinpoche returned to his birth place on 7th June, 2010, for the first time after becoming the Ganden Tripa, grand reception accorded in His honour by hundreds of monks from all schools of Buddhism, thousands of lay devotees, leaders of different religious organizations, government officials and political leaders including J&K Minister for Tourism and Culture Sh Nawang Rigzin Jora, Chief Executive

Councilor Sh Chering Dorje, LAHDC, Leh. On 14th June, 2010, a grand enthronement ceremony was held in Rizong Gonpa which was attended by the followers of Rinpoche across the Himalaya as well as foreign countries. The same paramount festive and formal celebration was also held on 4th July in Samstanling Gonpa to mark the Rinpoche's achievement as 102nd Ganden Tripa. May the most venerable Ganden Tripa Rizong Sras Rinpoche Jetsun Thupten Nyima Lungtok Tenzin Norbu live long for the wellbeing of all sentient beings.

LETTRE A L'IALS

—*Patrick Kaplanian.*

Imaginons un chercheur consciencieux qui désire être à jour en matière d'études ladakhi. Il devra acheter les publications les plus récentes suivantes (liste non limitative) :

Ladakhi Histories. Edited by John Bray 406 pages, 1er juin 2005, Brill. 108 euros.

Peace and Conflict in Ladakh. Fernanda Pirie. 244 pages, 30 décembre 2006, Brill. .108 euros

Modern Ladakh Edited by Martijn Beek and Fernanda Pirie. 311 pages, 5 juillet 2008, Brill. 103 euros

Relative Tense and Aspectual Values in Tibetan Languages: A Comparative Study.

Bettina Zeisler . 986 pages, 16 juillet 2004, Trends in Linguistics: Studies &

Monographs, Mouton de Gruyter . 125 euros

Herrscherkunden und Privaturkunden aus Westtibet (Ladakh). Dieter Schuh . 475 pp., illus. 2008. Monumenta Tibetica Historica. Abteilung III. Band 11. Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. 98.50 euros

Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: The Foundations of Authority in Gelukpa Monasticism. Martin A. Mills. 440 pages, 6 Novembre 2002, Routledge Studies in Tantric Traditions, Routledge. £95.00, environ 110 Euros

Mountains, Monasteries and Mosques. Recent Research on Ladakh and the Western Himalaya. John Bray & Elena De Rossi Filibeck, eds. 2009 Supplement No. 2 to Rivista degli Studi Orientali 80 (New Series). Pisa & Rome: Sapienza, Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Studi Orientali. 245 euros.

Si j'ai bien calculé cela fait 897,5 Euros. Apparemment les membres de l'IALS sont très riches. Mais a-t-on pensé aux Indiens ? Combien touche un instituteur au Ladakh ? Ce qui est sûr c'est que lors de mon dernier passage à Leh au printemps dernier, je n'ai vu aucun de ces livres ni dans les mains de nos amis ladakhi ni dans aucune des librairies de Leh quoique je sache que certains exemplaires de certains ouvrages ont été offerts à des Ladakhi. J'avais émis des réserves lorsque, suite au colloque d'Oxford, il avait été décidé de renoncer aux RRL pour les remplacer par des volumes thématiques.

Maintenant je suis encore plus réservé. Avant ce changement de politique, plusieurs RRL avaient été imprimés en Europe, une impression de bonne qualité, à un prix tout à fait raisonnable. A mon avis il n'y avait pas raison de ne pas continuer.

Le plus curieux c'est que deux RRL ont été récemment publiés en Inde au prix public respectif de 200 et 400 roupies soit 10 euros les deux ! On risque de déboucher sur une politique de publications à deux vitesses : du très cher pour les Occidentaux et du très bon marché pour les Indiens. Le risque c'est que les auteurs réservent leur meilleurs

papiers aux publications occidentales chères car il s'agit d'éditeurs scientifiques prestigieux.

P.S. Je viens de prendre connaissance de la très intéressante réponse que Martijn van Beek a faite à cette lettre. Je note un point qui me paraît particulièrement important ; Martijn écrit : « And it is becoming increasingly difficult to find publishers for some kinds of work. Particularly anthologies with a regional focus, rather than a thematic one, tend to be uninteresting to most academic publishers, readership is too small. » Dans ce cas ne peut-on, sur le site de l'IALS, mettre, en plus de la présentation par titres, une présentation dans laquelle les articles sont regroupés par thèmes ? Ecologie, géographie humaine, explorateurs, rituels etc. etc.

Le problème est : comment faire pour que cela soit repris par les moteurs de recherche ? Si par exemple je tape jésuites + Ladakh dans Google il faudrait qu'apparaisse l'article de E. G. Bargiachi qui ouvre le RLL 13 de Rome. Pour le moment ce n'est pas le cas.

Publications and Prices: An Exchange.
—*Martijn Van Beek.*

Patrick Kaplanian raises an important issue: the price of specialist publications has become exorbitant, and that this creates problems of access to some scholarly work on Ladakh, particularly for people in Ladakh and elsewhere in India. If books are priced out of reach not only for individuals, but even for institutions, the scholarship they contain no longer reaches its intended audiences. And what point is there in writing unless there are readers who can get hold of the book? Well, none. But whether we reach our readers is not so much a matter of money as one of access.

Access matters, I agree. But there are more considerations than price. Global distribution networks, production quality, and, not least, review and editorial processes. For those of us in academic jobs, we cannot always publish "locally" - rankings of publishers have consequences not just for individual careers but also for departmental funding. In Denmark where I am employed, a small number of journals and publishers have been ranked in the top category in the fields relevant to my research. If my colleagues and I produce enough points in a given year, this brings a considerable amount of extra funding to the department. The system is awful, we all agree, but it is a political and economic reality we cannot ignore: our department heads and deans will be sure to let us know if we don't publish in the right places. And as yet, publishing exclusively electronically on the web does not count at all, unless it is as an electronic version of a recognized journal that works with anonymous peer review and they usually still are subscription-based. Individual articles from such sources will also cost an arm and a leg, unfortunately.

And it is becoming increasingly difficult to find publishers for some kinds of work. Particularly anthologies with a regional focus, rather than a thematic one, tend to be uninteresting to most academic publishers and their readership is too small. Brill's Tibetan Studies series, where e.g. Fernanda Pirie's book, and the anthologies *Ladakhi Histories* and *Modern Ladakh* were published, is one of the few series in this field and has excellent distribution and solid marketing. It has become the most important series in its field. Unfortunately, because of small print runs (but also high quality production), prices

of individual volumes are very expensive, indeed. So what is one to do?

I myself rarely buy the expensive volumes that Patrick lists. I can't afford them all and our house and my office are too small to house them all. This is what libraries are for. What I don't want to or cannot afford to buy, I will ask my institute library to either buy the book (rarely because we are few readers and budgets are limited) or I will ask them to get it through interlibrary loan. I love a good library and librarians!

Of course, for researchers without access to a good library system, this doesn't help much. But in Ladakh, CIBS in Choglamsar has e.g. been given a copy of the *Modern Ladakh* volume, so that's available to local researchers there. (Incidentally, Fernanda Pirie and I also presented a number of individual scholars with complimentary copies of the *Modern Ladakh* volume, so Patrick may not have seen that particular volume in people's hands, but it's out there and available. I am sure the same is true for others on his list of shame.) This is still not a solution for everyone elsewhere in India, I realize, but it just is not feasible to publish everything locally. And unfortunately, the problem with overpricing is getting worse, as small independent presses are being gobbled up by big shareholder return-oriented holding companies, such as Taylor & Francis.

Ideally, for us in academic jobs who must publish in the 'right' places determined by bureaucrats in Ministries of Science and Education, we might want to do a parallel South Asian edition, like we did with the Aarhus volume, which was available for 800 INR and 40 USD in the West, I think. But that took at 10,000 GBP publishing grant and those are no longer as easily available. Brill has said that we can do a South Asian edition of the *Modern Ladakh* volume once they sell out the first print run - of course, I'm not holding my breath for that to happen any time soon . . . but I expect Fernanda and I will check in with them in a year or two to see whether they'll let us do that.

So: I feel access to, rather than ownership of books is a genuine problem that we should consider when we choose publishing channels (and I know most of us do so). But we should also recognize that there are more considerations at stake than setting the price so that everyone can own a copy. Perhaps we can discuss the larger issue of access at the Aberdeen colloquium, if only to insure that everyone is better informed about the constraints that we face in seeking outlets for our work and juggling our different commitments and obligations. I have yet to meet a Ladakh scholar, inside or outside of Ladakh, who does not recognize this as an important and challenging issue.

P.s. In recent years I have been conducting research in collaboration with 'real' scientists: cognitive (neuro-) scientists, mostly. It was very interesting to learn that journals will often allow people drafts or even the final versions of their published work on their own websites. This means work can be read, but if one wants to cite it properly, one should consult the published work. Open access is, to my knowledge, barely practiced in the humanities and social sciences, but we could of course work to make such practices more common and acceptable to publishers who (co-) own the copyright in our work.

Yonten Dargye & Per K. Sørensen with Gyönpo Tshering. 2008. *Play of the Ominiscent. Life and Works of Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen. An Eminent 17th-18th Century Drukpa Master.* Thimphu: National Library & Archives of Bhutan. 294 pp., illus., map. ISBN 99936-17-06-7.

Between 1706 and 1712 the eminent Bhutanese lama Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen stayed in Ladakh at the invitation of King Nyima Namgyal (r.1694-1729). He made a lasting impression, and his image is still to be found in Stagna monastery next to that of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651), the founder of the Bhutanese state. This book provides us with a detailed biography of Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen. In doing so, it makes an important contribution to the history of Ladakh as well as Bhutan.



Illustration: Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen's image in Stagna. Photo by Phuntsog Dorjay Pillay.

Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen (Byams mgon Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan) was born into an aristocratic family in Amorimu, Bhutan, in 1647. He grew up during the turbulent period when Bhutan was struggling to establish itself as an independent entity from Tibet. His father, Ngawang Rabten, distinguished himself as a general resisting invading Tibetan forces, but was later murdered as a result of internal political infighting, and his mother was sent into exile.

Despite these personal and family setbacks, Ngawang Gyaltsen established himself as one of the leading Southern (Bhutanese) Drukpa Kagyud lamas of his generation. He is still widely remembered in Bhutan for his spiritual leadership and artistic skill. In addition, he briefly played an important administrative role as regional governor of Paro, before founding Chökhör Dorjeden monastery in Punakha district. He died in 1732.

The main source for this book is a biography composed by Śākya Rinchen (1710-1767) who was one of Ngawang Gyaltshen's leading disciples. The authors have also cross-referred to other historical sources, as well as conducting on-the-ground research in the main places associated with Ngawang Gyaltshen's life in Bhutan, eastern Tibet and Ladakh. As with other similar works, the main purpose of Śākya Rinchen's biography is to emphasise the spiritual qualities of his mentor, and there is therefore no attempt at critical or psychological analysis. It is nevertheless rich in detail, providing a vivid picture of religious and political affairs in the wider Himalayan region during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

For Ladakh readers, Ngawang Gyaltshen's international activities will be of particular interest. He spent two extended periods outside his own country, first as a court lama to the ruler of Derge in northern Kham from 1688-1695 and then, following King Nyima Namgyal's invitation, in Ladakh from 1706 to 1712.

The biography contains a detailed account of Ngawang Gyaltshen's journey across Tibet, stopping near Mount Kailash and other pilgrimage places en route. Once he reached Ladakh, he was greeted by the Treasurer of Hemis and the leading ministers before meeting the king at his palace in Leh. According to the biography, he impressed everyone through his wisdom and, in due course, his miraculous powers, including his skill in controlling rainfall. From the Indus valley he also went on pilgrimages to Lahul, Kashmir and Zangskar. When the time came to leave Ladakh, he was accompanied by the king's younger brother Ngawang Stanzin Norbu. The latter subsequently became head of Rinpung Dzong in Paro and then, from 1738 to 1744, the 8th Je Khenpo (senior lama) of Bhutan.

In an appendix to the main biography, the authors review Ladakh's relationship with Bhutan and the Southern Drukpa Kagyud school from King Sengge Namgyal's correspondence with the Zhabdrung in the early 17th century until more recent times. Further appendices list leading Southern Drukpa Kagyud representatives in Ladakh, and summarise the life history of the present Stagna Rinpoche, including his early studies in Bhutan.

The book is well-produced on good quality paper, with excellent colour photographs of people, places and artefacts associated with Ngawang Gyaltshen. The cover illustration shows a large embroidered 18th century *thangka* of the lama that recently formed part of an international exhibition of Bhutanese religious art shown in Honolulu and Paris. The catalogue of the exhibition (Bartholomew & Johnstone 2008) will also be of interest to Ladakh readers, both for its own sake and because it contains a short essay by Yonten Dargye and Sørensen on Ngawang Gyaltshen's diplomatic career. The essay draws on the same material as this book.

This reviewer has a particular reason for welcoming *Play of the Omniscient*. In 1994 I learnt of Ngawang Gyaltshen's biography during a visit to Bhutan. Chris Butters and Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi of the National Library of Bhutan kindly made an extended summary of the sections referring to Ladakh, and we later turned this into a short article for one of the IALS conference volumes (Bray & Butters 1999). This book paints a much fuller and more detailed picture of Ngawang Gyaltshen's life and career. It is to be hoped that it will help prepare the way for further comparative research and scholarly collaboration on Ladakh, Bhutan and the other Himalayan kingdoms.

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News from Ladakh.

—Submitted by Nasir Khan

Nomination for minorities, women in LAHDC

Jammu, March 13, 2010: www.risingkashmir.com

Minister for Medical Education and Youth Services & Sports, R. S. Chib, on behalf of Minister for Ladakh Affairs, today informed the Legislative Council that the proposal for nominations for representation to minorities and women in LAHDC Leh and Kargil is under active consideration of the Government. Replying to a question, raised by Nurboo Gialchan, the Minister said that there is no question of depriving the minorities and women of their due representation in Leh and Kargil, adding that Government is fully seized of the matter.

In reply to another question of Amrit Malhotra, the Minister said that selection criteria and procedure for State Awards is being followed as per the Government orders. He said the investiture ceremony for giving away the State Awards for the year 2008 and 2009 could not be held in view of the restrictions imposed on such functions by Election Commission of India, during Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, adding that the ceremony would be organized shortly.

Bangla Army chief visits Leh; no Siachen visit due to bad weather

Srinagar/ New Delhi, March 16, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

Bangladesh Army Chief Gen Mohd Abdul Mubeen today visited Leh Garrison. He was received by 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen S K Singh, who briefed the visiting General about the deployment of Indian armed forces in high altitude areas, their operational characteristics and the terrains there. Raised after the Kargil war, the Leh-based 14 Corps looks after the Army operations in Ladakh region along with the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control with China.

However, Gen Mubeen's planned visit to the Siachen Glacier could not take place due to bad weather. In Leh, Gen Mubeen, who was accompanied by his wife Begum Syeda Sarifa Khanom and a delegation of four Bangladesh Army officers, visited Shanti Stupa, an iconic landmark in Leh city, where he interacted with the Head Lama who briefed him on the rich cultural heritage of the region and presented traditional Buddhist scarfs to the Bangladesh Army delegation, the spokesman said.

"This visit to Leh has played a significant role in promoting and strengthening the bonds of friendship, mutual trust and confidence between the two armies and the countries," the spokesman added. The Bangladeshi Army Chief is on a six-day visit to India from March 14 to 20. During the visit, Mubeen has held discussions with the Army Chief Gen Deepak Kapoor and is likely to meet several other top political and military leaders in the next few days including the other two services chiefs.

He will also visit key military training establishments and field formations in Jaipur, Ajmer and Kolkata. Later in the day, Mubeen returned to New Delhi and held a meeting with Defence Minister A K Antony at South Block where the two discussed issues of mutual interest, South Asian security situation and future areas of cooperation between the armed forces of the two nations, Defence Ministry officials said.

Solar Energy projects for Nobra, Zaskar in Ladakh :Rigzin Jora

Jammu, March 27, 2010: www.scoopnews.in

The J&K Government is looking forward to harness solar energy to provide power supply to the people in mountainous areas of Nobra and Zaskar in the Leh region. Minister for Tourism, Rigzin Jora, gave this information, in reply to a question by Tsetan Namgyal. The Minister said that the Science & Technology Department, which work as Nodal Agency for Union Ministry for Renewable Energy, has conducted a survey for taking up the solar energy project in the twin border areas of Nobra and Zaskar. The Minister also gave details about the electrification of villages being carried out in the Nobra area. He also gave the details about Micro hydel projects proposed for the area. In reply to the questions of Ashwani Kumar and Sofi Abdul Gaffar, clubbed with this question, the Minister gave details about the status of power development works in their respective constituencies. In reply to another question of Nizam-u-Din Bhat, the Minister gave details about the measures suggested by the Environment Impact Assessment Study for mitigating any adverse impact on the environment due to the construction of the Kishan Ganga Hydel Project.

Rigzin Jora, while replying to supplimentaries on a series of similar questions raised, during Question Hour, here today. The Minister said that the consultancy would conduct a comprehensive survey in all the three regions of the State and suggest measures to harness the tourist potential more optimally. Responding to the demands of the Members, the Minister said that the provisions allow for expanding the scope and jurisdiction of a particular Development Authority, on the public demand. He said that it was the prime objective of the Government to expand the scope of the vital tourism industry to every potential area and various measures are being taken in this regard.

In reply to the question of Ashok Kumar, the Minister said that the Government has contacted Goa Institute of Water Sports for survey and consultancy to recommend measures for promoting Water Sports in Baglihar Dam Lake. He also gave details about the tourism infrastructure development works taken up in Sanasar and Batote areas. In reply to another question by Mohammad Ashraf, the Minister said that there was no proposal for creating Sub-Division within Wullar- Manasbal. He, however, said that some more villages, having tourism potential are being included under the ambit of the Development Authority. The Minister also informed that the Tourism Department has spent Rs 19.45 lakh and Rs 4.07 lakh for developing facilities for visiting devotees at Baba Shakur-ud-Din Shrine and Tujar Sharief, respectively.

The Minister also gave a detailed resume of the tourism development activities in Tral area of the Kashmir Division and Bani Tehsil of the Jammu division, in reply to the clubbed questions of Mushtaq Ahmad Shah and Lal Chand, Basharat Bukhari, Nizam-udin Bhat, Abdul Razak and Sayed Bashir raised supplimentaries on these questions.

China grabbing land in Leh: BJP

Leh, April 4, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

In the wake of reports of Chinese incursions in the Ladakh region, the BJP deputed a delegation of its national leaders for an on-the-spot survey after which they demanded

that Government stop the practice of issuing inner line permits but open up the area to tourism to defeat the "Chinese design of grabbing the land by inches".

The five-member delegation headed by former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, party spokesperson Rajeev Pratap Rudy and former J and K State chief Nirmal Singh visited this area and bordering areas of Nyoma and Demchok, 300 kilometres from southeast of this Himalayan town. "We have come here to ascertain reports about the Chinese incursion and what we have found is shocking....," Rudy said here. This is the first national-level political delegation to visit the far-flung areas of this Himalayan town. "The most shocking and frightful site was when we met those nomads and Ladakhi people. They are craving for every inch of land which they see has been encroached since 1962. "The most stunning revelation was that most of the incursion that has taken place from 1965 to 1995 and the Chinese Army had come and established posts," said Rudy, who will be submitting a report to Party President Nitin Gadkari.

Though the Chinese incursions have been taking place for last five years, they have not set up any posts. "But the major damage has been done between 1965-95," he said. After the briefing by Army's Leh-based 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen S K Singh and other officials, Rudy said the latest strategy that Chinese have developed is that they have pushed their nomads and grazers into Indian territory. "They are fighting a war through nomads and grazers. There are no conflict zones or day-to-day confrontation with armed forces but they are fighting the battle through nomads on grazing pastures...They are pushing nomads here and there. "It's all about pasture land and gazers and they stand solidly behind these nomads....So they are inching through grazing land," he said.

It may be mentioned that an official report last year of the State Government had said "they (Chinese) have threatened the nomadic people who had been using Dokbug area (in Ladakh sector) area for grazing since decades long, in a way to snatch our land in inches. "A Chinese proverb is famous in the world – better do in inches than in yards," a report filed by a former Sub Divisional Magistrate (Nyoma) Tsering Norboo had said. Norboo was deputed by the State Government to probe complaints of incursion of the Chinese Army in Dokbug area and threats to the local shepherds to leave the land as it belonged to them. The area has been used by the shepherds to graze their livestock it is warmer compared to other parts of Ladakh.

The then Army chief Gen Deepak Kapoor had denied there were any serious incursion saying there was difference in perception on the Line of the Actual Control between the two countries. Rudy said the people in the Indian region felt isolated as their interaction with the rest of the country was virtually nil because of the inner line border permit. "The BJP would strongly like to question why we still have major land masses out of the purview of Indians... No political movement, no tourist movement. "This isolation is a very very dangerous situation. Why can't Indians move to these areas which are thousands and thousands of miles. By merely visiting these areas and people in the area we can certainly change the complex of the area," he said. The BJP leader also commented on the bare minimum or zero infrastructure in the area. "The biggest other issue is that we are zero on infrastructure...We are not able to imagine how the Indian Army will react in condition of conflict or confrontation at those features which are totally inaccessible by the roads today. "We are years behind as far as infrastructure is concerned as this needs an immediate attention from the Government," he said. (PTI)

Ladakh to have year round road connectivity: Saroori

Jammu, April 7, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

Asserting the Government's commitment to have a round the year road connectivity to Ladakh region, Minister for Roads & Buildings, G M Saroori today reiterated that the proposed Zojila tunnel would be a major initiative in this regard. "Beacon has conducted the survey and the Union Surface Transport Ministry is committed to fund this ambitious project", Mr Saroori said while addressing a big youth rally here this afternoon.

Prominent among those present in the rally were the senior Congress leader and MLA, Choudhry Mohammed Aslam, former Minister, Haji Nisar Ali, former MLA Ghulam Raza and the former Chief Executive Councilor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil, Asgar Karbalie besides Councilor, Sonam Namgiyal.

The Minister said that he took up this important issue with the Union Minister for Surface Transport, Kamal Nath recently in New Delhi, who assured that all required steps would be taken for construction of the Zojila tunnel to ensure round the year connectivity between Kashmir Valley and the Ladakh region. The Minister reiterated Government's resolve to ensure equitable development of all the three regions of the State and their sub regions. He said road connectivity has witnessed a discernible transformation all over the State, as the Government's endeavour is to lay special thrust on it to ensure speedy development of the State. "Good roads are key to progress and prosperity", Mr Saroori declared. Mr Saroori urged the youth to play their crucial role in the development and progress of the State. Haji Nissar, Ghulam Raza, Mr Karbalie and Mr Namgiyal also spoke on the occasion.

Cabinet Committee approves Rs 473 cr N&RE projects

13th FC awards Rs 90 cr for Ladakh

Jammu, April 23, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

The 13th Finance Commission has awarded a grant of Rs 90 crore for Ladakh region while as Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure of Union Government has approved a project to promote use of renewable energy in the cold desert region at a total cost of Rs 473 crore. Authoritative sources in the State Finance Department told the EXCELSIOR that 13th Finance Commission under State Specific Grants has awarded Rs 90 crore for Ladakh Division phased over the period of 2011-12 to 2014-15.

Of this, Rs 20 crore have been awarded for road connectivity in the Kargil district while as Rs 15 crore have been earmarked for upgradation of power distribution network in Leh district. An amount of Rs 20 crore has been kept for sports complex and youth hostel, Rs 15 crore for cold storages and marketing facilities for agricultural and horticultural products, Rs 15 crore for bridges and Rs 5 crore for development of eco tourism in the Leh district, sources informed. "The Finance Department of the State Government will submit composite Detailed Action Plans (DAPs) sector-wise for award grants by 13th Finance Commission in consonance with phasing of funds", sources said, adding "the DAPs will be considered by the Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, in a meeting proposed to be held in the middle of May". Meanwhile, the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure, Government of India, has approved a project to promote use of renewable energy in the Ladakh region at a total cost of Rs 473 crore. "The implementation of project will start from June 2010 and will be completed by December 2013", sources said, adding "the renewable energy projects

will result into saving of about 200 lakh litres of diesel per year. Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Dr Farooq Abdullah alongwith senior officials of his Ministry will be visiting State next month to hold discussions with the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, for speedy implementation of the Plan.

The project has been accorded approval as the Ladakh region has extreme environment conditions and faces enormous energy adversities throughout the year. It becomes even more acute during the winter months and all the urban areas and defence establishments use diesel and kerosene extensively while as population in the remote areas faces acute problem of fuel for cooking and other purposes.

Considering that the region has good potential of solar and hydro resources and can be effectively used for minimizing use of diesel, kerosene and fuel-wood, detailed studies were undertaken in Leh and Kargil districts and after consultations with all the stakeholders—defence authorities, Hill Development Councils of Leh and Kargil, district officials and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy prepared a plan for large scale use of renewable energy with a total financial requirement of Rs 473 crore. The Plan envisages 30 small/ micro hydel projects aggregating to 23.5 Mega Watts capacity, setting up of about 300 SPV power plants of 5 to 100 KW capacity, 2000 SPV home lighting systems and about 40,000 solar thermal systems such as water heating, solar cookers, solar passive buildings, solar green houses etc. This will help increase the production of green vegetables in winters for the region, which are otherwise procured from far off places.

Omar Abdullah releases book on Ladakh

Jammu, April 27, 2010: www.thaindian.com

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday released a book on 'Ladakh' by S. D. Singh Jamwal, IPS, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Poonch-Rajouri range, here at the Brigadier Rajinder Singh auditorium, University of Jammu. Speaking at this occasion, Omar Abdullah said that the book is more than a travel guide. This beautifully written book which covers travel, art, culture, history of Ladakh, flora fauna, geography in fact almost all aspects of Ladakh. Saying that Mr. Jamwal was not short of responsibility as a police officer looking after the sensitive areas of Poonch Rajouri, Omar complimented him for writing the book.

He said that inspite of challenges faced in the field as a police officer, he has still been able to take lot of time and write this book which is 'a book of labour' for which he obviously has lot of love."I hope that in future also he will keep writing more books and many more colleagues will also follow him in this," he said adding Mr. Jamwal has set an example which others can follow and emulate. He also said that his range of interests fascinate him including his topic of Phd on chemical warfare and bioterrorism. Recalling his own "love affair" with Ladakh, Mr. Abdullah said that he visited Ladakh in August 1977 as a young boy of seven with his parents and two sisters."I have distinct memories of that visit as it was our first family holiday and we drove to Ladakh from Kargil; picked up Apricots from the trees while my father would wave a hand to say Julley to the friendly warm people of Ladakh," he recalled. Omar has also written the foreword of the book. (ANI)

Rs 12 cr sanctioned for bus stand in Kargil'

Kargil, May 2, 2010: www.risingkashmir.com

Addressing a public gathering at Drass, Minister for Transport, CA&PD and Civil Supplies, Qamar Ali Akhoun said that the work on the construction of a tunnel at Zojila is under progress. The Minister said that by constructing this tunnel, the people of Ladakh and Kargil districts would be benefitted and their many problems would be solved automatically. He said the work for the construction of hostels in Srinagar and Jammu for the student community is presently under progress. Besides, Rs 12 crores for the construction of Bus Stand at Kargil has already been sanctioned. He further said that Rs. 270 crores for the development of solar energy and Hydel power projects have been sanctioned by New Delhi.

The Minister appealed the people to strengthen the hands of the present government in implementing various welfare and developmental schemes. Later, the Minister also convened an officers meeting at Drass and took stock of the ongoing development works there. He stressed upon the officers to work with zeal and dedication and complete the ongoing works within stipulated time. The meeting was attended by the Chief Executive Councilor, Kachoo Ahmad Ali Khan, MLA Zanskar, MLC, Deputy Commissioner, SP and other district officers.

Farmer festival organized at Khumbathang in Kargil of Ladakh division

Jammu/Udhampur/Kargil, May 04, 2010: www.groundreport.com

The extreme climate prevalent in Khumbathang and nearby areas does not permit locals to utilise farming techniques used in rest of the mainland. As per delayed reports Forever in Operations Division realising the need to educate the locals, organised a kissan mela (Farmer festival) at Khumbathang garrison as part of its ongoing Sadbhavana efforts. Defence spokesperson Col DK Kachari said that a group of eminent scientists headed by Dr Narender Singh, a scientist of Institute of High Altitude Research was invited along with other scientists to explain different techniques and latest arboriculture/farming methods during extreme winter conditions. GOC 8 Mountain Division extended a warm welcome to Officiating CEC, LAHDC, other civil dignitaries and the local population present for the event. The General Officer highlighted the importance of bond between the army and civil population for developing of the area. He implored the civil population to utilise the various projects being launched by the army under Op Sadbhavana.

Honorable Haji Ghulam Amir Kamran, Officiating CEC, LAHDC addressed the mela and stressed on the locals to utilise the facility offered by the army and conveyed his appreciation to the army. He also asked the local population to extend their full support to the army and emphasised on close relationship between Jawan and Awam. Ghulam Mohd Khan, Chief Agriculture Officer, Kargil also addressed the gathering urging them to learn the techniques being explained. He thanked the army for organising the Kissan Mela for the farmers of Kargil. The mela was a grand success as it was attended by about 500 people from the village of Kanoor, Maji, Trespone, Saliskot, Panikher, Lankerchey, Sankoo, Umba and Pherona besides a large number of civil dignitaries. Seeds pertaining to this area were distributed to the local populace.

Charter flights to Leh from today

New Delhi, May 8, 2010: Press Trust of India

A holiday to the picturesque valley of Leh this summer might be easier and cheaper with the launching of special charter flights to Ladakh tomorrow. Touted as the first of its kind holiday charter flight for the domestic market, the initiative by travel agency MakeMyTrip.Com includes a tour package to exotic destinations like Nubra valley, Pangong Tso lake and Khardungla pass. "We are launching it as a travel package to Leh and Ladakh which is flight inclusive and is yet very competitively priced. The cost will be between Rs 25,000 and 30,000 per person. The flights will operate from Delhi every Sunday starting tomorrow, initially for a period of 10 consecutive Sundays," MakeMyTrip Chief Marketing Manager Mohit Gupta said.

The flights are in addition to the existing scheduled flights that offer daily departures into Leh. Gupta said the agency has rented an aircraft from a leading private airline for tomorrow's flight. MakeMyTrip co-founder and COO Keyur Joshi said, "The significant growth of holidays within India has shown the huge potential this market holds. We are extremely hopeful of bestowing the benefits of this charter service to more and more travellers year after year." (PTI)

Seed safety vault in Ladakh

New Delhi, May 16, 2010: www.telegraphindia.com

Inside a stone and wood-panelled building on a frozen mountain top in Ladakh, on the road from Leh to Pangong lake, seeds of vegetables and other plants sealed in moisture-proof packets sit on steel racks. Sometimes, during the hottest days of the year in May and June, the temperatures climb to about 5°C above zero. But for more than 10 months of the year, the cold remains below -18°C — just right for long-term storage of seeds. The structure at Chang-La, a three-hour drive from Leh, built by Indian defence researchers is the world's second doomsday vault after the Svalbard Global Seed Vault set up by Norway more than two years ago on an Arctic island. Both vaults are storing seeds for the future, a reserve against natural or manmade catastrophes that might wipe out key crops. The Chang-La vault has acquired over 5,000 seed samples — apricots, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, radish, tomatoes, barley and wheat, among others. Some seeds will yield an anti-malarial compound, others are sources of a natural anti-cancer chemical. "This is Noah's Ark type of activity," said William Selvamurthy, a senior scientist who heads the life sciences division at India's Defence Research and Development Organisation which has funded the Rs 2 crore Chang-La seed vault.

The deposits in the seed vaults could be used to replant crops lost through either natural or manmade disasters on a regional or global scale. "Droughts, floods, or climate change, or even pests may threaten crops," Selvamurthy said. The idea for a high altitude seed vault in Ladakh emerged after a mysterious locust invasion in Ladakh nearly five years ago. "It was the first major infestation of locusts in Ladakh and it hurt the barley crop here badly," said Shashi Bala Singh, director of the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research, Leh, a research centre trying to grow fresh vegetables in Ladakh. Although the Indian Council of Agricultural Research maintains a national plant gene repository in New Delhi, it is "enormously expensive" to store seeds in hot humid conditions, Selvamurthy said. Seeds need to be preserved at below -18°C in low humidity conditions for long term storage. At Chang-La, the temperature needs to be

artificially brought down to -18°C only during the summer — the end of May and early June.

“We’re currently focused on high-yielding plant varieties as well as traditional crops grown in Ladakh,” Singh said. But over time, she said, the seed vault is expected to receive samples from other agricultural institutions in India. The seed deposits are still tiny compared to the Svalbard vault which has now acquired over 525,000 samples — rice from India and Malaysia and wheat from Lebanon and South Africa, among others.

LAHDC demands block status for Turtuk

Srinagar, May 19, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) today appealed to Governor N N Vohra to grant block status and a separate legislative seat to Turtuk area in Ladakh region. Asserting that Turtuk which comprises eight villages was the "most underdeveloped" area in Ladakh, the LAHDC appealed to the Governor to grant block status and a separate Legislative Assembly seat to the area. Executive councilor LAHDC Mohammad Khan said they had been demanding a separate legislative seat for Turtuk since 1971 and that the Government had taken no action in this regard despite several representations.

Stating that the main source of income of the residents of Turtuk was labouring with the Army, Khan requested the Governor to withdraw the Nepali labourers from the area who were working with the Army as the "poor villagers of the border area are not getting benefit of their rights." Turtuk was recaptured by the Indian Army from Pakistani domination during the 1971.

2 killed in Ladakh avalanche, 73 rescued

May 20 2010: www.indianexpress.com

Two persons were killed while 73 others, mostly tourists, had a narrow escape when avalanche struck a mountainous pass, two kilometres short of Changla Top on the Leh-Karu-Tangtse axis, en route to Pangong Lake bordering China in Ladakh region on Tuesday. The 73 people trapped in the snow were rescued by troops of the 3 Infantry Division. The deceased have been identified as Mohammad Latif, District Social Welfare Officer at Leh, and A Balakrishnan, a tourist from Bangalore. Balakrishnan’s wife is recovering in hospital.

Confirming the incident, Leh’s Deputy Commissioner Ajit Kumar Sahu said the other passengers were safe and were being brought to Leh through a different route. The victims were on their way back from Pangong Lake to Leh when the tragedy struck. According to Sahu, nearly 60 vehicles had gone to Pangong Lake on Tuesday. On the return journey, one of the vehicles developed a snag. The drivers of the vehicles caught behind this vehicle came out to help. They were reportedly pushing the vehicle when the avalanche occurred at around 3.15 pm on Tuesday. About 12 vehicles were caught in the avalanche.

Tourist Mela commences in Batalik Kargil

Kargil, May 26, 2010: www.groundreport.com

A 3- day Tourist Mela took off in Dard Tribal area Batalik in district Kargil today. The mela, organized by the department of Tourism, was inaugurated by LHDC Kargil Chief Executive Kachoo Ahmad Ali at Darchaks Village in Batalik area. M.P. Ladakh, Gh. Hassan Khan was also present. A large number of media persons both from Srinagar and Kargil besides local people were present on the occasion.

Appreciating both State and Centre for opening Batalik for tourists, Kachoo Ahmed Ali Khan said it would help promote tourism in other parts of the Kargil district also. He said all possible efforts need to be taken by Tourism Department to attract and motivate more and more tourists to Kargil. He said it would provide ample opportunities to the domestic and foreign tourists to understand and see the age old heritage in various parts of the district including Darchaks. Kachoo also appealed the media to project the tourist spots and villages having age old history of the district in a befitting manner. He hoped that such steps would positively help in providing employment opportunities to the educated youth.

M.P. Gh. Hassan Khan in his address on the occasion impressed upon the local people to convert their houses in Guest houses and provide ample hospitality to the tourists. M P announced RS.2.50 lakh out of his MPLAD fund for preserving heritage in the area. On this occasion, a colorful cultural programme was also presented by the artists of Darchaks and Gorkun villages.

Schoolkids trapped in landslide rescued

May 31, 2010: www.indianexpress.com

A major tragedy was averted in Ladakh as Army troops, battling adverse weather conditions, rescued 11 schoolchildren who were trapped in a major landslide near Turtuk village in Nubra Valley on the Line of Control (LoC). Giving details, a Defence Ministry spokesman at the Northern Command in Udhampur said on Sunday that a school bus carrying 15 children to Tyakshi — an Army Goodwill School — was trapped in a landslide around 9.45 am on Thursday. Eleven of them were seriously injured.

Rescue operation was launched immediately under supervision of senior Army officers, the spokesman said and the children were taken out of the school bus trapped in the landslide. An Army medical team rushed to the site despite continuing landslides, and provided immediate first aid and treatment to the injured children. Three Army helicopters were launched despite bad weather conditions to evacuate eight seriously injured children to Military Hospital at Hunder. Three children were evacuated to Military Hospital, Leh by Air Force helicopter. Two of these children have been further air evacuated to an Army hospital in Delhi.

Iranian delegation visits Kashmir to promote educational and cultural ties

Kargil, June 7, 2010: www.oneindia.in

A seven-member Iranian delegation is currently on a visit to Jammu and Kashmir's Kargil District to strengthen the age-old cultural ties between the two countries and promote educational activities in the region. The delegation, which is led by spiritual leader Hujjat Ul Mohsin Qommi Aghae includes Kareem Najaffe, Cultural Councilor of Iran. "We are very much interested in cultural ties especially the Iranian culture and our desire is to provide an impetus to educational activities. Wherever such endeavour is made, we want to applaud that effort," said Aghae. "We have heard that in Kargil efforts are being

made for the betterment of the future generation. We want to see that and we want to congratulate them," he added.

Kargil and Iran share a centuries-old, close cultural and civilization relation. The two regions have in the past influenced each other in the fields of culture, art, architecture and language. "We are happy to collaborate with the Government of India for cultural activities. As you know this Shaheed Mutahhari is the centre of educational activities and we are happy that we can improve education in India," said Kareem Najaffe, Cultural Councilor of Iran. (ANI)

CM releases comic book manual

Leh, June 16, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

The Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today released a Comic book manual published by the District Panchayat Office, Rural Development Department, Leh. The Comic book is a promotion on Hygiene practices and part of the Awareness Campaign under total sanitation campaign. The Chief Minister lauded the department on coming up with such an innovative medium. Tsering Angchouk, Deputy Commissioner and Chairman District Water and Sanitation Mission and Moses Kunzang, Project Director, DRDA Leh who has published this comic book were present on the occasion. Later, the president All Gonpa Association Rev. Togdan Rinpochey and president Muslim Association Nazir Khan called on the Chief Minister and presented memorandum.

Indian Vice President inaugurates International Conference at Leh

Leh/Srinagar July 05, 2010: www.groundreport.com

The Vice President of India . M. Hamid Ansari while addressing Scientists, Academicians and Scholars in a 3-day International Conference of "Geothermal and other Energy Resources of Ladakh; Technological and Business viability" at Leh, Ladakh fully supported the view that technology and human ingenuity would lead us to newer sources of energy as also to better utilization of existing sources and qualities. The Conference was jointly organized by the Institute of Energy Research and Training and the Business School, University of Jammu in collaboration with MPRG University College London (UK). A galaxy of scholars, scientists and academicians from India and broad attended the Conference. Vice President M. Hamid Ansari said, it is a recorded fact of history that all civilizations depended for survival and prosperity on their ability to access energy in sufficient quantities in the form of food and fuel. The advancement of the past two centuries highlights this truism, Ansari said.

Ansari said exploiting Geothermal Energy is not new to humankind. Ancient Romans built elaborate complexes in areas where they came across hot water springs. In our own country, hot water springs were traditionally use for religious and the IITs, especially at Puga valley in Ladakh and Tatapani in Chhattisgarh, he added. The Vice president further said that though India has been one of the earliest countries to begin geothermal projects way back in the 1970s, geothermal energy has not emerged as a significant renewable energy option in the country. The preference, instead, he said is for wind energy and solar energy presumably on account of their easy availability, lower initial investment and proven technology. Ansari said that it is estimated that there is a technical potential to produce about 10 thousand megawatts of geothermal power in the country. From the point of view of electrification of rural and remote areas, the Vice President said that there is even greater potential in terms of the impact of geothermal

power where even small projects of 5 kilowatts can significantly change the economic situation and living standards.

The Vice President said that the national mission to ensure energy security thus propels us to look seriously at new and renewable energy options with a focus on grid interactive and distributed renewable power, rural and urban applications, and industrial and commercial applications of such renewable power. Regarding heat flow and thermal gradients, Hamid Ansari said that India has several geothermal provinces characterized by high heat flow and thermal gradients, subsequent to the oil crisis of the 1970s, the geological Survey of India generated data of resources assessment for over 300 hot springs in the country.

Ansari said that the Puga valley geo-thermal field in Jammu and Kashmir has been estimated to have a temperature of 240 degree centigrade at a depth of 2000 meters. This makes evident its potential and said he is confident that this conference would debate ways and means of involving all stakeholders to make this the first viable and operational geo-thermal power plant. He hoped that the regulatory and policy environment governing renewable energy in general and geo-thermal energy in particular would evolve, to enable us to realize the existing potential in Ladakh and deploy it for the public good.

The Minister for Tourism, Nawang Rigzin Jora, Minister for CA&PD, Qamar Ali Akhooon, Chief Executive Councillor LAHDC Leh, Chering Dorje, Vice Chancellor Jammu University, Prof. Varun Sahni, Director Business School, Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, and Prof. G. M. Bhat Department of Geology University of Jammu attended the Conference. The Minister for CAPD, Qamar Ali Akhooon in his address while welcoming the Vice President of India said that the recommendations of this conference would go a long way in promotion and development of Non conventional energy in Ladakh. He said that Ladakh is gifted with rich resources of non conventional energy like geothermal, wind and solar energy and said the need of the hour is to exploit all these properly for the development of the region and welfare of the people. Chering Dorje, in his address said that tapping of non-conventional energy would tremendously contribute for over all development of this region and strongly urged the Central as well as State Government for initiating measures on Puga Geothermal project and other renewable energy. Referring to present power scenario of Leh district, Nawang Rigzin Jora said that the whole district Leh has been electrified either from the hydel project or from diesel project and other non-conventional energies. He said that Leh district is moving forward speedily towards development with people's participation in every developmental process.

World famous Drass Polo-ground to be upgraded to intl standard: J&K Minister
Drass/Kargil, July 23, 2010: www.groundreport.com

The final match of the Chief Minister's Polo Cup -2010 was played at world famous Polo-ground, Baltik today between the Drass A and Drass B teams. The match was won by Drass-A by 7 goals. The Drass A team scored 7 goals as compared to 6 goals by Drass B. The Minister for Youth Services and Sports, R.S. Chib was Chief Guest on the occasion, who distributed trophies among the winner and runner up teams. Minister for CA&PD and Transport, Qamar Ali Akhooon, Chief Executive Councilor, LAHDC, Kargil, Kachoo Mohammad Ali Khan, Executive Councilors, concerned district officers of Drass and thousands of sport lovers were also present on the occasion. The

event, first of its kind, was organized by the J&K Sports Council in collaboration with Polo Promotion Club Drass. As many as 16 Polo Teams participated in the tournament. A colorful cultural programme was also presented on the occasion by the local artisans, which enthralled the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, Chib said that Polo game is an integral part of Ladakhis cultural legacy, adding that there was an urgent need to promote the game further to match with the international standards. He assured that efforts would be made to upgrade the existing Polo Stadium to international standard. He instructed to include 31 teams in the next year Polo Tournament to broad base the event. He also assured a grant of Rs 1 lakh for further development of the Polo Stadium. Qamar Ali Akhoo also spoke on the occasion and assured of Government's full support and assistance for upgrading the Polo Stadium, Drass.

Jora pledges support for old Leh town

Leh, August 4, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

Minister of Tourism and Culture Nawang Rigzin Jora today visited the LAMO Centre (Ladakh Arts and Media Organization) located in two historical houses below Leh Palace. During his visit, he expressed his willingness to support restoration of the traditional houses in old Leh town especially in light of the growing tourism potential of this historical heritage area. Considering the historical and cultural significance of the old town and the need to conserve this site, the Tourism Minister urged that organizations such as LAMO, LOTI, INTACH should work together and develop a plan for the revitalization of Old Leh Town keeping the inherent cultural and historical importance of the area. He announced his willingness to support this joint effort. He also stressed upon avoiding any duplicity of works taken up by different NGOs and the importance of having specialized fields.

Appreciating the initiatives taken by LAMO the Minister recognized their efforts at restoring historical space for contemporary use, which should be a precedent for others to follow. Research Fellows of LAMO presented their work on the Old Town Project to the Minister and he was pleased to know that young Ladakhis are researching and documenting their cultural history, which forms a significant part of the intangible heritage of Ladakh. On the occasion the Minister announced a token amount of Rs 5 lakh towards LAMO's initiatives.

125 killed in Leh flash flood

Leh, August 6, 2010: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in>

At least 125 people were killed and hundreds of others injured in flash flood in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday night. Many people were reported missing. Army and Indo Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP) have been carrying out rescue operations with the help of local police even as the local authorities braced for casualties to mount. The injured were rushed to Leh army hospital. In the worst ever flood in the cold desert of Ladakh, triggered by a series of cloudbursts in the night, Leh was totally cut off from the rest of the country. The worst hit area was Leh district's Choglamsar along the Indus where over 40 houses were swept away. Till 3 pm, 90 bodies were recovered.

The flood caused failure of telecommunication system in the area as BSNL network was

badly damaged. The main bus stand of Leh along with several government buildings, including schools and hospitals were also damaged in the calamity. Air and road traffic was completely disrupted from the district as the runway of Leh's civil airport was damaged and the parts of Leh-Srinagar and Leh-Manali highways were washed away.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has directed the defence ministry to provide all relief to the affected people. He also announced an ex-gratia relief of Rs 1 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each to the seriously injured. The tri-service crisis management group met in the national capital to review the situation in Leh with Defence Minister A.K. Antony monitoring the operations. Home Minister P. Chidambaram said there were enough rescue facilities available in Leh. "We are sending supplies to support the operations. But there is problem in airport operation. Supplies would reach there as soon as the airport is ready," he said. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, while expressing grief over the tragedy, has directed the civil and police administration to undertake relief and rescue work on a war footing.

Airlines jack up fares for flights out of Leh

New Delhi, August 8, 2010: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

They may have survived the catastrophic cloudburst in Leh but were not spared of the greed of private airlines who reportedly charged sky-high fares to fly out of the Ladakh capital on Saturday. The aviation ministry received scores of complaints from people who said they paid up to twice or thrice the normal fare to fly to Delhi on Day 1 of evacuation in Leh. Sources said the fares went as high as Rs 30,000-35,000. Miffed with these complaints, the aviation ministry on Saturday evening issued a directive to airlines not to overcharge. "Saturday being the first day of operations after the runway became operational, we were tied up coordinating with airlines to operate as many flights as possible to Leh. We received complaints and will act against airlines while ensuring no such repeats on Sunday," said sources.

Aviation ministry joint secretary Prashant Sukul is learnt to have pulled up airlines in evening and DGCA chief Nasim Zaidi will be monitoring the fares. He warned of strict action if anyone tries to take advantage of the situation. "This is a national calamity and airlines shouldn't try to cash in this time of crisis. Air India is going to take the lead by announcing reasonable fares to help the people stranded in Leh," a senior aviation official said. On Saturday, about eight commercial flights operated out of Leh to Delhi and on Sunday, three flights each by Kingfisher, Air India (domestic) and Jet each are expected to operate. "Many airlines could not operate on Saturday due to bad weather in the morning. Some flights flew in but could not land because the runway in Leh is under maintenance. Since Leh is a high altitude airport, the highest in the country, commercial flights are not encouraged much," said sources. "Fares should be decided by airlines based on market forces and competition and our policy is not to interfere but if airlines overcharge during any natural calamity or strike or sudden shortfall, then we will have to step in," said another senior official.

This is not the first time that the aviation ministry has had to warn airlines following complaints of overcharging. Last year, the pilots of Jet airways and Air India went on strike and each time with flights getting reduced, the operating airlines made the most of the situation by hiking fares. A couple of months back Zaidi formed a fare monitoring panel in the regulatory agency to keep a daily watch on the level of fares. In fact, for the first time, Zaidi also got notices issued to two private airlines for overcharging on certain

routes where they enjoyed a monopoly.

**1400 stranded people airlifted to Delhi, Jammu
Chances of missing persons' survival turning bleak; death toll rises to 165
81 foreigners, 6 tour operators rescued from Zaskar**

Leh, August 9, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

With every passing day, the chances about survival of missing persons have been turning bleak as heaps of debris were yet to be removed from several areas particularly Choglumsar, which bore the maximum brunt of devastation caused by the cloud burst and flash floods while as the death toll in the nature's fury reached 165 today. In the meantime, airlifting of the stranded people including tourists continued for the third day today with private airlines operating a total of 12 flights on New Delhi-Leh-Jammu aerial route and airlifting 1400 persons. Eighty-one foreigners and six tour operators were also rescued from Zaskar valley and two ailing foreign nationals evacuated from Pang valley and brought here for treatment in Army Hospital by the Indian Air Force. As rescue and relief efforts continued on war-footing for the fourth day today, the death toll climbed to 165 with rescuers digging up 33 more bodies while hundreds of people continued to remain untraced as removal of slush from all the affected areas particularly Choglumsar was taking time and some areas were still inaccessible.

Of the 165 deceased, 150 have been identified and last rites of 15 others were performed as neither their identification could be established nor anybody turned up to claim the bodies. "Since hundreds of missing persons are still believed to be under the rubble, there are very remote chances of their survival and keeping in view huge slush everywhere particularly in Choglumsar, it seems that rescuers will take some more days to completely remove the debris", an officer of the Leh district administration said on the condition of anonymity. Worried about the fate of missing persons, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Naseema Lankar said, "it is fact that huge debris is lying in several areas. Keeping in view the intensity of devastation, we can only pray for the survival of the missing persons and they cannot be declared dead till rubble is cleared from all the areas". In order to trace the missing persons, sniffer dogs have also been brought here and pressed into service. They have started assisting the teams of Army, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF), Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and local volunteers besides personnel of Disaster Management Force in locating the missing people.

Notwithstanding the fact that there has been no fresh rainfall since cloud-burst and subsequent flash floods, fear psychosis continued to grip the large number of people, who have been preferring to stay put in the higher reaches. Their faces turn pale whenever sky turns over-cast and this indicates that they have been finding it difficult to come out of the worst ever tragedy the nature's fury had brought. "During the reconstruction of Leh, the administration should pay proper attention towards creating protection walls along the nullahs in the inhabited areas so that deaths and devastations which the cloudburst and flash floods had brought on the intervening night of August 4 and 5, could be avoided in future", Sonam Wangchok, a resident of Ney village said. "Nobody is ready to believe that after such a devastation, the rainfall will again be a rare phenomenon in the cold desert region", he further said, adding "some people have also started thinking of reconstruction of their houses in the upper reaches so that they don't face horrendous flash floods in future". A Ministry of Defence spokesman said that the Indian Air Force rescued 81 foreigners and six tour guides from the 11,000- foot high

picturesque Zaskar valley. These foreigners were stranded there for over three days, as Zaskar valley was totally cut-off from the rest of the Kargil and Leh districts.

He said that late last evening, IAF received an information that about 150 foreigners were struck up in the Zaskar valley and with the first ray of the light at around 5.30 am, the IAF started operation to rescue them. "We flew the small five seater Chetak helicopter rather than the MI-17 as the valley was narrow", Air Vice Marshal, J Chauhan, Air Officer Commanding for Jammu and Kashmir said, adding though the initial information said there were about 150 odd stranded foreigners, the actual number was 81". A record number of 62 sorties were carried out by Chetak helicopters in five and half hours to bring back 81 foreign tourists and six tour operators from Zaskar to Leh. The valley was so narrow that even the Chetak found it tough to turn around. We had to land on hard surface as there was no helipad there," said Wing Commander Manish V Patel, who was heading the operation and made the first sortie.

The foreigners include 17 British and French nationals each, 9 Dutch nationals, 8 Czech, 7 German, 4 Israeli, Swiss and Romanian each, three Ausi, American and Italian each and 2 Spanish, the spokesman said, adding a special police assistance booth was opened to help those who have lost their passport and other travel documents so that they could be airlifted from Leh in commercial flights to Union Capital. Out of 76 foreign nationals kept at Pang valley, two were also airlifted here as their health got deteriorated. They were admitted in the Army Hospital where doctors provided them all medicare and they were responding to treatment when reports last came in. Even the airlifting of stranded tourists and others continued for the third day today with Indian Airlines, Jet Airways and Kingfisher operating a total of 12 flights on New Delhi- Leh and Leh-Jammu routes.

A total of 1400 people were airlifted from Leh, which includes 1288 for New Delhi and 112 for Jammu. As number of stranded people is still very large, these airlines will continue to operate their flights tomorrow also. However, the destination other than New Delhi will be decided tomorrow. Meanwhile, the IAF's all out efforts in rescue and relief operations received further boost when Air Marshal NAK Browne, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Air Command under whose charge the Northern Sector falls, arrived here to oversee relief and air bridge operations. He also carried a consignment of medical aid to the civil administration on his flight and handed over the same to local administration personally.

Accompanied by Air Vice Marshal, R Sitaraman, the AOC-in-C reviewed the infrastructure of airbase, which was restored for full fledged operations in record time of seven and half hours as a result of which a total of 16 flights (both IAF and civil) were undertaken on Saturday and 22 flights (both IAF and civil) on Sunday. An official spokesman said that Army troops and ITBP personnel have also been assisting Border Roads Organization in creating diversions at several damaged bridge sites on NH-1D while as two bridges have been launched at Phyang and Choglumsar. Work on one bridge has also been completed in Nimoo village.

As the work on Leh-Manali road has been going on war footing, it is likely to be opened within a day or two so that foreign tourists kept at Pang valley could leave by road while as reopening of Leh-Kargil-Srinagar road will take some time. "As far as communication link is concerned, work on installation of BSNL equipment has been going on war footing

while as 7 tonnes of additional cables for the Army have also reached here for further enhancing the communication facilities", an official spokesman said.

According to ITBP spokesman, Deepak Kumar Pandey, the force has opened a medical camp at Sabu village and three relief camps at Leh to provide relief to the injured and bereaved. About 1000 ITBP personnel had been deployed in the relief and rescue works. More than 400 homeless victims had been accommodated in the relief camps, set up by the force and more than 70 injured were admitted in the disaster wards of the ITBP. Apart from providing drinking water, food and medical help to all affected population, the ITBP was also distributing blankets and tents to the homeless victims. "Now the focus is on providing relief to the victims and restoration of normalcy. We have retrieved a few more dead bodies from the debris," he said. According to Deputy Commissioner, Kargil the preliminary damage caused to the property and other infrastructure due to the recent torrential rains and flash floods in the district has been estimated for Rs.55 crore.

Nearly 30 per cent standing crops have been washed away while it is apprehended that remaining standing crops may also suffer damage due to broken Irrigation Khuls. Meanwhile, 40 Irrigation Khuls, 85 water supply schemes including main water supply line to the Kargil town, 25 road links, 10 bridges, 100 residential houses and hundreds of kanals of agriculture land have been severely damaged in the devastating floods.

List of identified deceased

Sane Bano, wife of Rehzat Ullha of Leh, Shahina Bano, daughter of Ghulam Mahidin, Rinchen Dorjay, wife of Tundup Tsering, Sonam Angmo, daughter of Tsering Tundup, Rinzen Angmo, wife of Lobzang Tundup, Mohd Hanif, son of Abdul Rashid of Doda, Isfaq Ahmad, son of Ghulam Rasool of Doda, Javid Malik, son of Mohd Razan of Doda, Imran Ahmad, son of Abdul Gani of Doda, Ram Lal, son of Sahi Bushan of Doda, Tsering Diskit, wife of Yang Tsering of Leh, Tsering Chondol, wife of Lamo Phunchok, of Leh, Stanzin Chosgail, son of Sonam Norphel, Sonam Yangchan, wife of Tsering Nurboo, Tsering Yangskit, wife of Yang Tsering, Paksang Tsering, son of Yangphel, Pashu Pal, son of Niaf Chand of Doda, Pretem Singh, son of Paresh Ram of Doda, Predeep Kumar, son of Posesh Ram of Doda, Mohd Hussain, son of Mohd Kazem of Kargil, Mohd Shafi, son of Mir Ghulam Rasool, Ajay Kumar, son of Ayat Kumar of Punjab, Sher Kumar, son of Bulit Ram of Bihar, Neru Ram, son of Novel Ram of Ganga Nagar, Kunzes Dolma, wife of Tsewang Thupstan of Kargil, Stanzin of Leh, Sonam Gyaltsan, son of Tashi Gyaltsan of Leh, Tsering Dolma, wife of Phuntsog Tsering of Leh, Stanzin Mutup, son of Tsering Nubroo of Leh, Stanzin Yangdol, wife of Sonam Rinchen of Leh, Ghulam Nabi, son of Mohd Abdulal of Kishtwar, Tsewang Samstan, son of Tsering Mutup of Leh, Rigzen Wangail, son of Thinless Dorjay of Leh, Sonam Chonzom, wife of Rigzin Wangyal, Tashi Dolkar of Leh, Stanzin Sonam, son of Gyaltan, Stanzin Chosphel, son of Dorjay Phunchok of Leh, Nima Zangmo wife of Tsering Dorjay of Nepal, Tsering Neklal, son of Rajesh Kumar, Nawang Tsering, son of Tsering Gatok of Leh, Thiksay, Tashi Nima, son of Sonam Tsering of Leh (Meru), Mubarik Khatoon, daughter of Ajaz Ali of Kargil, Santosh Ram, son of Buland Ram of Bihar, Ram Miswat, son of Mangale Ram, Muna Kumar, son of Bhula Ram, Manush Kumar, son of Haskari Ram, Manto Ram, son of Bhuland Ram, Tsering Lamo, wife of Ishay Tundup of Leh, Baljil Manjit, son of Parjet Manjit of Bihar, Nilza Angmo, daughter of Sonam Angmo of Nubra, Nilza Angmo, daughter of Tashi Tundup of Ney, Nissar Ahmed of IRP 4th BN, Abdul Hussain of IRP 4th BN, Chonzom Dolma, wife of Tsering Dorjay of Nubra, Reyas

Ud Din, son of Nazir Ud Din of Nubra, Jigmat Dorjay, son of Rigzin Paljor of Leh, Thukjay Angmo, wife of Tsering Dorjay of Domkhar, Tsering Dolkar, wife of Padma Dorje of Korzok, Deachen Choskit, daughter of Padma Dorjay, Roshan Lal, son of Hans Lal of Samba, Ram Lal, son of Madan of Bihar, Rakesh Kohli, son of A.L.Kohli of Punjab, Stanzin Dolma, daughter of Tsering Dorjay of Leh, Bakta Bahdur, son of Dil Bhadur of Nepal, Kunga Namgyal, son of Tsering Thustan of Leh, Tsering Dolma, daughter of Konchok Phanday of Tangtse, Kame Lama, son of Pasang Gyalpo Lamo of Nepal, Sammana Bano, daughter of Ajaz Ahmad of Kargil, Deachen Paldon, daughter of Tashi Mutup of Choglumsar, Ajay Raina, son of Budini Ram of Nepal, Phunchok Gelak, son of Rigzin Deldan of Nepal, Padma Chosdon, daughter of Sonam Wandus of Leh, Padma Dolma, wife of Tashi Paldan of Leh, Tashi Paldan of Leh, Kushali Samasar, wife of Banasi Lhatir of Garh, Gita Kumari, daughter of Ragir Kumar, Raju Daleep, Rishpal, son of Uttam Singh of Udampur, Mohd Ali, son of Akhoon Hussain of Kargil, Lakpa Gyalmo, daughter of Kami Lama of Chani Nepali, Padma Dolma, wife of Tashi Paljor of Leh, Chosket Dolma, daughter of Sonam of Mudh, Tsering Dorjay, son of Ishey Murup of Choglumsar, Santosh Kumar, son of Halkari Ram of Bihar, Tashi Dadul, son of Tashi Nurboo of Leh, Dil Bai Saroj, Thupstan Tsultim, son of Rigzin Deldan of Tarchit, Konchok Sonam, son of Skarma Khando of Kumdok, Pasang Tsering, son of Yangphel of Choglumsar, Tsering Yangkyid, wife of Tenzin, Tenzin Yangdon, daughter of Dawa Tsering, Stanzin Dolma, wife of Tsewang Phuntsog of Ney, Tsering Palmo, wife of Tsewang Phuntsog of Ney, Tsering Wangdus of Ney, Nurgis Khatoon of Pheyang, Roqiya Bano, daughter of Hussain Ali of Pheyang, Rehana Parveenof Pheyang, Sania Zahra, Sukra Bano, daughter of Mohd Javed, Kulsum, daughter of Khatoon Hussain Ali, Kherun Nissa, Haseen Bano, daughter of Mohd Ali, Tsewang Nurboo, Samstan Zangmo, wife of Tsewang Nurboo, Morup Dolma, wife of Tsewang Namgyal of Skurbuchan, Stanzin Dolma, wife of Tsering Stanzin, Tsering Namgyal, son of Tsering Angchuk of Saboo, Nilza Angmo, daughter of Tsewang Gonbo of Chemday, Tashi Dorjayof Saboo, Chondol Sonam Tsering of Saboo, Phunchok Wangdus Rinchen of Pheyang, Sonam Dolma of Taru, Tsetan Dolkar, daughter of Spalay Angmo of Thiksay, Sogra Bano, daughter of Mohd Javed of Pheyang, Shekhar Maan, son of Bhadur Shekar of Nepal, Prem Delip of Chattisgarh, Kusheli Behe Samaru of Chattisgarh, Kelan Bee, wife of Chander Shekhar of Chattisgarh, Venod Gopal of Chattisgarh, Kesan Bai, wife of Puneey Ram of Chattigarg, Kamlisri Buhhdan of Chattisgarh, Rameshwar Dane Ram of Chattisgarh, Penkey Rajan of Chattisgarh, Vearun Nermala of Chattisgarh, Kum Kum, wife of Suvarash Kumar of Chattisgarh, Lashmi Ganga of Chattisgarh, Samai Lal Malhusi of Chattisgarh, San Jai Banvali of Chattisgarh, Pento Delay of Chattisgarh, Skalzang Edzes, daughter of Kunga Namgayl of Thiksay, Fatima Nessa, daughter of Mohd Hussain of Kargil, Sikendar Patel, son of Tanpal Patel of Bihar, Mahurdin Ansari, son of Salari Ansari of Nepal, Manee Patel, son of Ishwarnat Patel of Nepali, Ramesh Patel, son of Parma Patel of Nepal, Narai Badur, son of Sume Chapsi Sonar of Nepal, Amarjit Kour of Leh, Tashi Gatsal, Santosh Kumar, son of Jeed Badur Kumat of Nepal, Nel Badur, son of Meena of Nepal, Stanzin Yangdol, daughter of Dawa Tsering of Manetselding, Rigzin Chomo of Koyul, Saima Bano, wife of Gh Mohi-ud-din of Saboo, Aasiya Belquis, daughter of Gh. Mohi ud Din of Saboo, Riyaz ud Din, son of Nazir Ud Din of Saboo, Tsering Angchuk, son of Nurboo Tundup of Saboo, Tsewang Spaldon, wife of Tsering Angchuk of Saboo, Satyanareyan Chawdhary, son of Chamma Tharu of Nepal, Anil Chowdhary, son of Gari Ram of Nepal and Nissa Khatoon, daughter of Mohd Hassan of Manesermo.

List of 71 injured

Ishey Dorjay, son of Tashi Paljor of Leh, Jigmet Namgail, son of Nawang Tsering of Leh, Kham Bahadur, son of Zai Bahadur of Nepal, Mukhtar Yadav, son of Raman Yadav of Bihar, Rigzin Namgail, son of Tashi Tundup of Leh, Tsewang Namgail son of Phuntsog Dorjay of Leh, Sunil Yadav, son of Vikram Bahadur of Bihar, Bullet Kumar, son of Ganga Ram of Bihar, Prabha Chauhan, son of Ram Iqbal Parsad of Bihar, Arun Prasad, son of Jodha Bhagat of Bihar, Sunil, son of Vikram Yadav of Bihar, Sushit, son of Rajinder Yadav of Bihar, Mohan Lal, son of Viswanath Yadav of Bihar, Kamal Yadav, son of Ramanyan Yadav of Bihar, Shamboo Yadav, son of Soyhaban Yadav of Bihar, Yashpal of Samba, Raju, Paryrash Yadav, son of Vikram Yadav of Bihar, Chain Singh, son of Suman Singh of Udhampur, Surendar Kumar, son of Ham Raj of Punjab, Rinchen Norbo, son of Lobzang Jampal of Leh, Ud Bahalas of Nepal, Dharam Dass, Kamla of Nepal, Bir Bhadur of Nepal, Bharat of Nepal, Bhadi Ram of Nepal, Bis Bhadur of Nepal, Pushkar of Nepal, Zakir Hussain of Kargil, Padma Rigzin of Leh, Abdul Hussain of Kolkata WB, Skarma Tsultim of Leh, Tsering Chosdon of Hemya, Baby Tsering of Hemya, Bharat Bushan, Tsering Yangdol of Leh, Lobzang Dolma, Ishey Dorjay of Leh, Tsering Lamo of Leh, Rinchen Zangmo of Leh, Jigvar of Leh, Tsewang Paljor of Leh, Sonam Angchuk, Rigzin Angmo of Kargil, Sama Pujhar, Umesh, Nessam, Rigzin Namgyal of Leh, Rinchen Zangmo, Morupm Gurmet of Leh, Youdol Lamo of Kargil, Konchok Dolma of Leh, Maya of Nepal, Thukjsay Palmo of Leh, Konchok Dorjay of Leh, Thinless Wangyal of Leh, Jagdish of Udhampur, Phunchok Angchuk of Leh, Stanzin Nordan of Nubra, Tashi Wangyal of Alchi, Akbar Peer of Chhuchot, Skarma Chuskit of Chhuchot, Stanzin Angmo of Chhuchot, Ravi Kumar of Nepal, Vijay Rai of Nepal, Jangh Bhadur of Nepal, Anita of Nepal, Tsering Angchuk of Liker, Yashpal of Samb.

Tributes paid to victims of natural calamity

No festivity, only flag hoisting in Ladakh on Independence Day

Leh, August 15, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

Unlike other parts of the State and country, there was no festivity in the Ladakh region on the 64th Independence Day in view of deaths and destruction caused by the worst ever natural calamity. At all the places in the region, only flag hoisting ceremonies were organized to mark the important day. Chief Executive Councilor of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, Chering Dorjay hoisted the National Flag at Pologround. On the occasion a 2-minute silence was observed in memory of those killed in the natural calamity. In his brief speech, Mr Dorjay termed the recent deluge as the worst calamity in the region that brought unprecedented death and destruction. "The Council is focusing on the rehabilitation of the flood victims to safer places", he said, adding the Central and State Governments and Hill Council have been co-coordinating efforts to rehabilitate the flood affected and rebuild the damaged infrastructure. He thanked the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, Army, Indian Air Force, ITBP, BRO, NGOs, Police, Monasteries, volunteers and tourists for their support and generous contribution in carrying out rescue and relief operation. Minister for Tourism and Culture, Nawang Rigzin Jora, Executive Councilor, Art and Culture, Tsering Wangchok, Executive Councilor, Minority Affairs, Mohd Khan, the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Tsering Angchok, the SSP, Leh BS Tuti, the Councilors, Addl. Deputy Commissioner, Leh. Mohd. Hanif and the district officers also attended the Independence Day function.

Earlier, Mr. Dorjay hoisted the Tricolor at Council Secretariat in the presence of Executive Councilors, Deputy Commissioner and other Councilors. Reports from Kargil

said that Chief Executive Councilor, LAHDC Kargil, Kacho Ahmad Ali Khan hoisted the National Flag in the premises of Boys Higher Secondary School Baroo and took salute at a parade comprising of 16 contingents of JK Police, NCC, Government and private schools and Army band party.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Khan expressed his deep sorrow over the loss of human lives in Leh district due to the recent flash floods. Later a two minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect to the deceased. About the developmental scenario in the district, he said that the construction work on Rs 40 crore Council Secretariat has kicked off while as the work on the 44 MW Chutak Hydel project will be completed by February next year, where the first unit will get operational. Furthermore, the laying of the transmission line is in full swing and will be completed by November this year. He further said that Rs. 270 crore is being spent on the execution of mini Hydel projects and installation of solar Power Plants in the District.

Later a number of Government servants were awarded for their meritorious and outstanding performance in the field of administration and public welfare. On the occasion, a special award from the LAHDC, Kargil was given to the ex-Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Riyaz Ahmad Sheikh for his outstanding capabilities as a visionary administrator during his tenure at Kargil. Reports of flag hoisting were also received from Drass, Zanskar, Sankoo and Chiktan.

Every home destroyed in Leh will be rebuilt: PM

Leh, August 17, 2010: www.hindustantimes.com

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday visited Leh and announced that all the houses destroyed in flash floods would be rebuilt before the onset of winter. To make sure his promise was fulfilled, he would again visit the place later this year. During his daylong visit to Leh, the prime minister announced a grant of Rs.125 crore out of the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for reconstruction of Leh town and adjacent villages. He also announced Rs.100,000 ex-gratia relief for the next of kin of those who died in the calamity and Rs.50,000 each to those injured in the Aug 6 flashfloods triggered by a massive cloudburst. At least 179 people, including six foreigners, were killed while 200 people are still missing in the disaster.

Addressing the victims of the tragedy, the prime minister said the purpose of his visit to Leh was to share the pain of the people of Ladakh at this critical point of time, in which so many precious lives had been lost and many children rendered orphans. He assured complete rehabilitation of the affected people would be undertaken with the collective efforts of the central and state governments and the Leh Hill Council before the onset of winter. Besides, restoration of hospitals, CT scan units, drinking water supplies, electricity and road connectivity would be carried out effectively, the prime minister added. He said all the restoration and rehabilitation works would be carried out under the supervision of a monitoring committee headed by the Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary.

The prime minister assured that money would be a constraint for the reconstruction of Leh. Later, he held a high-level review meeting on the losses, relief and rehabilitation measures. The meeting was attended by Governor N.N. Vohra, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, union Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, union New and Renewable Energy Resources Minister Farooq Abdullah, senior officials of the state and the district administration. The Jammu and Kashmir commissioner/secretary, planning and Ladakh Affairs, B.B. Vyas gave a presentation to the prime minister about the damage caused by the cloudburst and the future strategies about relief, rescue and rehabilitation measures. During his visit, Manmohan Singh gave a patient hearing to the

people's demands and problems at the relief camp at Himank Complex and enquired about the supply of relief materials and availability of ration. The heads and representatives of different religious, social and political organizations also called on the prime minister at the relief camp in Himank and submitted memoranda urging generous central assistance for reconstruction of Leh district.

Cloudburst in Leh may be due to climate change

New Delhi, August 26, 2010: <http://sify.com>

Based on detailed analysis of weather data of last five years in Leh, Ladakh, scientists have attributed the recent cloudburst in the region to prolonged winters which may be due to climate change. "After going through the sequence of events of the weather that led to the cloudburst on August 6, it has been reinforced that the catastrophe was due to prolonged winters being witnessed in the region," sources in Leh-based Defence Institute For High Altitude Research (DIHAR) said. The analysis by the research institute under the Defence Ministry was done to look into the reasons that triggered the cloudburst in Ladakh which is usually considered unnatural because it is a rain shadow area. On the condition of anonymity, the sources said at a recent meeting on "Evaluation of climate change in Ladakh sector and causes of cloudburst in Leh," the scientists led by DIHAR director Sashi Bala had analysed the weather data of the last five years in terms of monthly temperature, rainfall, humidity and snowfall. The study indicated that increased temperature and hot summers in the plains lead to increased evaporation and subsequent cloud formation in the hills. "This in turn, lead to increased duration of snowfall in Ladakh when compared to previous years. "The winters in Ladakh were found to be prolonged," the experts concluded though they felt the phenomenon could not be directly associated with climate change given the short range of data. They also noted that the region was witnessing unusual phenomenon of bright sunshine in the June and July months causing melting of snow and high relative humidity (72%) as compared to previous years (50%), the sources said. Tracing the change in weather on the basis of the data available, the sources pointed out "since snow absorbed the latent heat also, the monthly maximum and minimum temperature remained low and did not shoot up as compared to previous years (2006). "The low temperature and high relative humidity lead to formation of dense low clouds in the valley. Since the vapour content in the clouds were high and on trying to cross the glaciers, the vapours further condensed. "The clouds could not retain the water droplets that lead to the cloudburst. Since the rainfall was absent on 3rd, 4th and 5th August and was negligible on 7th, 8th and 9th August the theory of occurrence of a cloudburst in Leh due to prolonged winters may be reinforced," the meeting said on the sequence of event. The cloudburst, which led to flash floods and mudslides, claimed about 180 lives and injured about 400 people, besides causing widespread damage to public and private property. The Defence establishment has also initiated research towards preventing soil erosion in case of heavy rains in the area in future in view of climate change.

No Ladakh Festival this year

Leh, August 31,2010: www.tribuneindia.com

Cancellation of the annual Ladakh Festival, which would have begun tomorrow, means a loss of crores but survivors of the recent flash floods resolutely mourn the dead. On the eve of the annual, two-week Ladakh Festival, city markets are deserted. Shopkeepers sit outside their shops waiting for customers. Hoteliers have virtually halved room tariffs from Rs 1,800 to Rs 900-1,000. The festival venue, Polo Ground, has been converted

into a parking lot. Trucks, cars and other vehicles are parked there. "Bodies are still being extricated... how can we even think of a celebration?" asks shopkeeper Tashi Angchok. "The money we make during the 15-day celebrations lasts through the year. Undoubtedly, we'll face great hardship in the coming months, but that's not the point," says the owner of the Pashmina Boutique in the Main Bazaar here.

The Ladakh Festival sees both foreign and domestic tourists flock the valley and is one of the main sources of income for locals. What they earn during this period usually lasts till the next tourist season. This year, Leh was expecting to register a record increase in tourist footfall until Nature unravelled its plans. After mid-September, very few tourists visit Leh. Even locals stay indoors as the biting chill sets in. T. Wangchuk, assistant director with the J&K Information Department at Leh says, "No celebration means a loss of crores. It will take Leh a long time to recover. After the catastrophe, tourists left the town and even if celebrations proceeded as usual, it wouldn't have been of any use." The Ladakh festival is also celebrated in the Nubra Valley for three days, but the people there, too, have cancelled celebrations this year.

Indian president visits flash flood hit Ladakh of India-controlled Kashmir

September 02, 2010: <http://world.globaltimes.cn>

Indian President Pratibha Devi Singh Patil Wednesday visited flash flood hit Leh area of India-controlled Kashmir, Indian Defence officials said. Patil, who was on a day-long visit to the area, took stock of situation and rehabilitation efforts undertaken by the government in the aftermath of flash floods and mud slides triggered by cloudburst in first week of August in the mountainous Himalayan region. She was received by Indian Army Chief General V. K. Singh, India-controlled Kashmir Governor N. N. Vohra, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and other top Army officers at the Leh airport.

Officials said Patil visited relief camps and met the affected people. Around 80 percent of Ladakh's infrastructure has suffered damage in the deluge and slush triggered by cloudburst on Aug. 6. The flash floods and mudslides swept the road links and bridges in the area, damaged hospitals, schools, government buildings, bus terminals, radio station transmitter, telephone exchange and mobile-phone towers.

The devastation has snapped communication links in the area. Many civilian buildings have also been washed away in the heavy downpour. The rehabilitation efforts are underway in the affected villages. Officials say approximately 10,000 people in 34 villages were affected. Around 1,400 hectares of agricultural land was damaged in the calamity. At least 185 people, including 13 Nepali workers and six foreign tourists died in this calamity and more than 500 people sustained injuries. Some people are also reported missing.

Punjab sends 120 trucks of fodder, cattle feed to Leh

September 5, 2010: www.sify.com

A convoy of 120 trucks carrying cattle feed and fodder was flagged off by Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal Sunday as a part of relief operations for the people affected by last month's devastating cloudburst in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Badal said that Punjab would extend all help to the flood-affected people of Leh. He said that 380 more trucks of cattle feed and fodder would be sent to Leh from the districts of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Jalandhar Taran Tarn, Nawanshehr, Kapurthala, Ludhiana and Fatehgarh Sahib daily for the next four days. He said that the entire relief

material in the form of 250 tonnes of cattle feed and 15,000 quintals of fodder was being sent as per the requirement of Leh's deputy commissioner. 'Punjabis are benevolent and magnanimous by nature and were everready to help anyone in distress or a crisis,' Badal said. The chief minister said that he had also offered to help the government of Pakistan's Punjab province in the wake of recent flash floods there and personally talked to his Pakistani Punjab counterpart Shahbaz Sharif on telephone last week.

Qur'an Burning Plan: Protests In Kargil

Kargil, September 9, 2010: www.kashmiroserver.net

Thousands of people marched in Kargil district of Kashmir on Thursday denouncing the decision by a US clergyman to burn copies of the Holy Quran on the anniversary of the World Trade Centre attack.

Nearly ten thousand Kargilis, led by the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, marched in the streets of the mountain district, flaying "criminal silence" of "selfish rulers" of Muslim nations over the issue. The protestors carried placards denouncing the clergyman by name and describing his intention as "crusading imperialism." Chanting anti-US and anti Israel slogans, the huge march wound its way from the Kargil Jamia Masjid through several markets and turned into rally at the main square. Speakers condemned what they called Christian extremism and targeted the US and its allies for encouraging anti-Islam forces. "We condemn the numerous debauched rulers of the Muslim world for their cowardly silence on this issue, and ask all Muslims and justice loving people the world over to stand up against these diabolical conspiracies being hatched at the behest of the US," the speakers said.

A million trees to green cloudburst-hit Leh

Ladakh, September 12, 2010: www.hindustantimes.com

Hundreds of Buddhist monks and nuns kicked off a green drive for the Commonwealth Games at Leh on Sunday. Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for Communications and IT, and Thuksey Rinpochey, representative of Gyalwang Drukpa, head of the Drukpa lineage, led the planting of 1016 Ladakh willow and poplar trees near the ancient Hemis Monastery.

The massive plantation programme 11,000 feet above sea level was aimed at helping check soil erosion in the cloudburst-hit dry region. The drive — aimed at planting a million trees — will culminate during the Commonwealth Games on October 10, when the organisers hope to set a world record of planting the maximum number of trees in an hour. The plantation will be spread across eight blocks around Leh town and add 82 hectares of green area to the existing 11,000 hectares of forest cover in the Ladakh region. At the Hemis monastery, Rinpochey said, "I am sure this drive by the people of Ladakh will spur several such initiatives for a cleaner, greener India." Pilot described it as "timely" and "big boost to the fight against deforestation and desertification" in the region. He said he was "humbled" to know that one of the eight blocks of forest would be named after him.

He added that his ministry was spending R45 crore for reconstruction and expansion of telecom infrastructure, which was damaged in the cloudburst last month. "We tried to restore communication facilities as soon as possible. Massive efforts are being

undertaken to rebuild the infrastructure that was reduced to zero due to the cloudburst," Pilot said.

Dalai Lama meets flood victims in Leh

Leh, September 15, 2010: www.oneindia.in

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama urged victims of the cloudburst in Ladakh not to lose hope and rebuild their lives. The Tibetan spiritual leader toured the devastated terrain in Ladakh and expressed his grief at the natural calamity. "Those who passed away will not return. So, it is better to look forward. The disaster has already happened. Now there are many people, including many concerned governments, who are helping. Now utilise these resources and build your new life with confidence and vision, and look forward," said the Dalai Lama.

Highlighting the heartwarming global response to the disaster, the Dalai Lama said gestures shown by international governments were examples of a world united in adversity. He also praised the media for its stupendous role in catalysing such actions. "I think due to information...about what happened in some area, becomes immediately known to the rest of the world. So, the response to the disaster...such as in the tsunami and the Haiti (earthquake)...the worldwide response...helping...is really very, very encouraging," he said. He also cautioned that natural catastrophes were results of man's apathy and disassociation with nature. Highlighting the need for having a healthy planet to sustain the thriving ecosystems of the planet, the Dalai Lama appealed people to become more biologically sensitive in their practices.

"We really need more awareness about the importance of taking care of our ecology. This (planet) is our own home. This is the only planet where we can live," he said. Last month, the picturesque Ladakh region was left reeling under a destructive deluge of flash floods, caused by a sudden cloudburst. At least 183 people, including 35 army men, 18 Nepali and Tibetan workers, three French, one Spanish and one Italian tourists were killed. More than 7,000 soldiers were conducting rescue and relief work in the region. The deluge in Leh destroyed homes, uprooted telephone towers and deposited boulders and mud up to 15 feet high on highways, cutting road links with the rest of India. Five villages - Sabu, Phyang, Nimoo, Choglamsar and Shapoo were the worst hit by the flash floods. (ANI)

Now it's purely Cong vs BJP in LAHDC Leh polls 17 LUTF Councillors, ex-MP join BJP

Jammu, September 16, 2010: www.dailyexcelsior.com

In a sudden political development ahead of 4th elections to the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, top leadership of the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) including its 16 sitting Councillors and Chief Executive Councillor today joined the Bharatiya Janata Party while as two other Councillors of Front shifted loyalty towards Congress. With this, there will be purely saffron party versus Congress contest in the polls to be held on October 16, 2010. Following final round of successful negotiations with the LUTF yesterday, senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former party president, Rajnath Singh along with national general secretary of the party Jagat Prakash Nadda today flew to Leh in a chartered plane to formally welcome the LUTF top brass and its sitting Councillors into the party fold and finalize the names of the candidates, which will be announced within a day or two.

Out of 19 sitting Councillors including Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), Chhering Dorje of LUTF, 17 joined the saffron party while two others from Timisgam and Panamik chose to side with the Congress party. Besides, sitting Councillors and CEC, top leadership of the LUTF including its patron and former Member Parliament Thupstan Chhewang also joined the BJP. Though some independents may also try their luck in the elections to the Hill Council yet the political development has rendered the contest between BJP and Congress only as the latter, according to the Minister for Tourism, Nawang Rigzin Jora, is enjoying the full support of the National Conference, which has decided not to field any candidate against its Coalition partner in the State Government. "From now onwards, the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) will purely be a non-political organization and it will coordinate the struggle for the long pending demand of Union Territory (UT) status to the Ladakh region", former Member Parliament Thupstan Chhewang told the EXCELSIOR on telephone from Leh after joining the BJP.

Disclosing that some socio-religious organizations were also planning to float a new front for waging war in getting the demand of UT status conceded, Mr Chhewang said, "if such a platform is framed, we may also consider merging LUTF with the same for collective struggle in getting UT status". Earlier, while welcoming the LUTF leadership in the BJP fold in a function at Shenam Hall in the heart of Leh town, Rajnath Singh lashed out at Congress for announcing the elections at a time when ensuring relief and rehabilitation was the main concern for everybody. "There would have been no Constitutional crisis if the elections were delayed by one year for ensuring proper rehabilitation of the people affected by worst ever natural calamity", he said, adding "the holding of elections at this juncture clearly indicates the Congress party's lust for the power". He, however, hoped that people of the Leh district would understand the game plan of Congress and teach its leadership a lesson by voting all the BJP Councillors to power. "If the Congress leadership have any sympathy with the natural calamity hit people it should immediately postpone the elections even now and lay more focus on rehabilitation of people, who have even lost their livelihood", former BJP national president said. Claiming that only BJP can provide protection and prosperity to the people of country, Rajnath Singh alleged that it was only due to wrong policies of Congress that country has been facing problems on internal as well as external fronts. "It is due to weak policies of Congress led Government at the Centre that Pakistan and China have been creating problems for the country", he added.

Pointing towards the all party meeting convened by Prime Minister on Kashmir problem, the BJP leader said, "it is surprising that UPA Chairperson, Sonia Gandhi is only worried about Valley and nobody talked about Ladakh and Jammu", adding "without involvement of Ladakh and Jammu people in talks no solution can be found to Kashmir imbroglio". He assured that BJP will leave no stone unturned to get UT status for the Ladakh region and agitation in this regard would be intensified in the coming days. Thupstan Chhewang too lashed out at Congress and accused its leadership of deceiving the people of Ladakh on UT demand. "We have joined the BJP to highlight our demand from a wider platform and struggle in this regard will be taken to its logical conclusion", he added. "The future of Ladakh is secure only in the hands of BJP as only this party has always raised the issues of Jammu and Ladakh regions", he further said. State BJP president, Shamsheer Singh Manhas, national executive member, Dr Nirmal Singh, J&K Seh Prabhari R P Singh and State general secretary Satish Sharma were also present on the occasion.

Setback for J-K Cong, 5 ex-councillors join BJP

September 20, 2010: www.indianexpress.com

In yet another setback to Congress, five of its former councillors have resigned and joined BJP in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP got an opportunity to strengthen its position in Jammu and Kashmir in general and Ladakh in particular as five former Congress councillors of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) joined BJP, state BJP spokesman said here on Monday.

The former councillors -- Mohmmad Khan, Haji Abdul Qadir, Gulam Mohmmad Chattapa, Gulam Haider Majun and Ahmed Shah – joined the BJP at a function in Nobra belt of Leh in presence of Nobra MLA Tsetan Namgial and Nobra block President T Namgial. "The party has gained strength in entire Leh district as most of the councillors of Congress have joined the BJP. It is historic decision of the people of Ladakh to repose faith in BJP and its policies," the spokesman said.

On September 16, the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUFT) merged with the BJP in a bid to bolster their long pending demand for declaring Ladakh as a Union Territory. Declaring it as a "historic day", as many as 17 elected councillors of the Ladakh Hill Development Council (HDC) joined the national party in the presence of former BJP president Rajnath Singh at a small ceremony.

Indian team won the Oxford business competition 2010

September 26, 2010: www.siliconindia.com

Bangalore: A team of Indian entrepreneurs seeking to set up a network to supply and process apricots in the Ladakh region to produce marketable products has won the 2010 Oxford International Youth Business Development Competition. Of the four teams short-listed for the final, the judges awarded the top prize to the Organic Fresh Apricot Processing project from the Ladakh region. It is a global competition for entrepreneurs aged 16-25, challenging them to develop business ideas that address real economic, social, and environmental issues. The judges felt that the team clearly identified a need, and a plausible way of meeting this need, and were particularly impressed by the meticulous detail and thought which had been put to the application of the plan.

The Organic Fresh project proposes to set up a rural supply and processing network to benefit both farmers and consumers. The project will be launched in Khaltsi block in Leh, and uses a Village Centric Model. Currently nearly 98 percent of fresh apricots in this region reportedly go to waste. Under the VCM, Organic Fresh will gather and process these apricots and use the whole fruit to produce marketable products, mainly jam and juice but also, using the stones, oil. All the processing occurs at the villages where the apricots are grown.

This years competition attracted 130 business plans from teams of young entrepreneurs all around the world, and 20 of these teams received mentoring from current Oxford MBA students to develop their plans. The competition was launched by the Oxford MBA Class of 2006 and held at Oxford University's Sad Business School. The winning team was mentored by current MBA student Muswagha Katya and led by Amish Chadha, Akshay Rao and Rahul Mathur, all former students of St Stephen's College, New Delhi.

Himachal to Gift Potato Seed to Ladakh Farmers

Shimla, September 27, 2010: <http://nvonews.com>

Himachal Pradesh would be providing 2000 quintals of Kufri Jyoti and Kufri Chandramukhi potato seed cultivated in Lahaul Valley of the State free of cost to the farmers of flood affected farmers of Ladakh region. This was revealed by Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal, Chief Minister, after receiving requests from Shri N.N. Vohra, Governor and Shri Omar Farooq, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, to supply quality seed to the farmers of the Ladakh region where the entire crops of the farmers had got washed away in incessant rains and floods during recent monsoon season.

Dhumal said that the State Government had already provided financial assistance to the flood victims to express solidarity with the people of Ladakh region in their hour of distress by extending them financial help. He said that the State Government would be extending all possible help to the farmers of Ladakh region to resume their farming activities. He said that in almost all hilly regions farming had been major livelihood activity of the people and so it had been in the lower areas of Ladakh region. He said that potato cultivation was one of the major cash crop cultivation activity in Ladakh region which had been jeopardized due to the flash floods. He said that the State Government would be supplying 2,000 quintals of quality potato seed of best variety, as requested by the Jammu and Kashmir Government, free of cost and deliver the same in Leh headquarters for onward distribution amongst the farmers. He said that transportation costs would also be borne by the State Government, which alongwith cost of the seed would cost Rs. 50 lakhs. He said that Lahaul Valley was universally acknowledged as best potato production area and keeping in view its quality contents demand had been pouring in from many countries.

Prof. Dhumal said it was a goodwill gesture of the people of Himachal Pradesh that 2,000 quintals of seed potato would be supplied to the farmers of Ladakh free of cost. He said that since Kufri Jyoti and Kufri Chandramukhi were both top variety of seed potato, the same would be made available to the farmers. He said that since the collection of the potato crop in Lahaul valley was already in progress and the same would be collected by the local authorities and transported to the Ladakh Administration for onward distribution amongst the farmers in the valley. He reassured all possible help from the State to the people of Ladakh region in getting suitably rehabilitated and resume their farming and other activities as it was earlier.

Leh plants record 50k saplings in 33 min

Leh, October 11, 2010: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

Two months after flashfloods devastated the region and left over 200 dead, thousands of people, including Hong Kong musician-filmmaker Kenny Pee and Spanish actor Carlos Leal, turned out to plant saplings to create environmental awareness at Karu on Leh outskirts on Sunday. In the process, around 9,000 people, who planted 50,033 Ladakh willow saplings in 33 minutes and 25 seconds over 1.12 lakh sq yard area, also broke the Guinness World Record for planting maximum saplings in an hour. The earlier record of 27,166 saplings was set in Peru.

A joint 'Live To Love' and 'The Drukpa Lineage' effort, the plantation campaign started amid chants of 'yali yangsol. Its head Gyalwang Drukpa said flashfloods provided residents an opportunity to understand the the importance of trees. "Damage to both life

and property could've been reduced had there been more trees." Pee said he had worked with Drukpa during a concert in Kathmandu in April. "Since then, I've been chasing His Holiness (Drukpa)," said Pee, who's in Leh along with his wife, Gama. A participant, Stanzin (21), from Zaskar had travelled for days to take part in the event. "This is for our good," she said.

Divisional forest officer (Ladakh) B Balaji allayed fears about plantation of trees in the region. "It's a misconception that plantation is harmful to the region's ecosystem. It can influence only the micro climate," he said. He said contrary to the popular belief, flora didn't cause the cloudburst. "Plantation has been on since 1965 and is known to prevent soil erosion by binding earth together. "Plantation of seabuck thorn and willows can actually save many lives during cloudburst." Guinness World Records' Tarika Vara said the turnout at the event was heartening. "We were expecting 8,000 people but close to 12,000 came. We could only include 9,313," she said.

Stocking of essential items completed in Ladakh region

Srinagar, October 14, 2010: www.risingkashmir.com

Stocking of essential items like food grains and petroleum products in cloudburst-hit Ladakh region has been completed by the Jammu and Kashmir Government ahead of the winter, which cuts off the twin districts of Leh and Kargil from rest of the country. "Winter stocking of essential commodities, food grains, petroleum products and construction material in twin districts of Leh and Kargil has been almost completed," an official spokesman said after a high-level meeting chaired by Ladakh Affairs Minister Abdul Rahim Rather on Wednesday.

The spokesman said 16,313 metric tonnes of rice, wheat (16,215 mt) and sugar (1242 mt) have been stocked in Leh district whereas 12,171 mt of rice, sugar (1181 mt) and flour (7000 mt) have been stocked in Kargil district.

Stocking of essential items in Ladakh is an annual practice ahead of winter as harsh weather conditions, including heavy snowfall, snap the road links with the region.

The spokesman said 1.32 lakh LPG cylinders have been stocked in Leh district, whereas 71,516 cylinders have reached Kargil district. Nearly 2,800 kiloliters and 1000 kilolitres of kerosene have been stocked in Leh and Kargil districts respectively, which is sufficient to meet the winter requirements, he said. The meeting also reviewed stock position of construction material particularly cement, steel, CGI sheets, timber and firewood in view of the ongoing reconstruction programme for damaged infrastructure hit by worst-ever cloudburst in the region.

The Forest department has stocked about 700 tonnes of firewood and 2373 Cubic feet of timber in Kargil and 327 tonnes of firewood and 15724 cubic feet of timber in Leh district, the spokesman said. The district administration, Leh has also stocked 25,000 cft of timber in Leh to give impetus to the ongoing reconstruction programme under Prime Minister's Relief package, he said. Public Works Department has already stocked about 3.33 lakh bags of cement in the two districts, the spokesman said. Stocking of construction material by SICOP and other concerned departments is also in full swing, he said, adding that the Horticulture department has introduced Armenia-imported high density apple plant varieties in the Ladakh region. The Registrar Cooperatives assured that stocking of the targeted 7850 qts of chemical fertilisers in Kargil and 83000 qts in Leh would be completed within a week. The Minister also instructed for completing

internal transportation of the stocks in far-flung and remote areas like Sanko, Panikher, Nobra which often remain cut-off with the district headquarters during harsh winter.

Sindhu Darshan Festival in Ladakh

October 18, 2010: Press Information Bureau

The State Government of Jammu and Kashmir has informed that the name of the Sindhu Darshan Festival has been changed to 'Leh Singhe-Khababs Festival (Sindhu-Darshan)' based on the recommendation of Ladakh Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh and the festival is being held every year in the month of June. One project for 'Development of Leh as a Spiritual Destination' has been prioritized as a mega project for 2010-11.

News from IALS member Nasir Hussain Munshi

The popular Balti poet Ghulam Hassan Hasani of Baltistan who participated in IALS Kargil colloquium expired on 8th October at 2:30 pm in his home at Skardu. He was suffering from cancer for the last 2 years. May his soul rest in peace.

News From Rome

Professor Luciano Petech, the distinguished Italian historian of Ladakh, passed away in Rome on 29 September, aged 96. Professor Petech began his studies on Ladakh in the 1930s. His Ph.D thesis, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh (Indian Tibet)*, was published in 1939, and focused on the *La dvags rgyal rabs*. He returned to the same topic in a series of articles published after the Second World War and, most notably, in his 1977 volume, *The Kingdom of Ladakh C.950-1842 A.D.* This book remains the single most important work of Western historical scholarship on Ladakh, providing a firm foundation on which subsequent scholars have been able to build.

Professor Petech was already very frail in 2007 when the IALS conference took place in Rome, and unable to take part in person. However, a group of us were able to visit him in his flat, and the first Rome conference volume *Mountains, Monasteries and Mosques* is dedicated to him. We are thankful for his long life and manifold contributions to Himalayan scholarship, and send our condolences to his family.

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NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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We publish information relevant to researchers with an interest in the Ladakh region, including both Leh and Kargil districts. We invite our readers to submit essays, book reviews, fieldnotes or research news, and other items relating to current events, media, and knowledge about Ladakh broadly conceived.

Submission Guidelines

Ladakh Studies encourages submissions of short essays—**under 4000 words**—about contemporary events or ongoing research in Ladakh. Essays may cover historical social, cultural, political, ecological, or scientific topics of interest to IALS members. Book Reviews or “Notes From the Field” should be **under 2000 words**. All material should be submitted in digital form as email attachments, in MS Word. We also accept digital files sent by CD but formatting may be altered. All illustrations should be submitted digitally as JPG files, under 2 MB.

Essays should be submitted single spaced, with left hand margins, with no indentations but line breaks between paragraphs. They should use social science citation guidelines (Author, Date: page #) in both the text and footnotes, and include a bibliography. Please use 12 point Arial or Times font, format to US letter size paper, and consult previous issues of *Ladakh Studies*. All essays will be peer reviewed before publication.

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