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Note to Editors: This is a selection of news wire reports that have been edited to be relevant for audiences for the next two weeks. You are welcome to select and publish individual items or the whole stack.

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[NEWS ITEM TEXT]

Bolivian President Arce Hopes for a ‘Sincere Dialogue’ With Chilean Authorities on Sovereign Access to Sea

[280 words]

On March 23, Bolivia commemorated the Battle of Calama and the Day of the Sea. President Luis Arce, during an event commemorating the day in the capital La Paz, declared he would intensify efforts to obtain Bolivia’s sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, a right that he said he would never renounce.

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Bolivia lost its maritime access and became a landlocked country during the War of the Pacific, fought [between](#) Chile and a Bolivian-Peruvian alliance between 1879 and 1884.

The Battle of Calama was the first battle of the war. On March 23 in 1879, the Chilean army, backed by the British Empire, invaded Bolivia and took possession of the Antofagasta and Calama coastal regions.

The invasion of Bolivia was in response to the move by the Bolivian government to raise taxes on joint Chilean and British mining companies. When the companies refused to pay the new tax, Bolivia moved to nationalize the mines. In response, Chile declared war on Bolivia, which lasted five years with a death toll of as many as 18,000 Bolivians. In 1904, Bolivia officially ceded its coastal territories to Chile.

During the commemoration President Arce [remembered](#) the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the country, and [lamented](#) the “[mutilation]” of the “direct and ancestral relationship” of the Bolivians with the sea.

Arce [called](#) on “Bolivian women and men to learn from the lessons of the past, which teach us that no natural resource is safe from predatory capitalist anguish and foreign interests, neither then nor now.”

President Arce also [called](#) on his Chilean counterpart Gabriel Boric to initiate “a new stage of bilateral relations that will allow us to have a frank, sincere dialogue.”

The People of India Will Have Easier Access to Tuberculosis Treatment After Patent Extension Rejected

[359 words]

On March 23, 2023, the Indian Patent Office (IPO) rejected pharma company Janssen’s application for an extension of its patent on bedaquiline, a drug used in the treatment of tuberculosis patients. The verdict that came just a day ahead of World Tuberculosis Day was celebrated by health activists and tuberculosis survivors in India.

Janssen, owned by multinational Johnson and Johnson, applied for an extension of their original patent on bedaquiline on the basis of having discovered a new formulation. According to Indian law, in order to be granted a patent extension in such a situation, the manufacturer has to show that the new formulation leads to an enhanced therapeutic effect. Janssen repeatedly failed to prove that in the case of bedaquiline salt formulation.

If the patent on bedaquiline had been extended, public and family budgets would have remained burdened by unjustifiable high costs of the drug. Bedaquiline is an important drug for TB patients on many counts. The older TB drugs include injectables such as

kanamycin, which have severe side effects including permanent hearing loss. On the other hand, bedaquiline is an oral drug with much higher safety and efficacy profile.

Bedaquiline was the first new tuberculosis drug in forty years when it was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2012. According to the most recent Global Tuberculosis [Report](#), in 2021, India recorded 119,000 [cases](#) of multidrug resistant tuberculosis and over half a million [deaths](#) caused by the disease.

Priyam Lizmary Cherian, an intellectual property lawyer who argued the case at the IPO, said that the decision should ease the generic production of bedaquiline, making safe and effective treatment more accessible. “India, being a generic production hub, can count on companies being able to pick up production after the original patent expires in July 2023,” [she said](#).

Widely recognized as a disease of the poor, tuberculosis is generally not a prominent field in Big Pharma research and development, although it affects the lives of hundreds of thousands in the Global South. In 2021, the money invested in this field globally was [not even half](#) of what a UN High Level Meeting identified as a target.

Separatist Somaliland Escalates War on Somali Unification Movement

[231 words]

Casualties mounted in Las Anod as the troops of Somaliland, a separatist breakaway region from Somalia with no international recognition of its claim to sovereignty, continued attempts to reoccupy the city. Las Anod is at the heart of the unionist movement to reunite the region with Somalia.

On March 18, attacks by the Somaliland army left over 280 people injured and 47 dead, Jaama Mohamed Mursal, a medical doctor at the Las Anod General Hospital [told Peoples Dispatch](#). The hospital has been severely damaged in the bombardment ongoing since early February.

Somaliland is a self-proclaimed republic formed in 1991 as a separatist state, breaking away from Somalia’s northwestern region after the civil war. It spans a strip of land of almost 137,600 square kilometers along the south of the Gulf of Aden—a crucial shipping route, including for petroleum, connecting the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. It is now facing what many observers regard as an existential threat as the unionist movement for reunification with Somalia spreads across Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC), which is over a third of what Somaliland regards as its territory.

The protests calling for reunification began in December 2022 in the city of Las Anod, where a declaration was passed in February proclaiming SSC as a part of Somalia. The document deemed the presence of Somaliland administration illegal. Somaliland has since been shelling the city.

Long March by Farmers in Indian State of Maharashtra Succeeds After Government Accepts Demands

[316 words]

Thousands of Indian farmers who had been marching in the State of Maharashtra [concluded](#) their protest on March 18 after the government accepted their demands. They had begun their march on March 12. The farmers, who were marching from Nashik to the state's capital of Mumbai, were led by the All India Kisan Sabha, a left-wing farmers' organization.

The farmers had a 17-point charter of demands—the most important of which was remunerative crop prices, especially for onions. They also sought ownership rights on forest land for tribal farmers under the Forest Act 2005, immediate financial relief of Rs 600 (USD 7.2) per 100 kilograms to onion growers, a 12-hour continuous power supply, and farm loan waivers, among other demands.

The government was forced to accept the demands after several rounds of negotiations. Speaking at a public meeting announcing victory, farmers' leader J.P. Gavit said a committee has been formed to look into the implementation of some of the demands. The government has announced the implementation of other key demands, like an increase in the subsidy for onions.

One protesting farmer—Pundalik Ambo Jadhav—died during the protest.

Shortly after the 250-kilometer march began, the government promised it would accept the demands. However, the farmers were not convinced as the government had gone back on similar promises before. Hence, they halted their march but declared that they would not return home until concrete steps were taken regarding their implementation. Following this, the chief minister of the State, Eknath Shinde spoke in the state legislature on the issue and details were also provided to farmers on the implementation of their demands.

Maharashtra was also the venue of the historic Farmers' Long March of 2018 when thousands marched from Nashik to the state's capital Mumbai.

India's farmers and workers are set to hold a major mobilization across the country on April 5 to push for a variety of demands.

Mexico Is Charting Its Own Path Toward Energy Sovereignty

[241 words]

Five hundred thousand people mobilized in Mexico City's Zocalo on March 18 to mark 85 years since the [expropriation of oil](#) by former Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas. The mobilization was called by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, also known as AMLO, who has linked the move by Cárdenas 85 years ago to his administration's current efforts at building energy independence.

The Oil Expropriation Decree by Cárdenas in 1938 ordered the expropriation of the oil fields, machinery, installations, buildings, refineries, distribution stations, pipelines, and other physical assets of 17 foreign companies and their subsidiaries that had control over the industry. This meant that Mexico's oil resources and industry would benefit the people and strengthen the national economy.

The March 18 mobilization also marks one month since AMLO [decreed](#) the nationalization of the country's lithium, approved in April 2022 by the Mexican Congress. Lithium is classified as a "critical mineral" and is used to manufacture rechargeable electric batteries used in a variety of electronics such as electric cars, computers, and cellphones.

When addressing the crowd on March 18, AMLO strongly rejected threats against the country by U.S. politicians. He said, "We remind those hypocritical and irresponsible politicians that Mexico is an independent and free country, not a colony or a protectorate of the United States. They can threaten us with committing any outrage, but we will never, ever allow them to violate our sovereignty and trample on the dignity of our homeland."

20 Years After the Start of the Iraq War, U.S. Peace Movement Protests Yet Another War

[330 words]

An intergenerational, multiracial group of organizers demonstrated in Washington, D.C., on March 18, seeking to unite various sectors of the nation's anti-war movement. Under the slogans "Peace in Ukraine—Negotiations not escalation," "Fund People's needs, not the war machine," and "Say no to endless U.S. wars and sanctions—Abolish NATO," [around 2,500 people](#) representing over 200 organizations rallied in front of the White House and marched to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for a teach-in.

Endorsers and organizers include the ANSWER Coalition, CODEPINK, and the People's Forum.

The war in Ukraine has taken hundreds of thousands of lives, plunged the world into [crisis](#), and will cost the people of the U.S. at least [\\$113 billion](#) in public funds. Many in the anti-war movement [argue](#) that the war wasn't caused by Russia alone, despite what U.S. politicians and media say, and was completely avoidable.

Those joining the march had plenty of reasons to participate. Some have been active in the anti-war movement since even before the Iraq War 20 years ago, which broke out on March 20, 2003, in the "shock and awe" U.S. invasion.

Ellen Barfield of Veterans for Peace, who was active in opposing the Iraq War, told Peoples Dispatch, "Sadly, the general public worships troops, so they listen to us." "We use our status. And that's what Veterans for Peace is all about; it's about supporting each other in doing a better job of trying to educate the public about the real costs of war... to the whole world."

The March 18 rally united various working-class struggles around the globe. Riya Ortiz of Damayan Migrant Workers spoke on the struggle of Filipina labor trafficking survivors. "The reason that [Filipina workers] were getting trafficked is because the U.S. ravaged our home country. We don't have our own heavy basic industry, and basically the main commodity of the country [is] our people," Ortiz told Peoples Dispatch on the link between anti-imperialism and Filipina struggle.