

# REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



## In Conversation with

Tsering Dorjay, President, Zanskar Buddhist Association



# 2026



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Tundup Dorjey

Editor: Stanzin Dasal

Sales & Marketing: Tsering Morup  
Contact: +91 9469451102

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## 'Destination Ladakh' logo unveiled, gives new visual identity to UT Tourism



*Photo Caption: The "Destination Ladakh" logo designed by Team Stringmo, a young collective of artists from Kargil.*

*Reach Ladakh Correspondent*

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on December 18 unveiled the "Destination Ladakh" logo, marking a significant step toward strengthening Ladakh's tourism identity through a unified and meaningful visual representation.

The new logo has been designed by Team Stringmo, a young collective of artists from Kargil, and introduced by the Department of Tourism, Ladakh as part of the UT Administration's efforts to position Ladakh prominently on the global tourism map.

The 'Destination Ladakh' logo presents a distinctive visual identity deeply rooted in the region's authenticity, cultural richness and unique sense of place. It draws inspiration from Ladakh's pristine landscapes, ancient traditions, spiritual her-

itage and the resilient way of life of its people.

Explaining the conceptualisation and design process, members of Team Stringmo elaborated on the cultural symbolism, artistic elements and visual philosophy behind the logo. They said the design aims to project Ladakh as a responsible, authentic and globally appealing destination, while remaining firmly grounded in traditional values and ecological sensitivity.

Team Stringmo explained that the logo features the Bhoti letter "La" at its centre, chosen for both its linguistic relevance and deep symbolic meaning. In the Ladakhi language, La means "pass," an element intrinsic to the region's geography, mobility and identity. The name Ladakh itself originates from La, reflecting the importance

of mountain passes that have historically served as routes of trade, cultural exchange, migration and resilience.

Kaneez Fatima, Team Leader, Stringmo, said the use of La represents a unifying motif that transcends regional distinctions, sectarian lines and cultural variations across Ladakh, symbolising shared heritage and continuity.

She further explained that the logo's colour palette, dominated by a deep red hue, carries historical significance as Ladakh was traditionally known as Maryul, meaning the "Red Land," derived from the reddish tones of its mountains and terrain. Rendered in a bold yet graceful brushstroke, the design evokes Ladakh's natural textures and geological formations. The colour red also conveys warmth, vibrancy and the spirited hospitality of Ladakhi people, serving as a timeless and culturally neutral visual anchor.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the logo encapsulates the narrative of a people who have endured, adapted and flourished in one of the world's harshest environments. The organic brushstroke reflects generations who crossed high passes for livelihoods, traders who traversed historic routes, and communities that have safeguarded their land over centuries. The visual language also subtly pays tribute to Ladakh's patriotic legacy and its contribution to national

*...continues on page 2*

## Ladakh digitises land records; LG Kavinder Gupta launches web GIS portal

*Reach Ladakh Correspondent*

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta launched the Ladakh Land Records Web GIS Portal (<https://landrecords.ladakh.gov.in>) on December 29, developed by the Revenue Department, marking a significant milestone in the Union Territory's journey towards transparent, efficient, and technology-driven governance.

Addressing the gathering, the Lt Governor said that digitisation of land records is a cornerstone of good governance, as clear, updated, and authentic records protect citizens' rights and support effective development planning and policy-making. He emphasised that Ladakh is modernising land records through advanced technology to ensure direct benefits to the public.

Kavinder Gupta expressed satisfaction that land records for revenue villages in Ladakh are being brought onto a digital platform in a phased manner. He said the initiative would reduce the need for frequent visits to government offices, enhance transparency, minimise land disputes, and strengthen public trust in the administration. He also highlighted that modern survey techniques are being used to accurately capture actual land conditions—crucial for Ladakh's

*Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta launching the Ladakh Land Records Web GIS Portal.*

geographically challenging terrain.

The Lt Governor noted that the initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Digital India, Ease of Living, and Inclusive Development, ensuring that even remote and border areas receive robust digital infrastructure and citizen-centric services.

"Making the administration responsive and efficient through technology is the government's priority," he said.

Quoting former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Kavinder Gupta said good governance rests on transparency, accountability, protection of citizens' rights, and sensitivity to public needs. He added that initiatives such as digital land records and transparent recruitment systems are living examples of responsive, future-ready governance.

The Lt Governor congratulated Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, the Revenue Department, district administrations, and all officials involved, expressing confidence that the portal would prove user-friendly, reliable, and effective. He reaffirmed that such visionary, technology-driven initiatives would establish Ladakh as a model of good governance based on trust, transparency, and accountability.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Government of India, Kunal Satyarthi, praised the UT Administration for the achievement, noting that only a few states have reached this level of digital advancement. He also informed about

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## Fortnightly News

### 'Destination Ladakh' logo unveiled, gives new visual identity to UT Tourism

...Continuity of page 1

strength through courage and service.

As a tourism identity, the logo serves as both a symbol and an invitation. Interpreted as a "pass," the letter La becomes a metaphorical threshold to exploration, adventure and transformation. It portrays Ladakh not merely as a destination, but as a living experience that invites travellers to journey across landscapes, cultures, stories and time.

The unveiling of the Destination Ladakh logo marks a major milestone in the UT Administration's efforts to reposition Ladakh as a distinctive tourism destination that offers immersive experiences, supports local livelihoods and celebrates its unique cultural and natural heritage.

The logo embodies the essence of Ladakh—where enduring traditions blend seamlessly with subtle modernity—reflecting the simple, grounded and balanced way of life practised by its people.

### Ladakh digitises land records; LG Kavinder Gupta launches web GIS portal

...Continuity of page 1

NAKSHA (NAational Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations), a one-year pilot project under the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP), and invited Ladakh to participate.

Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal highlighted the universal importance of land records and detailed ongoing digitisation efforts under SVAMITVA and DILRMP as per Government of India guidelines. He stated that documents issued through the portal are legally valid and can be used for purposes such as bank loans, adding that efforts are underway to achieve saturation of digital land records across the UT. Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Leh, Shabbir Hussain, informed that citizens can access 18 land record-related services through the portal and demonstrated the simple and transparent online process for applying for fard intikhab.

The event was attended by Executive Councillor LAHDC Kargil Kacho Mohd Feroz, Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, Administrative Secretaries Shashank Aila, Bhanu Prabha, Moses Kunzang, Special Secretary (Law) Qureshi Tariq Mahmood, Deputy Commissioners Romil Singh Donk (Leh) and Rakesh Kumar (Kargil), along with senior officers, tehsildars, NIC officials, and other dignitaries.

### Delegation led by Councillor Cha Stanzin Lakpa meets LG Kavinder Gupta, urges early operationalisation of five new districts



Photo Caption: Delegation led by Councillor Cha Stanzin Lakpa meets Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** A delegation led by Councillor Cha Stanzin Lakpa met Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on December 27 at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.

The delegation expressed gratitude to the Union Territory Administration for announcing the creation of five new districts—Changthang, Zanskar, Nubra, Sham and Drass. They also urged the administration to ensure the formal notification

and early operationalisation of the newly announced districts in a time-bound manner so that residents can begin receiving tangible administrative and developmental benefits.

Members of the delegation highlighted the severe challenges faced by people in these regions due to vast distances, harsh climatic conditions, and limited administrative outreach. They stressed that the establishment of full-fledged

districts would strengthen grassroots governance, improve public service delivery, enhance disaster response mechanisms, and promote inclusive development, while safeguarding Ladakh's unique cultural and ecological identity.

Responding to the delegation, Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta said that the UT Administration is fully committed to fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Ladakh. He informed that necessary steps are being taken to put in place the required administrative, infrastructural, and human resource frameworks for the smooth implementation of the new districts.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the Central Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains firmly committed to the holistic and equitable development of the Union Territory of Ladakh, with special sensitivity towards the needs of people living in remote and border areas. The decision to create five new districts, he said, reflects the Centre's resolve to strengthen decentralised governance, improve service delivery, and ensure inclusive growth, while preserving Ladakh's distinct cultural, social, and ecological heritage.

Reiterating the significance of the move, Kavinder Gupta said that the creation of the five new districts marks a historic step towards decentralised administration, equitable development, and administrative justice for people living in far-flung areas of Ladakh. The long-awaited decision is expected to bring governance closer to the people, enhance access to essential services, and address long-standing developmental imbalances in the region's challenging terrain.

He further emphasised that stakeholder consultations will continue to ensure that the transition remains people-centric and responsive to local needs.

### LG Kavinder Gupta visits Sangam point, stresses sustainable tourism in Ladakh



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta at the Sangam Point.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta visited the Sangam Point on December 28, one of Ladakh's most prominent tourist destinations, located about 35 kilometres from Leh on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway. The site marks the spectacular confluence of the Indus and Zanskar rivers and is globally renowned for the striking visual contrast of the blue waters of the Indus merging with the muddy green-brown waters of the Zanskar, forming a single majestic river.

During the visit, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted Sangam Point's growing importance

as a hub for adventure tourism, offering activities such as river rafting, trekking, and sightseeing, while serving as a key stopover for travellers on the Srinagar-Leh route. He noted that its proximity to Leh enhances its role in Ladakh's overall tourism circuit.

Emphasising visitor comfort and experience, the LG called for the development of dedicated viewpoints and cafeterias at the site. He also stressed the need to maintain cleanliness and environmental sustainability to preserve Ladakh's pristine natural beauty for future generations.

Kavinder Gupta reiterated that tourism is a major pillar of Ladakh's economic growth, contributing significantly to local livelihoods and allied sectors such as hospitality, transport, handicrafts, and eco-tourism. He underlined the importance of promoting responsible and sustainable tourism to protect Ladakh's fragile ecosystem while ensuring long-term, inclusive development.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that since Ladakh became a Union Territory, accelerated development has taken place across key sectors, with tourism receiving special focus. The UT Administration, he said, is working towards the holistic development of existing and potential tourist destinations through improved infrastructure, connectivity, and visitor facilities.

Highlighting future connectivity, he said the Zoji La Tunnel, expected to be completed within the next two years, will be a game changer by providing year-round all-weather road access to Ladakh. The tunnel is expected to boost tourism by reducing travel time and enabling uninterrupted access during winter.

Stressing the importance of winter tourism, the LG said efforts are underway to promote winter sports, cultural events, and experiential tourism to attract visitors throughout the year and generate sustained employment.

He further reaffirmed the UT Administration's commitment to developing world-class tourism infrastructure while maintaining ecological balance. Calling for coordinated efforts, he urged officials and stakeholders to focus on community-driven, eco-friendly tourism initiatives.

During the visit, the Lieutenant Governor also interacted with tourists from different parts of the country, receiving first-hand feedback on their experiences. Welcoming them to Ladakh, he assured them of the administration's commitment to providing safe, comfortable, and memorable travel experiences.

Appealing to people across the country, Kavinder Gupta invited tourists to explore Ladakh's breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, reaffirming that the Union Territory is steadily progressing towards becoming a globally recognised destination for sustainable and responsible tourism.

### Operation Sadbhavana: 10 KVA solar power plant inaugurated at Khated village in Changthang



Photo Caption: During the formal handing over of 10 KVA solar power plant to Khated village in the Changthang region.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Under Operation Sadbhavana, a 10 KVA solar power plant was constructed and formally handed over to Khated

village in the Changthang region of Ladakh on December 24. The initiative was undertaken by the Indian Army in close collaboration with the civil administration, reinforcing efforts to promote sustainable development in remote border areas.

The solar power project aims to enhance access to reliable electricity for the villagers while supporting clean and renewable energy solutions. Through such sustainable initiatives, the Indian Army continues to empower local communities, improve access to essential services, and strengthen the spirit of nation-building in strategically important and remote regions.

On the occasion, former Councilor Konchok Stanzin expressed gratitude to the Trishul Division of 14 Corps for upgrading the existing solar power infrastructure by adding an additional 10 KVA capacity. The plant was handed over to the villagers in the presence of the village head (Nambardar) and other local representatives.

He said that such initiatives not only address critical local needs but also further strengthen civil-military relations, fostering mutual trust and cooperation between the Army and the local population.

### LG Kavinder inaugurates ₹25.9-crore 3 Tesla MRI facility in Kargil



Photo Caption: 3 Tesla MRI facility at the District Hospital Kargil.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**KARGIL:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on December 24 inaugurated a state-of-the-art 3 Tesla MRI facility at the District Hospital Kargil, marking a major milestone in strengthening advanced healthcare services in the remote Himalayan region.

Addressing the gathering, the Lt Governor said the new facility ensures that people living in remote, hilly and border areas will no longer be deprived of world-class diagnostic services despite challenging geographical and climatic conditions. He emphasized that geographical remoteness is no longer a barrier to accessing quality medical care in Ladakh.

The advanced MRI facility was dedicated to the people of Kargil in the presence of CEC LAHDC Kargil Dr. Jaffer Akhoon; Member of Parliament Mohd Jan; Executive Councillors of LAHDC Kargil; Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal; Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar; Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar; SSP Nitin Yadav; Director Health Services Dr. Tashi Thinles; Chairman Haj Committee Ali Majaz, senior officers, religious heads, and medical staff and students.

LG Kavinder Gupta said the installation of cutting-edge diagnostic technology reflects the government's firm commitment to equitable and quality healthcare and represents a significant step toward strengthening the public health system in Ladakh.

Highlighting Ladakh's difficult terrain, harsh climate and long winters, he noted that healthcare delivery had historically faced serious challenges. However, he expressed satisfaction over the progress made in recent years, stating that sustained infrastructure development and policy focus have transformed healthcare access across the UT.

Referring to reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor recalled India's resilient response during the COVID-19 pandemic through rapid infrastructure expansion, modern technology and the tireless efforts of healthcare workers. He said the same national vision is now benefiting remote regions like Ladakh.

The Lt Governor said the 3 Tesla MRI will enable faster and more accurate diagnosis of complex diseases. Earlier, patients from Kargil were compelled to travel to Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh or Delhi for advanced investigations, resulting in financial strain, time loss and mental stress. With this facility available locally, patients and their families will receive significant relief and renewed confidence in district-level healthcare services.

He also highlighted the continuous strengthening of healthcare infrastructure across the UT, including District Hospitals, Community Health Centres (CHCs),

Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, aimed at improving accessibility, preventive care and early diagnosis.

Providing details of ongoing projects, the Lt Governor informed that a proposal to enhance the bed capacity of District Hospital Kargil from 100 to 200 beds has been submitted to the Government of India and approval is expected soon. Construction of a new hospital block to expand capacity to 300 beds at a cost of ₹61 crore is underway. He added that Doctors' Quarters, Staff Quarters and Class-IV employees' quarters are nearing completion, along with an Administrative Block and a TB Hospital. The ₹81-crore CHC Zanskar project is currently under tendering.

LG Kavinder Gupta noted that Ladakh allocates nearly 8.76 percent of its total budget to the health sector—higher than the national average. He reiterated the administration's commitment to universal healthcare through Ayushman Bharat and initiatives to strengthen medical education, including the approval of a new Medical College in the UT.

Congratulating the Health Department and all stakeholders, the Lt Governor urged effective utilization of the MRI facility to benefit all sections of society, particularly the poor and residents of far-flung areas. He expressed confidence that the facility would significantly enhance timely diagnosis and help save valuable lives.

CEC LAHDC Kargil Dr. Jaffer Akhoon, speaking on the occasion, congratulated the people of Kargil on the installation of the state-of-the-art MRI facility, calling it a landmark achievement in regional healthcare. He thanked the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Secretary for their support and recalled the pivotal role played by former LG Dr. Brig. B.D. Mishra in developing modern infrastructure at the hospital.

Dr. Akhoon said the new MRI facility will provide world-class diagnostic services free of cost at the doorstep of Kargil residents, especially benefiting marginalized communities who previously had to travel long distances. He highlighted several healthcare initiatives undertaken under his chairmanship, including CSR procurement of a ₹9-crore CT scan for CHC Sanatorium through Power Grid.

He urged the administration to address shortages of super-specialists such as cardiologists, urologists and nephrologists, provide short-term ultrasound training to local MBBS doctors in J&K hospitals, and ensure emergency first-aid services for Kargil residents in Jammu. He also appealed for support to upgrade the AMT School into a Nursing College.

Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal termed the inauguration of the 3 Tesla MRI facility a significant milestone for Kargil, stating that advanced medical infrastructure ensures timely and accurate diagnosis, reduces patient burden and reflects the UT administration's commitment to quality healthcare delivery in remote and challenging areas.

Earlier, Medical Superintendent Dr. Mohammad Abbas delivered the welcome address and described the 3 Tesla MRI as a giant leap for diagnostics in Kargil. He said the facility would greatly benefit economically weaker patients by sparing them the cost and hardship of external investigations, while improving treatment outcomes.



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No: ETO/LEH/2025-26/211

Dated: 11 - 12 - 2025

## Fortnightly News

### LG Kavinder Gupta pays tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Good Governance Day

Recalls Vajpayee's visionary leadership marked by nation-building and people-centric governance



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary, observed as Good Governance Day, at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat on December 25.

Addressing officers and staff, the Lieutenant Governor recalled Vajpayee's visionary leadership, stating that his tenure will always be remembered for nation-building, transparent governance, and people-centric policies.

Kavinder Gupta shared personal memories of meeting Atal Bihari Vajpayee on several occasions.

tration and last-mile delivery of development—principles that continue to guide governance in Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that the UT Administration is committed to ensuring that government schemes and development initiatives reach remote and border villages.

Highlighting ongoing governance reforms, he stressed the importance of transparency, digital governance, and efficient service delivery, adding that initiatives such as e-office and technology-driven administration are strengthening public service systems in Ladakh.

Kavinder Gupta reaffirmed the Administration's commitment to inclusive development, youth empowerment, preservation of cultural heritage, and the strengthening of public welfare systems across the Union Territory. On the occasion, the UT Administration also announced the declaration of nine UT-Level Festivals, aimed at creating a structured and globally recogni-

### Bhoti textbook training for Foundational classes launched at DIET Leh



Photo Caption: During the five-day Bhoti Training Programme on the newly framed Bhoti textbooks for foundational and primary classes at DIET Leh.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** A five-day Bhoti Training Programme on the newly framed Bhoti textbooks for foundational and primary classes commenced on December 27 at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh.

The objective of the programme is to orient teachers with the newly developed Bhoti textbooks for Nursery, LKG, UKG, and Classes I and II, and to strengthen pedagogical

practices at the foundational and primary levels in line with the National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

A total of 91 teachers from three educational zones—Nubra, Durbuk, and Nyoma—are participating in the programme. The initiative aims to ensure the effective classroom implementation of the newly framed Bhoti textbooks and to promote mother tongue-based education in Government schools across the Union Territory of Ladakh.

### LG Kavinder Gupta launches SOPs for Satellite Phones to boost tourism safety in Ladakh



Photo Caption: During the launch of streamlined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the procurement of satellite phones for tourism purposes.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on December 17 launched streamlined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the procurement of satellite phones for tourism purposes, marking a major milestone in strengthening tourist safety and advancing Ladakh's adventure tourism ecosystem.

Ladakh, globally recognised for its remote landscapes, high-altitude adventure tourism, mountaineering expeditions, and off-grid travel experiences, has long faced communication challenges in areas with limited or no mobile connectivity. The operationalisation of satellite phone services for tourism addresses these challenges, benefiting tourists, tour operators, and emergency response agencies alike.

Secretary, Tourism, Sanjith Rodrigues, informed that in 2022, the Ministry of

Defence, Government of India, permitted the use of satellite phones for tourism purposes by tour operators," said Director Paldan.

With the new SOP, tour operators can now directly approach BSNL, Leh, and procure satellite phones through an approved, transparent, and streamlined process, enabling timely access to reliable communication tools in remote and high-risk areas.

This landmark initiative represents a first-of-its-kind measure for Ladakh's tourism industry, significantly enhancing preparedness, safety standards, and operational confidence for adventure tourism activities. The availability of satellite phones is expected to improve emergency communication, strengthen rescue coordination, and reinforce Ladakh's position as a responsible, safe, and globally competitive adventure tourism destination.

"These continuous efforts and detailed consultations culminated in the issuance of a comprehensive SOP by BSNL on December 17, 2025, governing the procurement of satellite

### LG Kavinder Gupta unveils 'Celebrate Ladakh' calendar; Nine UT-Level festivals declared



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta inaugurating the 'Celebrate Ladakh' Tourism Calendar.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on December 17 inaugurated the 'Celebrate Ladakh' Tourism Calendar, prepared by the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh, marking a significant step towards strengthening Ladakh's cultural branding and promoting year-round tourism in the Union Territory. On the occasion, the UT Administration also announced the declaration of nine UT-Level Festivals, aimed at creating a structured and globally recogni-

nizable tourism identity for Ladakh.

Secretary, Tourism, Sanjith Rodrigues, stated that while Ladakh hosts over seventy festivals across districts and seasons, the lack of a clearly defined festival hierarchy has led to fragmented branding, limited national visibility, and inconsistent promotion. To address this, the Department of Tourism has identified nine high-impact festivals to be designated as UT-Level Festivals, with

locations and dates fixed for the next three years. The selection is based on cultural significance, tourism potential, geographic spread, economic impact, and alignment with national and international tourism calendars.

The nine UT-Level Festivals include:

- Apricot Blossom Festival
- Ladakh Astro Week
- Changthang Nomadic Festival
- Suru Summer Festival
- Zanskar Festival
- Ladakh Festival
- Himalayan Film Festival
- Ladakh Bike Week
- Ethnic Food Festival

Director, Tourism, Tsering Paldan, said the initiative will enable tour operators, travel platforms, media partners, and airlines to promote Ladakh more effectively as a year-round tourism destination through predictable and well-publicised events. He added that two flagship festivals—the Lada-

kh Festival in Leh and the Suru Summer Festival in Kargil—have been proposed for national-level promotion under the Ministry of Tourism's "Two Festivals per State" scheme, with partial central support to maximise visibility and tourist inflow.

"While these nine festivals will receive priority branding, marketing support, and coordinated resource allocation, all other local and regional festivals—approximately seventy—will continue to be celebrated according to community traditions and district-level planning," he said.

Festivals such as the Zanskar Festival, Changthang Nomadic Festival, and Himalayan Film Festival will be organised in close coordination with the Departments of Culture and Information, ensuring unified branding under the "Ladakh Tourism" identity

while respecting departmental mandates.

The declaration of fixed festival dates for three years is expected to significantly enhance inter-departmental coordination, enable timely promotional campaigns, and eliminate challenges arising from ad-hoc scheduling. By prioritising these UT-Level Festivals, the UT Administration aims to strengthen Ladakh's cultural appeal, attract domestic and international tourists, and generate sustained economic opportunities for local communities.

Through the launch of the 'Celebrate Ladakh' Calendar and the structured festival framework, Ladakh has taken a decisive step towards harmonising its rich cultural traditions with strategic tourism promotion, reinforcing its position as a premier destination for culture, adventure, gastronomy, and sustainable tourism.

### Royal Enfield expands Learn to Play Ice Hockey programme to 23 villages in Ladakh

Over 800 children to receive structured skating and ice hockey training during the winter season



**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Royal Enfield Social Mission is set to roll out the Learn to Play (LTP) Coaching Programme 2025–26 in Ladakh, reaffirming its commitment to grassroots ice hockey development in the region. A key intervention under Royal Enfield Ice Hockey Season 3, the programme will engage over 800 children aged 6 to 15 years across 23 villages, marking a significant expansion from

10 villages last year and strengthening early access to structured skating and ice hockey training.

Designed as a season-long engagement, the Learn to Play programme commenced in November 2025 with a Basic Coaches Training Camp led by Coach Darryl Easson in Dehradun and will conclude in March 2026. During the peak winter months, structured 8-day

coaching modules will be delivered across participating villages. The programme will be led by 24 trained local coaches, many of whom have progressed through Royal Enfield-supported Train-the-Trainer initiatives, ensuring a consistent coaching framework and community-led implementation.

The curriculum focuses on skating basics and ice hockey fundamentals, with an emphasis on balance, coordination, confidence, and enjoyment of the sport. Alongside physical skills, the programme encourages values such as teamwork, discipline, and resilience, positioning sport as a meaningful part of everyday winter life in Ladakh.

Building on the success of earlier editions, the 2025–26 programme expands its footprint to 23 villages across Nyoma, Durbuk, Kargil, Nubra, Zanskar, Khaltse, and Leh blocks. Preparatory work

is already underway, including coordination with village representatives, equipment planning, and scheduling aligned to local winter conditions to ensure smooth execution throughout the season.

Aligned with the Blueprint for Himalayan Ice Hockey Development, the Learn to Play programme forms the foundation of Royal Enfield's grassroots-led approach to the sport. It creates a clear pathway from early participation to advanced coaching, officiating, and competitive

platforms such as the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League (REIHL) in Ladakh and the Spiti Cup powered by Royal Enfield in Himachal Pradesh. By delivering quality coaching and structured training from the basics, the programme will include Learn to Play training for 80 children during the first six days, culminating in a fun, carnival-style competition featuring a 32-team 3v3, non-contact, mixed age and gender knock-out format, along with community-led engagements.

### Leh observes Veer Bal Diwas honouring courage and sacrifice of children



**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** The Department of Social and Tribal Welfare, Union Territory of Ladakh, organized a state-level celebration of Veer Bal Diwas on 26 December to honour the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of children.

The programme commenced with the live telecast of the address by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, who distributed the "Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar" on the occasion.

The state-level programme was graced by the Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk (IAS), as the Guest of Honour. Other dignitaries included Kunzes Angmo, Director, Social and Tribal Welfare Department; Kunzes Dolma, briefed the audience on the activities conducted in Child Care Institutions (CCIs) across UT Ladakh during the Veer Bal Diwas week.

A brief PowerPoint presentation on History and significance of the Veer Bal Diwas was presented, emphasising on 'collective responsibility' towards child rights and safety. Appreciation awards and certificates

were presented to meritorious and resilient children from various Child Care Institutions by the Deputy Commissioner Leh and Director, Social and Tribal Welfare Department.

The highlight and culmination of the event was the live telecast & address by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, who called upon the nation to draw inspiration from the courage of the Sahibzadas and reaffirmed the government's commitment to child welfare, protection, empowerment, and nation-building towards the Viksit Bharat 2047.

### ADC Kargil Imteeaz Kacho conducts quarterly inspection of EVM warehouse



Photo Caption: ADC, Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho conducting the fourth quarterly inspection of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) warehouse.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho conducted the fourth quarterly inspection of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) warehouse on December 29 to review the security arrangements and availability of election-related equipment.

During the inspection, the ADC thoroughly examined the warehouse and assessed fire safety measures, including fire extinguishers and fire balls, along with CCTV surveil-

lance and other security-related installations.

The inspection was carried out in the presence of DSP (DAR) Tundup Dorjay, Executive Engineer, PDD, Feroz Ahmad, Executive Engineer, R&B-II, Er. Mansoor Hussain, representatives of concerned departments, and political representatives from the Indian National Congress (INC) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), ensuring strict adherence to election guidelines and safeguarding the integrity and security of election materials.

After verifying compliance with all prescribed norms and expressing satisfaction with the security arrangements, the EVM warehouse was resealed as per established procedures.

The inspection formed part of the fourth quarterly review, aimed at ensuring strict adherence to election guidelines and safeguarding the integrity and security of election materials.

## Fortnightly News

### L-G Kavinder Gupta hails transparent recruitment, launches online domicile portal in Leh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, handed over selection letters to provisionally selected candidates who appeared in the recent matriculation-level examinations conducted by the Ladakh Subordinate Services Staff Selection Board (LSSSB) at the District Panchayat Resource Centre, Leh, on December 29. On the occasion, he also launched the Online Ladakh Domicile Certificate Portal, marking a significant milestone in advancing digital governance and youth empowerment in the Union Territory.

The Lt Governor highlighted the time-bound and transparent recruitment process undertaken by the Union Territory Administration through LSSSB, noting that the declaration of examination results within just 48 hours reflected strong institutional systems and administrative efficiency.

He said the achievement has set a national benchmark and demonstrated that even remote and border regions like Ladakh can successfully adopt best-in-class administrative practices with clear intent and robust governance mechanisms.

Emphasising the values of public service, Kavinder Gupta said government service is a responsibility towards the people and not merely an employment opportunity. He urged the newly selected candidates to uphold the highest standards of integrity, discipline, and professionalism, and to adopt a citizen-first approach. He expressed confidence that the new appointees would contribute meaningfully to good governance, administrative efficiency, and nation-building in Ladakh.

Highlighting the performance of the Ladakh Subordinate Services Staff Selection Board, the Lt Governor said the Board, constituted in 2024, was established with the objective of creating a robust, transparent, and credible recruitment system. He expressed satisfaction that the Board successfully completed its first recruitment process in a fair, transparent, and time-bound manner—from the issuance of advertisements to the conduct of examinations, declaration of results, and final selection.

Referring to the launch of the Online Ladakh Domicile Certificate Portal (<https://domicile.ladakh.gov.in>), Kavinder Gupta said the initiative would

simplify procedures, reduce delays, and eliminate unnecessary visits to government offices. He added that the portal would enhance transparency, efficiency, and trust between the administration and citizens, and would be particularly beneficial for Ladakh given its challenging geographical conditions.

The Lt Governor emphasised that several central government flagship programmes, including Digital India, Smart City Mission, AMRUT, Housing for All, and infrastructure development initiatives launched under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have accelerated development, attracted investment, and generated employment across various sectors. He specifically mentioned free LPG connections under the Ujjwala Scheme, rural and urban housing under PMAY, Har Ghar Nal Se Jal, and the mission-mode construction of roads and highways, which have transformed the country's development trajectory while strengthening national connectivity and defence preparedness.

Kavinder Gupta highlighted the unprecedented development witnessed in Ladakh since it became a Union Territory in 2019, noting significant progress in empowering youth, farmers, and women. He said that supportive infrastructure, policies, and schemes have promoted entrepreneurship and self-employment, unlocking immense potential in tourism, renewable energy, handicrafts, and public administration.

Calling upon the youth to play a pivotal role in achieving the national vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor said young people are the greatest strength of the nation. He expressed confidence that the newly appointed candidates would uphold the core values of public service and contribute meaningfully to good governance and nation-building.

Concluding his address, Kavinder Gupta congratulated all selected candidates, stating that their selection was the result of hard work, perseverance, and merit. He urged them to view the appointment not merely as a job offer, but as an opportunity to serve the nation.

Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal highlighted the first UT cadre recruit-



ment drive conducted by the UT Administration post-2019 with the assistance of the Staff Selection Commission, through which around 4,000 candidates were selected. He underscored the need to establish a dedicated Ladakh recruitment board and commended LSSSB for conducting its inaugural recruitment drive in a fair, transparent, and timely manner for the benefit of Ladakhi youth.

Secretary, LSSSB, Dr. Zahida Bano, informed that the Board had advertised 377 posts, including 99 matriculation-level posts, and conducted examinations and declared results within a remarkably short timeframe, underscoring the Board's efficiency.

Additional Secretary, GAD, Rigzin Spalgon, briefed the gathering on the Domicile Certificate Issuance Portal, highlighting its simplicity, speed, and accessibility.

Among those present were Administrative Secretary Moses Kunzang, Deputy Commissioner Leh Romil Singh Donk, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Rakesh Kumar, Directors and Heads of Departments, senior government officials, and newly selected candidates.

### Former CEC LAHDC Leh meets Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, raises key development issues

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Former CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson called on Union Cabinet Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, on December 22, and discussed several key issues related to infrastructure development and administrative matters concerning UT Ladakh.

During the meeting, Adv. Gyalson expressed gratitude to the Minister for his continued support towards infrastructure projects under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs. He highlighted ongoing approved projects, including the construction of 200-seater Computer-Based Test (CBT) centres at Leh and Kargil, with project costs of ₹7.00 crore and ₹7.50 crore, respectively. He informed that these projects are nearing completion and are expected to be operational in the coming financial year.

Emphasising the importance of the initiative, Adv. Gyalson said the CBT centres would significantly benefit students by facilitating the conduct of major competitive examinations using a common question paper, thereby resolving the long-standing issue of multiple paper sets caused by inadequate examination infrastructure in the region.

He also urged the Union Minister to expedite approval of proposals already submitted under the PMJVK scheme, while informing him that additional development proposals are likely to be submitted in the future.

In addition, Adv. Gyalson sought the Minister's intervention regarding the transfer of arts, artefacts, and archival materials, which, despite the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union



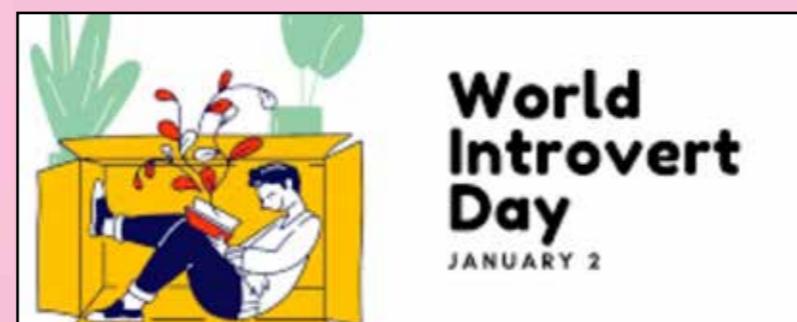
Photo Caption: Former CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson with Union Cabinet Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju.

Territories, are yet to be transferred from UT Jammu & Kashmir to UT Ladakh.



### The World of Juniors

### World Introvert Day



Felicitas Heyne, a well-known German psychologist and the creator of the free e-book "Happily Introverted Ever After," is credited with creating World Introvert Day. Heyne published a blog entry titled "Here's Why We Need a World Introvert Day" on her website "iPersonic" on September 20, 2011.

This article served as the catalyst for the inaugural World Introvert Day. She claimed in the article that it was past time for the world to become more cognizant of what makes introverts unique.

Heyne proposed that January 2 be designated as World Introvert Day, a day that introverts all over the world take a collective deep breath after the exhausting holiday marathon that begins with Christmas and ends on New Year's. The first World Introvert Day was held in 2011.

World Introvert Day honors introverts and their contributions to society while also highlighting the fact that being an introvert does not limit one's potential. Do you know that some of the brightest minds in history, from Charles Darwin to Albert Einstein, have been

introverts?

People often mistakenly perceive introverts as haughty, uninterested, timid, or distant. World Introvert Day aids in raising awareness of introverts' needs. In a busy space, you will get some calm and tranquility. In a world full of noise and distractions, World Introvert Day is the ideal time for introspection and meditation to help you clear your mind.

Courtesy: Jagran Josh

Courtesy: www.savit.in

### DID YOU KNOW

1. Your brain is constantly eating itself. This process is called phagocytosis, where cells envelop and consume smaller cells or molecules to remove them from the system. Don't worry! Phagocytosis isn't harmful, but actually helps preserve your grey matter.

2. The largest piece of fossilised dinosaur poo discovered is over 30cm long and over two litres in volume. Believed to be a *Tyrannosaurus rex* turd, the fossilised dung (also named a 'coprolite') is helping scientists better understand what the dinosaur ate.

3. Polar bears aren't actually white. Surprisingly, underneath all their white fur, polar bears actually have jet-black skin.

4. Starfish don't have bodies. Along with other echinoderms (think sea urchins and sand dollars), their entire bodies are technically classed as heads.

5. It's almost impossible to get too much sugar from fresh fruit. While the sugar in fruit is mostly fructose and glucose (fructose is what's convert-

ed into fat in your body), you can't get too much sugar from fresh fruit. Fresh fruit contains a lot of fibre and water which slows down your digestion and makes you feel full.

6. You don't like the sound of your own voice because of the bones in your head. This may be because the bones in our head make our voice sound deeper.

7. A rainbow on Venus is called a glory. Appearing as a series of coloured concentric rings, these are caused by the interference of light waves within droplets, rather than the reflection, refraction and dispersion of light that makes a rainbow

Courtesy: BBC Science Focus

### SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk  
New Year greetings and wishes



Dear readers, I am happy that we are in the lap of yet another year. Wish you all a very happy New Year. I wish the New Year brings in joyous moments and the fulfilment of your wishes in the days and months ahead. As you know, the year just gone by was a 'Black Year' that witnessed killings of millions and total chaos and destruction in many parts of the world. As a result, Mother Earth and millions of its inhabitants were left poorer and helpless.

Now that we are in the New Year, let us hope we will have good times ahead. To make that happen, one way is to plan and draw a carefully-drafted New Year resolutions that will guide you and lead you on to the path of success in the months to come. Like every year, this time too, I am going to resolve and plan for at least 10 things to be achieved.

Some of them could be the 'must-do' ones left unachieved last year. I may not be able to tell you right away about the things that I am trying to go for, but one of them could be a globe-trotting plan, an obsession now after several years of an inevitable break.

And, I am also planning to do a few quirky things that may not be that difficult to achieve. Also, the most important of all, I would plan out certain steps to keep myself healthy and happy! That is because until you are happy and healthy all your other plans would fall!

Many of us do our best bid in framing out a sincere and hearty list of goals to be achieved during the next 12 months, but I believe a majority of people among us do not plan any such thing. They waste most of their time doing just nothing except the minimum effort to manage their existence. That will not serve the meaning and the purpose of life that we were fortunate enough to have.

The point here is that the New Year promises so many beautiful things, but it is up to us whether we get ready to take up those things towards fulfillment.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

## Fortnightly News

### In Conversation with

### Tsering Dorjay, President, Zanskar Buddhist Association

*Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal*

**Q. Congratulations on becoming the President of the Zanskar Buddhist Association. Could you please tell us about yourself?**

Thank you for having me. I come from Skyagam village in the Zanskar region. I served in the Ladakh Scouts for 30 years, a journey that instilled in me the importance of service, integrity, and collective effort, especially while working in some of the most challenging terrains and conditions in the country.

I retired from active service in June 2023. Following my retirement, I felt a strong sense of duty to continue serving my community. I was entrusted with the responsibility of Goba (Village Head), where I worked closely with villagers on local governance, welfare issues, and community development. In November 2023, I was also elected as the President of the Zanskar Ex-Servicemen Association, where I have been representing the concerns and interests of veterans and their families.

On December 1, 2025, I was elected as the President of the Zanskar Buddhist Association. I consider this role a great honour and responsibility. My life experiences—both in uniform and in community leadership—have prepared me to work for unity, preservation of our cultural and spiritual heritage, and the overall welfare of the people of Zanskar.

**Q. What are your plans and priorities as President of the Zanskar Buddhist Association?**

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Zanskar for placing their trust in me and electing me as the President of the Zanskar Buddhist Association. This responsibility comes with great expectations and a deep sense of accountability.

During my three-year tenure, my foremost priority will be to strengthen and sustain communal harmony between the Muslim and Buddhist communities of Zanskar. Peaceful coexistence and mutual respect are essential for the social and cultural fabric of our society.

Secondly, I will focus on the preservation and promotion of Zanskar's rich Buddhist heritage, for which the region is widely known. This includes safeguarding monasteries, traditional practices, and cultural values, while also encouraging younger generations to stay connected with their spiritual roots.

I will also work in close coordination with the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) to ensure alignment on matters of common interest and to collectively address broader social, cultural, and



**MESSAGE TO THE READERS**

**As the President of the Zanskar Buddhist Association, I sincerely appeal to all members of the Buddhist community to remain united and steadfast. Let us continue to follow the teachings of our revered Rinpoche, which guide us towards compassion, harmony, and wisdom. Through unity, mutual respect, and adherence to our spiritual values, we can strengthen our society.**

religious concerns.

Additionally, the Zanskar Buddhist Association will endeavour to invite respected spiritual leaders, Rinpoche, and scholars to Zanskar for teachings, discourses, and interactions. These initiatives aim to inspire positive inner transformation, promote ethical values, and contribute to the creation of a more compassionate and harmonious society.

**Q. With rapid development in road connectivity, Zanskar is witnessing economic growth. At the same time, what changes and concerns do you foresee for its culture and heritage?**

If we look back 10 to 15 years, the people of Zanskar faced immense hardships due to poor road connectivity, especially during the winter months. Travelling to Leh was extremely difficult, and I personally remember the struggles and risks involved in such journeys. However, over the last four to five years, there has been remarkable improvement in road and telecom connectivity, which has significantly eased daily life for the people.

Along with these positive developments, we have also witnessed rapid changes in our society. Improved connectivity has led to a substantial increase in tourism, bringing economic opportunities and exposure. At the same time, this has also posed challenges to our traditional culture, values, and way of life. People from different parts of the country and the world are visiting Zanskar, and their influence—if not managed carefully—can gradually affect local traditions and social norms. In recent months, these changes have become increasingly visible.

While development has undoubtedly made life more comfortable and accessible, it is equally important to remain conscious of its negative impacts. There is a strong need to create awareness among the people, especially the youth, about preserving our cultural identity while embracing progress.

The opening of road connectivity from Himachal Pradesh has also raised concerns about the possible influx of drugs and other illicit substances into the region. This poses a serious threat, particularly to the younger generation. In the past, awareness initiatives have been undertaken to educate people about these dangers and the ways to prevent and control such issues. Going forward, continued vigilance, community participation, and collective responsibility will be crucial to safeguard Zanskar's social fabric, culture, and future generations.

...continues on page 6

### Fortnight Highlights



**LAHDC Kargil, District Administration, and District Police Kargil jointly organized a farewell dinner in honour of Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, the outgoing Chief Secretary, Ladakh, on the occasion of his superannuation. Dr. Pawan Kotwal joined the Administration of Ladakh on 12 April 2021 as Principal Secretary, holding charge of key departments including Planning, Development & Monitoring, Health & Medical Education, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Revenue. He later assumed charge as Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, UT Ladakh, on 9 June 2023.**



**Seven NCC cadets from the Eliezer Joldan Memorial (EJM) College, Leh, in association with the 1 Ladakh Battalion NCC, have been selected for the prestigious Republic Day Camp (RDC) 2026 to be held in New Delhi. The selected cadets are Cadet Tsering Lhandol (3rd Semester), CQMH Sonam Dolker (3rd Semester), Cadet Dechan Youtso (1st Semester), Cadet Dawa Dolkar (1st Semester), Cadet Rizgin Angmo (3rd Semester), Cadet Lozes Dolma (1st Semester), and Cadet Konchok Namgail (5th Semester).**



**The document verification process for candidates shortlisted for 10th and 12th level posts under the Kargil Subordinate Services Recruitment Board (KSSRB) was conducted smoothly and transparently on December 16th and 27th at the Tourist Facilitation Centre (TFC), Kargil.**



**A delegation from the Ladakh Ice Skating Association met with the Lt Governor and requested the creation of 400-metre long-track ice skating facilities in Leh and Kargil, permission to use the NDS Indoor Stadium ice rink to prepare for the upcoming Khelo India Winter Games and inclusion of figure and speed skating in the upcoming LG Ice Hockey Championship.**



**Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta met the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, in New Delhi and held a detailed discussion on Ladakh's developmental priorities, financial requirements and measures to strengthen infrastructure for inclusive growth.**



**B-3 helicopter services were inaugurated at Diskit in Nubra on December 16, marking a significant step towards enhancing regional connectivity, promoting tourism and strengthening emergency response services through subsidized fares.**



**SAMAARAMBH Foundation, under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of NBCC (India) Limited, on December 16 handed over a Basic Life Support ambulance to the Medical Centre, Hanle, UT Ladakh, with the objective of strengthening emergency healthcare services in the remote Changthang region.**



**The Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI) Programme was successfully conducted in Leh district, to protect children against poliomyelitis.**

# Fortnightly News

In Conversation with  
Tsering Dorjay, President, Zanskar Buddhist Association

...Continuity of page 5

## How does the Zanskar Buddhist Association plan to function in a neutral manner without the influence of political parties in Zanskar?

The political landscape in Ladakh has undergone significant changes compared to the past. In view of these developments, representatives from all sections of society—including Goba (village heads), youth, women, and monastery representatives—have collectively resolved to keep the Zanskar Buddhist Association completely free from political influence.

The ZBA will function as a purely socio-religious and cultural body, guided by community welfare rather than political interests. Its members are committed to working solely for the betterment of the Buddhist community in Zanskar, with a focus on social harmony, cultural preservation, and spiritual growth.

By maintaining this collective understanding and discipline, the ZBA aims to uphold neutrality, inclusiveness, and trust, ensuring that its decisions and actions remain in the larger interest of the community and the region.

## Q. What is the Zanskar Buddhist Association's stand on Ladakh's safeguard demands and its support to the Apex Body Leh and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)?

The Zanskar Buddhist Association has consistently stood in support of Ladakh's safeguard demands. Whenever we were called upon to participate in shutdowns, rallies, or peaceful movements for Ladakh's rights, the ZBA has extended its full support and solidarity.

We also stand in solidarity with those who lost their lives, as well as with the injured and detained during the unfortunate incident of September 24. Their sacrifices and suffering will always be remembered as part of Ladakh's collective struggle.

Regarding the absence of representation from Zanskar in the Apex Body or the Kargil Democratic Alliance, I would like to clarify that I have only recently assumed charge as President of the ZBA. Therefore, it would be premature for me to comment on this matter at this stage. However, this issue will be discussed and deliberated upon collectively by the people of Zanskar, including senior leaders, representatives of the ZBA, and other community stakeholders, to decide whether formal representation is required.

The primary focus of the people of Zanskar remains the long-pending demand for district status. This is a struggle that the people of Zanskar have pursued for more than 70 years. While the announcement for district status has been made, its implementation is still awaited. We sincerely hope that the district is formally established at the earliest.

Following the implementation of district status, we will also raise the demand for a separate Council for Zanskar, so that the region can have dedicated administrative representation and address its unique developmental, cultural, and governance needs.

## Q. What is the Zanskar Buddhist Association's stand on the September 24 violence that resulted in deaths, injuries, and arrests?

The events of September 24 have left a deep scar on the hearts of the people of Ladakh, one that will never be forgotten. The loss of four young lives due to bullet injuries, the death of another youth who died by suicide, the dozens who were injured, and the arrest of many people—including Sonam Wangchuk under serious charges—have deeply pained the entire region.

The struggle of the people of Ladakh for their legitimate rights and safeguards will always be remembered, and so will the sacrifices made during this movement. We pray that such tragic incidents are never repeated in the future. It is the collective responsibility of the administration, the government, and all leadership—political and social—to ensure that such situations do not arise again and that dialogue and peaceful engagement remain the path forward.

The Zanskar Buddhist Association stands in full solidarity with all those who lost their lives, those who were injured, and those who suffered arrests during this unfortunate incident.

## Dr. Sajjad Hussain conferred prestigious FAIS fellowship at ASICON 2025

Mansoor Hussain Beigh

**KARGIL:** Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Consultant Surgeon at District Hospital Kargil, Ladakh, has been conferred the prestigious Fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of India (FAIS) during the 85th Convocation of the Association of Surgeons of India (ASICON 2025) held on December 19.

The grand convocation ceremony took place at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, Kolkata, West Bengal.

ASICON, the largest surgical conference in India, attracts leading surgeons from across the country and abroad and is regarded as one of the most prestigious congregations

of surgical professionals globally. The Fellowship was conferred by the President of the Association of Surgeons of India, Prof. Dr. Pravin R. Suryawanshi, in the august presence of eminent surgeons and stalwarts of the medical fraternity from India and overseas. Dr. Hussain received the honour in recognition of his professional excellence, outstanding contributions and dedicated service in the field of surgery, particularly in challenging and remote regions like Ladakh.

The Annual Conference of the Association of Surgeons of India has served as a lifeline for surgeons across the subcontinent for



Photo Caption: Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Consultant Surgeon at District Hospital Kargil, Ladakh receiving Fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of India (FAIS).

over eight decades. The four-day conference in Kolkata—a city renowned for producing six Nobel laureates and legendary figures such as Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose—continued this rich legacy of academic and professional excellence.

The congress represents a journey of healing, innovation, modern surgical care and education, offering an unparalleled platform for thought-provoking scientific sessions and interactive engagements with global experts.

The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) is the largest surgical body

## KVK Kargil organises Kisan Samman Diwas at Salikote

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kargil on December 23 organised Kisan Samman Diwas at Salikote to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Late Chaudhary Charan Singh.

The programme was graced by Syed Kazim Sabiri, former Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, as the Chief Guest. Officers from the Agriculture Department, officials of KVK Kargil and local farmers participated in the event.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Mansoor Hussain, Caretaker, KVK Kargil, briefed participants on the objectives of the programme and highlighted

the life and vision of late Chaudhary Charan Singh. He said the former Prime Minister, himself a farmer, dedicated his life to the welfare of the farming community and introduced several landmark reforms in the agriculture sector to strengthen farmers' livelihoods.

Dr. Hussain urged farmers to adopt agriculture as an enterprise and encouraged them to leverage modern technologies and various government schemes to enhance productivity and income. He informed that KVK Kargil has introduced several innovative initiatives, including natural farming practices, water conservation techniques such as mulching



Photo Caption: Farmers during the Kisan Samman Diwas at Salikote.

and drip irrigation, and the promotion of high-yielding varieties of vegetables and food crops.

Later, a practical demonstration on the preparation of Jeevanrit, Neem Astra and Brahma Astra was conducted to familiarise farmers with eco-friendly and cost-effective natural farming inputs for sustainable crop production.

Dr. Hussain also elaborated on the benefits of the newly enacted VB-G-RAM-G Act for the farming community. He explained that shortcomings in the earlier MGNREGA have been addressed in the new legislation, which guarantees 125 working days for rural households

and brings all rural welfare works under its ambit. He said the Act would significantly empower rural communities and promote holistic rural development.

On the occasion, pamphlets highlighting the benefits of the VB-G-RAM-G Act were released by the Chief Guest and distributed among the farmers.

## CEC Kargil reviews and finalises AN-32 winter courier service arrangements



Photo Caption: CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon reviewing and finalizing arrangements for AN-32 Winter Courier Service.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon chaired a meeting at the Council Secretariat, Kargil on December 24 to review and finalise arrangements for the Kargil-Srinagar-Jammu-Chandigarh AN-32 Winter Courier Service.

The meeting was attended by Executive Councillors Kacho Mohd Feroz, Syed

Mujtaba, Zakir Hussain and Er. Phunchok Tashi; Deputy Commissioner and CEO, LAHDC Kargil, Rakesh Kumar; SSP Kargil Nitin Yadav; Commanding Officer, Air Force Station Kargil; Chief Medical Officer; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer; Executive Engineer Mechanical Division; Executive Engineer PHE; General Manager SIDCO Ladakh; DySP Traffic Kargil; As-

sistant Director Tourism Kargil, along with other concerned district officers.

Detailed deliberations were held to ensure the smooth, safe and uninterrupted operation of the AN-32 courier service during the winter season.

Discussions focused on facilitating safe, timely and hassle-free travel for passengers commuting between Kargil, Srinagar, Jammu and Chandigarh during the harsh winter months when road connectivity remains disrupted.

The CEC directed all concerned departments to make comprehensive arrangements well in advance, particularly in the areas of logistics man-

## KVK Nyoma marks Kisan Diwas with farmers at Nyoma and Phulak villages



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NYOMA:** Kisan Diwas was celebrated on December 23 at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Nyoma (Leh-II)—the highest Krishi Vigyan Kendra in the country—with active participation of 78 farmers, along with KVK scientists and staff.

The programme was organised under the leadership of Dr. Phuntsog Tundup, Head, KVK Nyoma. During the event, farmers were sensitised about the Viksit Bharat – Gram Bill, 2025, and detailed information was shared on how they can avail benefits under the scheme.

Seed distribution for the upcoming agricultural season was also carried out among farmers by

Dr. Tashi Dolkar, Subject Matter Specialist (SMS), KVK Nyoma. A live telecast of the address by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Raj Singh Chouhan was screened during the programme.

In his address, the Union Minister highlighted the national significance of Kisan Diwas and underscored the crucial role of farmers in nation-building, followed by an interactive session with farmers at the national level. Lunch was arranged for all participating farmers. Following the programme at KVK Nyoma, the KVK team visited Phulak Village to celebrate Kisan Diwas with the local farming community.

A Swachhata (cleanliness) drive was also conducted in and around the area to promote hygiene and cleanliness. The programme concluded with a farmer-scientist interaction session, during which farmers' queries were addressed by KVK experts.

Dr. Tashi Dolkar expressed heartfelt gratitude to the villagers and Goba members for their active participation, cooperation and support in making the programme a success.

## School Education Secretary reviews schools in Kargil, launches winter classes



Photo Caption: Administrative Secretary, School Education, UT Ladakh, Bhanu Prabha.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Administrative Secretary, School Education, UT Ladakh, Bhanu Prabha IAS, visited several schools in Kargil district on December 27 to review infrastructure facilities and initiate winter academic activities.

During her visit, Bhanu Prabha inspected PM SHRI High School Tacha, accompanied by Executive Councillor (Education), LAHDC Kargil, Zakir Hussain; Executive Councillor (Tourism) Kacho Feroz; Deputy Commissioner Kargil Rakesh Kumar; Chief Education Officer Sonam Wangchuk, and other senior officials.

On the occasion, she announced the merger of Primary School Saithey and Primary School Gongsto Tacha with High School Tacha, declaring it a PM SHRI Model High School. She also formally launched winter classes for students.

Later, at Council Model Middle School Gramthang Minjee, the Administrative Secretary interacted with Village Education Committees (VECs) and assured them that their genuine demands would be addressed, including the sanctioning of additional classrooms in the upcoming financial year. She urged the VECs to mobilize community participa-

tion to increase student enrollment in the next academic session and inaugurated winter coaching classes at the school.

At the Conference Hall, Baroo, Bhanu Prabha chaired a review meeting attended by Director, School Education Department, UT Ladakh, Tsering Paldan; Chief Education Officer Kargil, Sonam Wangchuk; Principal DIET Kargil, S.D. Namgail, along with district education officers, principals, Zonal Education Officers, and headmasters of Higher Secondary Schools and High Schools. The meeting focused on the recent Pre-Board Second Examination, progress under Samagra Shiksha and PM SHRI schemes, and strategies to improve CBSE board results. She emphasized the timely utilization of funds and outlined departmental work plans.

The Administrative Secretary also inaugurated the new Council Model Middle School Tharumsa Pashkum, assuring full departmental support and expressing confidence that the institution would serve as a model school for the region. Winter coaching classes were also launched at the school.

The visit underscores the UT Administration's commitment to strengthening school infrastructure, improving academic performance, and ensuring uninterrupted learning during the winter months in Kargil district.

## Fortnightly News

### rZamba Trust's winter alternative learning programme concludes in Kargil



**Photo Caption:** During the concluding ceremony of the residential Winter Alternative Learning Programme organized by rZamba Trust.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**KARGIL:** The residential Winter Alternative Learning Programme (Khangrtaa Yontan), organized by rZamba Trust, concluded on December 18 in Kargil. The programme aimed to prepare facilitators from diverse communities across the district to implement alternative, community-rooted educational practices during the winter months. A flagship initiative of rZamba Trust, Khangrtaa Yontan ensures continuity of learning during winter through project-based, culturally responsive, and community-driven educational approaches.

The closing ceremony was graced by Imteezaz Kacho, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Kargil, as Chief Guest, and Sonam Wangchuk, Chief Education Officer (CEO), School Education Department, Kargil, as Guest of Honour.

Nahida Wahid, Programme Coordinator, introduced the Winter

Alternative Learning Programme and highlighted its focus on meaningful, experiential, and culturally relevant learning during winter.

Participating facilitators shared their reflections and learnings, expressing confidence in implementing alternative teaching methods in their respective learning spaces. They spoke about exposure to Project-Based Learning (PBL), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), wildlife and environmental education, hands-on science learning through kits, and community-based experiential activities.

Both dignitaries appreciated the design, content, and overall quality of the residential induction programme. They lauded the preparedness, clarity, and commitment of the facilitators and congratulated rZamba Trust for its efforts in holistic child development beyond conventional classroom learning.

The scheme aligns with the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, as notified by the Ladakh Pollution Control Committee (LPCC). While installation of STPs is not mandatory for obtaining Consent to Establish or Operate, eligible units are strongly encouraged to install STPs and avail of the scheme benefits, ensuring compliance with prescribed effluent quality standards.

The scheme applies to new and existing hotels and guesthouses in UT Ladakh with a room capacity of 10 to 19 rooms. Eligible establishments must be provisionally or permanently registered with the Department of Tourism and possess valid permissions or No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from competent authorities.

Under the scheme, eligible units installing decentralised STPs will receive financial assistance of 75 percent of the equipment cost, subject to a maximum ceiling of ₹5 lakh. An additional 10 percent incentive will be provided for hotels or guesthouses owned by women residents of UT Ladakh. Eligible expenses include equipment cost, installation, transportation, and consultancy, excluding GST and other non-admissible expenditures.

### LG Kavinder Gupta launches STP Incentive Scheme—2025 to promote sustainable tourism in Ladakh



**Photo Caption:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, launching the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Incentive Scheme-2025.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, launched the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Incentive Scheme-2025 on December 17, notified by the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh, aimed at promoting sustainable tourism and protecting Ladakh's fragile ecological balance.

During a presentation, Secretary, Tourism, informed that the scheme encourages the installation of decentralised Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in hotels and guesthouses to ensure scientific wastewater treatment, prevent pollution, and promote responsible tourism.

Recognising hotels and guesthouses as the backbone of Ladakh's tourism economy, the scheme seeks to address environmental challenges arising from improper wastewater disposal through clean and sustainable waste management.

ment practices.

To avail the incentive, applicants must install LPCC/CPCC-approved STP technology, obtain necessary consents from LPCC, and submit the prescribed application to the Department of Tourism. Upon verification and satisfactory commissioning, the incentive amount will be released through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to the beneficiary's Aadhaar-seeded bank account.

The scheme is voluntary and applicable only to hotels and guesthouses with 10 to 19 rooms. The responsibility for installation, operation, maintenance, and compliance of the STP rests with the beneficiary, while the Department of Tourism reserves the right to inspect, modify scheme provisions, and recover incentives in case of non-compliance.

### CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoon inaugurates newly constructed Indoor Stadium at Goma, Kargil



**Photo Caption:** The newly constructed Indoor Stadium at Goma, Kargil.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**KARGIL:** Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, inaugurated the newly constructed Indoor Stadium at Goma, Kargil on December 26, marking a significant milestone in strengthening sports infrastructure in the district.

The project, completed at a cost of ₹309.86 lakh, was executed by the Public Works Department (R&B). The inaugural ceremony was attended

### UT Administration committed to inclusive development across Ladakh: LG Kavinder Gupta

**Holds public grievance redressal camp at Shakar-Chiktan**



**Photo Caption:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, attending a public grievance redressal camp at Shakar-Chiktan.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**KARGIL:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, attended a public grievance redressal camp at Shakar-Chiktan on December 25, where he interacted with local residents and patiently listened to their issues, concerns, and suggestions related to development and public welfare. Representatives from sixteen villages raised matters pertaining to the subdivision.

Emphasising that the UT Administration remains firmly committed to equitable and inclusive development across Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor said special attention is being given to people living in far-flung, remote, and border areas. He reiterated that development should not remain confined to urban centres but must reach the most difficult and inaccessible regions to ensure that every citizen benefits from progress and an improved quality of life.

The Lieutenant Governor underlined the importance of direct engagement between the administration and the public, stating that such interactions help in understanding ground realities and strengthening public trust. He assured residents that all grievances raised during the camp would be examined carefully and necessary directions would be issued to the concerned departments for their timely redressal.

Kavinder Gupta said that since Ladakh became a Union Territory in 2019, the pace of development

by Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Kacho Mohd Feroz; Joint Director, Youth Services & Sports, UT Ladakh, Tahir Hussain Zubdavi; Councillor, Town Haji Abbas Adulpa; Chief Education Officer, Kargil; other district officers, and a large number of local residents.

Addressing the gathering, CEC Kargil Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon congratulated Councillor Haji Abbas Adulpa and the people of Goma Kargil on the inauguration of the state-of-the-art sports facility. He appreciated the efforts of Joint Director Tahir Hussain Zubdavi, the Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B), and all allied departments for the timely completion of the project.

Dr. Akhoon emphasized that the development of sports infrastructure plays a vital role in nurturing youth talent and steering young people away from social evils by engaging them in healthy and constructive activities. He further stated that developmental works worth several

### CEC Kargil reviews winter preparedness, focus on Zojila connectivity



**Photo Caption:** Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon assessing winter preparedness.

**Reach Ladakh Correspondent**

**KARGIL:** Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon chaired a comprehensive review meeting on December 22 to assess winter preparedness and strengthen inter-departmental coordination, with special focus on maintaining connectivity through Zojila Pass and other sub-divisional roads linking remote areas with the district headquarters, besides ensuring uninterrupted delivery of essential services across the district.

Emphasising the need for uninterrupted road connectivity during snowfall, Dr. Akhoon instructed NHIDCL to extend power supply hours to facilitate smooth celebrations. He also instructed the Cooperative Department to ensure the availability of subsidised food items for the public during the festive period.

Considering the ongoing Losar festival in Zanskar, the CEC directed the Power Development Department (PDD) to extend power supply hours to facilitate smooth celebrations. He also instructed the Cooperative Department to ensure the availability of subsidised food items for the public during the festive period.

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Regarding drinking water supply, the CEC directed the Executive Engineer, PHE, to identify vulnerable areas in and around Kargil town facing water scarcity and ensure the supply of potable drinking water through tankers wherever required.

During the meeting, the CEC reiterated that all necessary efforts will be made to keep Zojila Pass open for the maximum possible duration during winter. He emphasised that Zojila remains the only vital lifeline for Ladakh's connectivity, and its timely maintenance is of paramount strategic and public importance.

Dr. Akhoon directed all concerned line departments and executing agencies, including BRO, Project Vijayak, NHIDCL and Mega Engineering, to work in close coordination to ensure smooth winter operations. He instructed the SDM Drass to identify accommodation facilities available with the Army and NHIDCL at Gumri and Menamak for use during emergencies, particularly for stranded travellers and passengers. He also directed 24x7 deployment of an ambulance at the Matiya Sub-Centre to ensure prompt medical assistance.

The SDM Zanskar presented a detailed update on road connectivity, availability of essential commodities and supply of medicines in the region.

In this context, the CEC directed officials of Project Vijayak and NHIDCL to deploy adequate manpower and machinery at vulnerable locations along the Kargil-Zanskar road for emergency snow clearance and to ensure timely clearance of the

SDM Zanskar presented a detailed update on road connectivity, availability of essential commodities and supply of medicines in the region.

The Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, briefed the meeting on the current status of Zojila Pass, future planning, strategic logistics, and monitoring through the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). He also highlighted arrangements for Labour Sarais at various locations to support stranded passengers during winter.

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