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JANUARY 16-31, 2026

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In Conversation with

Tsering Ladol: A Young Shepherd's Perspective

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REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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Sales & Marketing: Tsering Morup

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Designer: Stanzin Rabgyas (CAGO)

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

Contact: +91 9858394403

+91 8899418322

Printed at: Ala Printing Press

3636 Katra Dina Baig

Lal Quan Delhi -110006



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Fortnightly News

LG Kavinder Gupta reviews preparations for 6th Khelo India Winter Games

Emphasises zero compromise on quality of arrangements



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on January 10 reviewed the ongoing preparations for the 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG), scheduled to be held from January 20 to 26.

During the review meeting, Administrative Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Moses Kunzang, informed the Lt Governor that the Games will be hosted across three venues—NDS Stadium, Guphuks Pond and the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC).

He said this edition will feature figure skating in addition to ice hockey and speed skating.

Kunzang further informed that an Executive Committee headed by the Chief Secretary, along with various functional committees, has been constituted to ensure seamless execution of the event. He added that tenders have already been floated and that the UT Administration is ensuring top-quality accommodation with adequate heating and running water for participants.

Around 500 athletes from across the country, along with nearly 100 technical officials and support staff, are expected to participate in the Games, he said.

Emphasising zero compromise on quality, the Lt Governor stressed the need to provide world-class facilities to all participants. Describing the Khelo India Winter Games as a marquee national sporting event, he directed for aggressive media promotion to showcase Ladakh on the national and global stage.

“The opening ceremony must be vibrant and reflective of Ladakh’s rich cultural heritage,” the Lt Governor said, urging all departments to work in close coordination to ensure the flawless conduct of the Games.

Kavinder Gupta also stressed the importance of robust logistical and safety arrangements, including efficient transporta-

tion, medical facilities and emergency response mechanisms at all venues. He directed the concerned departments to conduct regular inspections and mock drills well in advance to ensure complete preparedness, particularly in view of the region’s extreme winter conditions.

The Lt Governor further highlighted that the Khelo India Winter Games offer a unique opportunity to promote sports culture and winter tourism in Ladakh. He called upon all stakeholders to leverage the event to project Ladakh as a premier destination for winter sports, while ensuring active community participation and creating a lasting legacy of sports infrastructure and youth engagement in the Union Territory.

Among those present at the meeting were Deputy Director, PGF Upshi, Dr Tundup Namgail, and Assistant Director, Information, Leh, Rigzin Yangdol.

Lt Governor of Ladakh launches Ladakh Sports Policy

Policy includes 4% job reservation, scholarships, awards, cash incentives and promotions for outstanding sportspersons



Photo Caption: During the launch of the Ladakh Sports Policy.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on January 3 formally launched the Ladakh Sports Policy in the presence of Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the sports ecosystem of the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said the policy is not merely the introduction of a government document but a firm commitment towards shaping the future of Ladakh’s youth and giving a new identity to the region through sports. He emphasised that sports play a crucial role in building discipline, character, teamwork and resilience, and have also emerged as a powerful medium for social cohesion and economic opportunity.

Highlighting Ladakh’s unique geographical and climatic conditions, the Lt Governor said the youth of the region are naturally resilient, courageous and determined—qualities that align seamlessly with the spirit of sports. He expressed satisfaction that since becoming a Union Territory, sports have

received top priority from the administration, resulting in Ladakhi athletes delivering commendable performances at national and international levels.

Kavinder Gupta said the Ladakh Sports Policy provides a clear and structured roadmap for developing a robust sports culture, ranging from grassroots and school-level programmes to high-performance sports. The policy is anchored on the principle of “Scout, Facilitate and Recognise”, focusing on early talent identification, creation of quality infrastructure, access to professional coaching, and recognition of sporting achievements.

The Lt Governor underlined that the policy adopts an inclusive approach, ensuring equal opportunities for all children irrespective of region, background or ability, with special emphasis on women athletes and para-athletes. He noted that sports go beyond winning medals and serve as an effective tool for promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, social harmony and a drug-free society.

A major highlight of the policy is the establishment of the Ladakh Sports Council, which will provide a strong institutional framework for the coordinated development of sports across the Union Territory. The Council will work closely with sports associations on infrastructure development, coaching support, financial assistance and long-term strategic planning.

“To encourage youth to pursue sports as a viable and respected career option, the policy includes provisions such as 4 per cent reservation in government jobs for outstanding sportspersons, along with scholarships, awards, cash incentives and promotions,” the Lt Governor said.

He also highlighted that Ladakh is hosting the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games this month, describing it as a matter of pride for the region. He said the event offers an excellent platform to showcase Ladakh’s sports infrastructure, organisational capabilities and unique hospitality to participants from across the country.

Emphasising the scope of sports tourism, the Lt Governor noted that Ladakh’s natural terrain and adventure-friendly environment offer immense potential in winter sports, mountaineering, ice sports and traditional games, which can place the region prominently on the global sports map.

Concluding his address, the Lieutenant Governor assured full support from the UT Ad-

ministration for effective implementation of the Ladakh Sports Policy and called upon all stakeholders to work collectively to nurture sporting talent and elevate Ladakh’s sports ecosystem. He expressed confidence that the policy would produce athletes who not only win medals but also serve as ambassadors of Ladakh’s culture, confidence and identity.

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, in his address, welcomed the launch of the policy and reiterated the administration’s commitment to supporting athletes at all levels. He stressed the need for coordinated efforts among government departments, sports associations and local communities to strengthen infrastructure, provide quality coaching and create opportunities for young sportspersons.

Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Moses Kunzang, informed that the Ladakh Sports Policy—developed through extensive consultations—aims to systematically nurture a comprehensive sports culture and physical literacy from the school level onwards. He said the policy aligns with the administration’s vision to position Ladakh prominently on national and global sports platforms, including for para-sportspersons.

Representatives of various sports associations, outstanding sportspersons from Ladakh and officials of the Department of Youth Services and Sports were present on the occasion.

Ashish Kundra, IAS, assumes charge as Chief Secretary of UT Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ashish Kundra, IAS, formally assumed charge as the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh on January 1.

Upon assuming office, Kundra reaffirmed his commitment to effective governance, transparent administration, and inclusive development across the Union Territory. He emphasized the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms, enhance service delivery, and ensure the timely implementation of developmental programmes aimed at the welfare of all sections of society.

Highlighting the importance of teamwork, accountability, and responsiveness, the new Chief Secretary stated that addressing the aspirations of the people of Ladakh would remain a key priority of the administration. He stressed the importance of an

accessible administration that reaches out to all parts of the Union Territory, in line with the Prime Minister’s vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas.

Ashish Kundra further stated that the administration must gear up to meet the economic aspirations of the youth and work towards unlocking the full economic potential of the region. He noted that Ladakh has a rich civilisational history and has always been emblematic of peace, values that must be cherished and preserved.

He also underscored that, given Ladakh’s fragile ecology, the model of development must necessarily address concerns of sustainability and climate change. He cautioned against reckless construction in the name of development and called for a balanced and environmentally responsible approach.

The Administrative Secretaries and senior officers of the UT Administration welcomed Ashish Kundra and expressed confidence that his vast administrative experience and leadership would further strengthen governance and accelerate the overall development of the Union Territory.

Earlier, a ceremonial Guard of Honour was accorded to Ashish Kundra, IAS, at the UT Secretariat in Leh following his assumption of charge as the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Awareness programme on Myopia and Cataract held in Gya-Miru village



Photo Caption: During the awareness programme on myopia and cataract at Gya-Miru village.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

GYA: Smile Foundation, in collaboration with the CDSL–Ladakh team, on January 8 organised an awareness programme on myopia and cataract at Gya-Miru village in Ladakh.

The programme aimed to educate the local community on the prevention, early detection and management of common eye disorders. A total of 25 beneficiaries participated in the awareness session.

The session was led by Dr Junaaid Fayaz (MBBS), who explained the early signs and symptoms of myopia and cataract, emphasised the importance of timely diagnosis, and outlined key preventive measures. He also provided practical guidance on the need for regular eye check-ups and effective monitoring to manage these conditions and prevent complications.

Local residents actively participated in the programme, showing keen interest in eye health awareness. Beneficiaries raised relevant questions related to myopia and cataract, helping to foster a better understanding of the conditions. The session also addressed and dispelled common misconceptions surrounding eye disor-

ders, reinforcing the critical role of early diagnosis and timely treatment.

Participants expressed gratitude to Smile Foundation and the CDSL–Ladakh team for bringing essential healthcare awareness services to their village and for their continued support to underserved communities.

Smile Foundation is a national-level development organisation working for the welfare of underprivileged children, their families and communities through programmes focused on health, education, livelihood and women empowerment.

The CDSL–Ladakh team supports community development and health initiatives across the region by partnering with organisations to strengthen local well-being. The initiative aligns with Smile Foundation’s mission to promote health awareness and ensure equitable access to healthcare in remote and underserved areas. By empowering communities with knowledge and preventive care, the organisation continues to create a positive and lasting impact on public health outcomes.

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra conducts first visit to Kargil after assuming charge



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra (IAS), arrived in Kargil on January 10 on his maiden visit after assuming charge.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by Administrative Secretary, Education, Bhanu Prabha; Administrative Secretary, Public Health Engineering (PHE), Rahul Sharma; Director, Health and Medical Education; Chief Engineer, Public Works Department (PWD); Chief Engineer, Power Development Department (PDD), and other senior officers.

He was accorded a warm welcome at Hinasku by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho; Additional Superintendent of Police, Kargil, Ishyaq Kacho; Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Shakar Chiktan, Ravi Shankar; Executive Engineer, PHE, Sadiq Gul; and other district officers.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary inspected the 17 Madras Unit at Bodh Kharboo, where he was received by Colonel DSA Robin. He reviewed the facilities at the unit, during which a demand was raised

for macadamisation of the road connecting the main road to the 17 Madras Unit. The Chief Secretary directed the Chief Engineer to take necessary action in the matter.

The Chief Secretary also visited the Nunnery at Bodh Kharboo, where local representatives submitted memoranda highlighting issues related to floor tiling, mobile tower connectivity and other infrastructure development needs. He directed the concerned departments to take up the issues on a priority basis.

Later, he visited the Mulbekh Chamba, where he was briefed about its historical and religious significance. Villagers raised demands pertaining to the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), construction of an ice hockey rink, a public gathering ground, and implementation of a lift irrigation scheme.

Subsequently, the Chief Secretary visited Government Cluster Council Middle School, Tharumsa, in Pashkum, where Executive Councillor, LAH-DC–Kargil, Kacho Mohammad Feroz was also present. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Secretary thanked the people of Kargil for the warm

reception despite the harsh winter conditions.

Emphasising that education forms the foundation of unity in Ladakh, he said education remains the top priority of the administration. He stressed the importance of community participation in strengthening the education sector and assured that the UT Administration is providing all necessary facilities, including winter heating arrangements, to enable students to compete at national and global levels. He assured full support from the UT Administration in this regard.

In his address, Executive Councillor Kacho Mohammad Feroz thanked the Chief Secretary and accompanying officers for their visit. He requested upgradation of the school to the high school level and sought sanction of savings funds for the construction of additional classrooms. He informed that student enrolment at the school has increased to 150 due to coordinated efforts of the administration and community involvement.

Later, the Chief Secretary inspected the classrooms, library, laboratories and other facilities of the school.

Lt Governor Ladakh meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Discusses issues concerning general public, developmental priorities



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on January 5 and discussed on the overall development and welfare of the region.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor briefed the Prime Minister on key developmental initiatives, welfare schemes, and major infrastructure projects currently underway in Ladakh. He highlighted efforts being made to strengthen road and air connectivity, improve public infrastructure,

and ensure the timely delivery of essential services in the geographically challenging and strategically significant region.

Kavinder Gupta also apprised the Prime Minister of initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable tourism, preserving Ladakh’s unique cultural and ecological heritage, and creating livelihood opportunities for local youth. Issues related to education, healthcare facilities in remote and border areas, and the implementation of Central Government schemes were also discussed in detail.

The Lt Governor emphasised the administration’s focus on inclusive growth, good governance, and people-centric development, particularly in far-flung areas that face harsh climatic conditions. He shared feedback from the grassroots regarding public aspirations and developmental needs, underlining the importance of continued Central support for accelerated progress in the Union Territory.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being made for inclusive growth in Ladakh and reiterated the Centre’s continued support for the region’s all-round development and the welfare of its people.

Fortnightly News

Empowering Ladakh farmers: MIDH-sponsored training promotes sustainable farming at Basgo village



Photo Caption: During the one-day training and awareness programme at Basgo village.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A one-day training and awareness programme was organised at Basgo village on January 8 under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) by the School of Agriculture Science and Technology (SAS&T), University of Ladakh, Stakna Campus, in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nyoma. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 50 farmers from the region.

The programme commenced with a detailed session by Dr Phuntsog Tundup, Head, KVK Nyoma, who sensitised participants on soil health management through natural farming practices. He emphasised the importance of using Jeevamrutha, composting and other organic fertilisers for sustainable agriculture, and compared various organic nutrient sources, recommending

the most effective options suited to local conditions. Subsequently, Dr Kunzes Angmo, Junior Scientist (Forestry), spoke on the scope for cultivation of asafetida (hing) in the Ladakh region. She encouraged farmers to explore this high-value crop as a potential avenue for income diversification and regional development. She also created awareness about career opportunities in agriculture, particularly through enrolment in BSc Agriculture programmes, highlighting future prospects for youth in the region.

In the next session, Dr Sonam Spaldon, Junior Scientist (Vegetable Science), emphasised the importance of protected cultivation and strategies for off-season vegetable production, with a special focus on leafy vegetables. She also elaborated on the immense potential for vegetable seed production

under Ladakh's unique agro-climatic conditions.

Concluding the technical sessions, Dr Tsering Lanzes, Pomologist, delivered a talk on orchard management, focusing on orchard sanitation, canopy management and the issue of alternate bearing, including its causes and control measures. She also addressed farmers' queries on pest management in fruit crops and suggested practical solutions to enhance orchard productivity.

The programme was well received by the farming community, who appreciated the expert guidance and practical recommendations provided by the scientists. The initiative successfully enhanced farmers' awareness of sustainable farming practices, crop diversification and scientific management techniques tailored to Ladakh's unique environment.

LG Kavinder inaugurates Office of Director of Census Operations & Citizen Registration in Leh



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta inaugurating the Office of Director of Census Operations and Citizen Registration, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta inaugurated the Office of Director of Census Operations and Citizen Registration, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh at the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museum, in Leh on January 7.

Congratulating the people and officials on the establishment of the Census Office following the formation of the Union Territory of Ladakh in 2019, the Lieutenant Governor said the Census 2027 will play a decisive role in determining Ladakh's developmental trajectory and future prospects. He noted that the Census, approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marks a significant step forward after the 2021 exercise was deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Highlighting long-standing challenges arising from reliance on outdated 2011 Census data, the

Lt Governor said the new Census would address critical gaps in planning and resource allocation. Referring to irregularities and malpractices during Census operations under the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state, he stressed that the forthcoming Census in the new Union Territory framework must set a benchmark.

"This first Census for Ladakh as a Union Territory must be conducted with the utmost transparency, reliability and efficiency. There should be no compromise on constitutional mandates," the Lt Governor asserted. He reiterated the UT Administration's full commitment to ensuring a smooth and successful Census process, describing it as a cornerstone of effective governance based on contemporary and accurate data.

Kavinder Gupta also linked the initiative to India's broader national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047,

highlighting the use of innovations such as Artificial Intelligence, geo-tagging and self-enumeration mechanisms that will allow citizens to submit data digitally through mobile applications and an online portal.

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra termed the inauguration a major milestone and highlighted the pioneering digital data collection tools to be used in the upcoming Census. He assured complete support from the UT Administration to ensure the timely and efficient conduct of the exercise.

Earlier, Amit Sharma, Director of Census Operations and Citizen Registration, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, briefed the gathering on the two-phase Census process—Houselisting and Housing Census (April-September 2026) and Population Enumeration (September 2026 for snow-bound areas). He said the Census will be conducted using 100 per cent paperless digital tools, self-enumeration facilities, caste data capture and the deployment of trained functionaries to generate rapid and actionable insights.

He informed that the Houselisting and Housing Census in Ladakh is expected to be conducted between June 1 and June 30, and requested additional office space to ensure smooth functioning of the department.

note after each visit, which will form part of their Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR).

The circular further notes that it has been observed that officers frequently undertake extended tours to Delhi and other places outside Ladakh, which has been deemed unacceptable. It emphasises that minimum absence from the station must be ensured to maintain effective administrative functioning.

Additionally, the circular highlights the need to improve public accessibility. Accordingly, all Administrative Secretaries and field officers have been directed to remain responsive and accessible to the general public at all times.

Chief Secretary chairs review of Digital Land Records system

Sets January 26 target to operationalise system in Leh



Photo Caption: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra reviewing the recently launched Ladakh Land Records (LaLR) Portal with concerned officials.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on January 7 reviewed the recently launched Ladakh Land Records (LaLR) Portal, aimed at enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in land revenue administration across the UT.

During the meeting, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Shabir Hussain from the Revenue Department gave a detailed presentation on the functioning of the LaLR Portal, highlighting its paperless workflow, digital architecture, and integration with modern survey

and mapping technologies. He informed that village-level mapping surveys have been completed in 40 villages of Leh district so far, while surveys in the remaining villages of Leh and Kargil districts are yet to be undertaken.

The presentation also covered the use of drone-based surveys, challenges faced during data collection, and the process of delivering online services such as Jamabandi and Fard applications. Officials explained that LaLR is a secure, web-based, multi-tier application integrated with GIS to support real-time deci-

sion-making. The portal caters to citizens, revenue officials, and institutional stakeholders, including town planning authorities, registration offices, and courts.

Through the portal, users can access and analyse revenue records and related information such as Records of Rights, Jamabandi, Girdawari, Mutation, and other ancillary land details. Although complete digital coverage of the region is still in progress, the portal has been developed as a single-window platform for accessing and preserving land records, including maps, survey and settlement data, and immovable property registration details, with the objective of providing timely and reliable land revenue information.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the technical and functional aspects of the portal in detail and sought clarifications regarding the base maps used to ensure accuracy. He emphasised the need to validate digitally available revenue

records before making them publicly searchable and enquired about the number of users who have accessed the portal so far.

He also reviewed authentication mechanisms for accessing land documents, suggesting that basic land records may be made available through auto-generated downloads, while transactions related to sale, partition, division, bank loans, and transfers should remain subject to proper authorization and verification.

Further discussions focused on ensuring the authenticity of physical land details, verification mechanisms for ownership and bifurcation, and the integration of additional services such as income certificates and ST/SC certificates within the portal.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed user login credentials, training modules, and testing procedures for revenue staff, particularly Patwaris. He directed that structured competency tests be con-

ducted to assess actual usage and understanding of the portal and stressed the need to provide adequate hardware support, including laptops, for effective implementation.

Highlighting the importance of public awareness and adoption, he directed that a clear target be set to operationalize the online land system in Leh district by January 26. He further emphasized that once notified, the portal should be made mandatory for all land-related transactions to ensure a complete transition to a transparent and digital land administration system.

The meeting was attended by ACR Shabir Hussain, Sunil Kaul (State Informatics Officer, NIC Ladakh), Punchok Paldan (Scientist-F, NIC Ladakh), Stanzin Donsal (Joint Director, Finance Department), senior officials of the UT Administration, and representatives of vendor agencies associated with the project implementation.

Patwaris submit memorandum to Chief Secretary on service-related demands



Photo Caption: A delegation of Patwaris serving in the Revenue Department meeting with Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A delegation of Patwaris serving in the Revenue Department of the Union Territory of La-

dakh on January 8 called on Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra at the UT Secretariat in Leh.

During the meeting, the delegation submitted a representation highlighting several long-pending and critical issues affecting the Patwari cadre.

The Patwaris informed the Chief Secretary that they form the backbone of the Revenue Department at the grassroots level and shoulder key responsibilities, including maintenance of land records, revenue collection, resolution of land disputes and delivery of essential public ser-

vices across some of the most challenging terrains of the Union Territory.

Despite rendering dedicated services under harsh conditions—such as extreme weather and postings in remote and inaccessible areas—the delegation said certain systemic issues continue to adversely impact their morale, efficiency and overall welfare.

Among the key demands raised were upgradation to Technical Grade and enhancement of the pay scale; formulation of a fair and transparent transfer policy; provision of Trav-

elling Allowance (TA) and official transport support for field duties; bifurcation of GQ Circles and Patwar Halqas to reduce workload; and expediting the conduct of the Patwari examination for the 2020 batch following completion of training.

The Chief Secretary assured them that their genuine concerns would be examined sympathetically in consultation with the concerned departments. He appreciated the efforts made towards technological upgradation within the Patwari cadre and assured the delegation of a fair and appropriate resolution.

Road safety awareness drive launched in Leh under National Road Safety Month 2026



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: As part of National Road Safety Month 2026, a Sadak Suraksha Abhiyan focusing on the implementation of the Zero Fatality Solution was launched at Singey Namgyal Chowk, Leh, on January 1 under the theme "Sadak Suraksha, Jeevan Raksha."

The month-long road safety campaign will be conducted across the district through awareness programmes, enforcement drives, and media outreach activities, and will conclude on January 31, 2026.

The initiative is being organised by the Motor Vehicles Department, UT Ladakh, in collaboration with the District Administration, Leh, with the objective of promoting road safety awareness and encouraging responsible behaviour among all road users.

The campaign was launched in the presence of Deputy Commissioner,

Leh, Romil Singh Donk; Regional Transport Officer, Ladakh, Dr. Zahida Bano; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Ghulam Mohd; and Additional Superintendent of Police, Leh, Rigzen Sangdup, along with officers from the Traffic Police, DSP Traffic, NCC, and officials from various line departments.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of adhering to traffic rules, using safety gear such as helmets and seat belts, and sharing collective responsibility to reduce road accidents and fatalities. He stated that awareness, effective enforcement, and consistent communication through media are crucial to achieving the goal of zero road fatalities.

The Regional Transport Officer, Ladakh, stated that National Road Safety Month is being observed in both districts of UT Ladakh through coordinated

efforts by concerned departments. She highlighted the importance of safe driving practices, avoidance of overspeeding and drunken driving, and strict compliance with traffic regulations, particularly in view of Ladakh's challenging terrain and climatic conditions. She also underscored the role of print, electronic, and digital media in disseminating road safety messages.

During the drive, officials distributed information pamphlets, medals, and road safety materials among drivers and commuters. Vehicle checks were also conducted on private and passenger vehicles, with special emphasis on the use of seat belts, helmets, and other mandatory safety measures.

The campaign reflects the administration's continued commitment to ensuring safer roads and protecting human lives across the district.

Directorate of Industries & Commerce, UT Ladakh signs MoU to strengthen PM Vishwakarma implementation



Photo Caption: During the signing of MoU with the Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Union Territory of Ladakh and Firgun Social Initiative Foundation.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Union Territory of Ladakh, on January 9 signed a non-financial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Firgun Social Initiative Foundation to strengthen market-driven capacity building of beneficiaries under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in the districts of Leh and Kargil.

The MoU was signed by Mohd Ashraf Bhatt, JKAS, Director, Industries & Commerce, UT Ladakh, in the presence of Shafiq Ahmad, JKAS, General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Kargil. The collaboration was facilitated by the State-Level Project Management Unit (SL-PMU), PM Vishwakarma Ladakh.

The agreement aims to enhance the entrepreneur-

ial, financial and digital capabilities of artisans and craftsmen through structured training programmes. It also focuses on the mobilisation, identification and formation of trade-based business clusters under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

Under the collaboration, Firgun Social Initiative Foundation will conduct free and voluntary workshops on digital marketing, e-commerce, book-keeping and business management. The foundation will also facilitate certification of participants in coordination with the MSME Technology Centre, Greater Noida.

The Directorate of Industries & Commerce will extend coordination and mobilisation support for the initiative, with no financial involvement under the MoU.

People’s Voice:

Stanzin Dasal



Tsering Dorjay, Village Head (Goba), Kungyam Village: Despite the installation of a telecom tower around five years ago, telecom connectivity remains a major issue in Kungyam village. At present, internet and mobile phone services are extremely poor, and the people of Kungyam are facing numerous challenges in this digital era.

We have raised this issue several times at various levels; however, no positive outcome has been achieved so far. Compared to other villages in the Rong Valley, Kungyam has a larger population, yet the telecom connectivity here, as well as in a few other villages of Rong, is in a much poorer state. In fact, connectivity in these villages is worse than in many other villages, including those located in border areas.

Poor internet services have become a serious challenge for the people of Kungyam, especially the youth, who find it difficult to carry out any work in today’s digital environment. Students are struggling to attend online classes and conduct research, and villagers are unable to fully avail themselves of the benefits of various government schemes that are now accessible only through online platforms.

It also appears that good internet and telecom connectivity has increasingly become an election agenda. The reason cited by the authorities for the lack of proper connectivity is that the tower is located far from the main highway, and laying Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) from the highway to the village involves high costs. This has been stated as the primary reason why our long-standing demand remains unfulfilled.

I sincerely urge the concerned authorities to address this issue at the earliest, as the people of Kungyam have been demanding reliable internet and telecom connectivity for a

long time.



Nawang Lungtok: At the end of 2021, a Jio telecom tower was installed in Kungyam village after long-standing demands for proper telecom connectivity. While the tower has been installed, reliable internet connectivity still remains a major challenge.

Internet services are one of the most essential facilities in today’s digital era, as almost everything now functions online. Even essential services such as ration distribution are affected, with people having to wait for long periods because internet connectivity is almost nonexistent. Although mobile phone services work intermittently, internet services are nearly absent.

Several delegations from Kungyam village have approached the former Lieutenant Governor, former Member of Parliament, former Chief Executive Councillor, and many other officials with the same demand. We remain hopeful that a positive solution will be provided. In cases of emergencies or urgent work, villagers are compelled to travel 10–15 kilometers away from Kungyam village to access a network connection. Despite this, people continue to recharge their mobile numbers with full plans, similar to users in areas with proper connectivity, yet they do not receive the corresponding benefits. This situation is both unfair and deeply concerning.

Kungyam village remains far from the vision of a digital world, and the people continue to face difficulties in their day-to-day lives due to poor connectivity. I sincerely appeal to the concerned authorities to address our issue by laying the Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) so that the people of Kungyam can finally avail themselves of reliable internet services.



Jigmat Skalzang, President, Kungyam Youth Association: It has been five to six years since a Jio telecom tower was installed in Kungyam village; however, the lack of reliable internet and proper mobile phone connectivity continues to cause serious challenges for the people.

Digital divide persists in Kungyam village despite telecom tower

In today’s digital era, internet access is extremely important, as most work is carried out online. Students, in particular, depend heavily on the internet for their studies and academic activities. Due to the unavailability of reliable telecom services, many youths and students from Kungyam are forced to stay in Leh. If proper phone and internet connectivity were available, many of them would choose to remain in the village and pursue education and work from there.

In cases of emergencies or urgent requirements, villagers are compelled to travel to areas where network connectivity is available. With most services now digitised, the absence of internet connectivity has made daily life increasingly difficult.

Kungyam village remains significantly backward in terms of telecom connectivity compared to other parts of the Rong Valley. I sincerely urge the concerned authorities to kindly look into this matter and resolve the issue at the earliest.



Sonam Lamo, President, Women Association, Kungyam: The lack of good internet facilities forces our children and grandchildren to stay in Leh even during vacations, as internet access has become essential for education. If reliable internet connectivity were available, students could remain in the

village with their families, learn in a supportive environment, and complete their homework and studies without difficulty.

Nowadays, even essential services such as ration distribution depend on internet connectivity. Due to poor internet facilities, we often have to wait for long periods to access these services. Despite raising this issue with the authorities several times, no positive outcome has been seen so far.

In many instances, even mobile phone services do not function properly, and we are compelled to travel to areas with better network coverage just to make a phone call. These difficulties greatly affect the daily lives of the people of Kungyam.

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

New Year, new readings



I can’t help but repeat the cliché that reading and books are a part of a happy life. Reading of any kind, mainly books, makes one feel abreast with the outside world while sitting in the comfort of the drawing room. As usual, every New Year, many of us draw out a list of books to be read through the year.

Let me tell you about some of the more important books I had read last year: Games People Play by Eric Berne; Hyper Focus: How to Work Less and Achieve More by Chris Bailey; The Psychology of Money by Morgan Housel, and Enlightenment: A New Beginning by Sadhguru. I had great moments with them because they went either by my thought pattern or they had good lessons to learn.

And, Meditation and its Methods by Swami Vivekananda happens to be the first book I have bought for this year. The other books that I intend to read through the year excite me quite a lot. I make my routine visits to Connaught Place and Dilli Haat where I get the books of my choice quite easily. Buying books online, at time, gives you a big ‘deception’. In the year that is gone by, I had, at one time, bought three books online in one go. What happened was nothing short of a disaster. The books that were to keep me busy for several weeks were not of my interest, and were quite boring too. What had ‘cheated’ me into buying them was their attractive titles!

Normally, at any given time, I select a dozen of books, and ultimately select two or three of them. This process is done every 2-3 months as the already-bought books are done with.


I am yet to finalise the list of the books that would keep me busy and entertaining in the months to come, but have some idea of the books I would like and love to read. Some of them could be: The Glass Bead Game by Herman Hese; The Geography of Thought by Richard Nisbelt; and Think Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman.

The punchline: Books lead us to understand the very purpose and meaning of a good life!

Wish you happy reading!

Courtesy: WongWorld

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



Penguin Awareness Day

A World of Penguins
It is thought there are as many as 17 to 20 different species of penguins, each uniquely adapted to their environments. For example, Emperor Penguins are built to endure the harshest conditions of Antarctica, with a layer of fat and dense feathers for insulation. In contrast, Magellanic Penguins and Banded Penguins thrive on the sunny beaches of South America and Africa, using burrows to protect themselves from the heat. Other species like Gentoo Penguins are known for their incredible swimming speed, while King Penguins and Adelie Penguins are famous for their striking appearances and social behaviours. Most penguins live in the Southern Hemisphere, but none inhabit the North Pole.

Every year on January 20th, the United States observes Penguin Awareness Day to raise awareness of the behaviors and amazing characteristics of these creatures. The purpose of the day is to increase public awareness of penguins and their habitats. This day emphasizes protecting penguin habitats in an effort to promote the conservation of penguins worldwide. Climate change, overfishing, toxic plastics, invasive species, oil spills, and habitat destruction are some of the major threats.

National Penguin Day was established in 1972 by Gerry Wallace


of Alamogordo, California, who noted the occasion on his wife’s calendar (Aleta).

The goal of Penguin Awareness Day is to raise awareness of penguin conservation around the world by emphasizing the protection of their habitats. This day also honors the unique traits and behaviors of these animals.

Did you know that penguins have been around for over 30 million years? Their ancestors likely originated from the coasts of New Zealand and Australia. These early flightless birds evolved from species resembling albatrosses, taking to the water where food was abundant. Over time, their wings transformed into powerful flippers, making them expert swimmers and divers. While penguins gave up flight, they became the fastest swimming and deepest diving birds in the world.

Interestingly, penguins have never inhabited the North Pole. Their black-and-white colouring and waddling gait often lead to confusion with puffins or the extinct Great Auk, but these species are unrelated.

DID YOU KNOW



Facts about Penguins

1. Around 30 million penguins are thought to still exist today.

2. They are more difficult to distinguish because of their black backs and white bellies, which act as a form of camouflage to protect them from predators.

3. The known species of penguins number 18. The “adélie penguin,” the “southern rockhopper penguin,” and the “macaroni penguin” are three of them.

4. The emperor penguin has excellent breathing capabilities. Underwater, they are able to hold their breath for up to 20 minutes! The typical penguin’s endurance is only two to three minutes.

5. Penguin colonies go by two names. They are referred to as “rafts” if they are in the water. They are referred to as a “waddle” if they are on land.

6. The tiniest penguin is only 10 inches or so tall.

7. The tallest, however, can reach heights of more than four feet!

8. A “mega” penguin once existed that was over 250 pounds in weight and 6.5 feet tall.

9. Monogamy is typical for penguins.

10. While the female emperor penguins hunt, males incubate eggs.

11. Because they are carnivores, penguins typically eat fish.

12. The swiftest type of penguin is Gentoos. They are capable of swimming at a speed of 22 mph while submerged.

13. The oldest penguin in the world is thought to be 40 years old, which is astounding.

14. Many male penguins present rocks to female penguins as a form of courtship.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with
Tsering Ladol: A Young Shepherd’s Perspective

Q. Brief us about yourself.

Jullay and thank you for having me. I have studied in school of Kungyam village till class 8 and further 2 years in Liktsky. After that I pursued my Higher secondary at Govt. Boys Higher Secondary school Leh. I had an opportunity to pursue my higher education in Bangalore and completed my Graduation in B.COM. After graduation I was confused about what to do next and wasn't sure and clear about anything. I came back home and thought will figure out while staying with parents. It was covid pandemic days and I was at home helping them. My parent's rears livestock and staying with them helping them in their household chores the rearing of goats and sheep became part of my life also. It's been around 3 to 4 years I have been helping my parents.

Q. What is your opinion on the status of live stock rearing in Kungyam village and in Rong Valley?

When I was small, I remember that maximum of the household in Kungyam village kept goats and sheeps almost 40 to 50 per house. And similarly the same case is in Rong valley the picture of keeping livestock with times starts fading away and today in my village we are the only family with goats and sheeps. I feel that the decline in livestock rearing is because of the other income generation options with less hardwork. Livestock rearing is not easy it involves so much of physical activity you have to take them out in mountains everyday for grazing, take care of them and so much more comparing to which the income generation is not much. Which is why the status of it started declining and today almost everyone in the Rong valley has abandon it. Also, the job of shepherd is not considered respectable and people prefer to opt for govt. jobs or do something else.

Q. Since you have been as a shepherd for 3 to 4 years and have experience and seen the environment so close. How do you feel about the importance of promoting the livestock rearing and what can be done to promote it.

As per my experience, I feel happy to stay with animals and living village life. Far away from the hustle and bustle of the city life there is this sense of peace living with these innocent animals. I feel it's important to keep livestock in villages and today seeing many abandoning the lifestyle those who have also gets discouraged and opts to leave the livestock rearing. Even my parents wanted to leave the livestock rearing now because they say it's of not much use and is extra work.

I feel certain awareness and introducing new practices and ideas can help in promoting the livestock rearing. There is certain

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal



Since childhood I have been with my family and stayed in village that's why my attachment is more and very connected. I feel hopeless and waste of time in city. When I am helping parents living with goats and sheeps I feel that I doing something productive and not wasting my time.

More than that I feel happy being with them. Filmmaker Stanzin Dorjay Gya interviewed me and that has changed many things. I was called in many seminars, workshops because of that which made me realize that village life and the lifestyle has its own importance and there is many things we can do. Not all opportunity is limited to town and city life. I feel proud. In future even if I get to work in city I will definitely balance my village life also.

Q. Most interestingly you are vegan and very few people are there in Ladakh who are vegan. What you will say about it?

My brother he is vegan and work as an activist and after listening to him I became vegan. Many asked me about how can I take such big decision but for me it was nothing big decision it just came naturally. The concept of vegan is not so much popular in Ladakh and my family members tells me that I am doing something which is not even taught by spiritual leaders.

The animal products we mostly have nowadays have different picture in the back. The animals are not taken good care of there are tortures and many more. I know my only decision will not bring change instantly but will educate many more about the brutality the animals faces.

Q. many people talk about climate change at all levels. You have been going out with livestock in mountains for many years. What changes you have seen and is climate change real.

It's true. Over the years I have seen many changes. The place I used to take my goats for rearing in winters has less ice while last year there was more. I feel sad to see such changes. I used to feel very cold but every year the days are getting warmer. Many feel happy if the winter is warm but I feel sad and concern because these changes are not a positive sign and people should know about it.

Q. What are your plans in future.

As of now my plan is to rear livestock and help my parents but meanwhile I am also planning to try for some government job as my parents and family members also expect something more than this. One thing is very clear that I will balance my life.

Fortnight Highlights



Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, visited the Rai Pithora Cultural Complex on January 5 to witness the Grand International Exposition of the sacred Piprahwa relics of Bhagwan Buddha. The exhibition, titled "The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One" was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, an anti-encroachment drive was carried out in Kargil town. The drive was conducted along the stretch from Poyen Bridge to Poyen and also covered the Old Market area. During the drive, action was taken against various violations. A total of 61 challans were issued for wrong parking.



A ceremonial Guard of Honour was accorded to Chief Secretary Dr Pawan Kotwal at the UT Secretariat, Leh, on December 31 on the occasion of his superannuation, in recognition of his distinguished and dedicated service to the Union Territory of Ladakh.



The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development (LAHD-SSRB), in coordination with the District Administration, Leh, successfully conducted the Physical Standard Test (PST) and Physical Efficiency Test (PET) on January 7 for the posts of Deputy



A five-day Bhuti training programme on newly framed Bhuti textbooks for foundational and primary classes concluded on December 31 at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh.



ADC Kargil Inteeaz Kacho on December 31 flagged off the first batch of students from various Government PM SHRI Higher Secondary Schools and High Schools of Kargil district for an exposure tour outside the Union Territory of Ladakh under the PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) Scheme, approved under AWP & B 2025-26.



A two-day Thematic Capacity Building Training Programme under the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), organised by the Rural Development Department, Kargil, for Panchayat Secretaries (PSs) and Panchayat Accounts Assistants (PAAs) of District Kargil, concluded on January 1.



ADC, Leh, Ghulam Mohammad (JKAS) chaired a meeting of the District TB Forum under the National Tuberculosis Eradication Programme (NTEP) at the VC Room on December 30.

Fortnightly News

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra chairs review meeting of PWD and Mechanical Engineering department



Photo Caption: Chief Secretary chairing a review meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) and the Mechanical Engineering Department (MED).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh Ashish Kundra on January 7 chaired a departmental review meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) and the Mechanical Engineering Department (MED) at Leh to assess progress, challenges, and future plans related to infrastructure development in the region.

During the meeting, Michael M. D'Souza, Secretary (GAD/PWD-R&B), made a detailed presentation on the functioning and performance of the PWD, highlighting ongoing and proposed works under various centrally sponsored and UT-level schemes. The presentation covered initiatives under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), Status of major strategic tunnel projects, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Special Development Package (SDP), and State Capex Budget.

It was informed that road and bridge projects worth approximately ₹2,896 crore are being executed under CRIF, along with additional bridge works approved by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The presentation also underscored the unique geographical and climatic challenges of Ladakh, including high-altitude terrain, extreme winters, a short working season, and ecological sensitivity, which significantly affect project execution.

The meeting reviewed the physical and financial progress under the State Capex Budget, reporting about 91 percent expenditure as of December 31, 2025. A total of 72 projects covering buildings, roads, and bridges, with an estimated cost of ₹288.32 crore, are under execution, with several works already completed. Progress under PMGSY was also as-

sessed, noting that of the 196 schemes sanctioned under PMGSY-I to III, 137 have been completed, while PMGSY-IV is focused on providing connectivity to unconnected habitations under the Vibrant Villages Programme.

The discussion also covered works under the Special Development Package, financial expenditure of other departments under SDP, requirements of maintenance grants, the pending release of PMGSY-I funds from the Ministry of Rural Development, and the key achievements of the PWD (R&B) Department over the last five years.

The Mechanical Engineering Department presented an overview of its organizational structure, divisional setup in Leh and Kargil, availability of machinery division-wise, key achievements during 2025, and its vision, roles, and responsibilities in supporting infrastructure development across the UT.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the need for optimal utilization of the working season and explored possibilities of extending work during winter through better planning, technology adoption, and addressing labour-related issues. He reviewed the status and criteria of Class-A contractors, ongoing tenders, and under-

construction projects, and directed the department to prepare a comprehensive digital road network map indicating covered and uncovered areas to improve connectivity planning.

He further instructed the department to move towards end-to-end digital processes, including contractor registration, tendering, payments, work codes, and geo-tagged photo monitoring, in coordination with the IT Department. The use of camera-based monitoring systems on major projects and the role of the technical section in overseeing ongoing works were also reviewed.

The Chief Secretary directed identification of unused government buildings for alternative purposes and sought an explanation regarding vacant posts in the department and delays in their advertisement.

The meeting was attended by Michael M. D'Souza, Secretary (GAD/PWD-R&B), Er. Abdul Mutalib, Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B) PMGSY, Dr. Dorjee Gyatso, Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle Leh, along with other senior engineers and departmental officials. in the country and the second largest in the world, with a membership of over 41,000 surgeons.

Drug de-addiction awareness camp organised at Islamia Public School, Leh



Photo Caption: During the drug de-addiction awareness camp at Islamia Public School, Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A drug de-addiction awareness camp was organised at Islamia Public School, Leh, on January 8 to sensitise students, parents and teachers about the growing menace of substance abuse in the district and its serious health and social consequences.

The programme was attended by Ghulam Mohd, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh, as the Chief Guest, along with Shamim Ahmad, Station House Officer (SHO), Leh.

Dr Padma Angmo, Head of the Psychiatry and De-addiction Department at SNM Hospital, Leh, delivered the keynote address and presented recent data from the Psychiatry OPD of the hospital, highlighting emerging and alarming trends in substance abuse.

According to the data shared, the number of patients seeking treatment for substance abuse at

the Psychiatry OPD has shown a steady and concerning rise over the past few years. The total number of cases increased from 108 during March 2018–September 2020 to 537 cases between April 2023 and March 2024, and further to 796 cases during April 2024–March 2025. Although a slight decline to 633 cases was recorded during April–December 2025, the overall trend continues to remain upward.

Substance-wise analysis revealed that alcohol and tobacco were the most commonly abused substances until 2020–21. However, a significant shift in the pattern of substance abuse has been observed in recent years, marked by a sharp rise in opioid use. Opioid-related cases increased from nine cases during 2018–2020 to 87 cases in 2024–25, and further to 127 cases during April–December 2025, including a growing number of injectable drug

users (IDUs).

Dr Angmo also highlighted the emergence of injectable opioid use, particularly among adolescents and young adults, which poses serious public health risks. Risk behaviours such as needle sharing were reported among many users, significantly increasing vulnerability to blood-borne infections.

The camp also drew attention to the rising incidence of Hepatitis C infections among drug users. Over the past two months, in collaboration with the NGO JKSYMP, 24 intravenous drug users were tested, of whom 22 tested positive for Hepatitis C. So far, 11 affected youths, including two females, have been initiated on antiviral therapy. It was noted that continued substance use adversely impacts treatment compliance, increasing the risk of treatment failure and further transmission.

The programme witnessed active participation from students, parents and the teaching staff of Islamia Public School. Speakers emphasised the crucial role of families, educational institutions, healthcare providers and law-enforcement agencies in prevention, early identification and rehabilitation of substance abuse cases.

The awareness camp concluded with an interactive session, reinforcing the importance of early intervention, informed decision-making and collective responsibility in building a drug-free and healthy society.

Awareness programme on Drug abuse and preventive measures held at Taxi Stand, Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Drugs De-addiction Centre Kargil (DDAC), in collaboration with IKMT, JUIAK and the Taxi Operators Union, Kargil, organised an awareness programme on drug abuse and its preventive measures at the Taxi Stand, Kargil, on January 8.

Drivers from the Taxi Union, Bus Union, Tata Mobile Union, 407 Union and other transport unions actively participated in the programme.

The programme began with an introductory address by the Project Coordinator, DDAC Kargil, who highlighted the growing concern of drug abuse in Kargil district. He informed participants about the free treatment facilities available at the DDAC for individuals struggling with substance addiction and encouraged those in need to seek timely help. He also advised everyone to remain vigilant and stay away from harmful substances.

Sheikh Bashir Shakiri, representative of IKMT, addressed the gathering and delivered a strong message on the causes and dangers of drug abuse. He emphasised its serious impact on individuals, families and society, and urged participants to fulfil their social and moral responsibilities in preventing the spread of this menace. He also called for close cooperation with the District De-addiction Centre, Kargil, in spreading awareness and guiding the younger generation in the right direction.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by the In-charge President of the Taxi Operators Union, who expressed sincere gratitude to DDAC Kargil and the religious organisations for their dedicated efforts in raising awareness and steering the younger generation towards a healthy and responsible future.

The organisers reiterated their collective commitment to continue working towards a drug-free Kargil.

Four-day School Health and Wellness training begins at DIET Leh



Photo Caption: During the four-day School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) for newly appointed School Health and Wellness Ambassadors, Physical Education Masters (PEMs), and Physical Education Teachers (PETs) at DIET Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh, in collaboration with the Health Department, organised a four-day School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) from January 7 to 10 for newly appointed School Health and Wellness Ambassadors, Physical Education Masters (PEMs), and Physical Education Teachers (PETs) at DIET Leh.

The programme is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Education, aimed at strengthening health education and promoting the holistic well-being of students in both government and private schools of Leh district.

The workshop is being conducted for newly appointed SHWP teachers, PEMs, and PETs from government high and higher secondary schools of Leh district.

The training programme was inaugurated by Head of the Depart-

ment, Sonam Lamo, along with Dr. Farhana Iqbal, District Immunisation Officer (DIO) and District Nodal Officer, SHWP, Leh, in the presence of SHWP coordinators and Adolescent Wellness Centre counsellors from Tangtse, Nyoma, and Nubra blocks.

The four-day training has been designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the 11 modules of the School Health and Wellness Programme, enabling teachers to effectively address the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of students.

On the first day, Dr. Farhana Iqbal provided an overview of the School Health and Wellness Programme, highlighting its objectives, structure, and the crucial role of teachers in promoting healthy lifestyles among students. This was followed by an insightful session by Dr. Savita Poonia, Gynaecologist, who spoke in detail about the physical and physiological changes during

adolescence.

In the second session, Dr. Sajjad Husain, Clinical Psychologist, delivered an engaging and informative lecture on the prevention and management of substance misuse, emphasising early identification, counselling strategies, and the role of schools in creating a supportive and safe environment for students.

A total of 70 teachers, PEMs, and PETs from government schools are participating in the workshop. The programme is expected to enhance their capacity to implement the School Health and Wellness Programme effectively and enable them to act as change agents in promoting adolescent health and well-being across schools in Leh district.

The workshop reflects a strong commitment towards integrating health, wellness, and education in alignment with national priorities for the well-being of children.

LG Kavinder Gupta unveils “Yargyas Ladakh” annual calendar at Lok Niwas



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta releasing the Annual Calendar titled “Yargyas Ladakh: Marching Towards a Prosperous Future” at Lok Niwas.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta released the Annual Calendar titled “Yargyas Ladakh: Marching Towards a Prosperous Future” at Lok Niwas on January 1 in the presence

of Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ladakh, Prof. Saket Kushwaha.

The vibrant calendar comprehensively showcases

major festivals and events celebrated across the Union Territory, while also highlighting key transformative initiatives undertaken by the UT Administration for the holistic development of Ladakh and the prosperity of its people.

Prominent themes featured in the calendar include sports development for nurturing local talent; the energy leap towards sustainable power; flagship healthcare initiatives such as PM Ayushman Bharat ensuring accessible medical care; marriage assistance schemes supporting new beginnings; Digital Ladakh for promoting transparency, ac-

countability, and service accessibility; empowerment of entrepreneurs and artisans; promotion of Ladakhi apricots in national and international markets; educational transformation; positioning Ladakh as a premier tourist and adventure destination; financial management transparency; food security; and rural empowerment.

Lieutenant Governor lauded the calendar as a visual roadmap reflecting the UT Administration's people-centric vision and encouraged its wide dissemination to inspire collective efforts towards building a vibrant and self-reliant Ladakh.

Anti-encroachment, traffic enforcement drive continues in Kargil town



Photo Caption: Anti-encroachment drive carrying out in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL:In continuation of the ongoing anti-encroachment drive carried out under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, an enforcement drive was conducted on January 6 in Kargil town along the stretch from

Iqbal Bridge to the Petrol Pump via Andoh.

The drive was jointly carried out by the Tehsildar Kargil, Naib Tehsildar Kargil, Station House Officer, Police Station Kargil, Municipal Committee (MC)

Kargil, and the Traffic Police Kargil. The primary objective of the drive was to remove unauthorized encroachments from public roads and footpaths and to ensure smooth traffic movement and public safety.

During the drive, one illegal structure erected on the road was demolished. Additionally, as part of the observance of District Road Safety Month, the Traffic Police Kargil undertook strict enforcement measures. As a result, three compound challans and 15

sticker challans were issued, and one vehicle was lifted for wrong parking along the roadside.

The district administration once again appealed to the general public and shopkeepers to refrain from encroaching upon public spaces and to strictly adhere to traffic rules and regulations. It was reiterated that such drives will continue in the larger interest of road safety, pedestrian convenience, and the orderly management of traffic in Kargil town.

ADC Kargil conducts surprise inspection of Government offices



Photo Caption: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho, conducting surprise inspections of various government department offices.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho, conducted surprise inspections of various government department offices on January 7 to monitor staff attendance and assess the efficiency of public service delivery. During the inspection tour, the ADC visited the Office of the

Chief Education Officer, the Department of Cooperatives, and the Office of the Tehsildar, Kargil.

The ADC scrutinised attendance registers and reviewed the status of sanctioned leaves. Latecomers were reprimanded on the spot, with the ADC issuing a firm reminder

on the importance of workplace discipline and punctuality.

Kacho interacted with staff to ensure that public grievances and departmental work are being addressed without unnecessary delays. He instructed all department heads to ensure 100 percent punctuality, directing staff to report to office and commence work by or before 10.00 a.m. and remain available during office hours until the close of the business day to serve the public efficiently.

“The public should not suffer at any cost,” ADC Kacho stated. “Providing prompt and efficient service must remain the primary objective of every government official.”

He further warned that such surprise inspections would continue across departments during both morning and afternoon sessions to maintain high standards of administrative transparency and accountability.

Fortnightly News

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra chairs review meeting of Finance, Planning and Estate Departments in Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra chaired a departmental review meeting of the Finance Department, Planning, Development and Monitoring Department, and the Estate Department at Leh on January 8.

The meeting focused on financial planning, budgetary allocations, revenue augmentation strategies and institutional strengthening of key departments.

During the meeting, Kaneez Fatima, Joint Director, Finance Department, gave a detailed presentation covering revised estimates for FY 2025–26 and budget estimates for FY 2026–27, expenditure position as on 31.12.2025, and the format of PIB/ DIB memoranda for appraisal of projects.

The presentation also included additional funds sought under RE 2025–26 following pre-budget discussions, object head-wise budget details under Demand No. 55 (revenue component), budget allocation of LAHDC Leh under both revenue and capital components, and the Special Development Package (SDP) revenue component.

Further, the Finance Department shared data on tax and non-tax revenue for the last five financial years, year-wise revenue collection of the Excise Department, sanctioned strength of the Finance Department of UT Ladakh, details of posts under Excise and Taxation, department and cadre-related issues, and the need to strengthen the opinion advisory role of the Finance

Department.

Trends related to LAHDC budget BE and RE since 2020 and the year-wise status of LAHDC posts up to 2025–26 were also reviewed.

The Planning, Development and Monitoring Department presented its organizational setup, sanctioned strength of ministerial and statistical staff, and details of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics. The department also briefed the Chief Secretary on department-wise allocation under the State Sector (CAPEX) for 2025–26, the Vibrant Village Programme and the Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

While reviewing the presentations, the Chief Secretary stressed the importance of effective grant-in-aid expenditure, particularly for tourism and social sectors, and emphasized object-wise review of allocations to avoid under-provisioning. He highlighted the need for a flexible fund at the district level to enable Deputy Commissioners to meet urgent requirements during field visits, especially in cases of shortages of essential commodities, with on-the-spot sanctioning mechanisms.

The Chief Secretary directed that a clear, standardized and transparent format be designed for fund appraisal and approval processes to avoid mechanical exercises and ensure ease of reference. He also reviewed the delegation of financial powers, professional services, SDP capital expenditure, PMFS–LFMS

integration, Treasury Office functioning and CSS payment systems. The Finance Department was instructed to closely coordinate with the IT Department for department-wise CSS payment data and to establish a State Budget Cell to track CSS performance, spending and unspent balances using analytical tools and graphical dashboards in a systematic manner.

He further reviewed the internal revenue generation sources including GST collection trends, major revenue contributors, auction events and excise revenue. The Chief Secretary instructed the department to revisit and rationalize excise principles, excise policies and rules, assess market demand for retail outlets, and review the status of wine shops. He directed the department to immediately start working on a fresh excise policy for the coming financial year, which should be aimed at resource augmentation and discouraging spurious liquor and drugs in the territory. He also gave directions for reviewing the VAT levies on petrol, diesel and exploring the possibility of introducing a green cess. Emphasis was laid on developing a robust revenue augmentation strategy for the Union Territory.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed details of non-gazetted posts under Accounts and Treasuries and directed the hiring of a specialized consultant to prepare a white paper on the economic plan of Ladakh. He called for an economic forecast and a focused five-year plan with a dedicated team, and stressed linking economic and developmental expenditure with technology-driven monitoring tools such as GPS-based photo documentation and geo-tagged public works portals.

The meeting was attended by Stanzin Donsal, Joint Director, Finance Department; Kaneez Fatima, Joint Director, Finance Department; Jigmet Namgyal, Joint Director; Ajaz Hussain, Chief Accounts Officer, Directorate of Accounts and Treasuries; and other senior officers of the concerned departments.

MP Ladakh raises Drass development issues with DG BRO in Delhi



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Mohd Hanifa Jan, chaired a meeting with the Director General, Border Roads Organisation (DG BRO), Lieutenant General Harpal Singh, at the BRO Headquarters in Delhi on January 2 to discuss key developmental issues concerning the Drass region of Kargil.

During the meeting, several important in-

frastructure and livelihood-related matters were taken up. These included the proposed construction of the Drass–Gurez Road to enhance strategic as well as civilian connectivity, and the construction of bypass roads at Thasgam village and from Shimsa to Kharboo to ease traffic congestion and improve road safety.

The issue of enhancement of wages for la-

bourers engaged in BRO works was also discussed, along with the need for greater engagement of local labour in ongoing and upcoming projects. The MP further highlighted the scope for construction of a tunnel from Dandal to Khumbathang to ensure all-weather connectivity in the region.

Concerns raised by Ladakh-based contractors, particularly regarding qualification and eligibility criteria in BRO works, were also deliberated upon during the meeting.

Responding to the issues raised, DG BRO Lieutenant General Harpal Singh assured that all concerns would be given due consideration and reiterated his commitment to extending full support for the overall development of the Drass region.

Ladakh’s Jigmet Chunzen named Captain of Indian Women’s Futsal team



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Futsal player Jigmet Chunzen, hailing from Ladakh, is set to make her India debut as team captain in the inaugural SAFF Women’s Futsal Championship, marking a significant milestone for the region as Indian talent from Ladakh takes centre stage at the international level. The tournament is being held in Thailand.

Her appointment as captain underscores the growing recognition of

sports talent from Ladakh on the national platform. Speaking ahead of the tournament, Captain Chunzen expressed strong confidence and ambition, stating that although the championship is being organized for the first time, the Indian squad has arrived with a clear objective—to win the tournament.

The Indian team, popularly known as the ‘Futsal Tigresses’, will begin their campaign

against Maldives on Tuesday, January 13.

Meanwhile, Administrative Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, UT Ladakh, Moses Kunzang (JKAS), extended his heartfelt congratulations to Jigmet Chunzen on being named captain of the Indian team for the inaugural SAFF Women’s Futsal Championship. He described her achievement as a historic milestone that brings immense pride to the entire region of Ladakh.

Kunzang hailed Chunzen as a trailblazing role model, stating that her historic achievement would inspire the youth of Ladakh to pursue excellence in sports and strive for higher levels of achievement at national and international platforms.

The meeting was described as constructive and forward-looking, with a shared emphasis on infrastructure development, employment generation, and regional growth.

Ice Hockey takes centre stage as 5th LG tournament begins in Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, in the presence of Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh, Ashish Kundra (IAS), inaugurated the 5th LG Ice Hockey Tournament 2026 at the Ice Hockey Rink, Bimathang, Kargil, on January 12.

On the occasion, the CEC warmly welcomed the newly appointed Chief Secretary of UT Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, and expressed optimism about working in close coordination with LAHDC Kargil for the overall development of the region.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jaffer Akhoo highlighted that ice hockey is the traditional grassroots sport of Ladakh and is deeply rooted in the region’s culture. He emphasized that Ladakh is nationally and internationally recognized for its unique winter sports heritage, particularly ice hockey. The CEC urged authorities to consider Kargil as a host venue under the Khelo India initiative, assuring full cooperation along with all necessary logistical and administrative support from LAHDC Kargil and the district administration.

Dr. Akhoo further underlined the importance of sports in promoting physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and holistic development among youth. He stated that sports play a vital role in positively engaging young people while nurturing leadership qualities and resilience.

Concluding his address, he reiterated that through collective efforts and coordinated planning, Ladakh would continue to move forward on the path of sustainable and inclusive development.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary UT Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, lauded the efforts of the concerned departments in promoting winter sports, particularly ice hockey. Describing the sport as a unique experience, he noted that this was his first firsthand exposure to ice hockey, which left a lasting impression on him.

Kundra also appreciated the Indian Army for its dual role in safeguarding the nation’s borders while actively contributing to sports promotion and youth engagement in the region. He assured full support from the UT Administration for the development of winter sports infrastructure in Kargil, emphasizing that necessary steps would be taken to strengthen facilities and encourage wider participation.

The inaugural event was attended by CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo; Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, IAS; Executive Councillor Kacho Mohd Feroz; Secretary Education Bhanu Prabha; Secretary, PHE, Rahul Sharma; directors of various departments; councillors of LAHDC Kargil; district officers; and a large number of spectators, sports enthusiasts, and local residents, who witnessed the opening of the tournament with great enthusiasm.

District-Level Sports meet organised by Mera Yuva Bharat concludes in Kargil

Sports key to discipline, drug-free youth: ADC Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: ADC Kargil Imteez Kacho attended the closing ceremony of the District-Level Sports Meet organised by Mera Yuva Bharat, Kargil, on December 31 at Munshi Habibullah Mission Higher Secondary School, Kargil, in collaboration with the Social & Development Welfare Society, Kargil.

ADC Kargil Imteez Kacho was the Chief Guest, while Councillor Taisuru Abdul Hadi graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. Zonal Physical Education Officer Ibrahim Shogi was also present, along with officials, organisers, youth participants, and members of various sports clubs. The dignitaries witnessed the final volleyball match, which was won by Green

Valley, Karkitchoo.

The ADC appreciated the efforts of the organisers for successfully conducting the sports meet despite the harsh weather conditions prevailing in Kargil. He congratulated both the winning and runner-up teams of the volleyball final—Green Valley Karkitchoo and Down Town Andoo—and encouraged the participating youth to continue engaging in sports activities. Highlighting the importance of sports in shaping disciplined and responsible citizens, the ADC urged the youth to stay away from drug abuse and other social evils. He lauded the organising committee for promoting a healthy sporting culture in the district and assured full support from the Dis-

trict Administration for such youth-centric initiatives in the future.

Councillor Abdul Hadi also congratulated the winners and runners-up and praised the dedication and enthusiasm of the players. He encouraged the youth to make sports a priority for physical fitness and overall personality development.

District Youth Officer, Mera Yuva Bharat Kargil, Jigmet Spaldon, informed that six sports events were organised for both male and female participants as part of the meet. She also highlighted the umbrella schemes of Mera Yuva Bharat, including provisions for club affiliation and sports kits, aimed at encouraging greater youth participation in sports.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We the following persons, propose to register a Non-profitable NGO under the name and Style as ‘Snodo Nalden Nyamlen Tsogspa Lalok’ Leh UT Ladakh with the Registrar of Societies UT Ladakh under Society Registration Act 1860.

List of Executive members of the Society:

S.no.	Name	Parentage	Residence	Occupation	Designation
1	Rigzin Angdus	S/o Phuntsog Tashi	Merak Man Pangong	Teacher	President
2	Tsering Nurboo	S/o Kunchok Chokziang	Merak Man Pangong	Farmer	Vice-President
3	Konchok Tharchin	S/o Phunchok Namgial	Tangtse	Farmer	General Secretary
4	Tsewang Stanzin	D/o Konchok Stanzin	Chushul Man Pangong	Farmer	Joint Secretary
5	Chhemat Dorjay	S/o Konchok Tsetan	Tangtse	Farmer	Cashier
6	Rigzen Namgyal	S/o Konchok Stanzin	Chushul	Farmer	Member
7	Sonam Angmo	W/o Sonam Yangphel	Chushul	Farmer	Member
8.	Nawang Dolma	D/o Tsering Sonam	Phobrang Man Pangong	Teacher	Member

Any objection in this regard from any person (s) may be sent in writing / in person/ through authorised representation to the Registrar of Societies, Ladakh, within a period of 21 days from the publication of this notice, or by email at directorindustriessladakh@gmail.com or Ph No. 01982-415869.

President

‘Snodo Nalden Nyamlen Tsogspa Lalok’ Leh UT Ladakh



VIETNAM FAMILY GROUP TOUR 2026

HANOI . DA NANG . HO CHI MINH . DA LAT
Departure date: 15th Febraury and 15th March 2026

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Website: www.overlandescape.com



THAILAND FAMILY GROUP TOUR 2026

BANGKOK - PATTAYA - KRABI - PHUKET
Departure date: 24th Febraury and 24th March 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

- RETURN FLIGHTS (DELHI - BANGKOK - KRABI -> PHUKET -> DELHI)
- 8 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION WITH DAILY BREAKFAST
- PRIVATE AIRPORT TRANSFERS
- BANGKOK: TEMPLE TOUR, SAFARI WORLD & MARINE PARK WITH INDIAN LUNCH

- PATTAYA: CORAL ISLAND TOUR + ALCAZAR SHOW
- KRABI: 7 ISLAND TOUR BY SPEEDBOAT WITH THAI DINNER
- PHUKET: CITY TOUR + PHI PHI & KHAI ISLAND TOUR WITH LUNCH
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