

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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June 1-15, 2020



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Brief News

DM, Leh conducts random checking of homes under quarantine

LEH: To check abidance of measures put in place by the District Administration to contain spread of COVID19, District Magistrate, Leh conducted random checking of the Leh market and adjoining localities on May 29.

Four Home Quarantine violators were sent to Institutional Quarantine while several others were fined for not wearing face masks.

Stringent action under rule shall be taken against all the violators.

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Courtesy Tsetan Angmo

Correction and clarification

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Boosting Ladakh's economy through Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Stanzin Dasal

LEH: The high-altitude cold desert region of Ladakh is an abode for almost 1100 varieties of plants, out of which nearly 525 plants got medicinal value. The climatic and altitude variation adds to the unique diversity of these medicinal and aromatic plants.

Dr. Padma Gurmet, Director, National Research Institute for Sowa-Rigpa, Leh told us about the medicinal and aromatic plants of Ladakh. He said that these plants have a special metabolic and reproductive strategies well suited to counteract the harsh climatic condition and altitude this region.

He further added, "Plants grown at Khardongla pass have the capability to adapt in more than 25 degrees Celsius temperature during the day time and to rough minus temperature during the night. The bright sunlight and dryness of the region also proves to be a boon to the plants to develop their strong aroma".

The emerging growth of herbal products industry holds great potential for the economic development of the region. It will be a huge scope of cosmetic, perfume, pharmaceutical industries as well as opening of wellness centres in the region.

Consequent to the formation of Ladakh as Union Territory, the Government of India approved the establishment of the National Research Institute for Sowa-Rigpa in Leh as an autonomous organization under the Ministry of AYUSH. This opened up many opportunities and scopes in the field of medicinal plants and herbal industries. Also, Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks about 'Solo' or the 'Rhodiola Rosea', the plant with superior medicinal properties and rich biodiversity of the region, which gave a new perspective to many to think about.

Looking at the economic potential of medicinal and aromatic plants, UT Ladakh also focuses to promote



Medicinal and aromatic plants being cultivated at the Trans Himalayan Herbal garden initiated by National Research Institute for Sowa Rigpa.

it further. In an interview with All India Radio, Rigzin Samphel, Commissioner Secretary, UT, Administration states medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation sector as a game-changer for Ladakh's economy.

He states that, "Research on these medicinal and aromatic plants are already being done by DIHAR, SKUAST, and Sowa Rigpa. Now, the time is to be practical and come up with proof of the concept. A land in Agyam, Nubra valley has already been identified where cultivation of these plants will be carried out on 20 -25 kanals of land on an experiment basis".

In Kashmir valley, lavender is the potential and prospective crop for agribusiness to many farmers and youths. There is a story of many farmers who have transitioned from traditional crops such as maize to lavender farming because of the high economic potentials.

Rigzin Samphel talked about the plan of UT administration to replicate the idea of cultivating lavender for essential oils in Ladakh also. Dr. Padma Gurmet informed that out of the 525 wild plants which have medicinal

values, hardly five of them are cultivable. Also, the cultivation of such plants are not being carried out on a large scale. There are very few farmers who cultivate these plants.

In the past, many awareness camps and workshops were held in Leh regarding the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. Farmers were encouraged to explore and cultivate these plants to boost their income. But the question always arised about the productivity, market demand, availability of agro techniques and prices to be paid to the farmers or benefit-sharing issues.

Aiming to promote the traditional system of medicine, the National Research Institute for Sowa Rigpa acquired 200 kanal of land opposite to Phey village to develop the Trans Himalayan Herbal Garden. Cultivation of more than 100 species of medicinal plants is already in process on almost 60 kanal lands.

Dr. Phuntsog Dolkar, Senior Research Fellow said that

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UT Ladakh police to be renamed 'Ladakh Police'

Hill Council, Leh congratulates all police personnel



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Hill Council, Leh congratulated all the police personnel's serving in different wings of J&K Police earlier on the formation of 'Ladakh Police' on May 23.

Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh said that it is a very happy moment for every Ladakhi especially for the police personnel of Ladakh and their family members. He said that it is also a tribute to all those Ladakhi police personnel who struggled and sacrificed their lives in Kashmir valley countering different chal-

lenges since many decades.

He also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister, Amit Shah and LG UT Ladakh R.K Mathur for giving approval for the formation of "Ladakh Police".

Extending best wishes to the police personnel in their new journey headed by IGP Ladakh S.S Khandare, Gyal P Wangyal hoped that Ladakh Police will touch new heights and emerge as a role model in providing better policing in coming days and years.

LG Mathur meets Union Home Minister in New Delhi

Discusses developmental and administrative issues in UT Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant Governor, R. K. Mathur discussed various developmental and administrative issues related to the Union Territory of Ladakh with Union Home Minister, Amit Shah in a consecutive two days meeting.

Secretary Home, A. K. Bhalla; Advisor, Umang Narula, and Additional Secretary Home, Gyanesh Kumar also attended the meeting.

R K Mathur shared the Ladakh expe-

rience of COVID-19 and the coordinated efforts put into containing the virus spread. He apprised the Home Minister about the measures being taken to ensure effective management and strict adherence to government protocol of social distancing and other precautionary guidelines of COVID-19 in the region.

Also, he informed about the rise in numbers of new COVID-19 positive cases which is mostly being tested among 16000 people who came back to Ladakh recently from different parts of India.

Lt. Governor requested additional senior-level officers to augment the administrative strength in Ladakh and the officers who have opted for Ladakh may be permanently allocated to the Ladakh UT. Also, he requested for early implementation of recommendations put by the Advisory Committee and to fast track the domicile rules for Ladakh in order to enable recruitments.

In view of the recent amendment in J&K rules according to which the special reservation quotas for Leh & Kargil districts have been removed, he further requested to maintain the reservation for Ladakhi students in the J&K professional colleges. Deployment of CISF at Leh Airport and NHPC Power Projects at Nimobasgo and Chutuk project was also put forward.

First batch of stranded passengers from Himachal Pradesh reaches Leh

CEC, Hill Council, Leh receives homecoming passengers

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Around 188 passengers, including 87 people from Leh district and 101 from the Zaskar region reached Leh in nine buses on May 25.

Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council Leh along with Phuntsog Stanzin, EC Agriculture / Facilitation Officer for the evacuation of stranded Ladakhi passengers received homecoming passengers of UT Ladakh via Manali-Leh road at Dharma Centre, Choglamsar.

CEC and EC asked about the wellbeing of homecoming passengers from Himachal Pradesh and assessed the arrangements made by District Administration Leh including lodging, boarding, and food arrangements for passengers of Zaskar at Dharma Centre, Choglamsar.



Passengers coming from Himachal Pradesh being screened at Upshi check point.

He appealed inbound passengers to strictly follow home quarantine and to download the Aarogya Setu app. Also, he urged them to follow social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks for a prolonged time to make it a habit.

Senior Officers on Magistrate duty ACR Leh, Rigzin Spalgon; Tehsilder Leh, Gyurmet Namgyal; Nodal Officer, Dharma Cen-

tre, Choglamsar, Dr. Tsewang Morup, and Dy. Director, Upshi, Pashmina Goat Project Leh is supervising the arrangements.

Dr. Tsewang Morup said that 250 beds are ready for inbound passengers from Manali at Dharma Center, Choglamsar for their night stay. He said passengers from Zaskar will move towards Zaskar on May 26.

Evacuation of 8,373 residents stranded in different parts of India; CEC, Leh expresses gratitude



Gyal P. Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council along with EC, Agriculture, Councillor, Phyang and ADC, Zahida Bano during a press conference at Council Secretariat.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: More than 90 percent of stranded residents including patients, students, and pilgrims of Leh district have been evacuated successfully till date.

Gyal P. Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, stated this during a press conference on May 29 at Council Secretariat.

Phuntsog Stanzin, Executive Councillor for Agriculture / Facilitation Officer briefed about the evacuation of stranded passengers. He informed that till date 8,373 passengers out of which 5,142 students and 3,231 patients/pilgrims/others have been evacuated for which a total of 326 buses and 282 light vehi-

cles were arranged.

He expressed his gratitude to Lieutenant Governor, Ladakh, R.K Mathur, Advisor to LG Ladakh Umang Narula, Commissioner Secretary, Health, UT Ladakh, Rigzin Samphel, and IGP Ladakh Satish Khandare for their continuous support in the evacuation of stranded passengers.

Gyal P Wangyal made a special mention of Divisional Commissioner, Ladakh, Saugat Biswas who is also the UT Nodal officer and overall in-charge for coordinating movement of stranded persons from all the states, Executive Councillor, Agriculture / Facilitation Officer for the evacuation of stranded passengers,

Phuntsog Stanzin, Councillor Phyang, Phunchok Dorjey, Deputy Commissioner, Leh Sachin Kumar, SSP Leh Sargun Shukla, district officers and all the Nodal Officers of States /UTs who worked day and night tirelessly in making the evacuation process smooth and successful.

He also thanked presidents and members of all the student unions, NGOs volunteers, SDM Khaltse and Kharu, BMO Khaltse and Kharu, volunteer of LBA Leh and Wakha, volunteers of Lahaul Spiti, Eco-Tourism Union, YDA, Councillors, BDCs, Sarpanches, Nambarders, and villages for their support and cooperation in the evacuation of stranded passenger.

Boosting Ladakh's economy through Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

...Continued from Page 1

from the past two to three years, the cultivation initiative is being carried out in an extensive way focusing on organic farming. The cultivation process is the same as other cash crops but what we have noticed are that the medicinal plants take some more time to grow fully.

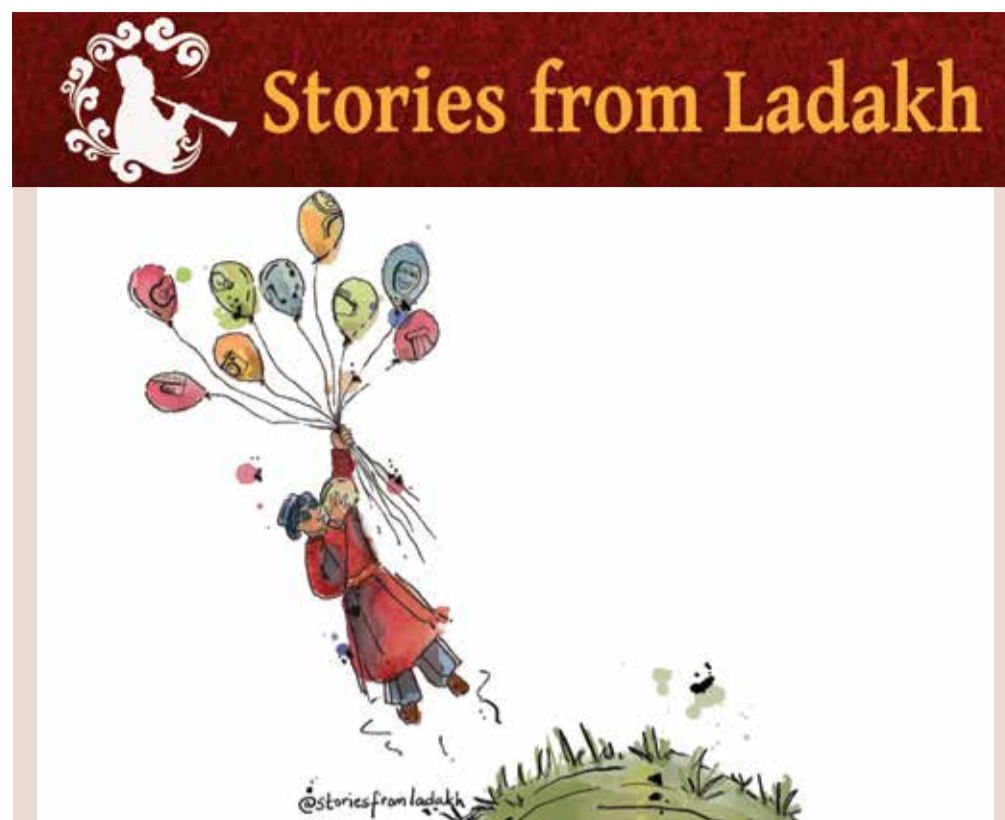
She explained that the cultivation of these medicinal plants are being carried out on this vast barren land on an experimental basis and is first of its kind which almost proved to be successful. Also, an effort is being made to conserve the many species of plants that are on the verge of extinction.

National Research Institute for Sowa Rigpa has

also collaborated with few Research Institutes such as Himalayan Forest Research Institute, DIHAR, Indian institute of Integrated Medicine, and GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development.

Dr. Padma Gurmet stressed the need of constituting a State Medicinal Plant Board and Ayush Mission Society in UT Ladakh to further engage in these sectors and promote its abilities.

Rampant infrastructural development and climatic change are causing extinction of many valuable species of plants. Cultivation and conservation strategies both the in situ, ex-situ and resource management is needed adequately for socio-economic development.



By Richa Maheshwari & Athulya Pillai

I was just eleven years old – a small, cute Ladakhi kid with red cheeks – when I went from learning about compassion and meditation at the Mahabodhi School in Leh to strict army rules at the Sainik School Nagrota, Jammu. The only things that mattered there were being good at sports and studies. I was there for seven years, and every year we were given only two days to show our creative capabilities. I used to imagine a small Smanla trapped inside my heart, banging at its walls. The problem was that I did not know why that someone within me was screaming.

Sainik School made me physically and mentally strong. I can adjust to any situation now. But I knew that I did not want my whole life to be like that. Fortunately, I could draw and was selected to go to the School of Planning and Architecture. I decided that until I was clear about what I want to do, I would take whatever life was offering. When I got to SPA, people were like – I paint. I play the guitar. I am an actor. What do you do? I would say that I can do push-ups. Frankly, I was surrounded by so much talent that I used to feel very inferior.

SPA gave me the freedom and the opportunity to explore. I joined the music club, the theater club, the football team and the student council. Theater helped in boosting my confidence. The art and design environment gave me an eye for detail, proportion, scale, and color. There was no film making club on campus, so I started a short film competition which has now grown into an international short film competition for students. My friends and I used to make videos of us playing pranks.

We even made some short films that got recognition at film festivals. We called ourselves Jobless Studios.

About a year after SPA, we registered Jobless Studios - Busy Telling Stories as a company. Our first project was a film about the life of an architect. We put our heart and soul into the project. Our work was appreciated, and we started to get more jobs. We did this for six straight years. We moved to a better colony, a better flat. Then, in 2018, I realized that I was not happy. We had built a well-oiled machine that was paying us, but most of my time was spent keeping that machine oiled and not creating what I wanted.

That is why I started Safarnama with Smanla on YouTube. People in Ladakh saw my work and I started getting calls of appreciation. One of the calls was from KagaTsephel at BORDA. He said, "Ladakh needs you!" That is how I came back. I used to think that the universe was making good things happen to me. Like SPA. Like theater. But after coming back home, I have realized that things did not just happen. There was a constant desire and I was always working towards it.

Storyteller: Smanla Dorje Nurboo, Likir

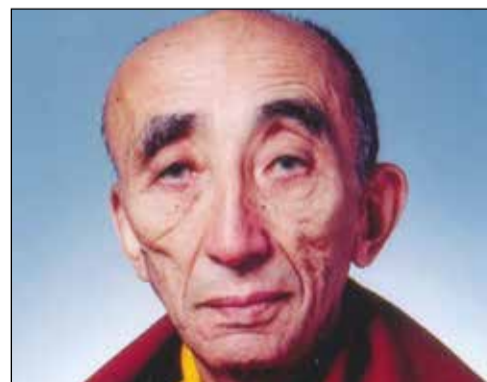
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Gyal P Wangyal pays tribute to 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche on his 103rd Birth Anniversary



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh paid rich tribute to 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche on his 103rd birth anniversary on May 19.

As Ladakh celebrates the birth anniversary of Bakula Rinpoche for the first time after Union Territory status, Gyal P Wangyal said that Bakula Rinpoche always dreamed UT status for Ladakh and taught us to strive for the ultimate goal till our last breath.

"Modern history of Ladakh can't be imagined without remembering Padma Bhushan awardee 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche who not only illumined the time he lived in but continues to remain an inspiration for humanity across the world", he added.

He said that Kushok Bakula Rinpoche's five decades-long selfless and extraordinary service especially in the field of education, politics and social work irrespective of caste and religion and ensuring communal harmony and development in Ladakh has been immense.

Recalling Bakula Rinpoche teaching on patience, discipline, fighting spirit, humanity, social service and most importantly integrity and unity, Gyal P Wangyal stressed on practicing it to overcome present challenges.

He further appealed parents, senior citizens, scholars, intellectuals, teachers, organizations, and schools to enlighten the younger generation of Ladakh about the contributions and principle values of Bakula Rinpoche for disciplined, cultured and prosperous Union Territory of Ladakh.

L-G Mathur discusses University of Ladakh functioning



Officials during the University of Ladakh meeting at Raj Niwas.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Discussion on the annual Capex budget and other related issues of the University of Ladakh was held in a meeting convened by R K Mathur, Lieutenant Governor on May 18 at Raj Niwas.

Rigzin Samphel, Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education,

Ladakh; Chewang Phuntsog, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ladakh; Imtiaz Kacho, Registrar UoL, and Deskyong Namgyal, Controller Examination/ Dean Academics Affairs were present.

Chewang Phuntsog, Vice-Chancellor informed R K Mathur about the projects conceived under the sanctioned budget and highlighted the requirement of

additional funds to take some more projects.

The revenue plan of six colleges in Ladakh, land allotment for administrative headquarter in Kargil, post creation for the university and colleges of Khamti and Drass, building construction plans and academic activities were discussed.

The functionality of Ladakh University either as a cluster university system or a collegiate university system was also raised during the meeting.

R K Mathur stressed on timely execution of the projects. He said that funds will not be a problem and UT Administration shall ensure every support for the effective functioning of Ladakh University and colleges in Ladakh.

Gyal P Wangyal writes to Advisor Umang Narula

Seeks his intervention to approve District Capex Budget for the financial year 2020-21

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Hill Council, Leh seeks early approval of District Capex Budget for the financial year 2020-21 and release of funds for implementation of the annual action plan.

Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh wrote a letter to Umang Narula, Advisor to LG Ladakh on May 29 requesting his intervention on the matter.

The letter reads as, "After the approval of draft Capex Budget 2020-21 in the Executive Council Meeting of Hill Council, Leh held on May 11, 2020, CEC, Hill Council, Leh on May 12, 2020,

submitted the action plan of District Capex Budget to UT Ladakh Administration for approval and release of funds. But, now with the passage of more than 15 days, LAHDC, Leh is yet to receive the approval as well as the release of funds for taking up the works."

The letter further reads that as only limited time is left in the current financial year, it is imperative that the due approval of the LAHDC, Leh, District Budget needs to accord on priority as Hill Council Leh can only call tenders and start developmental works after obtaining the approval from UT Ladakh Administration.

L-G Mathur reviews annual action plan of departments

Emphasizes digital transformation in government office system



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor, R.K. Mathur reviewed the annual action plan of various departments for the fiscal year 2020-21 on May 21 at Raj Niwas.

Advisor to LG, Umang Narula; Commissioner/ Secretary Finance, Divisional Commissioner Ladakh/ Secretary Education, Saugat Biswas, concerned Directors and District officers attended the meeting.

R K Mathur directed the Finance Department to prepare a concrete plan for funds utilization under the Special Development Package and to take the matter to make it non-lapsable with GoI.

He exhorted the department to make all the treasuries and financial systems online.

The departments were asked to purchase GFRs and other finance-related books and distribute them among the departments of UT Ladakh. He also emphasized on organizing training and workshops on FMPs, GRFs, del-

egation of financial powers, etc. to the officers/officials of Leh and Kargil districts every month.

R K Mathur directed to submit Action Plan for the year 2020-21 and to execute the major works without any delay.

He asked the Wildlife Department to issue standing orders for the compensation in case of man-animal conflict keeping in view the recent incidents of domestic animals killed by wild animals in Changthang, Drass regions etc. He directed to make the Pollution Control Board properly functional and conceptualize plans to tackle plastic and other waste issues in Ladakh.

While discussing the other department, ITI was directed to introduce highly employable and market-driven trade courses and to hire professional faculty to ensure quality training.

R K Mathur asked the Labour Department to create labour facilitation centre, build labour Sarai, and to ensure systematic

management of labourers in Leh town. He exhorted to give empathetic attention to the grievances of labourers and to provide the care and assistance.

The Department of Employment was directed to get all the unemployed registered and to impart them skill development training.

While discussing the Education department, R K Mathur directed to prepare a safety plan for all the schools before they reopen to ensure strict adherence to the protocols of social distancing, hygiene, and other safety measures amidst the risk of COVID-19 pandemic.

He exhorted to strengthen the ongoing digital classes and to further improve the online teaching system. He stressed on providing proper facilities to students including upgraded library and laboratories and to ensure 100% enrolment by involving the elected bodies.

The Social Welfare Department was directed to prepare a computerized birth certification record and to inform people about all the centrally sponsored schemes and scholarship programmes. ICDS and ICPS schemes were also discussed.

Likewise, the departments of Health & Family Welfare, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, and Fisheries were also reviewed.

Hill Council, Leh constitutes team for demarcation of wildlife region in Leh district

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A meeting on the demarcation of wildlife region in Leh district was convened by Gyal P Wangyal, CEC, Hill Council, Leh on May 27 at Council Secretariat.

A team of officers/ officials of Wildlife, Forest, and Revenue departments under the supervision of SDM, Durbuk, Nyoma, and Nubra will be constituted. The team will carry out a month-long exercise in the demarcation of wildlife region in close consultation with concerned Councillors, PRI members, and Gobas.

Problems faced to carry out developmental activities in villages falling under wildlife sanctuaries and national parks namely Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, Hemis National Park, and Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary were discussed.

Sachin Kumar, DC, Leh directed SDMs and Wildlife Warden Leh



During the meeting on the demarcation of wildlife region in Leh district at Council Secretariat.

to redefine reasonable wildlife regions ensuring the inclusion of roads, sources of water, pastureland, government assets, provision of expansion of 'Abadi Deh', commercial establishments and other village rights.

He said that this month-long exercise will define the outline of wildlife regions for centuries in line with the developmental aspirations of people living in wildlife areas. Also, he emphasized SDMs to take a holistic and visionary approach during fresh demarcation and submit

the report by June 20.

Sachin Kumar said that all reports will be compiled and scrutinized before submitting to Lieutenant Governor, Radha Krishna Mathur for further action.

Deputy Chairman, Tsering Sandup; EC Wildlife, Konchok Stanzin; SDM Durbuk, Rigzin Spalgon; SDM Nyoma, Jigmet Raftan, Wildlife Warden, Leh, Pankaj Sharma and Councillors of Diskit, Martselang, Skyu-Markha, Korzok, and Nyoma were present in the meeting.

Divisional Commissioner Ladakh visits Zanskar Sub-Division



Saugat Biswas, Divisional Commissioner, Ladakh during his visit to Zanskar subdivision.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

ZANSKAR: Saugat Biswas, Divisional Commissioner/ Secretary, UT Ladakh visited the Zanskar subdivision and took stock of the ongoing developmental works on May 26.

He reviewed the functioning of all the departments of Zanskar Sub-division and enquired about the pace of various ongoing developmental works and the progress. Instruction was given to complete the works within the stipulated timeline focusing on quality and quantity parameters.

He also visited High School, Tungri, and Higher Secondary School, Padum. ZEO Zanskar was asked to ensure submission of the detailed plan for reopening of schools highlighting social distancing measures, hand washing, hygiene, and other required measures as per the set protocols.

People expressed gratitude for the early evacuation of stranded passengers from different parts of the country and posting of six doctors to CHC, Padum.

BMO Zanskar was asked to furnish a detailed proposal about the requirement of machinery

and equipment at CHC Padum so as to provide the patients with all modern facilities at the health institution.

Saugat Biswas also reviewed the status of implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) which aims to provide safe and adequate piped drinking water to every household by 2024. He instructed the concerned officers to work with zeal and enthusiasm for the implementation of the scheme so that the objectives of the mission are implemented in letter and spirit.

Various delegation of Zanskar Buddhist Association, Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam and Gonpa Association, Councillors Hill Council, Kargi, Block Development Council members, Karsha Gonpa, Sarpanches, Lambardars, Muslim Youths and Women Association, and Merchant Association met the Divisional Commissioner.

The delegation raised the grievances and demands of the people of the Zanskar valley. Saugat Biswas assured early redressal of all the grievances.

Saugat Biswas along with Baseerul-Haq Chaudhary, DC Kargil visited Karsha, Sani, Shella, and

several other villages. They interacted with the public representatives including BDC Chairpersons, Sarpanchs, and Panches as well as prominent citizens of the areas to know about their developmental needs and grievances.

People demanded augmentation of drinking water supply and mobile communication, posting of doctors at CHC Padum, and reopening of schools.

Responding to the issue of doctors, Saugat Biswas directed DC Kargil to ensure that the recently transferred doctors join their duties at CHC Padum within 2 days. He also instructed Executive Engineer, PWD, Zanskar to restore all water supply schemes in the area within a week's time and completion of the remaining work of Padum Motorable Bridge within a month.

Saugat Biswas assured the locals that the issues related to mobile connectivity would be addressed soon by taking up the matter with Jio company and other telecom operators. He also informed the locals that to facilitate students and reading enthusiasts, steps would be taken to open libraries in every village of the Sub Division.

He also informed that the petrol pump sanctioned for Padum will also be made functional soon.

Highlighting the need to establish a mechanism of effective and efficient coordination between the Administration and people, he stressed upon the officers to be responsive to the needs and issues projected by the people.

Saugat Biswas also visited Dibling village of Leh district and met with the villagers to take stock of the food supplies and other requirements.

Higher Education: A long cherished dream



By Thinles Norboo

Changthang region of the newly formed Union Territory of Ladakh is lesser known to the world. In recent years, although the cold desert of Ladakh has become one of the most preferred destinations for tourists specially the domestic ones, Changthang remains untouched by a flock of tourists. A natural habitat of the pashmina goat (world-famous for its soft wool), is largely visited by explorer, environmentalist, academician, and journalist to understand the lives of the Changpa tribe – a nomadic pastoral community that resides in this high-altitude region. Living in perfect co-existence with their ecosystem, this tribe has endured several changes along with the changing environment.

As construction of roads opened its doors to development and modernisation, this region underwent several transformations. Access to education is one of the several changes that Changpas have received in the last 10-12 years. Although the advent of education and its relevance on the traditional lifestyle of Changpas is much debatable, the focus here is on the educational journey of the girls belonging to this tribe and the hurdles they face while fulfilling their dream of attaining quality education.

Community of Ladakh is known for treating both men and women equally and providing them equal opportunities. People's demand for a school for girls of Changthang was fulfilled by the government on April 21 2008, by establishing a residential school - The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya. The hostel accommodates girls belonging to the tribal community residing in difficult to access areas of Changthang. In the absence of any other private or government school, this secondary school with a residential facility is the only option for the girls who wish to study. Today, girls in Changthang have access to education.

The main objective of this Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya is to facilitate retention of girls, ensure greater participation in education, develop and promote facilities to provide access to girls belonging to disadvantaged groups, improve quality of education and stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment. However, as this school can support girls only till Class 10, they are



Students at their hostel KGBV in Nyoma Changthang

forced to migrate to the city for higher education. And this is where, their hustle with the outside world starts.

Higher secondary schools and graduation colleges are located in Leh town. The girl students who come from the Changthang region find it difficult to adapt to the town area as it is way more crowded than their native villages and people follow a completely different lifestyle. They have to live in rented accommodation, cook for themselves, cope with the 'new' environment, and ensure that they study well. It becomes too much pressure for many girl students.

The education till Class 12th is still inexpensive in government schools but colleges are costly and not everyone can afford to send their children to these higher education institutions. The Eliezer Joldan Memorial (EJM) College in Leh is the most sought-after option for the

Ladakhi students. "Just because of expensive college fees, rent and hostel fees many students from Changthang give up their studies and choose to earn money by working in town. Unaffordable fees and related expenses are the major reasons why students drop out after school," shares Tsering Dolker (names have been changed), a student of EJM College.

Another final year student from EJM college, Stanzin Angmo, also shared her concerns regarding the substandard hostel facilities. "Not having proper hostel facilities in college affects the students who already faced many challenges to reach Leh from Changthang. In the absence of proper facilities, students are forced to live in rented accommodations which do not guarantee a peaceful studying atmosphere. Many students are badly affected by this situation and eventually drop out of college," shares a disappointed Stanzin.

Tsering Tsomo, a second-year student from the same college believes that students who have spent most of their time in hostels during school days find it difficult to manage the newly found freedom and responsibilities that come with it. They feel distracted which soon starts affecting their studies. Students need to focus on their dreams, aspiration and purpose of life so that they can have a better future.

Data shows that from 2010 to 2015, only 124 girl students from Changthang could manage to complete their higher secondary studies. 27 percent i.e. only 33 girls of these 124 manage to pursue a graduate degree in these 5 years. Certainly, the existing education infrastructure in Changthang is quite fragile. Only a few manage to struggle with the offered facilities and complete their schooling but as soon as they enter college, they are forced to quit, and reasons, as listed, are several. It is the responsibility of the administration to support the people of Changthang in overcoming these challenges. The tribal girl students from this inaccessible region need proper guidance, support, and facilities to attain formal education. There is a dire need to come up with policies to ensure that participation and retention rate of girls from these tribal communities increases in higher education institutions.

This article has been written under the Sanjoy Ghose Media Fellowship 2019.
(Charkha Features)

Ladakh Project Steering Committee, SECURE Himalaya meeting held in Leh

Annual work plan 2020-21 for Project Secure Himalaya in UT Ladakh discussed



During the Ladakh Project Steering Committee, SECURE Himalaya meeting.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: First meeting of the Ladakh Project Steering Committee, SECURE Himalaya was convened on May 29 by Rigzin Samphel, Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department, UT Ladakh also the Chairman, project SECURE Himalaya.

Discussion on finalizing annual work plan 2020-21 of SECURE Himalaya project in UT Ladakh, and other related matters under the project and various aspects were carried out.

The project of SECURE (Securing Livelihoods, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of High Range Himalayan Ecosystems) Himalaya is implemented by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in association with UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) funded by Global Environment Facility.

The six-year project aims to support the Government of India and State Governments to

effectively promote sustainable land use and natural resource management in high range Himalayan ecosystems. The objective is to secure sustainable livelihoods and ensure the conservation of Snow Leopards and other associated species and habitats.

In the Union Territory of Ladakh, the project will be implemented in the Changthang landscape, wherein UNDP, along with the Department of Wildlife Protection Ladakh, will be working in cooperation with other district line departments, on various livelihood and conservation initiatives.

Rigzin Samphel urged the proper implementation of the aims and objectives of the project. In this direction, the correlation between tourism and wildlife be augmented and remodel the relation by devising new models to fall back during situations such as the current Covid-19 pandemic.

He said that the focus should be made on addressing man-animal conflict, taking people

into confidence to give actual meaning to the essence of the project. Giving the fact of initial days of UT Ladakh, he stressed on the need for building institutions on discussed models that would serve as the gateway to Ladakh.

Sajid Sultan, Chief Wildlife Warden, Ladakh; Col Arvind Batra, HQ 14 Corps; Md Mumtaz Ali, Director, Tourism Ladakh; Dr. OP Chaurasia, Director, DIHAR, Tahir Hus-sain, Director Finance; Tsewang Gyaltsan, Dy. Director Planning; Dr. Tundup Namgyal, District Sheep Husbandry Officer; Phunchok Wangtak, Block Office, CWLW office Ladakh and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Programme Manager, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Dr. Ruchi Pant, State Coordinator Officer, Gayatri Mahar, and Consultant Administration and Finance, Gaurav Joshi attended the meeting through video conferencing.

SoulSpeak

P.P. Wangchuk

The Koel and its persistent message



A solitary Koel in the park near my home has been, for me, a great source of inspiration and 'food for thought' for a long time now. Its insistence and persistence on its 'singing a melodious song' has been a constant charmer for me and the nearby people. It has the power and the influence to make my days, day after day, with its melodious 'koeings'!

Every morning, I wake up to its 'koe-koe' call, and nothing enchants one more than this early morning magical call. And it has so many good effects on us: First, it gives a wake-up call, and a reminder that a beautiful day awaits us, and that we are to make the best use of it. It also makes us wonder and ponder over the beauty of nature, and that we are here to co-exist with it and not to exploit it. And, it also reminds us that we need to keep ourselves positive in all circumstances by reminding us that life and its journey is nothing but an 'up-and-down track' of many vicissitudes. The sooner we realise that, the better for a balanced, happy and purposeful life.

And, just like the Koel, we need to cultivate the act of selflessness. Look at the Koel's 'koeing' wonder for hours without trying to make any kind of 'exhibition' of its natural gift of sweet voice. It remains far away from us, hidden in the thick foliage of a tree, and merrily keeps on rendering its enchanting musical 'service'.

The lesson we get, therefore, is that we must use our talent to make others feel good and, at the same time, expect nothing in return. The act of kindness and love is in itself a great reward. One can feel it and realise it only when one lives for others as well. The joy and the satisfaction one gets therefrom can't be measured by any limiting valuation means.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

In Conversation with

Konchok Stanzin, Executive Councillor, Education, LAHDC, Leh

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal

Q. Tell us about the present education scenario of Leh district.

In Leh district, we have 358 government schools, including 185 primary schools, 123 middle schools, 33 high schools, 17 higher secondary schools, and 12 residential schools. A total of 7,782 students, including 3890 boys and 3892 girls are enrolled in different schools. Apart from this, we have 46 private schools.

Unfortunately, nearly 43 government schools, including 41 primary and 2 middle schools of Leh district were closed because of no student enrollment. Out of which 2 schools in Nubra and 3 in Durbuk were reopened.

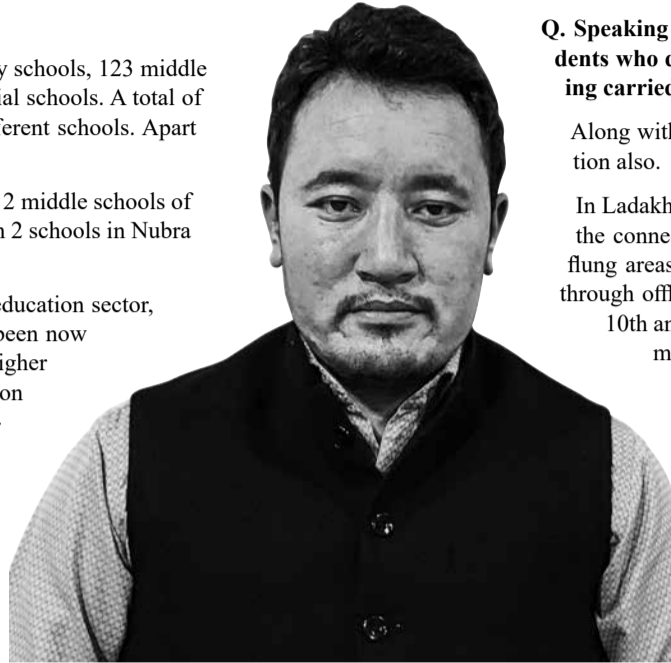
If we talk about the funds allotment under the annual district plan for education sector, a sum of around ₹ 3 crore is allocated earlier which is meager. It has been now enhanced to ₹15 crore under district plan, focusing mainly on high and higher secondary school development. Apart from that, we have funds allocation under Samagra which will be mainly utilized in the development of primary and middle schools. Also, we have a plan to develop all residential schools and provide them with all basic necessities.

Many of our schools don't have enough important infrastructures such as multipurpose hall, laboratory, and library. So, there is a dire need to bring changes in that sector. It should be done on need basis. Also, we are focusing to build solarized buildings in the future, keeping in view the geographical and climatic condition of the region.

The enrollment of students in private schools is comparatively more than government schools. It is not just because of the education quality but the lack of proper infrastructure also adds to the problem. We have well-qualified teachers in government schools now who are putting in their best effort, but the only thing which is needed is proper infrastructure. Secondly, awareness among parents and their co-operation is a must to run government schools successfully.

Q. Amidst COVID-19 lockdown, online lessons have emerged as a solution to push ahead academic calendar. How helpful and successfully implemented it is?

With the spread of coronavirus and country under lockdown, relying on technology have become crucial to continue the process of learning. Schools of Ladakh already remained closed for nearly 3 months in winters and because of the pandemic, it got extended causing major loss of academics. It becomes immensely important to continue the learning



MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“ We all need to work together to strengthen government schools and improve the education scenario. ”

process and the online system is one way to keep the student engaged during this shutdown time.

Schools are trying their best to continue the classes by using different technologies which is a positive aspect in this time of crisis.

But the unplanned and rapid move to online learning with no training, lack of internet connectivity, and little preparation also is a challenge for many.

Q. Speaking about challenges, the digital shift is a matter of concern to the students who don't have access to the technology. What alternative provision is being carried out?

Along with the advantages of the online education system, there is a certain limitation also.

In Ladakh, we don't have proper internet facilities and many areas don't even have the connection, which becomes a major challenge to reach out to students in far-flung areas. We have explored several alternative provisions to reach out students through offline mediums such as radio classes. The classes for the students of class 10th and 12th are commenced through the radio every Monday to Saturday from morning 10 to 11 am. The doubts of the students are even cleared through the phone. The same classes are also telecasted through free dish to benefit students who are in far-flung areas where the radio signals are not properly.

Also, every teacher is asked to provide assignments to the students during these lockdown and in far off villages, teachers in a particular village will reach out to the students. Concerned officers, Zonal Education Officers, principals, and teachers of the Education department are directed to present a report of their activities being carried out during this lockdown period.

We had a word with iDream education, a social ed-tech organisation for offline educational content for class 9 to 12 in pen drives or tablets. This is one alternative that can be used if the lockdown continues further. The charge is quite high to procure it. For financial assistance, a letter has been submitted to the UT administration and power grid to bear the expenses under CSR. The response is still awaited.

Q. Since all the schools are closed due to COVID-19 lockdown, there are many concerns regarding the payment of school fees. Any plans to formulate mechanisms to reduce the financial strain?

Yes, there has been much confusion regarding payment of fees among the parents since the schools are shut down. Waiving off the fees completely will be difficult as the schools need to pay the salaries of teachers and non-teaching staff. It is not a good idea to expect private schools not to take fees from students and hold back

...Continues on Page 6

Fortnight Highlights



Govt. employees of District Administration, Leh taking pledge to fight against all forms of violence on Anti Terrorism day.



Domestic flights resumes after two months: Passengers being screened at Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Airport, Leh, Ladakh.



District Magistrate, Leh conducting surprise inspection of the Leh market and adjoining localities to check abidance of measures put in place by the District Administration to contain spread of COVID19.



Delegation of Ladakh Buddhist Association, Anjuman-e-Imamia, and Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam meets Lieutenant Governor, R.K. Mathur at Raj Niwas.



During the launch of first COVID-19 testing laboratory at Chuchot Yokma.

CEC, Kargil reviews developmental projects status for Kargil town



Feroz Ahmad Khan, CEC, Hill Council, Kargil reviewing the implementation of various urban development projects sanctioned under Special Development Package (SDP) for Kargil town.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: A review meeting on the implementation of various urban development projects sanctioned under Special Development Package (SDP) for Kargil town was held on May 19.

The meeting was chaired by Feroz Ahmad Khan, CEC, Hill Council, Kargil.

Discussion on the issues related to the identification of land, sites, formulation of DPRs, and other related aspects for the timely start of work on the sanctioned projects were carried out.

It was informed that various projects including, construction of multitier parking space for

₹15 crore, establishment of solid waste management and sewerage treatment plants at a total cost of ₹11 crore, open space park at a cost of ₹ 15 crore, truck terminal at a cost of ₹ 5 crore, winter-friendly public convenience at a cost of ₹2 crore besides construction of bus stand, slaughterhouse, setting up of street lights and other projects have been sanctioned by the Government of India under SDP for Kargil town.

It was decided that the multitier car parking will be constructed at New Bus Stand Kargil and the existing truck terminal near Petrol Pump Kurbathang would be developed into a full-fledged ter-

minal with all requisite facilities.

As regards to the establishment of solid waste management and sewerage treatment plants, Feroz Ahmed Khan directed the SE PWD, Executive Engineer R&B II, and Executive Officer MC Kargil to identify land for the two projects at Kurbathang near Choskore road and submit the report to the Deputy Commissioner, Kargil at the earliest.

He also asked the concerned officers to identify suitable land, site for construction of open space parks, winter-friendly public convenience and other projects. Also, he highlighted the need for necessary modifications in the DPR for the establishment of a solid waste management plant.

Baseer ul Haq Choudhary, DC, Kargil; Moses Kunzang, Director, Urban Local Bodies, Ladakh; Ved Prakash, Superintendent Engineer, PWD, Kargil; Zaheer Hussain, President, MC Kargil; Councillors of Kargil Town, Poyen and Baroo, Executive Engineers of R&B II and PDD, Executive Officer MC Kargil, AD Tourism Kargil besides other concerned officers were present.

Divisional Commissioner, Ladakh visits Rong area

Enquires pace of development works, assures redressal of grievances and demands



Divisional Commissioner, Saugat Biswas interacting with the villagers during his visit to Rong block of Nyoma Sub division.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

CHANGTHANG: Divisional Commissioner/Secretary UT Ladakh, Saugat Biswas took stock of the ongoing developmental works in parts of Nyoma Sub-Division covering Rong block on May 29.

He visited Liktsky, Hemya, Kyungyam, Teri Phoo, Teri, Nee, sRiyul, and Chumathang villages and interacted with the people.

Chairman BDC Rong, Jigmet Yountan; Sub Divisional Magistrate, Nyoma, Jigmet Raftan; Assistant Commissioner Development, Leh, Sonam Chosjor; District Panchayat Officer, Leh, Zakir Hussain, and Block Development Officer, Nyoma, Mohd Hassan were also present.

The villagers demanded augmentation of drinking water supply, mobile communication, and up-gradation of Middle and High schools.

Responding to the demands in connection with school education, Saugat Biswas informed that the UT Administration is

opening residential schools with state of the art facility in every zone. Thus, ensuring easy access to a school with hostel facility. At Hemya village, Saugat Biswas assured sanctioning of a library for the Panchayat Halqa, Hemya.

Villagers of Liktsky and Kyungyam demanded decentralization of the Block headquarter from Chumathang. Divisional Commissioner directed SDM to submit a report in this regard

He also reviewed the status of the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide safe and adequate piped drinking water to every household. Concerned officers were instructed to complete the pending work for the implementation of the scheme in the Nyoma Sub Division.

Also, he assured to provide satellite phones in far-flung villages of Teri, Nee, and sRiyul to address their phone connectivity issue. Villagers of Nee requested setting up a Medical Aid Centre.

To facilitate connectivity for medical and other emergencies, BDO was asked to develop a spot for civil helipad in every village for medical emergencies and submit a proposal under MGNREGA. Also, he asked the SDM for frequent reviews of the facilities such as food, water, road, electricity and others.

To develop the Hot Water Spring in Chumathang as a tourist destination, Saugat Biswas directed BDO to develop a plan and submit it in a week. The villagers requested up-gradation of Chumathang High School to Higher Secondary School, to which Saugat Biswas assured to get the demand examined with the department.

Responding to the demand for opening-up of a bank, he assured to take the matter with State Bank of India. Regarding training under the Skill Development programme, the villagers were instructed to submit a proposal of their field of interest and assured of redress.

Konchok Stanzin

...Continued from page 5

the salaries of teachers, who work hard and are also conducting online classes now.

In this time of crisis, both parents and schools are going through financial hardships and to manage the situation it's important now for both of them to work out in a balanced way. Thus, payment of tuition fees is one solution and in turn, no schools shall force or compel the parents to pay for the facilities which are not being used. Also, the genuine financial situation of parents should be considered.

Q. A series of meeting was held regarding inclusive education policy for Leh district. Brief us

about the policy?

LAHDC, Leh is working on drafting an education policy for ensuring inclusiveness and participation for all. Our stress is to include moral ethics, concept, experimental and research-based education system besides academic results. We had meetings before also with the educationist and senior intellectuals of Leh district to design the policy. To have an inclusive education policy, many research and discussions still needs to be carried out and it's going to take some time.

All this time we have been moving forward without any concrete policy and now the time has come to move with proper regulation and plan.

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Religious heads of Leh district meets L-G Mathur

Highlights grievances of the people living in containment zone, Chuchot

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Delegation of Ladakh Buddhist Association, Anjuman-e-Imamia, and Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam met Lieutenant Governor, R.K. Mathur on May 22 at Raj Niwas.

R K Mathur thanked them all the religious heads for their cooperation and good work in this pandemic situation.

All religious heads appreciated UT Administration

for their efforts in the smooth conduct of the evacuation process of stranded pilgrims, patients, and students from India and from Iran to Ladakh. Also, they expressed gratitude to all the frontline workers and the masses for their cooperation.

The delegation highlighted problems and grievances of the people of Chuchot village who are in containment zones. They requested the LG to address the issues on a priority basis.

EC Agriculture discusses various agriculture projects

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A review meeting on the ongoing implementation and future execution plans of Agriculture projects sanctioned under Special Development Package 2020-21 in Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) scheme and Capex Budget 2020-21 of Hill Council, Leh was held on May 29 at Council Secretariat.

The meeting was convened by Executive Councillor for Agriculture, Phunchok Stanzin. Members of LAHDC, Leh's Consultative Committee on Agriculture including Councillor Phyang, Punchok Dorje, and Councillor Sumoor, Rigzin Lundup with officers of Agriculture Department Leh headed by Chief Agriculture Officer, Leh, Tashi Tsetan were present.

Importance of agriculture and allied projects sanctioned under Mission Organic Development Initia-

tive including 300 big Commercial poly-carbonate sheet Green Houses worth ₹ 34 crore on 90% subsidy, Compost and Vermicomposting pits worth ₹ 5 crore, 1200 Small Green Houses units worth ₹ 6 crore on 50% subsidy, revival of traditional Rarzi and Barzi system in livestock rearing worth ₹ 2 crore project and procurement of seeds was highlighted.

EC Agriculture directed officers and filed staff of Agriculture dept, Leh to fix criteria, feasibility, and other mandatory requirements for the implementation of the mega projects ensuring availability of water etc. The meeting also fixed criteria for salary to the Rarzi and Barzi keeping in mind the size of livestock and months required for rearing.

Agriculture Department, Leh was asked to procure machinery under subsidy component at the earliest.



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