

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



In Conversation with
State Awardee Shanaz Parveen,
Taekwondo Player

People's voice:
District status:
Zanskar pa balances disappointment and hope

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REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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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

Rising road accidents claim lives in Leh: 40 fatalities, 219 injuries in 2023

Calls for immediate intervention and enhanced road safety measures



Stanzin Dasal

LEH: In 2023, Leh witnessed a concerning surge in road accidents, registering 187 cases—an increase of 14 from the previous year's 173 cases in 2022, as per data from the district Police Leh. The impact was severe, with 40 lives lost and 219 individuals injured, compared to 53 fatalities and 216 injuries in 2022.

Dr. Tashi Motup, Senior Consultant Surgeon at SNM Hospital Leh, shared, "Having witnessed the devastating consequences of these accidents firsthand, one of the most disheartening aspects of this crisis is that a significant portion of the victims falls within the age group of 17 to 45, often referred to as the productive phase of life. These individuals, in the prime of their youth, are the lifeblood of our community. It is imperative that we address this issue with urgency, dedication, and comprehensive solutions."

The 35th National Road Safety month, observed from January 15 to February 14, became a platform for concerted efforts to involve all stakeholders in minimizing road accidents. Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Mujeeb-ur Rehman Bhat, during a program at ARTO Leh on January 20, presented the previous year's statistics, revealing 289 accidents in Ladakh with 58 deaths and 336 injuries in 2023. Expressing concern, he emphasized that the surge in accidents leads to physical disabilities and, all too frequently, the loss of precious lives.

He also highlighted the crucial objective of saving lives and reducing road accidents in Ladakh, urging the public to con-

scientiously adhere to traffic rules.

The exact cause behind the surge in accident cases remains uncertain, but it is a stark realization that modernity has ushered in a culture of reckless behavior, encompassing drinking and drug use. This cultural shift has significantly contributed to many accidents and, tragically, fatalities on the roads. Additionally, engineering faults in road designs have emerged as another significant factor leading to several road accidents in Leh. The winter season exacerbates the situation, with accidents stemming from vehicles slipping on snowy roads remaining a persistent concern.

In this scenario, Hit-and-run

cases in Leh, often involving younger individuals but occasionally middle-aged individuals as well, have become more prevalent. However, the commitment to resolving these cases has been commendable, with over 50% of them successfully resolved. Ladakh police are proactively addressing this issue through the implementation of a CCTV network, a valuable tool, especially in areas like Leh where surveillance is less established.

The pressing need for more advanced technology to enforce and regulate traffic is evident. The installation of CCTV cameras with night vision capabilities and Automatic Number Plate Readers at various locations to detect reckless driving plays a piv-

otal role in enhancing road safety measures. The adoption of such technological solutions is crucial for curbing the rising trend of accidents and ensuring the safety of both drivers and pedestrians on Leh's roads.

The imperative for immediate medical response is underscored, necessitating the establishment of trauma and rescue centers along Ladakh's highways, particularly in areas frequented by tourists such as Nubra and Changthang. Basic facilities are deemed essential to ensure swift rescue operations and protection.

Dr. Tashi Motup emphasized the critical nature of timely medical assistance in the remote region, where access to medical facilities can be challenging. He emphasized that every minute counts, especially for critically injured

individuals, as prompt medical help can significantly impact the outcomes. Dr. Motup stressed the collective responsibility of the community in rendering assistance and ensuring injured individuals reach the hospital without delay.

The SNM Hospital in Leh faces significant challenges due to the absence of a fully equipped critical care ambulance capable of providing incubation facilities (artificial breathing support) for patients in critical conditions. The lack of a well-equipped helicopter or air ambulance further compounds these challenges. While the Air Force and Army occasionally assist with air ambulance facilities, not all critical patients can be transferred via these means. Winter conditions exacerbate difficulties in road transportation, emphasizing the urgent need for an air ambulance or a fully equipped, ventilated helicopter. Despite offering free-of-cost ambulance services for road transportation, including critical care and eco ambulances, the multifunctional nature of these vehicles poses limitations.

Dr. Rinchen Chosdol, Medical Superintendent at SNM Hospital Leh, stressed the critical importance of timely patient transport, especially considering the 'golden hour,' which is crucial for survival in critical conditions. Efforts have been made to request additional ambulances and hearse vehicles from higher authorities to ensure adequate transportation

facilities for referral patients and the respectful handling of deceased individuals.

Promoting road safety in Ladakh demands a comprehensive strategy. While individual responsibility and effective law enforcement are crucial, addressing systemic issues is equally imperative to prevent accidents. Improved road infrastructure, encompassing better road design, strategically placed signage, and adequate lighting, plays a pivotal role in reducing accidents. It is essential not to overlook remote areas, ensuring that these locations are included in the efforts to enhance road safety.

Facilities ensuring pedestrian safety, such as zebra crossings, footpaths, foot-over bridges, and road signs, are of utmost importance. However, challenges arise in some places where footpaths are encroached by shopkeepers and used for parking vehicles. At locations like Housing Colony, footpaths are constructed at elevated levels without any ramps, causing inconvenience for pedestrians due to a lack of easy accessibility.

The collaborative efforts of the UT administration, various associations, and the youth during the month-long road safety initiative are directed towards raising awareness and minimizing road accidents and fatalities in Leh Ladakh. The overarching goal of this campaign is to achieve zero accidents and zero casualties by the year 2030.

Ladakh's struggle for safeguard: Hunger strike looms amidst talks and rising tensions

Historic rally 'Leh Chalo' amplifies Ladakh's call for justice



Stanzin Dasal & Nenzes Chodon

LEH: In a significant development, Thupstan Chhewang and Sonam Wangchuk have announced an indefinite hunger strike, intensifying the call for Ladakh's protection under the 6th schedule. This move hangs in the balance, awaiting the outcome of talks with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on February 19, centered around a critical 4-point agenda.

Thupstan Chhewang, the leader of the apex body, issued a stern statement, "If our demands are not conceded in the February 19 meeting, we will resort to a 1989-like agitation. Each village will conduct a day-long dharna in Leh."

This announcement underscores the escalating tension and the determination of Ladakh's leaders to secure safeguards for their region. The hunger strike is positioned as a last-resort measure should the dialogue with MHA fail to address the pressing concerns raised by Ladakh's apex body.

Committee, led by Chering Dorje Lakrook, has been established

to navigate the decisions of the Ladakh movement, starting with the impending hunger strike. Comprising representatives from social and religious organizations, the committee excludes active politicians, emphasizing a non-political approach.

The committee actively encourages the participation of volunteers willing to join the hunger strike, heralding a collective effort to champion Ladakh's cause. Registration for individuals willing to partake in the hunger strike, specifying the number of days they are committed to, has commenced.

Chering Dorje Lakrook expressed optimism about the significant turnout, with expectations of a large number of people participating in the hunger strike. The committee places faith in the peaceful nature of their protest, drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's principles of

non-violence during the freedom struggle.

Lakrook hopes that the administration will refrain from arresting participants, underscoring the peaceful intent behind the protest. The committee, while gearing up for the hunger strike, holds high hopes for a positive response from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), signaling a desire for a constructive dialogue and resolution to Ladakh's demands.

On February 3, Apexbody orchestrated a historic rally named "Leh Chalo" in Leh, drawing thousands of participants from various corners of Ladakh. The primary objective was to emphasize the government's responsibility to address their demands by incorporating Ladakh under the 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution. The rally, starting from Singey Namgyal chowk and concluding at Polo ground Leh, left a pro-

Two-day Dosmochey festival observed



Stanzin Padma

LEH: The Leh Phudo Cultural and Welfare Society organised the annual Dosmochey festival with great religious fervor and devotion on February 7.

The sacred mask dance, known as 'Chaams,' adorned the courtyard of the Leh Palace. Monks from various monasteries took turns participating in the mask dance, with this year's performance led by the monks of Chemdey Monastery. The monks of Takthok Monastery crafted the 'Dhos' thread crosses, while the monks of Lingshed Monastery created the 'Storzok' ritual effigy.

Ven Tsepak Namgyal from Takthok Monastery explained that

Dosmochey has been celebrated since the time of the king's rule and is an annual observance in Leh and Likir. He described 'Dhos' as tall wooden structures adorned with vibrant threads, believed to dispel evil spirits, war, and diseases, fostering peace and harmony in society.

Ven Tashi Namgyal from Chemday Monastery highlighted the significance of the mask dance, featuring performances like the black hat, Lobon, Champon-Serkhem, Lamo, Gonbo Chak zi chams, Gombo Chardong, Chagemen chams, and more. On the final day of the festival, the ritual effigy was

ceremonially burnt at Katmochey, symbolizing the expulsion of evil spirits and ushering in peace and prosperity among the people.

The Dosmochey rituals aim to ward off evil spirits, war, and diseases in the region, fostering peace and harmony among the people.

In addition to the rituals and mask dance, the festival at the polo ground featured shopping centers, tambola, lotteries, street food, and Ladakhi cuisine, attracting large crowds and enhancing the event's allure. Simultaneously, the festival was also observed in Likir.

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Fortnightly News

UPSC sanctions centre for Civil Services (Preliminary) Exam in Kargil

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) approved the establishment of an examination centre for the UPSC Civil Services (Preliminary) exam in Kargil. This was communicated through a letter dated February 9, 2024, and will facilitate candidates from the region to appear for the Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2024, closer to their place of residence.

UPSC Civil Services (Preliminary) examination including Indian Forest Service (Preliminary), National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, and Combined Defence Services Examination shall now be conducted at two centres in Ladakh, one each at

Leh and Kargil. UPSC shall also be conducting the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) exam in Leh and Kargil providing candidates in Ladakh with convenient access to appear for this examination.

As per UPSC, over 480 candidates are expected to apply for the Civil Services (P) exam in May this year in Kargil.

The Department of Higher Education, UT of Ladakh had taken up with UPSC and National Testing Agency for having centres for major national-level exams in

Ladakh to facilitate students. Ladakh Administration had received representation from individuals, student groups, and organizations in this regard.

While Civil Services (P) exams have been held in the Leh centre since 2021 by the UPSC, the CUET exams by the National Testing Agency, NTA were held in Leh and Kargil for the first time in 2023. Now examinations for JEE, NIFT, UGC NET besides CUET 2024 are being conducted by NTA in Leh and Kargil centres.

DC, Leh, discusses proposals submitted under vibrant villages, saturation of CSS



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve discussed the proposals submitted under Vibrant Villages and Saturation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the villages on February 9 at DC office, Leh.

During the meeting, Chief Planning Officer Tsewang Gyalton highlighted the significance of the 436 projects within the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the pending

projects awaiting approval for Vibrant Village initiatives.

Attention was drawn to the 76 projects earmarked under Vibrant Village, including the construction of an Ice Hockey rink at Rongo Anley, a solarized half-kitchen for Self Help Groups at Rongo Anley, a mini-indoor stadium for High School Chumathang, a First Aid center at Chushul, and an AWC Centre at Dungi,

among others.

CPO, Leh, directed the departments to achieve 100% saturation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and to ensure the inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries within Vibrant Villages.

The meeting was attended by Councillors representing Tangtse, Chuchul, Nyoma, Korzok, Kungyam constituencies, and Nominated Councillor for Changthang. Additionally, Programme Officer from ICDS, the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Education Officer, Assistant Commissioner for Development, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, District Youth Services & Sports Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Assistant Director of CA&CS, and Lead Bank Manager from SBI Leh.

The journey of Skarma Rinchen: From semi-nomadic village to National Ice Hockey star

A beacon of resilience and inspiration for girls in remote villages



Skarma Rinchen of Union Territory of Ladakh. (Photo: DIPR - Ladakh)

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Skarma Rinchen, a 20-year-old from the semi-nomadic village of Gya Meru in Ladakh, has become a symbol of the transformative power of sports, particularly ice hockey. Her inspirational journey from struggling with ice-skating boots in 2017 to representing the Indian national ice hockey team is a testament to determination and hard work, set against the challenging terrain and harsh winters of Ladakh.

In 2017, Skarma encountered ice hockey during a training workshop in her village, initially finding it challenging to even stand on the blades. Despite limited practice opportunities, her interest grew, leading her to a 15-day workshop in Leh organised by the Women's Association. There, she connected with members of the Indian women's national ice hockey team, regularly attending their practice sessions, and eventually earning a chance to train with them. By 2023, Skarma, now a left forward, became a national team player.

Contributing to Ladakh's success, Skarma was part of the Marylu Spamo Leh squad that secured a gold medal in the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League, a championship which started by the UT administration in January this year to tap the grassroots in Ladakh. She also played in the Ladakh women's team, who won silver in the national ice hockey championships 2024 in Kaza, Himachal Pradesh. Her international debut at the

2023 IIHF Women's Asia and Oceania Championship in Thailand marked a significant moment in her career.

Skarma's international debut was not without challenges, as India faced a defeat against Iran. However, for the young Ladakhi village girl, it became a moment worth cherishing. She shared, "I was nervous before my first international game. An artificial rink was something I had never known existed, as I had only seen a natural rink. When I stepped onto the court, the tall girls and their gear seemed intimidating. It was overwhelming, but we managed to reach the semi-finals."

Despite the initial setback against Iran, the Indian women's team demonstrated resilience by securing victories against Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Malaysia. Unfortunately, they faced another defeat, this time against Thailand in the semifinals. Thailand eventually clinched the gold by defeating Iran in the final.

Skarma aspires to convey a powerful message about resilience and determination, particularly for girls confronting challenges, emphasizing that "ice hockey is a physically challenging game, and girls tend to give up quickly when they are hurt; believing in oneself and working hard is the key to mastering a game like this." Her journey, from struggling on skates in 2017 to earning a spot on the national ice hockey team in 2023, underscores

the rewards of unwavering persistence.

Recognizing the significance of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG), especially as it welcomes women's teams for the first time in its fourth edition, Skarma expresses her excitement to compete on her home ground. She believes that this national-level event will not only break barriers but also create more opportunities for female athletes across the country.

For Skarma, ice hockey transcends being just a game; she acknowledges its transformative impact. Initially serving as an escape during slow winters, it evolved into an opportunity for physical activity and eventually provided a platform to explore the world. Her participation, both nationally and internationally, represents a dream realized through ice hockey.

Looking beyond personal achievements, Skarma envisions that professional ice hockey will open up additional job opportunities, bringing potential socio-economic benefits for girls from remote villages in Ladakh. In essence, Skarma Rinchen's story encapsulates the transformative power of sports and the resilience required to overcome challenges, serving as an inspiration for aspiring athletes, especially girls in the remote villages of Ladakh and beyond.

Beyond her personal achievements, Skarma hopes that professional ice hockey will open up more job opportunities, highlighting potential socio-economic benefits for girls hailing from remote villages in Ladakh.

In essence, Skarma Rinchen's story encapsulates the transformative power of sports and the resilience needed to overcome challenges, serving as an inspiration for aspiring athletes, especially girls in remote villages of Ladakh and beyond.

4th Khelo India Winter Games 2024 concludes with thrilling Ice-hockey showdown

ITBP claims women's title as Army clinches men's victory in Khelo India Winter Games finale



The Army team that won the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 men's ice-hockey competition at the NDS Sports Complex in Leh on Tuesday. (Photo: DIPR-Ladakh)

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 4th edition of Khelo India Winter Games 2024 concluded on a high note on February 6, with over 3,000 enthusiastic fans enduring icy conditions to witness the thrilling ice-hockey finals. In a spectacular turn of events, the Army thwarted ITBP's bid for a double victory.

The UT of Ladakh hosted the Khelo India Winter Games for the first time. Leh hosted two sports - ice hockey and speed skating. Part 2 of KIWG has been scheduled in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir from February 21-25. Gulmarg will stage four sports.

In the five-day-long sporting event, Maharashtra finished on top of the medal standings

winning 20 skating medals that included six golds. Karnataka also finished with six golds but their total count of eight as against Maharashtra's 20, relegated them to the Number 2 position in the standings. Hosts Ladakh, who won a pair of historic Khelo India golds in speed skating, finished third with a combined haul of 13 medals.

The skating competition ended late on February 5. All eyes were on professional skater Shrutu Kotwal of Maharashtra. The 32-year-old speed skater, who trains and competes in the US, participated in the Khelo India Winter Games for the first time and did not disappoint. It was a sweet homecoming after 15 years.

At the frozen Gupuks Pond, a slightly tentative Shrutu comfortably won both the long-track events (1000 and 500 m) in the above-17 years' category with a timing of 1:00.56 seconds and 1:49.25 seconds, respectively. The difference in timings between the winner and the others in the 1000 m race was very conspicuous. Shrutu holds the national record in the 500m with timing of 41.97 seconds.

This edition of the KIWG 2024 has been historic for Ladakh. After the hosts won the women's short track 1600m relay gold, the long track skaters - Padma Angmo, Insha Fatima, and Tasnia Shamim (Ladakh) did a commendable 1-2-3 in the under-17 1000 metres race at Gupuks. Maharashtra added three long-track skating golds to catch with Karnataka's six and overtake them on the cumulative count.

The Ice Hockey men's final concluded with Army emerging victorious, securing a 3-1 win after a dramatic

shootout. On the women's front, ITBP claimed the title, defeating the hosts Ladakh with an impressive 4-0 score. In a well-contested final, the first period ended 0-0. Army opened the scoring in the ninth minute of the second period through Tsewang Dorjay. Mohammed Ismail equalised for ITBP soon after. At the end of the third period, the score stood 1-1. Two periods of extra time did not produce a result. In the shootout, Army scored twice to settle the issue. Stanzin Namgyal Army Player said: "Today's match was very important for us to win, and some player came for it from Glacier and the UN, and we won. I'm really happy. In every game, there's a win and a loss, and the audience's support was great. It was a good match with ITBP"

Tsering Angdu, ITBP Captain said, "Every victory has its own rules in the game, and first of all, I want to thank all our supporters today. We have no regrets about today's game because we gave it our all and gave

a tough fight alongside the Army. Even though we lost in the penalty shootout, we're not sad because it depends on luck and skills. The Army vs ITBP has always been a rivalry, and there has always been a winner between us"

For the ITBP girls, winning the gold in Ladakh's home ground was a sweet experience. The two teams had met in the title round of the nationals in Kaza, Himachal Pradesh in January this year. ITBP won the title. Himachal Pradesh and Telangana were the other two teams at KIWG 2024.

ITBP captain Tashi Dolker said: "It feels like a historic moment to be the first women's champions at the Khelo India Winter Games 2024. This is a very important win for us as in the Kaza nationals we won via a shootout. This win is thus far more satisfying."

This is the first time that women's ice hockey was included in the Khelo India Winter Games programme.

Over 30 representatives showcase Ladakh's tourism potential at OTM

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

MUMBAI: As a part of its tourism promotional efforts, Tourism Department of Ladakh actively engaged in the 3-day Outbound Travel Mart [OTM] at the Jio Convention Center, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai from February 8-10.

More than 30 representatives from travel trade associations, hoteliers, and tourism officials from the twin districts of Leh and Kargil took part in the event, to highlight Ladakh as an unique and adventurous tourist destination.

Deputy Minister of Marketing, Ministry of Tourism & Creative Economy, Indonesia, Ni Made Ayu Marthini and many other dignitaries visited the Ladakh Pavilion.

Ladakh Tourism Department has facilitated the participation of co-exhibitors from the UT to showcase Ladakh's unique position as a different tourist destination, which catches the imagination of varied travellers, explorers, adventure lovers, nature lovers and above all Ladakh's rich cultural and heritage assets. The OTM pro-



The Ladakh Pavilion during the Outbound Travel Mart [OTM] at the Jio Convention Center, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

vides a vibrant and global platform to conduct B2B and B2C meetings and to establish business networks with the travel & trade fraternity and visitors from India and abroad.

Commissioner/Secretary, Tourism Department, UT of Ladakh Kachho Mehboob Ali Khan and Director, Tourism Department, Kunzes Angmo; other members of the official delegation and co-exhibitors interacted with the representative of the tourism boards from different States & UTs, media and leading stakeholders from across the globe.

The Ladakh Pavilion

received overwhelming response from the visitors who enquired about different tourism products and showed keen interest to visit Ladakh in the near future.

Meanwhile, Tourism Department also disseminated information about various destinations within Ladakh, Ladakh's rich culture, landscape, cuisine and other aspects. Promotional films on various themes were also screened at the Ladakh pavilion. Ladakh being a new and upcoming major tourist destination has attracted the imagination and interest of travellers from within the country as well from abroad.

Delegation comprising ReT teachers & 10+2 lecturers meets L-G

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A delegation of Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers led by Chorol called on Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat on February 12.

Principal Secretary, Sanjiv Khirwar and Director, School Education, Tsering Paldan were in the meeting.

Chorol informed the LG that ReT Grade 2/Grade 3 and 3rd teachers have been working at the same schools in remote areas of Nyoma, Durbuk, Khatse and Nubra block for the last two decades. She informed the LG that they had been regularised as permanent teachers and requested the LG for their transfer to other schools on the same pattern as general line teachers for better exposure. She also requested for their transition to general line teachers.

Sanjiv Khirwar apprised the LG of the formation of a committee to frame the transfer policy of ReT teachers and informed that the policy will be formed soon.

Highlighting the need for the adjustment of ReT teachers for their convenience, LG stated that the

transfer policy for ReT teachers is required at the earliest.

Phuntsog Angmo, Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teacher informed the LG that she was working at Govt Primary School, Nimgo in the Durbuk sub-division but was later deployed to Govt Middle School, Saspol. She informed that she was transferred again to Nimgo last year. She apprised the LG of her medical condition as she is suffering from asthma and is currently on half-pay leave due to her inability to work in a high-altitude area. She requested the LG to transfer to a school at a lower altitude.

Sanjiv Khirwar informed the LG that her medical case was rejected by the Medical Board constituted to look into medical cases of government teachers. He also informed about the transfer policy being framed for ReT teachers.

LG told Phuntsog Angmo about the transfer policy for ReT teachers which will be completed shortly.

Also, delegation comprising 10+2 lecturers of 2017 batch led by Mohd Sadiq called on LG at the LG Secretariat. Mohd Sadiq informed the LG that they were appointed under SRO 202 in 2017 as 10+2



A delegation of Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers with Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd).

lecturers. He informed that they did not receive annual/periodical increments and allowances such as DA/HRA during the probation period under SRO 202 while 10+2 lecturers who were recruited in 2020 post-formation of Ladakh as union territory received full salary, including allowances. He requested the grant/release of increment during the probation period retrospectively and grant of arrears of allowances such as DA/HRA, etc, retrospectively from appointment.

Sanjiv Khirwar informed the LG that the cases of 10+2 lecturers who were appointed under SRO-202 are under examination at the General Administration Department (GAD), where the legal and financial implications are being studied. LG asked Khirwar to check if SRO-202 is prevalent in J&K or any other state/UT. He also asked to check the legal implications if SRO-202 is revoked.

Fire and fury corps AD Brigade organises Veer naris outreach programme in Leh



Stanzin Padma

LEH: The fire and fury corps AD Brigade organised Veer naris outreach programme on February 5. The event brought together 25 Veer Naris, whose husbands made the supreme sacrifice during the Kargil war.

The primary objective of the programme was to address the pressing issues faced by Veer Naris and enhance their well-being through informative sessions on the latest policies and initiatives implemented for their welfare. The Brigade Commander actively engaged in detailed interactions with ex-servicemen and Veer Naris, fostering a sense of community and understanding of their unique challenges and requirements.

Col Lobsang Neema, Director, Zila Sainik Board UT Ladakh, provided insights into the procedures established by the Rajya Sainik Board and Zila Sainik Board, offering the option for video calls to address queries and facilitate necessary actions.

Col Prashant Thakur expressed heartfelt gratitude

towards the Veer Naris, acknowledging them as the brave widows of fallen heroes who embody the resilience and sacrifice defining the spirit of the nation. Their unwavering support and contributions to the country's defense serve as a testament to their courage and patriotism.

Captain Tsering Stobdan expressed gratitude to the Fire and Fury AD for paying respect to ex-servicemen and Veer Naris. He highlighted the significance of recognizing not only those who sacrificed during the Kargil war but also warriors from 1962 and 1971. He urged paying tribute to all these heroes.

The distinguished attendees included the Fire and Fury Corps AD Bde Commander, Commanding Officer, ex-servicemen, representatives from Zila Sainik Boards, bank managers from various branches, and the Director of Rajya Sainik Board.

Veer Naris were felicitated with medical and winter essential kits, demonstrating a commitment to their well-being and honoring their sacrifices.

Hill Council discusses issues over wildlife protected areas



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson convened a meeting with the Executive Councillors and all the concerned area councillors on February 12 and discussed the issues over Wildlife protected areas of Changthang, Nubra & Hemis National Park.

CEC briefed the councillors on the recent proposal prepared from their consultation and feedbacks with the help of experts for the settlement of boundaries, and added that it has been submitted to LG Ladakh for further necessary action. He further discussed other important issues in

view of the expected visit of a team of wildlife experts to Leh soon.

He also extended his gratitude on behalf of LAHDC Leh to LG Ladakh for his kind intervention and action in this matter to settle the long-pending issues and appreciated his prompt action as soon as the proposal for boundary settlement put forth before him further taking up the matter with the Ministry in this regard.

The meeting was also attended by ADC Leh, SDMs of Nubra, Durbuk, Nyoma and officials of Revenue Department, Leh.

Fortnightly News

DC, Leh, reviews expenditure under LAHDC subsidy program

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve reviewed the expenditure under LAHDC Subsidy Program on February 9 at VC room.



Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve during the review meeting on the expenditure under LAHDC Subsidy Program.

The primary objective of the meeting was to identify departments whose expenditures fell below 90% of the allocated funds and to develop a comprehensive action plan to tackle this issue effectively.

During the meeting, representatives from the concerned departments provided valuable insights into the underlying reasons contributing to the lower expenditure figures. The reasons included project delays, administrative hurdles, and unanticipated challenges encountered during the implementation

process.

DC Leh directed all departments to implement proactive measures aimed at expediting pending projects. He emphasised the importance of adhering to a strict timeline and set February 29 as the deadline for the implementation of the action plan.

Furthermore, DC Leh

stressed importance of optimizing fund utilization for the betterment of the community. He urged all departments to accelerate their expenditure efforts to ensure that funds are utilized efficiently for the benefit of the populace.

The meeting was attended by the CPO Leh, AO to DC Leh, and all the HODs and officials of various departments.

Dr Pawan Kotwal reviews progress achieved under Vibrant Village Program

Stresses on ensuring 100% saturation of all schemes



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor for Ladakh, conducted a thorough review of the ongoing Vibrant Village Program in 35 border villages of Changthang on February 10.

The program is dedicated to achieving comprehensive development in these villages, focusing on various key areas such as livelihood generation through the promotion of agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and cultural heritage. Additionally, the interventions include skill development, entrepreneurship, co-operative societies for managing livelihood opportunities,

cultivation of medicinal plants/herbs, road connectivity, housing, village infrastructure, energy (including renewable sources), television and telecom connectivity, and financial inclusion.

Deputy Commissioner, Leh Santosh Sukhadeve apprised the meeting of the total number of projects submitted to MHA for approval for the new financial year and gave details of the development in saturation of the various Gol schemes in these villages.

Advisor Dr. Kotwal discussed in detail the schemes implemented

and the challenges faced in achieving 100 percent saturation, especially in some of the schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. He gave instructions to the concerned department to take all steps to saturate the scheme in the next ten days. Similar instructions were given to the Rural Development Department to clear the few pending cases under PM Awas Yojana and achieve 100 percent saturation of the scheme.

Dr Kotwal, while discussing the projects approved under Samagra Shiksha, urged the concerned department to initiate the tendering of the works so that physical works can begin as soon as the working season starts in Ladakh. These include new residential hostels/upgrades in schools at Koyul, Tsaga, Korkoz, Chushul, Durbuk, etc.

Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, Commissioner Secretary Padma Angmo, CCF Sajad Mufti, Secretary Yatinder M Maralkar, and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

Four days SEE learning workshop held at DIET Leh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Four days Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) learning educator workshop for 55 Head teachers of government school started on February 12 at DIET Leh as a part of ongoing winter Digital Literacy training program (Fourth Batch).



In these, four days workshop, the experts Senior Lecturer (L1 Facilitator), Thenless Wangmo and Lecturer (L1 Facilitator), Tsering Angmo will give an overview on Social Emotional and Ethical Engagement, one of the important components of

National Education Policy-2020 and National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS).

The experts will also impart training on skills like attention practice, resilience, system thinking, navigating emotions and

many more.

Principal DIET Leh, Tsetan Dorje assured that the four days workshop will be very productive for the Head Teachers from various zones of Leh District. He further expressed that such kind of workshop is the need of the hour.

District motor garages organises one-day training on first aid and road safety



During the one-day training session on first-aid skills and road safety to government drivers.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: District Motor Garages, Leh organised one-day training session on February 12 aimed at enhancing first-aid skills and promoting road safety among government drivers.

Led by Dr. Jigmet Wangchuk and supported by technical experts from the Health Department, training session featured comprehensive demonstrations of first aid procedures. Participants learned crucial life-saving techniques, in-

cluding Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), emphasizing the importance of immediate intervention emergencies.

He added that with the ability to administer prompt first aid, government drivers become invaluable assets in emergencies. Further, he said that by mastering basic life-saving skills, they can significantly contribute to mitigating the severity of injuries and potentially saving lives.

The training also highlight-

ed road safety protocols and best practices, with insights shared by Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mohd Baqir, and Inspector, Parvez Ahmed from the traffic department.

They emphasised the shared responsibility of road safety and the pivotal role of responsible drivers in upholding safety standards.

Deputy Superintendent, Mohd Baqir said that road safety is a shared responsibility, and government drivers play a pivotal role in upholding safety standards on our roads. Also added that by adhering to traffic regulations and prioritizing caution, drivers can help prevent accidents and protect themselves and the community.

The session concluded with the participants equipped with enhanced first-aid skills and a deeper understanding of road safety principles.

Advisor reviews action taken reports from 31st Northern Zonal Council meeting

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to efficient governance and inter-regional collaboration, Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal led a significant meeting focused on scrutinizing the "Action Taken Reports" arising from the 31st meeting of the Northern Zonal Council (NZC) on February 9.

The meeting discussed critical resolutions and decisions, focused on multifaceted issues ranging from social justice to rural development and healthcare initiatives to evaluate progress and strategize future actions. It centered on expediting the investigation and resolution of cases



of sexual offenses against women and children.

Dr Pawan Kotwal emphasised the effective implementation of the Fast Track Special Cases (FTSC) scheme to accelerate the disposal of cases under the POCSO Act, thereby mitigating pendency and ensuring timely justice.

Furthermore, deliberations extended to the extension of banking facilities and

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanisms to rural areas, particularly focusing on the coverage of 34 villages by bank branches and postal banking facilities and 100 percent digitalization of all eligibility certificates. The aim is to enhance financial inclusivity and facilitate seamless transactions for rural communities.

The adoption of Model Bye-Laws for new Pri-

mary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) which enable them to undertake more than 25 economic activities, and the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) were thoroughly discussed to bolster agricultural infrastructure and healthcare provisions.

Measures to combat malnutrition among girl children through the POSHAN Abhiyan were underscored and deliberation was held on the concerns regarding the dropout rate of school children.

Dr Pawan Kotwal directed all the concerned officers to expedite the action

and submit a detailed action taken report within 15 days.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary of the School Education Department; Additional Director General of Police; Commissioner/Secretary of the Social and Tribal Welfare Department; Administrative Secretary of the Cooperatives Department; Director of the Finance Department; Deputy Director (K) of Planning Development, and Monitoring Department; Superintendent of Post Offices, UT of Ladakh; Senior PO/APP, Directorate of Prosecution, Ladakh; Under Secretary of Home Department; and concerned officers.

Shruti Kotwal, India's fastest ice speed skater, returns to national stage after 15 years at Khelo India Winter Games 2024

My ultimate goal is to qualify for the Olympics, and I am thrilled to be back on national soil: Shruti



Shruti Kotwal of Maharashtra, India's first professional ice speed skater

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Khelo India Winter Games 2024 in Ladakh witnesses the skills of India's top skaters, some of whom have trained and competed internationally. Pune's Shruti Kotwal, the country's first professional ice speed skater, is poised to showcase her talent at the Gupuks Pond in Leh.

For the 32-year-old Shruti, this event marks a special homecoming. As India's fastest ice speed skater, she made headlines in November 2022 by breaking the national record, completing a 500-meter race in an impressive 42.21 seconds, just two weeks before the AmCup 2022, the prestigious American championship for skaters who meet high qualifying standards. Shruti participated in the 2008 Win-

ter Games in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir. Over the past decade, she has proudly represented India in various international tournaments. Remarkably, the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 marks her return to the national stage after 15 years.

Shruti, specializing in long track speed skating, initially began her journey as a roller skater at the age of 10, a common starting point for many Indian skaters. However, her aspirations to compete in the Olympics led her to transition to ice skating.

Notably, Shruti holds the national records in long track speed skating for 500m, 1000m, and 1500m distances. Her remarkable achievements include securing gold medals in the 500m, 1000m, and 1500m events at the 2011 South Asian Winter Games. At the national level, she boasts an almost unbeatable record with five gold medals from various championships.

In 2012, Shruti Kotwal received a scholarship from the International Skating Union (ISU) to undergo training at the Kia Speed Skating Academy in Germany, marking her first international camp. Throughout her journey, Shruti has enjoyed unwavering support from her family.

At the Khelo India Win-

ter Games 2024, Shruti will be competing in her specialty, the 500m race, as she harbors aspirations of qualifying for the 2026 Winter Olympics. Currently training in the United States under the guidance of coach Mitchell Whitmore, a three-time Olympian, Shruti draws inspiration from training alongside top-class international skaters.

Shruti acknowledges positive changes in the winter sports sector in India, particularly in ice skating. She notes the evolution from just one rink in Shimla to the availability of facilities in almost all states. Notably, winter sports athletes now emerge from the plains, showcasing the expanding reach of winter sports in the country.

"Although India is a tropical country, winter games athletes should train throughout the year so that when the season arrives they can give their best," Shruti signed off.

Despite India's tropical climate, Shruti emphasizes the importance of year-round training for winter games athletes. This approach ensures they are ready to deliver their best performances when the season arrives. Shruti concludes by expressing her happiness at witnessing the growth of winter sports in India and the increasing opportunities for athletes in the sector.

"I am the first long track speed skater from India

Ladakh's struggle for safeguard: Hunger strike looms amidst talks and rising tensions

...continues from page 1

found impact, prompting the closure of businesses in both Leh and Kargil for a day.

This rally is seen as the initial step in a prolonged movement, aimed at safeguarding Ladakh for future generations while maintaining present tranquility. The participants vociferously expressed their desire for inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Addressing the gathered crowd, Thupstan Chhewang declared, "The assembly in this rally is motivation to go further and fight for our rights. We will persist until our demands are met. Today, many representatives have become obstacles to achieving our agenda, discouraging us by falsely claiming that the demands are sectional. The crowd here has made it clear that the demands are unanimous."

Chhewang revealed that the previous meeting with the Union Ministry yielded no positive response regarding the 4-point agenda presented by the Apex Body Leh and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). Instead, they were asked to submit the agendas in writing. Despite delays caused by elections in Kargil, the proposal was eventually drafted and delivered, with a decisive meeting scheduled for February 19.

"February 19 will be the decision-making day, determining whether we escalate our fight or Ladakh

receives what it intends," he added.

He further acknowledged Sonam Wangchuk's influential role in the movement, extending its reach globally. He commended Wangchuk's contributions, including educational reforms and hunger strikes. Chhewang pledged solidarity with Wangchuk for Ladakh's agenda, addressing false allegations against him and urging people to speak out against such tactics.

Expressing dissatisfaction, he remarked, "The Union Territory (UT) we sought was meant to have a legislature; however, we were granted a UT without a Legislature, lacking any safeguard. We lost our council power, rights, and decisions are now made by non locals. Our struggle persists, facing more difficulties than when we were under the state of Jammu and Kashmir."

In a final commitment, Chhewang assured that the movement officially begins now, and if the government's decision doesn't favor the people of Ladakh, he vowed to embark on a hunger strike for their rights alongside Sonam Wangchuk. This declaration underlines the gravity of Ladakh's quest for justice and signifies a resolute stand against perceived injustices.

The Apex Body, in collaboration with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has persistently pressed for Ladakh's statehood, Sixth

Schedule status, a dedicated Public Services Commission (PSC), and two parliamentary seats—a comprehensive set of demands reflecting their vision for the region's holistic development.

Environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk, standing at the forefront of this movement, declared, "Not only today, but I am prepared to fight for Ladakh, even if it means facing death. I won't hesitate to starve for our rightful demands in the future. I believe many of you are ready to struggle for our land. There will be moments when the significance of our demands will be recognized and fulfilled. History shall repeat itself. Therefore, I urge you all to anticipate a long road struggle."

Expressing gratitude for the massive turnout in the Leh Chalo rally, Wangchuk emphasised that Ladakh's strength lies in the unity of its people, ready to collectively fight for their rights. He underscored the importance of unity in achieving Ladakh's rights, emphasizing that if the people don't stand up for themselves, no one else will. He cautioned against expecting quick and easy achievements, asserting that struggles will result in the fulfillment of their interests.

On behalf of all Ladakh citizens, Wangchuk conveyed his 'Maan ki Baat' to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He commended the PM for judi-

icious decisions benefiting the country and thanked him for granting Ladakh Union Territory (UT) status, fulfilling a long-term demand. He reminded the BJP party of its promises, including the assurance of the Sixth Schedule for Ladakh, as outlined in their manifestos during parliamentary and council elections.

Expressing concern over the apparent communication breakdown between the central government and Ladakh, Wangchuk pointed out issues like the selling of Ladakh, encouragement of industrial land policies, and a perceived 'Deficit of Trust' in policies and corruption, echoing national sentiments.

Wangchuk drew parallels between the fight of Ladakh against corruption and lies to the historical struggle against British rulers by freedom fighters. He stressed the need to take election manifestos seriously and highlighted the significance of safeguarding Ladakh's fragile ecosystem, unique culture, and rare and vulnerable species from both external and local threats.

In a powerful call to action, Wangchuk concluded, "Just as our freedom fighters fought against the British rulers, today we are fighting against corruption and lies." This declaration encapsulates the essence of Ladakh's ongoing struggle for its rights and the preservation of its rich heritage in the face of contemporary challenges.

The transformation of Ladakh into a Union Territory has ignited concerns over potential disruptions to its authentic culture, fragile ecosystem, rising unemployment, and an adverse impact on the local population. These concerns form the core of the ongoing demands made by Ladakh's residents, who express disappointment and agitation over unfulfilled promises by past representatives to safeguard Ladakh alongside its Union Territory status.

As Ladakh gears up for a new election in the coming months, apprehensions loom large among the populace. There is a palpable fear that the longstanding demands of the people might once again go unanswered until after the elections. The uncertainty surrounding the fulfillment of Ladakh's demands add to the growing discontent and calls for immediate attention to safeguard the region's unique identity and address the socio-economic challenges arising from its new Union Territory status.

The people's concerns underscore the delicate balance Ladakh must strike between embracing progress and development while preserving its cultural heritage and ecological integrity. As the region navigates these complexities, there is a pressing need for transparent dialogue and concrete actions to address the multifaceted challenges.

People's Voice:

District status:
Zanskar pa balances disappointment and hope

Nenzes Chosdon & Stanzin Padma



Pasang Lhawang, President, Zanskar Buddhist Association: The demand for district status for Zanskar is a crucial and valid concern that reflects the aspirations and expectations of the local population. The commitment made by the MP Ladakh during 2019 elections, with overwhelming support from the people of Zanskar, adds weight to the significance of this issue.

I advocate for a comprehensive district status, as experts discourage settling for an administrative district status, which has not been recommended before.

The commendable overall development in the region under the current government is acknowledged, but it's clear that the demand for district status remains a top priority for the people of Zanskar. The potential impact of the decision on the upcoming 2024 elections emphasizes the political significance of this issue.

The proactive engagement of delegations from Zanskar with the MP and their efforts, including visits to Delhi, signifies a positive indication toward the potential announcement of district status. However, the absence of official information regarding the announcement, especially considering the anticipation during Republic Day celebrations, adds an element of uncertainty to the situation.

In conclusion, the demand for district status for Zanskar appears to be a legitimate and pressing concern, reflecting the democratic aspirations of the local community. The resolution of this issue will likely have significant implications for the political landscape and the representation of the region.



Lobzang Dolma, Former Sarpanch, Ufti Pibiting: The assurance of district status for the Zanskar region is deemed certain under the current government. However, the announcement is currently delayed for unspecified reasons by the central government. Notably, the Sarpanch and BDCs have held discussions with Union ministers, receiving a positive response, and anticipate the district's announcement before the next Lok Sabha election.

Zanskar has been persistently seeking district status for nearly seven decades, and the current government appears to offer hope for addressing this longstanding demand. The trust and optimism placed in the government and the Ladakh MP stem from the collective commitment of the region's voters in the 2019 election.

While acknowledging the challenges in assigning district status, including necessary planning and decision-making, the government's proactive approach is acknowledged. The prolonged stay in Delhi to engage with ministries highlighted the government's commitment to fulfilling Zanskar's rightful demand.

Despite the delay, people of Zanskar continue to trust the government's intentions and await the announcement of Zanskar as a district, with expectations heightened on the eve of the upcoming Lok Sabha election. Planning and judicious decision-making may be causing the delay to prevent future discrepancies.

The expectation for an announcement on the 75th Republic Day turned out to be unfulfilled, creating a sense of uncertainty. The successful declaration of Zanskar and Nubra within a short timeframe could garner support from both regions in the upcoming election, but failure to secure districts may alter the political landscape. The situation remains dynamic, and the government's ability to fulfill this promise will likely influence the electoral landscape in the approaching election.



Lobzang Paldan, Former Leaf Chief Coordinator: Zanskar's longstanding demand for district status, originating in the 1970s and gaining momentum in 2019 when the entire Zanskar, including opposition parties, united to support the BJP government with the sole objective of securing district status. The significant role played by Zanskar's voters in the MP's electoral victory adds weight to their expectation.

I am disappointed at unfulfilled promises of district announcements during occasions like New Year and Losar. With the approaching election and the enforcement of the code of conduct, the window for the announcement is narrowing.

Zanskar demands full-fledged District status rather than an administrative district, as administrative district sounds incomplete and people remain in doubt. Just like, Ladakh struggled for a very long time to the UT with Legislature however, at the end the UT without legislature bestowed, incomplete and insecure resulted in public disappointment. Therefore, Zanskar is very clear on the demand and replacement is not acceptable by the people.

If the demand is not fulfill by the government before Code of Conduct, the repercussions will reflect on the coming election. "MP Ladakh owes Zanskar the fulfillment of the demand, considering the overwhelming support garnered during the 2019 election."

The Students Union of Zanskar has actively led various movements advocating for the same demand in key locations such as Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu, and within Zanskar itself. The MP consistently made promises aligned with this demand. Religious organizations, student unions, and local leaders collectively aspire to secure district status before the Code of Conduct comes into effect. In the event of non-fulfillment, the people of Zanskar, along with all organizations and leaders, are prepared to remain united and collaboratively determine the next course of action. The expectations run high from representatives to local residents, but failure to deliver may erode trust. Highlighting the historically slow procedures since the declaration of Union Territory status, particularly in areas such as recruitment and other developments, there is a persistent hope for the eventual declaration of Zanskar as a district.



Tenzin Loden, Content Creator: Enthusiasm prevails in Zanskar regarding the prospect of attaining district status, fueled by the assertive stance of the ruling party, which wields influence at the central level. There was widespread anticipation that an announcement regarding district status might occur on Republic Day, January 26, but disappointingly, no such declaration transpired. In my view, it appears that political maneuvering is underway in the lead-up to the MP election.

While the demand for Union Territory (UT) status has a long history, the people of Zanskar are approaching this issue with increased awareness, learning from the experiences of Ladakh. Concerns have been raised about potential administrative district status, drawing attention to Lahaul Spiti as an example where Spiti lacks the full-fledged powers of a district and must rely on Lahaul. Consequently, the residents of Zanskar are advocating for the establishment of a complete district rather than settling for an administrative one.

The UT demand has historical roots, and the granting of UT status to Ladakh caught many off guard, highlighting the lack of preparedness in understanding the associated pros and cons. Reflecting on this, the people of Zanskar are already expressing concerns about the potential ramifications and have raised questions with the MP, drawing parallels with Lahaul Spiti's administrative district status.

The absence of an announcement on Republic Day has led to speculations about political motivations, particularly in the

...continues on page 7



On November 3, 2011, UNESCO declared February 13 as World Radio Day because on this day United Nations Radio was first established in 1946. It is observed to preserve the importance of radio as well as to encourage decision makers to provide access to information through radio. UNESCO coordinates World Radio Day activities on a global scale with UN member countries through their radio stations. The United Nations General Assembly formally endorsed UNESCO's proclamation of World Radio Day on 14 January 2013. In the 67th session of the UN General Assembly,

a resolution was adopted for proclaiming 13 February as World Radio Day.

The main purpose of celebrating World Radio Day is to spread awareness among the public and the media to increase the importance of radio. It also encourages decision-makers to establish and provide access to information through radio, enhance networking, and generate a sort of international cooperation among the broadcasters.

Facts about Radio

- The first-ever radio transmission was made on May 13, 1897 by Guglielmo Marconi.
- The first ever radio broadcast in India happened in June 1923 by Radio Club of Bombay.
- India has around 479 radio stations making All India Radio one of the biggest broadcasters in the world. It covers around 99.19% of the Indian population.

Courtesy: Economic Times

DID YOU KNOW



*All mammals get goose bumps. When your hair stands on end, tiny muscles contract at each hair's base distorting the skin to create goose bumps. This process is called piloerection and is present in all mammals. Hair or fur is used to trap an insulating air layer.

*Football players spit so much because exercise increases the amount of protein in saliva. When you exercise, the amount of protein secreted into the saliva increases. A protein mucus named MUC5B makes your saliva thicker when you're exercising which makes it more difficult to swallow so we tend to spit more. It may occur during exercise because we breathe through our mouths more. MUC5B could activate to stop our mouths from drying out, therefore.

*Some animals display autistic-like traits. Au-

tistic traits in animals include a tendency toward repetitive behaviour and atypical social habits.

*The biggest butterfly in the world has a 31cm wingspan. It belongs to the Queen Alexandra's Birdwing butterfly, which you can find in the forests of the Oro Province, in the east of Papua New Guinea.

*You remember more dreams when you sleep badly. Research suggests that if you sleep badly and wake up multiple times throughout the night you will be more likely to recall the content of any dreams you had. You are also more likely to remember a dream when woken from one.

*The longest anyone has held breath underwater is over 24.5 minutes. The world record for breath-holding underwater was achieved by

Croatian Budimir Šobat on 27 March 2021, who held his breath for a total of 24 minutes and 37 seconds. On average, a human can hold their breath between 30-90 seconds.

*The Moon is shrinking. But only very slightly – by about 50m (164ft) in radius over the last several hundred million years. Mysterious seismic activity, known as moonquakes, could be to blame.

*Mercury, not Venus, is the closest planet to Earth on average. On average, Mercury is 1.04 astronomical units (AU) away from Earth compared to the 1.14 AU average distance between Earth and Venus. One AU is equal to the average distance between the Earth and the Sun. Venus still comes closest to Earth as part of its orbit around the Sun, however.

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

What makes you great and famous?



What makes a person great and famous? Yes, the question is very close to everybody's heart because each one of us wants to be famous and known as 'great'. Being a super-rich man or a highly successful person in any area could fetch you the title of being great and famous.

But the fact of the matter is that all of us do not get famous and great. Only one or two persons out of thousands can fit into the

bracket. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the bulb, has this to say: "I did not find a way to make a light-bulb, but I found a thousand ways how not to make one!"

That shows how difficult it is to enter the circle of the great and the famous. And yet, one can say, it is not impossible. Gandhi-ji was just like any one of us to begin with. It was his resolve, hard work and the circumstances that catapulted him to earn the 'Mahatma' title. And that reminds us of the proverbial saying that each one of us is the master of our own name and fame.

So, what to do to be called a great person? Work hard, and never give up? Many of us do that and yet fortune never comes our way. In the words of Confucius, "a great man is hard on himself, but a small man is hard on others"! That, to some extent, explains why most of us are not great! To be great, if you go by this yardstick, one has to sacrifice one's own life and fortune in order to make a good difference in others' lives.

That maybe surely one way, but there are so many 'other ways' that push one to the pinnacle of success. And yet, I am of the view that you may be highly successful but until you live for others, your greatness is small! Gandhi-ji had nothing for himself except his great thoughts and great actions for his country, all through his life. He was a "half-naked fakir" as Winston Churchill had described him.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with State Awardee Shanaz Parveen, Taekwondo Player

Interviewed by Yangchen Dolma

Q. Can you briefly introduce yourself and share what inspired you to become Taekwondo player?

Greetings to everyone, and sincere thanks to Reach Ladakh for providing me with this platform. I am Shanaz Parveen, hailing from Checheysna Sankoo in Kargil. My journey into Taekwondo began during my school days when it was introduced as a discipline for everyone.

Starting at the district level, I secured a Gold medal, an accomplishment that ignited a spark within me. Fueled by this success, I intensified my training, progressing to the state level where I clinched another Gold medal. This continuous success propelled me to strive even harder.

Ultimately, I proudly secured the first-ever Gold medal for Ladakhi women at the national level in Taekwondo. Throughout this journey, the unwavering support and guidance from my coaches played a crucial role. My family and coaches consistently motivated me, emphasizing the importance of giving my best, regardless of winning a medal. I am deeply grateful for the encouragement that fueled my achievement in becoming the first Ladakhi woman to win in Taekwondo.

Q. How did you react upon learning about your inclusion in the state award for 2024? What significance do you believe this recognition holds for both your career and your field?

Upon discovering that I received the State Award, my immediate sentiment was one of gratitude towards my family and coach. Their steadfast support throughout my journey played a crucial role in my achievements. The recognition of my hard work and dedication with this prestigious honor felt incredibly rewarding. Attaining state awards is a testament to dedication, and I devoted my heart and soul to this accomplishment. This recognition provides me with the opportunity to showcase my skills and bring pride to my loved ones.

Q. What training techniques fueled your success in Taekwondo, and how do you overcome moments of demotivation or setbacks in your journey?

Experiencing moments of demotivation is common in any athlete's journey. However, it's vital not to be disheartened by losses. Personally, I see these experiences as catalysts for growth and improvement. I embrace defeat as an opportunity to intensify my training and surpass my previous limits. This mindset serves as a constant motivation for me to grow and improve as an athlete. I believe everyone should use such moments as fuel to push themselves even harder. With the right mindset and determination, we can overcome any obstacle that comes our way.

Q. Did you encounter cultural and societal challenges as a woman pursuing Taekwondo, particularly as a Muslim player? How did you navigate and overcome these challenges?

Certainly, as a Muslim woman practicing Taekwondo, cultural norms and societal restrictions posed challenges, especially regarding girls participating in the sport and attire. Despite facing criticism and discouragement, my family's

unwavering support emerged as my greatest strength. Their encouragement empowered me to overcome these obstacles and establish a robust foundation in Taekwondo. My journey stands as an inspiration, highlighting that with the right support and determination, one can triumph over any adversity.

Q. How do you plan to inspire and encourage other young Ladakhi girls to take up Taekwondo?

In Kargil, we have a hostel facilitated by the Sports Authority of India, admitting children aged 12 to 15 with a serious interest in sports, including Taekwondo. They also have the option to train at private academies. However, not everyone sustains their commitment to Taekwondo until the end, highlighting the importance of true dedication. It's crucial to foster genuine passion and commitment to the sport. While girls may face challenges with confidence, everyone should be encouraged to pursue their interests and exhibit dedication.

Q. How do you balance studies and sports at such a young age?

Managing studies and sports has never been a challenge for me as I've effectively handled both. Even during my 12th grade, I achieved a distinction, and in 10th grade, I received good marks. Effective time management is crucial for balancing multiple responsibilities, and I've excelled in both areas by practicing effective time management techniques.

Q. What are your thoughts on the significance of gender equality in sports, especially in Taekwondo?

In Taekwondo, success is primarily determined by interest and hard work, irrespective of gender. The sport does not differentiate based on whether one is a boy or a girl; instead, it actively promotes gender equality and ensures equal opportunities for everyone.

Q. Are there any upcoming competitions or events where we can see you in action?

Currently, my primary focus is on gearing up for the upcoming World Championships trials and the senior national competition. I am dedicating my utmost efforts and rigorous training to excel in these events, with the hope of delivering my best performance and, ideally, clinching a medal. Concurrently, while preparing for the World Championships trials and national competition, I am committed to enhancing my skills and techniques in Taekwondo. I firmly believe that continuous training and refining my abilities are paramount for success in this sport.

I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to represent Leh, Ladakh, and showcase the talent and potential of our region on a broader stage.



MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“When it comes to pursuing your goals and dreams, it's important not to let society's opinions hold you back. If you have the desire to do something, go for it wholeheartedly. Remember, starting is key, and never give up along the way. Also, always remember to show respect and gratitude towards your family, as their support is invaluable.”

Fortnight Highlights



Sheep Husbandry Department Nyoma organised mobile veterinary health camp cum awareness regarding various schemes. They also took feedback from breeders/livestock entrepreneurs regarding established kid pen and milk replacers at highland pasture area Lanzam of Chumur Tibetan refugees' settlement and Sumdo Tibetan refugees' settlement villages in Nyoma subdivision.



Members of Hill Council, Leh celebrated Tibetan Losar with the Tibetan Community in Leh Ladakh. Advisor, Dr. Pawan Kotwal also attended the Losar celebration at Tibetan Settlement, Choglamsar.



LAHDC Leh signed a MoU with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) for the implementation of collaborative Energy Efficiency Measures specifically emphasising on Space Heating and Clean Cooking solutions. The MoU was signed by the CCF, Jigmet Namgail (JKAS) on behalf of LAHDC Leh and exchanged with EESL in the presence of DG-BEE and CEO-EESL.



Ladakh won first-ever Khelo India gold in the women's short track 1600m relay at the NDS sports complex in Leh on February 5.



Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning education preparation workshop concluded on February 6 at DIET Leh. A total of 50 participants participated in the workshop.



Councillor, Cha, Stanzin Lakpa called on Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), at Raj Niwas. Highlighted the importance of district status announcement for Zaskar and resumption of helicopter service between Leh and Padum for better accessibility during the winter months.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson hold a meeting with Maj. Gen. SS Bakshi, GOC Leh sub area and discussed the issues regarding the CTA land at Melong-thang, Leh.



One day program on use of road infrastructure, black spots, road construction, road safety audit and traffic signs was organised by R&B Division Kargil in collaboration with NHIDCL and PMU Kargil at Conference Hall, Kargil.

Fortnightly News

Drass Winter Carnival concludes

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DRASS: Forever in Operations Division successfully organised the Drass Winter Carnival 2024 (Jashn-e-Fateh) from February 1 to 6, celebrating the Rajat Jayanti of Kargil Vijay Diwas, marking 25 years since the Kargil War with major battles fought in the Drass sector.



In collaboration with the Himalayan Sports and Cultural Development Organisation, the event aimed to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Drass Valley and promote talent in winter sports.

The youth of Drass showcased their skills in Ice Hockey competitions for both Men's and Women's teams. The Carnival featured a vibrant Cultural Carnival, Archery Tournaments, Balti Dances, and captivating martial

arts performances by students of Army Goodwill Schools, creating a heightened sense of excitement among the community members.

The closing ceremony on 6 February marked the pinnacle of the regional competition, graced by various dignitaries, including the General Officer Commanding, Fire and Fury Corps, General Officer Commanding, Forever in Operations Division, Commander, Drass Warrior Brigade, and representatives from Civil Administration and sports clubs.

General Officer Commanding, Fire and Fury Corps, and other dignitaries engaged with the Drass community, expressing sincere gratitude to the Indian Army for organizing tournaments in this remote region. The Army's efforts were lauded for providing a platform for locals to celebrate and enhance their skills in this challenging and remote part of the country.

Brigadier, Parashu Brigade, Brig Banit Singh Negi informed LG that 16 students, mostly from eastern Ladakh, visited various places of India, including Delhi, Uttarakhand and Agra under the National Integration Tour.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) interacted with the students who participated in the National Integration Tour 2024 under Operation Sadbhavana with the theme, Hill Se Dil Tak, at Parashu Brigade in Nimoo on February 3

He informed that the students witnessed the Republic Day Parade and visited Kartavya Path, Qutub Minar, War Memorial, India Gate, Zoological Park, National Rail Museum, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Amrit Udhyan, Raj Bhavan Uttarakhand, Indian Military Academy, Uttarakhand sub-area, Clement Town Mind Rolling Monastery, Taj Mahal Agra Fort and

Brig Negi informed LG that the students met President of India, Droupadi Murmu; Governor of Uttarakhand, Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh; Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami; President of Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA), Archana Pandey; Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh, AVSM, VSM; General Officer Commanding, Delhi, Lieutenant General Bhavish Kumar; Commandant Indian Military Academy, Lieutenant General VK Mishra; GOC Uttarakhand Sub Area, Maj Gen R Poremraj; His Eminence

Headquarter 50(1) Para Bde Group.



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Choegon Rinpoche and other military officials.

The students also shared their experiences with the LG.

Later, LG also visited the Women Empowerment Centre in Nimoo, where he inspected the English Language Lab, Weaving Centre and Recreational Centre.

Brigadier Negi informed the LG about various initiatives taken under Operation Sadbhavana, including teaching basic English grammar and martial arts to students, etc. He also informed the LG that the Women Empowerment Centre offers training in tailoring, weaving and basic skills to local females.

DC Kargil reviews progress of Sukanya Samridhi Yojana



Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse reviewing the progress of Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse reviewed the progress of Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) on 7 February. Sukanya Samridhi Account (SSA) scheme is a small deposit scheme of the Government of India meant exclusively for a girl child.

Chief Medical Officer, Kargil, District Social Welfare Officer Kargil, Medical Superintendent DH Kargil and sub-Postmaster Mohd Abass were present in the meeting.

DC Kargil instructed the concerned officers and officials of the Health, Education and Social Welfare Department to ensure wide publicity of the scheme so that it reaches all eligible beneficiaries across the district.

He also directed the Health Department to provide data of the girl children below the age of 10 years who are the target beneficiaries of the scheme to ensure better monitoring of the progress under the scheme. Further, he instructed that application forms should be available in all the ICDS centers as well as health institutions and primary schools across the district to ensure the saturation of the scheme.

While reviewing the progress of the scheme, DC Kargil reviewed progress on number of accounts created under the scheme for the girl child. He also directed the Informa-

tion Department Kargil for wide publicity of the scheme.

SSA is a government savings scheme created to benefit girl children under the initiative called "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao". The parent or guardian of the girl child who is 10 years of age or younger can open an account under this scheme.

One can apply for SSY through Post Offices or through the branches of Public Sector Banks and three Private Sector Banks viz. HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, and ICICI Bank. The account can be opened by a parent or legal guardian of the girl child. The girl child must be below the age of 10 years. Only one account is allowed for a girl child.

SSY allows for flexible and affordable deposits, with a minimum yearly contribution of Rs. 250 and a maximum of Rs. 1.5 Lakh. This accessibility makes it feasible for people from all sections of society to invest in their girl child's future.

The scheme permits partial withdrawals of up to 50% of the account balance at the end of the previous financial year to cover the educational expenses of the girl child. This benefit can be availed by providing proof of admission to an educational institution. SSY accounts offer a high rate of interest compared to other government-backed schemes.

Martyrdom anniversary Hazrat-E-Imam Mussa Kazim observed



Mansoor Hosain Beigh

KARGIL: The martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat-E-Imam Mussa Kazim (A.S) was observed in Kargil on February 6.

A congregation rally was organised by Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT), and Anjuman-e-Jamait Ul Ulema

Isna Ashriya at Kargil. Thousands of people joined the rally.

Rich tribute was paid to Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (RA) for the cause of Islam and Ummah.

While highlighting the sacrifices of the Imam for

Islam religious scholar said, "Imam Mussa Kazim (AS) served Muslims and rendered sacrifices for preserving the true spirit of Islam and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW)."

They said Imam Mussa Kazim is respected for his courage, knowledge, belief, honesty, and unbending devotion to Islam.

Congregations and processions were also observed at Drass, Shargole, Chiktan, Sankoo, Suru Valley at Anjuman-e-Sahib Zaman Sankoo, ASZ Tai-Suru, Markaz-E-Tabligh Imam Reza at Sankoo, Anjuman-e-enqalab Mehdi Suru, Thangboo Purtik-chay, Kargee, Tsangrah Tangole, Barsoo, Lankechey, Saliskote, Trespone, GMPora, Tambis, Kanoor, Tambis.

DDMA Kargil, Indian Army conducts mock drill exercise

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: DDMA Kargil in collaboration with the Indian Army, Health, Revenue, Mechanical, I&FC, UT-DRF, Fire and Emergency Services and other departments, conducted a disaster preparation cum mini mock drill exercise at Kharbu village on February 12.

The training saw active participation from stakeholders such as Bashij Imam IKMT and Aapda Mitra. The main objective of the exercise was to enhance disaster readiness in the district by equipping



participants with essential skills and knowledge.

The Army conducted a mock drill on avalanches while UT-DRF showcased CPR techniques to enhance the community's resilience against potential disasters.

During the event, BMO Drass emphasized the importance of CPR during disasters.

SDM Drass conducted the session by expressing gratitude on behalf of DDMA Kargil to all stakeholders and participants.

Ladakh Tribal Foundation organises brainstorming session on road safety



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Ladakh Tribal Foundation in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra, Kargil, and the Transport Department, Kargil organised a comprehensive brainstorming session at ARTO Office, Kargil on February 10.

The session was organised as part of a series of awareness programmes of the ongoing Road Safety Month being held from January 15 to February 14. The session aimed to delve into the root causes of accidents, identify key areas for improvement, and collaborate on implementing effective plans and next steps.

Joint Director, Information, Ladakh, Inteez Kacho thanked the Transport Department, Nehru Yuva Kendra, and Ladakh Tribal Foundation as well

Safety Month. He stressed the need for community engagement and innovative solutions to address road safety challenges effectively. He said such programs will help to develop discipline among the general public avoid fatal accidents and save precious lives.

as other stakeholders for organizing such a crucial and thought-provoking awareness programme. He highlighted the importance of collective efforts in ensuring road safety and immense behavioral change while emphasizing the need for continuously conducting similar awareness campaigns to instill a sense of responsibility among each citizen of Kargil. He endorsed the fact that the school curriculum should be loaded with practical lessons on traffic rules and responsible behaviour. He also lauded the efforts of each personnel of the Traffic Police who are thoroughly dedicated to ensuring the smooth flow of traffic.

LAHDC Councilor of Saliskote, Sajjad Khan highlighted the significance of the event during the Road

ARTO Kargil urged the public to prioritize public transport over private vehicles for safer roads. He also highlighted the importance of sustainable driving practices.

During the session, many others also spoke and shared their views with the participants. Participants discussed to identify the causes of accidents in Ladakh. Factors like infrastructure deficiencies, reckless driving, behavior, and lack of awareness emerged as key areas requiring attention.

During the interactive sessions, participants identified specific areas for improvement, including road maintenance, driver training programs and public awareness campaigns. They stressed on implementing targeted interventions to address these areas effectively.

L-G interacts with students who went on National Integration Tour

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) interacted with the students who participated in the National Integration Tour 2024 under Operation Sadbhavana with the theme, Hill Se Dil Tak, at Parashu Brigade in Nimoo on February 3

He informed that the students witnessed the Republic Day Parade and visited Kartavya Path, Qutub Minar, War Memorial, India Gate, Zoological Park, National Rail Museum, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Amrit Udhyan, Raj Bhavan Uttarakhand, Indian Military Academy, Uttarakhand sub-area, Clement Town Mind Rolling Monastery, Taj Mahal Agra Fort and

Brig Negi informed LG that the students met President of India, Droupadi Murmu; Governor of Uttarakhand, Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh; Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami; President of Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA), Archana Pandey; Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh, AVSM, VSM; General Officer Commanding, Delhi, Lieutenant General Bhavish Kumar; Commandant Indian Military Academy, Lieutenant General VK Mishra; GOC Uttarakhand Sub Area, Maj Gen R Poremraj; His Eminence

ITBP's 24th Battalion hosts Rozgar Mela, distributes 26 appointment letters

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 12th edition of the 'Rozgar Mela' took place in the Kumbha Hall of the 24th Battalion Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) in Choglamsar, Leh on February 12. Kailash Choudhary, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare of the Government of India, and Jamiyang Tsering Namgyal, the Member of Parliament from Ladakh, graced the event with their presence.

Spanning 47 centers across the country, the Rozgar Mela successfully distributed over one lakh appointment letters to selected candidates for various government sectors. Specifically, the 24th Battalion ITBP in Leh distributed appointment letters to 26 newly appointed personnel from the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Notable attendees included senior officials from ITBP, such as Clay Khongsai, IPS, Inspector General, Northwest Frontier Ladakh, Ashok Kumar Negi, DIG, and other senior ITBP officials. Additionally, officers from

the Union Territory of Ladakh, including Chief Agriculture Officer, Leh, Thinles Dawa, Deputy Director Planning, UT Ladakh, Tsering Angdus, and Headquarter Assistant, Nilza Angmo, graced the occasion.

Expressing delight and pride, Commandant of the 24th Battalion ITBP, Shashi Chandra Jha, highlighted the potential of the Rozgar Mela in creating employment opportunities and fostering youth participation in the nation's development.

MP Ladakh, Jamiyang Tsering Namgyal, emphasized the significant role of ITBP in national service, particularly along the Indo-China border, and expressed gratitude for the employment opportunities

extended to the region's youth.

Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Kailash Choudhary, reiterated the Government of India's commitment to generating employment for the youth. He emphasized the importance of their contribution to nation-building and underscored the transparent recruitment process, free from corruption.

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, remotely initiated the appointment process for over one lakh personnel and virtually addressed the newly appointed individuals. The event concluded with the chief guest, Kailash Choudhary, distributing appointment letters to the deserving candidates.

Advisor chairs UT committee meeting to approve annual programme implementation plan



Advisor, Dr Pawan Kotwal chairing the UT Level Committee meeting.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Advisor, Dr Pawan Kotwal chaired the UT Level Committee meeting to review and approve the UT Annual Programme Implementation Plan (APIP) prepared by the Department of Social & Tribal Welfare for the Financial Year 2024-25 under Mission Vatsalya, Mission Poshan, and Mission Shakti at UT Secretariat, Leh on February 9.

He appreciated that the State and District Hubs for Empowerment of Women are operationalised in Ladakh under Mission Shakti and asked the Department of Social & Tribal Welfare to ensure that wide coverage is given so that women in Ladakh can access these hubs for assistance and information. Advisor underscored the importance of providing a comprehensive range of support services to women including

Vatsalya that are being constructed under Special Development Package, for children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law.

Commissioner cum Secretary, Social & Tribal Welfare, Padma Angmo apprised the UT Level Committee about the status of various projects being undertaken under Special Development Package and stated the Observation cum Special Home under Mission Vatsalya is expected to be completed in 2024-25 while the 300 bedded Working Women's Hostel in each district is expected to be ready by 2025-2026.

Earlier, the Director, Social & Tribal Welfare Department, Tashi Dolma gave a comprehensive presentation to the UT Level Committee on the Annual Plan Implementation Programme for 2024-25 for Mission Shakti, Poshan and Vatsalya. She outlined the significant milestones attained during the fiscal year 2024-25 including the Zero-MAM initiative under Poshan, strengthening of Child Care Institutions and launch of State Adoption Agency and Child Helpline 112 under Mission Vatsalya and launch of Women Helpline and establishment of State and District Hub for Empowerment under Mission Shakti.

Advisor reviewed the status of Child Care Institutions under Mission

CEC discusses developmental work at District Hospital Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: CEC, LAHDC, Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoo chaired a review meeting on February 10 to discuss necessary approval of work under Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) and Hospital Development Fund (HDF) for 2024.

Chief Medical Officer Kargil, Medical Superintendent DH Kargil, Physician Specialist, Executive Engineer R&B, PHE, PDD, Project Director KREDA, District Information Officer besides other concerned officers were present during the meeting.

Medical Superintendent informed the CEC that a total of ₹92 lakh budget is under the Hospital Development Fund (HDF) and ₹10 lakh under Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS).

The meeting discussed procurement of Jan Aushadi Drugs, consultant cabins library, establishment of consultant cabin, maintenance of doctors common room, funds to help needy people, Ayurvedic drugs, reserve funds for CME, purchase of electrical, carpentry, plumbing items, cabin in physiotherapy section, purchase of sanitary item, UPVC partition for storage of bedding for attendants, repair of different sections, parking allocations, purchase of batteries for blood bank and

other issues.

CEC showed his disagreement over the engagement of multi-tasking staff through HDF. He said HDF is specifically for the development of hospital infrastructure development and procurement of necessary items. He directed MS, District Hospital Kargil to write a letter to higher authorities to absorb the same manpower on an outsourcing basis under professional services.

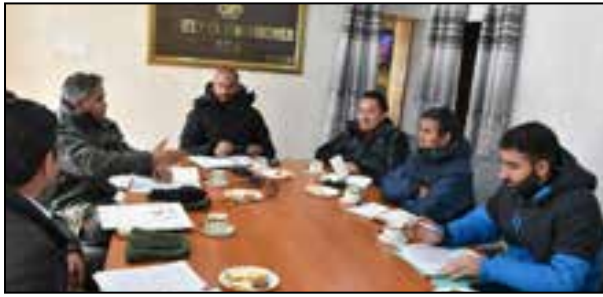
He also directed to raise existing funds from ₹5 lakh to ₹8 lakh to help to provide financial aid for the poor and needy. He also directed the Health Department to prepare criteria so that the most deserving would get the benefit of the scheme.

CEC also directed to raise the funds of Jan Aushadi Drugs from ₹7 lakh to ₹10 lakh. He also suggested providing 90 percent discount on medicines which would help the financially weak people. Dr Jaffer suggested sparing a prayer room for attendants at the hospital.

CEC appreciated the efforts of doctors and other healthcare staff for providing uninterrupted services to the people. He requested all officers to work with a similar spirit to improve the services as well as the infrastructure of the district hospital.

Fortnightly News

DC, Leh chairs review meeting on Border Village Development



Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve, chairing a review meeting on the ongoing development projects in border villages.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve, chaired a review meeting on the ongoing development projects in border villages under the Vibrant Village Programme and the advancements in Project Tsangda at the Pangong area on February 6 at DC Office Leh.

Colonel Atul Bharadwaj, representing HQ 14 Corps shared detailed insights into the multifaceted development projects initiated by the Indian Army under the Vibrant Village Programme in Leh. He elaborated on the various approved projects, including the installation of a Community Radio Station at Hanle, provision of ambulances with accessories for multiple villages, in-

stallation of borewells, establishment of an archery node, and other significant initiatives aimed at enhancing community welfare and infrastructure.

In addition to the ongoing projects, Colonel Bharadwaj also presented proposed initiatives under the Vibrant Village Programme. These proposals encompassed a wide spectrum of development areas, ranging from classroom repair and renovation to the procurement of essential vehicles and machinery, construction of welcome gates, and the provision of extreme cold climate tents.

Further, it was informed that to infuse soul in these remote villages, Fire and Fury Corps has undertaken

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer of Leh, Councillor Chushul, District Block Development Officer of Durbuk, and the Supervisor overseeing Project Tsangda.

DC Kargil tours Drass sub-division reviews developmental works

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: DC, Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse conducted a tour of Drass subdivision on February 6 and reviewed the status of development and snow clearance works on the Srinagar-Leh Highway.



DC, Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse interacting with hospital staff during his visit to Sub District Hospital, Drass.

Executive Engineer Mechanical, Mohd Hassan; Dy. SP Traffic, Manzoor Ahmed; Tehsildar Drass, SHO Drass, PHE Engineers, and concerned BRO officers were also present. During the visit up to India gate, DC took stock of the snow clearance measures being undertaken by project Vijayak on the highway. The snow clearance team informed that all efforts were being taken to make the road suitable for vehicular traffic at the earliest. He also discussed telephonically with Chief Engineer Beacon regarding the snow clearance status being undertaken by Beacon.

A public delegation led by Councillor Bhimbat, Abdul Wahid, Councillor Ranbirpora, Abdul Samad, and former BDC Drass Noor Mohd met DC at Dak Bungalow and raised their grievances. The demands include the promotion of tourism, compensation for land, installation of street lights, etc.

DC Kargil assured suitable follow-up for redressal of all genuine issues as per norms in a specified timeline. He also enquired about the status of snow clearance work on various internal roads in the subdivision, the functioning

of JJM, essential supplies, etc.

He assessed Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works in Sub Division Drass, facilities being provided to the students including heating arrangements, etc at the winter tuition center. At Sub District Hospital, Drass interacted with patients and hospital staff. He took a detailed assessment of services being provided to the patients and inspected its various sections and wards.

Earlier in the morning, he also participated in the Drass winter carnival culmination event.

DDMA Kargil conducts collaborative disaster readiness exercise involving multiple departments



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: District Disaster Management Authority, Kargil in collaboration with Indian Army, Health, Revenue, Mechanical, I&FC, PDD, MC, DIPR, UT-DRF, Fire & Emergency Services and other departments, conducted a disaster preparation-cum-mini mock drill exercise at Bus Stand, Kargil on 7 February.

The exercise was designed to strengthen disaster readiness in the district and ensure effective coordination among different stakeholders in managing emergency situations.

Lt. Col. Joshi underscored the critical importance of disaster preparedness, particularly given the town area's vulnerability. The army conducted a mock drill focused on landslides, while UT-DRF demonstrated CPR techniques. These efforts were undertaken with the objective of strengthening the community's resilience against potential disasters.

Key attendees included Tehsildar Kargil, Executive Engineers from I&FC and Mechanical departments, DPO Education, EO MC Kargil, doctors from the Medical Department, the head of Fire Services in Kargil, and the head of UT-DRF.

In concluding the exercise, Tehsildar Kargil, on behalf of DDMA Kargil, expressed gratitude to all the participating departments for their contributions to the successful event.

Drass Warrior lifts 15th CEC Ice Hockey Cup

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Drass Warriors lifted the 15th CEC Ice Hockey Cup by beating Royal Shakar Chiktan with a margin of 7-0 goals on 10 February. The tournament was organised by Department of Youth Services and Sports Kargil at Khree Sultan Cho Sports Stadium Biamathang, Kargil.



Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC, Kargil, attended the concluding ceremony. He congratulated the winner and runner up team for displaying exemplary sporting skills throughout the tournament and congratulated all participating teams and the organizing department for the successful conduct of the tournament.

He expressed hope that winter sports will further achieve new heights in the district considering the infrastructure expansion

and hopefully athletes will perform their best in the national and international events in future.

CEC assured that winter sports infrastructure will be boosted in all blocks by construction of more Ice Hockey rinks and in this regard, maximum provision for funding will be explored in the coming financial year under District Capex. He also expressed hope that UT Administration will continue their support in strengthening sports infrastructure in Kargil by providing more

logistic support to the athletes.

Earlier, DYSSO Kargil, Abid Ali briefed about the conduct of the tournament and added that 36 teams including four women teams across the district participated in the tournament. Pertinently, the Women Trophy was lifted by Bodh Kharbo by winning over Wakha Mulbekh.

Later, the CEC and other dignitaries felicitated the winners and runner up team with trophies and certificates.

DC Kargil reviews Swadesh Darshan 2.0 progress in tourism department



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse reviewed the progress of work of the Tourism Department under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 on 7 February.

DC Kargil was informed that the DPRs for many projects under the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India are under preparation. He instructed AD Tourism to ensure completion of the same at earliest.

Discussions were also held on progress on skill devel-

opment component under SD 2.0, branding of tourism potential of the district on more comprehensive pattern.

Ministry of Tourism has revamped the scheme and launched Swadesh Darshan 2.0 with a holistic mission to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations across the country.

Nodal officer ADC Kargil, Ghulam Mohiudin Wani and Assistant Director Tourism, Kargil, Aga Syed Toha were present in the meeting.

CEC, LAHDC Leh meets Secretary GAD & PWD discusses several issues



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson convened a meeting with Secretary GAD & PWD Ladakh, Micheal D'Souza on February 12 and discussed the status of Leh Bhawan's construction in Dwarka, New Delhi.

Issues regarding appointments on compassionate ground under SRO 43 in Police Department, issues of Daily waged workers in different departments, issues of regularisation under SRO 64 in Health Department, filling up of additional posts of Work

Supervisors in PWD, and other way forward to make necessary amendments in Recruitment Rules were also discussed during the meeting with the concerned officers.

The meeting was attended by Executive Councillor for Minority Affairs, Ghulam Mehdi; Councillor Nyoma, Councillor Korzok, Director Health Services Ladakh, Chief Engineer PWD Ladakh, SE PW (R&B) Leh, CMO Leh, AEE Construction Division, and the consultant/ empanelled architect of Leh Bhawan.

DEO Kargil reviews provision of Assured Minimum Facilities at Polling Stations



Deputy Commissioner/District Election Officer (DEO), Kargil Shrikant Suse taking stock of the provision of the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) at the polling stations in the district.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Deputy Commissioner/District Election Officer (DEO), Kargil Shrikant Suse took stock of the provision of the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) at the polling stations in the district on February 5.

Dy. District Election Officer Kargil, Dr. Khanzada Mohd Usman informed the meeting about the accessibility arrangements and AMF Status of the Polling Stations as per the reports submitted by the concerned SDMs/Tehsildars and other Nodal officers.

DC/DEO stressed for making timely preparations and completing the Accessibility and AMF of the Polling Stations in all respects for facilitating the electors.

Shrikant also directed the SDMs/Tehsildars to conduct physical verification of the polling stations in their jurisdiction and ensure the availability of all assured minimum facilities, so as to ensure that no voter or poll staff faces any kind of difficulty.

Discussion also held on vulnerability mapping of polling stations.

During the meeting, the status of buildings, availability of drinking water, ramp facilities, electricity, toilet facilities, and wheelchair facilities for PwDs voters and senior citizens at various polling stations were discussed in threadbare.

The meeting was also attended by SDM Zanskar Romil Singh Donk (through VC), SDM Shakar Chiktan, A. G Zargar, DySP Hq, Manzoor Ahmad, AD DIPR Kargil, Padma Angmo, Exen PDD Kargil, Tehsildars, BDOs, AEE PHE, SHO and other concerned officers.

People's Voice District status: Zanskar pa balances disappointment and hope

...continues from page 4

context of the upcoming MP election. The people of Zanskar remain optimistic, yet there is a growing awareness of the need for careful consideration and clear delineation of powers, echoing their desire for a full-fledged district rather than an administrative one.

Since 1979, the people of Zanskar have consistently pressed for the establishment of a full-fledged district. The prospect of receiving only an administrative district is viewed with skepticism, as it would not differ significantly from the constitutional provisions. The concern is that amateurs might manipulate rules and regulations, making changes that could potentially undermine the essence of the demand. The ambiguity surrounding whether Zanskar would receive a district commissioner, additional DC, or a Revenue department, and whether the headquarters would be established in Zanskar, adds to the uncertainty. The demand for full power stems from the aspiration to separate from Kargil, perceived as a factor hindering progress in various aspects. The public, if provided only an administrative district, would express discontent, and there is a prevailing sentiment that they will not remain silent.

The disappointment among the people of Zanskar is palpable, especially considering that the MP included the promise of district status in his 2019 election manifesto. With high hopes based on these promises, the people of Zanskar united in their support and voted for him, overlooking other political parties. Although the MP has raised the issue in parliament, the demand remains unfulfilled, leading to a perception that it was utilized as a vote bank strategy. The fear is that if these promises are not realized this time, it will be a matter of shame for the MP, and the people of Zanskar will lose faith in future expectations.

Despite the disappointment, there is lingering hope, especially after Republic Day when discussions within the BJP ruling party hinted at the possibility of obtaining district status before the upcoming elections. Recognizing their limited influence, people of Zanskar are left with the only option of maintaining their expectations and hoping for the best in their pursuit of district status.



Rinzin Kalsang, Lecturer and Former President Student Association: As a resident of Zanskar, I observe that the ruling party, which has consistently made promises and provided assurances for several years, is experiencing unexplained delays in granting district status. In my opinion, these delays could be attributed to a strategic move to gain political advantage in the upcoming election, even though the confirmation of providing district status is evident.

Both Zanskar and Nubra have been advocating for district status to establish separate headquarters, but the urgency is more pronounced in Zanskar. The considerable distance and challenges posed by winter road blockages make it imperative for Zanskar to have its own district. The people of Zanskar have experienced neglect in areas such as education, supervision, development, and basic needs under the administration of Kargil. Given this scenario, the necessity for Zanskar to become a full-fledged district is apparent.

Typically, a political party that fulfills its promise of providing district status to a region would make the announcement closer to the election, leveraging their influence on the public. While there is visible assurance based on past promises, there remains a concern about the possibility of compromising and granting limited power. However, there is an 80% hope that the ruling party will declare Zanskar a district before the MP election.

NOTICE

I, Stanzin Gyalak D/o Gyaltsen Kunzang R/o Shilingskit, Padum- Zanskar UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my father's name has been wrongly recorded as Gyaltsen Kunsang instead of the correct and actual name as per my Adhaar card Gyaltsen Kunzang, in my ST Certificate Registration No. Teh-Z/BG/STC/429 Dated 29-07-2022 and Resident Certificate No: Z/LRC/456/ Dated 28-07-2022 duly issued by Tehsil Office, Zanskar UT Ladakh. Now, I'm applying for changes in my ST Certificate as well as Resident Certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to the Tehsil Office, Zanskar UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

I, Stanzin Sonam S/o Tsering Pakto R/o Khaltse, Leh UT Ladakh Prop of M/s Ladakh Rafting Adventure applying for the registration with the Assistant Director Tourism Office, Leh. Any objection in this regard may file their report in writing within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTICE

I, Jigmat Yangchan Dolma D/o Regzen Namgial, R/o Sakti, Leh UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my father's name has been wrongly recorded as Regzen Namgial instead of correct and actual name as per my Adhaar card Regzen Namgial in my Resident Certificate No.Teh/K/1847-49(R) 2021 Dated 29/11/2021 duly issued by Tehsil Office, Kharu, UT Ladakh. Now, I'm applying for changes in my Resident certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Tehsil Office, Kharu, UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

An application has been received from Stanzin Chosdup S/o Tsering Morup R/o Domkhar, Leh UT Ladakh to transfer the vehicle No. JK 10 9432 owned by Thinle Norbu S/o Nawang Yontan R/o Mudh Leh UT Ladakh. Now, it is therefore notified for general information that objection if any to the proposed transfer shall be filed in writing in the office of Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) within a period of 10 days from date of publication of this notice.

No: ARTO/ UT/Leh/2743-44
Date: 09-02-2024

Asstt. Regional Transport Officer
Leh Ladakh

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