



In Conversation with
Stanzin Angmo, Mixed Martial Art Fighter

In Focus:
Tracing Barley’s Himalayan roots — And saving it from extinction

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केंद्र शासित प्रदेश लद्दाख
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सत्यमेव जयते

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY
स्वतंत्रता दिवस की शुभकामनाएँ

SH. KAVINDER GUPTA
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor
Union Territory of Ladakh

ADV. TASHI GYALSON
Hon'ble Chief Executive Councilor
LAHDC, Leh

DR. MOHD JAFFER AKHOON
Hon'ble Chief Executive Councilor
LAHDC, Kargil

HAPPY 15th August INDEPENDENCE DAY

Conveys Warm Greetings To
Dear Brothers & Sisters of UT Ladakh

Fortnightly News

9th Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston held in Leh with grand festivities

Bhikkhu Sanghasena receives Ladakh dPal-rNgam Award 2025



Photo Caption: Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder of the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre receiving the prestigious Ladakh dPal-rNgam Award 2025.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 9th edition of the Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston was celebrated with grandeur and cultural fervour in Leh on August 5. Organised under the aegis of 6th Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, the festival aimed to honour Ladakh’s rich cultural legacy and historical identity.

The day-long celebration commenced at the historic Leh Palace with traditional rituals and vibrant cultural performances and culminated in a musical evening at the NDS Stadium.

This year’s central theme, “Compassion”, reflected the teachings of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, whose 90th birth anniversary was commemorated through the declaration of July as the Month of Compassion by the Council.

Addressing the gathering, CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson said the celebration aims to honour and relive the memories of Ladakh’s rich history and cultural heritage. “The celebration at Leh Palace offers us a chance to reflect on the journey of Ladakh — its challenges and achievements — and to remember all those who have contributed to its progress,” he said.

He emphasized the importance of unity and collective effort in working towards a better future for Ladakh.

Highlights of the day included a traditional horse race by villagers from Phobrang, Changthang at the Polo Ground and a Shondol dance performance by 90 artists in hon-

our of His Holiness’ birthday.

The evening programme featured a musical play on the life of the Dalai Lama, followed by a powerful theatrical production titled “bDud aDul”, directed by Mipham Otsal, Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee and Director of the Ladakh Theatre Organisation. The play, themed on the path of compassion, portrayed the journey of the Buddha in his quest for enlightenment and the transformative impact of his teachings on two key characters — Sujata, who offers him nourishment during his journey, and Angulimala, a ruthless killer who ultimately renounces violence and becomes a devoted follower of the Buddha.

Welcoming the guests, Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk, described the festival as a “living bridge” between Ladakh’s past and future. He highlighted environmental initiatives, including the Indus River Clean-up Drive, and underscored the importance of preserving Ladakh’s ecological, cultural, and moral values.

The CEC also reviewed the achievements of the 6th LAHDC Council, including the free cervical cancer vaccination drive, 33% reservation for women, and the upcoming Indus Cleanliness Drive scheduled for August 12.

A documentary on the Month of Compassion was screened, showcasing various Council-led initiatives throughout July.

L-G Kavinder Gupta stated that the celebration of dPal rNam Dus-

ton is an effort to keep Ladakh’s pride, glory and centuries-old rich culture and traditions alive.

Acknowledging the stupendous developments in UT Ladakh post formation of Ladakh as a union territory after the abrogation of Article 370 on this very day in 2019, the Lt Governor reiterated the commitment of Union Government and UT Administration to work for the welfare of the people of Ladakh, particularly in the preservation of its unique and rich culture & heritage along with language. He highlighted the need to pledge to keep the youth connected to their roots to safeguard Ladakh’s unique culture and identity so that they can take pride in Ladakh’s rich history and glory.

The Lt Governor highlighted the need to send students from Ladakh on cultural exchange tours so that the Ladakhi youth are acquainted with different cultures to celebrate the unity in diversity of India.

The audience also witnessed the formal launch of three major initiatives — the revival of Ladakh’s traditional knowledge (Norskal), a documentary on the achievements of the 6th LAHDC Leh, and the digitalisation of grameen homestays, a collaboration between LAHDC Leh, Fircun Society, and the Department of Tourism aimed at sustainable and community-led tourism development.

The prestigious Ladakh dPal-rNgam Award 2025 was conferred upon Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder of the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, for his spiritual contributions and humanitarian efforts. In his address, he paid tribute to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and reflected on the journey of Ladakh as a Union Territory and the democratic legacy of LAHDC Leh.

In his spiritually grounded and emotionally resonant address, Bhikkhu Sanghasena expressed heartfelt gratitude to the people of Ladakh, the Mahabodhi family, and supporters from across India and abroad. He extended special thanks to CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson and the LAHDC Leh for their continued support.

He acknowledged that the formation of Ladakh as a Union Territory has opened new avenues for

development and progress, while also honouring the sacrifices made by countless individuals to achieve UT status. Reflecting on the region’s democratic journey, he described LAHDC Leh as a powerful institution born of struggle, vision, and the collective will of the people.

Urging the youth to safeguard this legacy, he emphasized that the autonomy and powers enjoyed today were hard-earned and must be preserved with responsibility and commitment.

He concluded by dedicating the award to the people of Ladakh, the Mahabodhi family, and to all those who follow the path of compassion, unity, and inner development.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Lobzang Tsewang for his longstanding work in translating the teachings of His Holiness and making them accessible to the wider public. A Special Appreciation Award was given to internationally renowned author and activist Helena Norberg-Hodge for her decades-long contribution to cultural and environmental conservation in Ladakh. The award was received on her behalf by Ishey Tundup, Director of LEDeG.

Special Awards were presented to Moses Kunzang (KAS) for his service in administration and youth development, Thupstan Shanfan for preserving traditional knowledge and wisdom, Ishey Yangzom for promoting tourism through tours and travel, Ghulam Mustafa and Ghulam Mohiuddin Abdu for their contributions to the hospitality sector and Ghulam Musa for his dedicated public service.

The evening concluded with folk music and traditional costume showcases, followed by contemporary music and dance performances, culminating in a live performance by Indian Idol and Bollywood singer Rito Riba, whose appearance was met with enthusiastic applause.

The 9th Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston concluded on a note of celebration and reflection, reaffirming Ladakh’s enduring unity, cultural pride, and the spirit of compassion that continues to guide its people.

Ladakh bids farewell to Ashok Chakra awardee Chhering Motup



Photo Caption: Ladakh bidding solemn farewell to Naib Subedar Chhering Motup, Ashok Chakra awardee.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh bid a solemn farewell on August 8 to one of its most valiant sons, Naib Subedar Chhering Motup, Ashok Chakra awardee, whose life embodied service, humility, and extraordinary courage.

The wreath-laying ceremony, conducted with full military honours, brought together civil and military dignitaries, spiritual leaders, monks, and local residents — all united in silent tribute to a soldier whose legacy will outlast the echo of rifles and ceremonial drums.

Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta; Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson; Chief Secretary, Dr. Pawan Kotwal; Director General of Police, Dr. S.D. Jamwal; Councillor Likir, Smanla Dorje; and President of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, Chering Dorjay Lakruk, were among those present.

Senior Army officials including Lieutenant General Hitesh Bhalla, General Officer Commanding 14 Corps; Brigadier Rinchen Dorje; LSRC Com-

mandant Col. Kamal Pandey; Subedar Major Tashi Zangpo LSRC; and commanding officers from other battalions stood in solidarity with the bereaved family. From the veteran community, Colonel Neema, Director, Rajya Sainik Board Ladakh, and Honorary Captain Sonam Morup, President, Ex-Servicemen League Ladakh, joined in paying homage to a fellow soldier whose courage remains an enduring inspiration.

Meeting with the bereaved family, the Lt Governor offered heartfelt condolences, calling Chhering Motup a “son of the soil whose place will remain irreplaceable for years to come.”

Born into the Khachepa family of Likir, Chhering Motup, aged 80, joined the Ladakh Scouts in 1965. He was awarded the Ashok Chakra — India’s highest peacetime gallantry award — in 1985 for exemplary courage during a mission on the Saltoro Ridge in Siachen. His late son, Tsewang Morup, was a Vir Chakra awardee.

5th Nomadic Festival: Changthang traditions take centre stage in Hanle



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

HANLE: The windswept plains of Hanle came alive with colour, music, and tradition as the 5th Nomadic Festival began amidst great enthusiasm. The two-day celebration drew people from Sham, Lalok, Rong, and distant corners of Ladakh, along with visitors keen to witness the distinctive heritage of Changthang.

The day began with the traditional reception of dignitaries, followed by visits to the rebos and stalls displaying local crafts, handwoven woollens, and traditional delicacies. The offering of Lhar-nga to mark the auspicious start of the proceedings set a spiritual tone for the festival. From there, the main venue burst into life with cultural presentations that reflected the diversity and depth of Changthang’s traditions.

The religious chams by the venerable monks of Hanle Gonpa, in their flowing brocade robes and elaborate masks, offered a powerful display of Ladakh’s spiritual heritage. The haunting sound of dungchen horns filled the valley, mingling with the rhythmic beats of drums and cymbals. Following this, artists from Hanle presented the Bukshasdo and T.R. dances — slow, graceful movements accompanied by folk songs that tell stories of nomadic life, seasonal migrations, and the deep bond between people and the land. Performers from Phulaks, Phobrang, Korzok, Nyoma, Likte, and other villages brought their own traditional styles — some marked by energetic footwork and rapid drum beats, others by melodic singing and colourful costumes adorned with turquoise and coral. Each performance was not just entertainment, but a living archive of Changthang’s oral history and collective memory.

Executive Councillor RDD, Tashi Namgyal Yakzee congratulated the people of Hanle and expressed gratitude to CEC, and the administration for their constant support. He recalled that the festival was conceived to safeguard Changthang’s cultural heritage while creating new avenues for local income. He stressed that the Nomadic Festival is not only for tourists but equally for the local people, as it allows them to reconnect with their heritage, learn from one another, and explore sustainable ways of turning culture into a source of livelihood.

Chief Guest, His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche, lauded the initiative, saying that such festivals are crucial for reviving Ladakh’s cultural identity and value systems, which risk fading in the face of modern changes. He said that heritage should not be

allowed to disappear, and gatherings like these help ensure that traditional wisdom, customs, and practices are passed on to the next generation. Rinpoche also observed the significant development Hanle has witnessed in recent years, improved roads, better connectivity, and upgraded infrastructure and highlighted that these changes, if combined with unity and dedication, could transform Changthang into a thriving cultural and tourism hub.

CEC Tashi Gyalson, in his address, commended the people of Changthang for keeping their traditions vibrant and for hosting a festival that plays a vital role in reviving local heritage. He remarked that such events are essential for preserving culture while also creating opportunities to promote tourism in the region. Speaking on development, the CEC noted that since Ladakh became a Union Territory, Changthang has witnessed significant improvements in connectivity, with mobile networks now reaching even remote villages and upgraded roads making Hanle accessible within a day’s journey from Leh. He also urged the people to stay united, work collectively for the region’s progress, and respect diverse opinions to ensure harmony and inclusive growth.

The first day of the festival concluded in an atmosphere of joy, unity, and optimism, a celebration of the Changthang spirit, where culture and development walk hand in hand.

Later in the day, Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Advocate Tashi Gyalson, with the blessings of His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche laid the foundation stone for the Improvement & Upgradation of Road on MRL12 – Link Road to Buk Yogma Anlay under PMGSY, at an estimated cost of ₹993.32 lakh, in the presence of Administrative Secretary, Tourism & Culture, Sanjit Rodrigues; Executive Councillor Tashi Namgyal Yakzee; and Councillors Ishey Spalzang (Nyoma), Karma Namdak (Korzok), Kunzang Lotos (Hunder), and Thinles Nurboo (Kungyam), along with Nominated Sanga Councillor Ven. Konchok Tsepal, were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, CEC Tashi Gyalson stated that this project marks a significant milestone in strengthening the region’s infrastructure and improving connectivity for the people of Changthang. He emphasised that better roads will not only ease travel for residents but also improve access for tourists, thereby fostering economic growth and development in the area.

Leh gears up for UT-level disaster mock drill



Photo Caption: During the Disaster Management Orientation and Coordination Conference for the upcoming Union Territory-level mock drill.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A Disaster Management Orientation and Coordination Conference for the upcoming Union Territory-level mock drill was held virtually on August 12 at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner’s Office, Leh.

Chaired by Maj. Gen. Sudhir Bahl (Retd.), the session aimed to strengthen disaster preparedness and address gaps identified in previous operations. The presentation covered the Incident Response System (IRS), nodal officer assignments, early warning mechanisms, and coordinated planning for disaster and rescue operations.

Maj. Gen. Bahl stressed the importance of public awareness drives, inter-departmental coordination, and regular training in line with National Disaster Management guidelines. He also called for close collaboration with the Army, ITBP, and Air Force for operational support, and explained differences in urban versus rural response strategies.

Programme Schedule for the Mock Drill:

Aug 12–18: Preparation & Coordination – Awareness drives, resource mapping, communication planning, training, and rehearsals.

Aug 19: Tabletop Exercise – SDMA updates, civil defence preparedness, and scenario-based presentations by districts and departments.

Aug 20: Preparation for Mock Exercise – Simulation site setup, activation of EOCs, IRTs, IRS facilities (relief camps), and communication checks.

Aug 21–22: Day mock exercise (09:00–13:00 hrs) and night mock exercise (18:30–22:00 hrs).

Aug 22: Debriefing at 10:00 hrs.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Leh, Ghulam Mohd, and Additional Superintendent of Police Leh were present, while officials from CISF Leh, 13 NDRF, DIG ITBP, and U-Force 14 Corps joined virtually.

The exercises will focus on inter-agency coordination, hospital casualty management, and school evacuation drills to ensure readiness for any emergency.

From source to soul: Leh unites to protect the sacred Indus river



Photo Caption: Pledging to protect the Indus River from pollution.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a landmark step towards preserving Ladakh’s lifeline, LAHDC Leh, under the leadership of Chairman/CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson, launched the Singe Tsangspo Tsangde Lasgul – Mission Indus Clean-Up at Sindhu Ghat on August 12.

The event, coinciding with the Har Ghar Tiranga movement, saw an unprecedented gathering of leaders and citizens united in purpose — from the Worthy Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal and senior Army and ITBP officers, to councillors, Gobas, religious heads, civil society, NGOs, trade and transport unions, and nearly 2,000 volunteers.

The programme began with a solemn pledge in both English and Bhoti, committing to protect the Indus River from pollution.

DC Romil Singh Donk called the Indus “the soul of India,” urging that the mission be an everyday effort rather than a one-day event. Army representative Col. A.K. Upadhyaya reflected on the sacred elements of nature, while DIG K.S. Kas, ITBP, commended the vision of the LAHDC and pledged the force’s active involvement.

Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal spoke of the Indus Valley Civilisation’s legacy, the sacredness of the river, and the very origin of the name “India” from the Sindhu. He also urged better waste management, especially poultry waste, to protect the river’s health.

CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson underlined that the mission’s success rests on both individual responsibility and collective effort, calling for constructive suggestions and strict enforcement to sustain the momentum.

Following the speeches, dignitaries moved to the riverbanks to lead the clean-up, symbolising collective action. The campaign’s main focus was the Leh Stream — a 13.94 km stretch from Gangles to Abi Spang before merging into the Indus — as well as adjoining nallahs and feeder streams. The stream was divided into 12 cleaning zones, each assigned to specific volunteer groups including LEDeG, Zero Waste Ladakh, LEHO, Women’s Alliance Leh, merchant and transport unions, and armed forces.

By day’s end, approximately 75 tonnes of waste — plastic, cloth, metal scraps, and other pollutants — had been removed and segregated for proper disposal under Solid Waste Management Rules. The day also featured the inauguration of garbage collection vehicles donated under CSR initiatives of CII Foundation and HDFC Bank Parivartan, and a thought-provoking skit by University of Ladakh students on the dangers of waste dumping.

Simultaneously, similar drives were held in all subdivisions under the respective SDMs and Gobas, with Khaltisi, Nubra, Likir, Nyoma, Kharu, and Durbuk showing exemplary mobilisation.

Fortnightly News

HOPE Mission concludes: India’s first analogue astronauts complete 10-day isolation study



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: A milestone in India’s space exploration efforts was marked on August 11 with the conclusion of the HOPE mission — the nation’s first analogue astronaut isolation study. Crew members Rahul Mogallapally and Yaman Akot emerged from the HOPE analogue station, a specialised facility operated by Protoplanet in collaboration with Mars Society Australia, The Mars Society, and ISRO.

The conclusion ceremony was attended by Executive Councillor Stanzin Cho-

shpel and Councillor Korzok Karma Namdak, who welcomed the crew and commended their achievement. Scientists from ISRO’s Human Spaceflight Centre, who closely monitored the mission, were also present.

Over the 10-day isolation, the crew lived under conditions designed to simulate a long-duration space mission, focusing on human factors, psychological resilience, and operational protocols in a confined, resource-limited environment. The data and insights gathered will support future human spaceflight missions, including India’s upcoming Gaganyaan programme.

The HOPE mission underscores the value of international collaboration and research, offering a platform to study crew dynamics, mental well-being, and technological readiness for future planetary exploration.

Kisan mela-cum-fruit exhibition 2025 showcases Ladakh’s horticultural potential at Khaltse



Photo Caption: Guests during the Kisan Mela-cum-Fruit Exhibition 2025 at the SDM Ground, Khaltse.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KHALTSE: The Horticulture Department, Leh, organised the Kisan Mela-cum-Fruit Exhibition 2025 at the SDM Ground, Khaltse, on August 11, featuring a vibrant display of fruits, flowers, and horticultural tools and machinery offered at subsidised rates.

The event was attended by Councillor Khaltse, Lobzang Sherab, as Chief Guest; SDM Khaltse, Mohd Sharif, as Guest of Honour; and Director Horticulture, UT Ladakh, Tsewang Phuntsog, as Special Guest, along with several senior horticulture experts and local leaders.

In his address, Councillor Sherab stressed the importance of recognising farmers’ contributions, ensuring timely access to resources, and blending modern technology with traditional practices for sustainable horticulture. SDM Sharif promoted organic farming and encouraged diversification in fruit cultivation, while Director Phuntsog highlighted Ladakh’s unique microclimate and its potential for cultivating diverse apricot varieties.

Experts from CAZRI Leh, KVK Leh, Horticulture Department Kargil, and Himmotthan Society shared innovative research techniques and best practices to support local farmers. Chief Horticulture Officer, Leh, Kunzang Wangmo, detailed departmental schemes and inaugurated a one-year Planning Book.

The exhibition saw enthusiastic participation from farmers across villages, with prizes awarded in various fruit categories. The event served as a platform for celebrating agricultural achievements, fostering collaboration, and promoting innovation in Ladakh’s horticulture sector.

Artist Skarma Sonam Tashi wins National Award at 64th National Exhibition of Art



Photo Caption: Skarma Sonam Tashi receiving the National Award at the 64th National Exhibition of Art.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: In a moment of pride for Ladakh, artist Skarma Sonam Tashi has been conferred the National Award at the 64th National Exhibition of Art, organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi under the Ministry of Culture, Govern-

ment of India. The award ceremony took place on August 5, 2025, in New Delhi. Skarma’s award-winning work, titled “My Homeland – 3,” is a striking sculpture that captures the essence of Ladakh’s landscapes and traditional architecture. Crafted from recycled materials such as cardboard, papier-mâché, and natural pigments, the piece embodies themes of sustainability and ecological awareness, setting it apart for its originality and relevance.

This marks a historic first, as Skarma Sonam Tashi becomes the first artist from Ladakh to receive this prestigious national honour, a significant milestone for the region’s art community.

The ongoing exhibition features a wide array of contemporary Indian artworks and is open to the public until September 15, 2025.

Ladakh drafts sports policy to reward athletes, coaches: LG Gupta



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta meeting the athletes during the 7-a-side League tournament at the Astro-turf Football Stadium, Spituk.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Union Territory Administration of Ladakh is framing a Ladakh Sports Policy to recognise and reward deserving sportspersons and coaches, with the aim of motivating more youth to pursue sports.

Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta announced the initiative while inaugurating the 7-a-side League Tournament organised by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) under the theme ‘Ladakh Says No to Drugs’ at the Astro-turf Football Stadium, Spituk, on August 11.

Noting that states like Haryana and Pun-

jab reward medal-winning athletes — a practice previously absent in Ladakh — LG Gupta said the new policy would ensure players who excel at national and international levels are duly recognised. He also stressed rewarding coaches for their crucial role in shaping athletes both on and off the field.

Praising the Prime Minister’s Khelo India initiative as a “landmark step” in harnessing youth potential, the LG said such programs channelise energy positively, fostering fitness, discipline, and teamwork.

Highlighting Ladakh’s unique advantage in winter sports, especially ice hockey, he reaffirmed the Administration’s commitment to provide facilities and equipment across sports disciplines, enabling local athletes to compete at the highest levels. He also lauded ABVP Ladakh for aligning the tournament with the Drug-Free Ladakh campaign.

The event was attended by University of Ladakh Vice-Chancellor Prof. Saket Kushwaha, NISR Director Dr. Padma Gurmet, District Youth Services & Sports Officer Tsering Tashi, ABVP officials, and students from EJM College, Leh.

L-G Kavinder reviews key departments, calls for zero pendency and fast-tracked development



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta with officials of Union Territory of Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, urged senior government officials to ensure good governance, efficient public service delivery, and timely completion of developmental projects across the Union Territory.

The Lt Governor made these remarks while chairing an introductory and comprehensive review meeting of multiple departments at the LG Secretariat. The meeting aimed to assess departmental functioning and the implementation status of various government schemes.

The departments reviewed included Revenue, Finance, Home, Police, Health & Medical Education, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Ladakh Pollution Control Committee, and Labour.

Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining the roles and responsibilities, major projects, schemes, and challenges faced by the Revenue, Finance, and Home departments.

Dr. Kotwal highlighted key schemes under the Revenue Department such as the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)

and the SVAMITVA scheme (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas), aimed at promoting paperless and digitized revenue records. He also presented proposals regarding the administrative framework, creation of additional posts, and financial requirements for the formation of five new districts in Ladakh.

On the financial front, Dr. Kotwal outlined mechanisms such as PMFS and LIFMS, adopted by the UT Administration to streamline governance. He briefed the Lt Governor on the budget allocated by the Union Government and the administration’s efforts to ensure 100% utilization of the current fiscal year’s budget.

DGP Ladakh Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, IPS, along with the Chief Secretary, presented an overview of the Home Department and Ladakh Police, covering staff strength, recruitment status, key initiatives, upcoming projects, and the department’s strategic vision.

Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, IAS, gave a comprehensive report on Health & Medical Education, detailing healthcare services delivered through

health centres and the National Health Mission (NHM). He spoke about human resource planning, ongoing health programmes such as Anemia Mukh Bharat and Vision TB-Free India, and upcoming initiatives, including the establishment of a Medical College in Leh.

Wildlife Warden Leh, Mandeep Mittal, IFS, briefed the Lt Governor on efforts to rationalize the boundaries of the Karakoram and Changthang Wildlife Sanctuaries to better serve local communities. He also spoke on the rescue and rehabilitation of injured wildlife, the creation of India’s first Dark Sky Reserve at Hanle, and other scientific research projects in the pipeline. He further updated the LG on key initiatives undertaken by the Forest Department and the Ladakh Pollution Control Committee.

Principal Secretary Khirwar also discussed the functioning and legal framework of the Labour Department, and the activities of the Ladakh Building & Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Board (LBOCWBB).

In his concluding address, LG Kavinder Gupta directed all officials to adopt a result-oriented approach, ensure zero pendency of files, and fast-track all developmental initiatives. He emphasized that the people of Ladakh must witness visible progress on the ground, and instructed the UT Administration to utilize available resources efficiently to ensure timely project completion without delays.

Mission Indus Cleanup: Kargil youth lead the way in river protection



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Government Degree College (GDC) Kargil organised an awareness rally to highlight the importance of protecting and preserving the Indus River and its vital tributaries for sustainable life. The Suru chapter of the rally marked the concluding day of the programme on August 9, focusing on the Suru River—Kargil’s lifeline and one of the most significant tributaries of the mighty Indus.

Around 200 students and faculty members participated, marching from the college through Bagh-e-Khomeini to

the Megawatt area. Chanting slogans such as “Save Suru, Save Kargil”, “Ghar ki tarah gali mohalle saf rakho” and “Suru i rgyamtsol lhyakhmo joq” in English, Urdu, and Purgi, participants carried placards and posters with impactful messages. Pamphlets on the protection of water bodies were also distributed to the public along the route. The rally concluded near Satellite Colony Chowk, where a cleanliness drive was held. Students actively collected large amounts of garbage, which was disposed of properly through Municipal Committee dustbins.

Addressing the gathering, Mustafa Ali, Physical Education Director and organising committee member, stressed the importance of such initiatives for a sustainable future. The programme was supervised by Dr. Abdul Hamid, Head, Department of Environmental Science.

Refreshments were served to participants by the College Protocol Committee. The organising team extended gratitude to the District Administration, Municipal Committee Kargil, and the College Principal for their support in making the event a success.

L-G Kavinder advocates SHG promotion to empower rural women as ‘Lakhpati Didis’

Stresses full scheme coverage and inter-departmental convergence for effective execution



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta chairing a comprehensive review meeting for the promotion of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, has called for the promotion of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by providing training in business models, product packaging, and marketing, along with opportunities to showcase their products at high-visibility platforms such as airports. The initiative aims to empower rural women to become ‘Lakhpati Didis’.

Chairing a comprehensive review meeting on August 11, the LG assessed the functioning and implementation of various schemes and projects across departments, including Law & Justice, Social & Tribal Welfare, Rural Development, IT, and Disaster Management.

Special Secretary Qureshi Tariq Mehmood outlined the Law & Jus-

tice Department’s work in legal advisory services, litigation management, legislative drafting, ongoing infrastructure projects, and addressing staff shortages.

Administrative Secretary Shashanka Ala presented an overview of key schemes under Social & Tribal Welfare, such as ICDS-Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0, Mission Vatsalya, Mission Shakti, PM Matru Vandana Yojana, disability support programmes, and the Lt Governor’s Student Support (Rewa) scheme. She also reviewed Rural Development initiatives like MGNREGA, SBM-Gramin, PMAY-Gramin, DAY-NULM, and watershed development projects. The IT Department reported on progress in 4G mobile tower connecti-

Leadership communication program for school leaders kicks off in Leh



Photo Caption: During the launch of three-day Leadership Communication Program in partnership with GoldenMile Learning.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The LAHDC, Leh and the Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh, in collaboration with DIET Leh, launched a three-day Leadership Communication Program in partnership with GoldenMile Learning on August 12.

The program, running from August 12 to 14, brings together Headmas-

ters and Principals from Higher Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools across Leh’s six educational zones, along with selected private school administrators.

Designed on the basis of a prior needs analysis, the training covers three key modules — Communication for Connection and Influence, Public Speaking: Debunking the Myths, and Building Teams and Leading Change. The sessions aim to inspire change through effective communication and strengthen educational leadership in the region.

The training is being conducted by subject expert Tarana Patel and Program Director, GML Mumbai India (EDU), Dr. Neepa Oza, both trainers from the GoldenMile Learning Trust.

NDMA holds orientation meet for Ladakh multi hazard mock exercise



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Secretary, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Department, UT Ladakh, informed that a UT-level mock exercise on Earthquake, Cloudburst, and Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) hazards will be conducted across both districts of Ladakh in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

In this connection, NDMA, New Delhi, convened an Orientation and Coordination Conference through Video Conferencing (VC). The VC was chaired by senior NDMA officials and attended by representatives from UT Disaster Management Authority (UTDMA) Ladakh, District Administrations of Leh and Kargil, Defence & Security Forces, Police, Fire & Emergency Services, Health Department, PWD, and other line departments, NGOs and community-based organisations.

NDMA reviewed and coordinate preparations for a mock exercise on multi-hazard scenarios, specifically focusing on Earthquake, Cloudburst, and Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) hazards in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

During the videoconference, NDMA experts provided a detailed presentation on Hazard profile of Ladakh and the increasing risks from seismic activity, extreme rainfall events, and glacial lake breaches, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for coordinated response, Communication and early warning systems for remote and high-altitude areas and Role of Incident Response System (IRS) in managing emergencies.

The participants discussed the mock exercise plan, which will include simulated earthquake tremors, flash floods due to cloudburst, and a GLOF event. The exercise will test evacuation drills, search & rescue operations, medical triage, relief camp management, and restoration of essential services.

Officials emphasised the importance of community participation and awareness, especially in vulnerable villages near glacial lakes and in seismically sensitive zones. Special focus was given to coordination between civil administration, armed forces, and local volunteers.

The NDMA team urged all departments to review their contingency plans, resource inventory, and inter-agency communication protocols ahead of the exercise. The meeting concluded with a commitment to conduct the mock drill in a realistic manner, ensuring lessons learned is incorporated into future disaster preparedness strategies.

Grade-I officials. He also called for improved solid and wastewater management to achieve ODF+ certification, and stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination for watershed development projects.

On connectivity, the LG directed telecom companies to meet mobile network expansion targets within the stipulated timeline. He further recommended introducing academic courses on wildlife, ecology, and other subjects relevant to Ladakh’s unique environment, enabling local youth to develop livelihoods in these fields.

Finally, he instructed departments to strengthen emergency response systems to ensure timely public assistance during crises.

Addressing administrative challenges, the LG suggested filling Block Development Officer (BDO) vacancies by promoting Panchayat Inspector

In Focus:

Tracing Barley’s Himalayan roots —
And saving it from extinction

By M.S. Raghuvanshi, Changchuk Lamo, Jigmat Stanzin, Stanzin Landol, Anurag Saxena, Abhay Shirale and Hrittick Biswas.

The worsening global crisis threatens to perpetuate food insecurity that would result in widespread poverty world-wide becomes particularly severe for communities that reside in isolated, and inaccessible remote areas which are not only harsh climates but difficult, and often inaccessible, making the mountain people more vulnerable to food accessibility (Khalid and Kaushik, 2008). Naked barley (Ladakhi: nas, Urdu: grim) is traditionally a staple crop of the Ladakh region and Although its growing times vary considerably with the altitude but is being cultivated at Korzok, on the Tso-moriri Lake, at 4,600 m (15,100 ft), which has what are widely considered to be the highest fields in the world (Rizvi, 1996). Around 10,000 years BC, the natural biological diversity played an important role in finding out the food for people and further started domestication of identified crops and animals and over the centuries, agricultural technology developed a broad spectrum of options for food, feed, and fiber production. (Wieczorek and Wright, 2012). The origin, evolution, and distribution of cultivated barley provide powerful insights into the historic origin and early spread of agrarian culture (Wang et al, 2015). Wild barley, *Hordeum spontaneum* C. Koch, is the progenitor of cultivated barley, *Hordeum vulgare* L. As one of the earliest domesticated crops, barley has been one of the most important staple crops in old world Neolithic agriculture upon which early agriculture was built (Harlan and Zohary, 1966; Zohary and Hopf, 2000). The domestication of food is fundamental to understanding the origin and early diffusion of agrarian culture (Morrell and Clegg, 2007).

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) is one of the founder crops of Old World agriculture. Archaeological remains of barley grains found at various sites in the Fertile Crescent (Zohary and Hopf 1993; Diamond 1998) indicate that the crop was domesticated about 8000 B.C. (B.C. 5 calibrated dates and b.c. 5 uncalibrated dates, where calibration refers to normalization of radiocarbon age estimates based on trees’

growth rings; Nesbitt and Samuel 1996).

The domestication of plants was one of the most important innovations that allowed the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to



settled agriculture (Meyer et al. 2012; Purugganan and Fuller 2009). In Ladakh, barley has been the major, most valuable crop and lifeline of Ladakhi people as most of the food items are derived from this important staple crop. And also many health benefits of barley have

been recognised for decades (Anonymous, 2022). In Ladakh the traditional diet of barley and wheat has been the base of the nutritional system for centuries (Pellicciardi, 2013). It is said that Barley is as old as human civilisation. Some experts suggest that its history dates back 8000 years. Moreover, many tales are attached to the barley crop. Indian agriculture has a big historical record begins with the Indus Valley civilization. From the present mirror, it seems that Indian agriculture has crossed many phases of development as per the requirement since 9000 BCE. Experts do not agree on one but the earliest samples of Barley have been found from three sites. The first is Fertile Crescent, which includes Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Turkmenistan, the second site is the Middle East Center and South East Asia This proves that for thousands of years, barley has been used as a staple diet.

As observed in Ladakh ecosystems, this crop is being cultivated for consumption since the time agriculture started. Its old races have been collected by ICAR-NBPGR. This crop has long been used for manufacturing wine and many other forms of braver-ies since ancient times. There is evidence supporting the idea. As per experts, in some 2800 BC, barely was used in Baby-lonia, Mesopotamia, to manufacture wine. Many of the teams have identified and collected many old races lines from Ladakh sphere to keep them as record and preserved with ICAR-NBP-GR and ICAR-IIWBR. The following facts and records witness the presence of old races of barley in Western Himalayan region:

1. Wheat, barley and jujube were domesticated in the Indian subcontinent by 9000 BCE (2);
2. Barley and wheat cultivation—along with the domestication of cattle, primarily sheep and goat—was visible in Mehrgarh by 8000- 6000 BCE; Facts indicated that in the Indian subcon-tinent, two early stages of agricultural development in South Asia. In the earlier stage, dating roughly from 9500 to 7500 BP, agriculture was being established in the north-western most part

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The World of
Juniors

Every free nation of the world has its own flag. It is a symbol of a free country. The National Flag of India was adopted in its present form during the meeting of Constituent Assembly held on the 22 July 1947, a few days before India’s independence from the British on 15 August, 1947. It served as the national flag of the Dominion of India between 15 August 1947 and 26 January 1950 and that of the Republic of India thereafter. In India, the term “tricolour” refers to the Indian national flag.

The National flag of India is a horizontal tricolor of deep saffron (kesari) at the top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom in equal proportion. The ratio of width of the flag to its length is two to three. In the centre of the white band is a navy blue wheel which represents the chakra. Its design is that of the wheel which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. Its diameter approximates to the width of the white band and it has 24 spokes.

Colours of the Flag

In the national flag of India the top band is of Saffron colour,

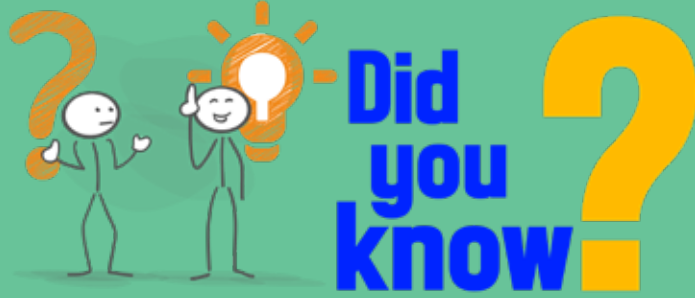
History of Indian Tricolor



indicating the strength and courage of the country. The white middle band indicates peace and truth with Dharma Chakra. The last band is green in colour shows the fertility, growth and auspiciousness of the land.

The Chakra

This Dharma Chakra depicted the “wheel of the law” in the Sarnath Lion Capital made by the 3rd-century BC Mauryan Emperor Ashoka. The chakra intends to show that there is life in movement and death in stagnation.



1. Wind turbines kill between 10,000 and 100,000 birds each year in the UK. Interestingly, painting one of the blades of a wind turbine black can reduce bird deaths by 70 per cent.
2. Snails have teeth. Between 1,000 and 12,000 teeth, to be precise. They aren’t like ours, though, so don’t be thinking about snails with ridiculous toothy grins. You’ll find the snail’s tiny ‘teeth’ all over its file-like tongue.
3. A horse normally has more than one horsepower. A study in 1993 showed that the maximum power a horse can produce is 18,000W, around 24 horsepower.
4. Your signature could reveal personality traits. A study in 2016 purports that among men, a larger signature correlates with higher social bravado and, among women, a bigger signature correlates with narcissistic traits.

5. One in 18 people have a third nipple. Known as polythelia, the third nipple is caused by a mutation in inactive genes.
6. Bananas are radioactive. Due to being rich in potassium, every banana is actually slightly radioactive thanks to containing the natural isotope potassium-40. Interestingly, your body contains around 16mg of potassium-40, meaning you’re around 280 times more radioactive than a banana already. Any excess potassium-40 you gain from a banana is excreted out within a few hours.
7. There’s no such thing as a straight line. Zoom in close enough to anything and you’ll spot irregularities. Even a laser light beam is slightly curved.
8. Finland is the happiest country on Earth. According to the World Happiness Report, it has been for six years in a row. It’s not really surprising, given that Finland is the home of Santa Claus, reindeer and one sauna for every 1.59 people.
9. Hippos can’t swim. Hippos really do have big bones, so big and dense, in fact, that they’re barely buoyant at all. They don’t swim and instead perform a slow-motion gallop on the riverbed or on the sea floor. In fact, hippos can even sleep underwater, thanks to a built-in reflex that allows them to bob up, take a breath, and sink back down without waking.
10. The Moon looks upside down in the Southern Hemisphere. Compared to the Northern Hemisphere, anyway. This means that the ‘Man in the Moon’ is upside down in the Southern Hemisphere and looks more like a rabbit.

Courtesy: BBC Science Focus

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

Think right, think big!



It is a universal truth that you become what you think. All those who have succeeded in reaching great heights were once like any ordinary person among us, but they had the ability to think positively and big.

Such people are hardly 10 per cent of the entire population on this globe. The rest of the 90 per cent people think nothing good and do nothing good. That is why such people remain either poor or at the best in the middle-class category.

The problem with the unsuccessful people is that they keep on grumbling instead of becoming a ‘go-getter’ with a positive mindset and a definite goal-plan.

That is why someone had said: Think big, dream big, believe big and the results can’t but be big. This is so inspiring, and it gives us a feeling that we are shown a definite path to a progressive life and success. Yet another similar quote is from British film producer Rebecca Yates: “Dare to dream big, and then do something about it for sure success.”

It is only by thinking big that you will be unlocking your potential. Everybody has the potential but a rare few utilise it.

By thinking big, you gain several things, and the first of them is that you gain confidence which is a necessary tool for sure success. Confidence makes you sure of your abilities, and it also leads you towards innovative ways and means. It also makes you get ready and eager for greater ability towards great possibilities.

All that one needs to do is to set a definite and ambitious goal with the determination to get it, come what may. In a way, you have to visualise success from day 1 of your plan. And you have to give up hesitation, fear, doubts and negative thoughts. Instead, you need to focus on your strength.

Having said all that, one must sum up and say that poor thoughts make you poor, and rich thoughts make you rich. You are free to exercise your options.

The choice is yours, for sure.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with
Stanzin Angmo, Mixed Martial Art Fighter

Q. Can you tell us about your journey into MMA? What sparked your interest in combat sports?

Jullay! I'm Stanzin Angmo from Hemis Shukpachan. I completed my schooling up to Class 12 at Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School and pursued my graduation from Eliezer Joldan Memorial College. Currently, I'm pursuing post-graduation through distance learning while also doing an internship in hotel management.

My interest in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) began after watching it on TV. I was captivated by the fighters—their resilience, the way they maintained their physical and mental discipline, and the sheer passion they displayed in the ring. It was inspiring, and I found myself wanting to be like them.

That dream started to take shape when a friend, Tsewang Dolma, told me about the Ladakh Combat Academy. She encouraged me, saying it was a place where I could truly pursue my dreams—and she was right. I joined the academy in 2024, and that's where my real journey began.

At the academy, I was introduced to various combat arts like Jujutsu (also known as Jiu-Jitsu), and I got the opportunity to compete in platforms such as grappling. Under the mentorship of our coach, Jigmet Singey Oddan, I've learned not just fighting techniques but also discipline, focus, and mental strength. His guidance gave me the chance to represent in competitions, and that's how my passion for MMA truly grew.

Q. Brief us about Ladakh Combat Academy.

The Ladakh Combat Academy was founded in 2023 with a clear vision: to nurture and produce top-tier athletes in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) at the national level. The academy not only focuses on MMA but also aims to contribute significantly to the Jiu-Jitsu community in India.

Currently, there are around 12 to 15 regular students, with the average age being around 22 years. Despite being a young institution, it has already made a mark in the national combat sports scene.

Recently, I had the opportunity to win gold and silver at the AJP India Nationals, which was a proud moment for me and for the academy. Looking ahead, a team of 7 to 8 athletes from the academy will be representing Ladakh at the prestigious ADCC Championship to be held in Delhi in

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal



MESSAGE TO THE READERS
“Mixed Martial Arts deserves more recognition and importance, just like any other sport. I encourage all girls to explore this field, not just as a competitive sport but also as a way to build confidence, strength, and self-discipline. Don't be afraid to step into something new—you might discover your true strength there.”

December 2025.

However, competitions are just one part of the vision set by our head coach, Jigmet Singey Oddan. His broader mission is to build a strong community of like-minded individuals and to engage Ladakhi youth in high-level physical activities through Mixed Martial Arts. It's about developing discipline, resilience, and a healthy lifestyle—not just winning medals.

Q. What was the reaction of your family and friends when you chose this path?

MMA, especially for women, is still quite new—many girls don't really take an interest in the sport, as it's generally seen as more popular among boys. When I share my passion for MMA with other girls, their reaction is often casual, like “Okay, that's cool”, but when I talk about it with boys, they're usually surprised and say “Wow!”

When I first told my parents about wanting to pursue MMA, they were skeptical and worried, mainly because of the risk of injury. They were scared for my safety, which is understandable. But over time, as they saw changes in me—my discipline, dedication, and how serious I was about it—they began to support me wholeheartedly.

As for my friends, they've always known about my interest in combat sports. From the beginning, they've been encouraging and supportive, and they're genuinely happy to see me growing and representing myself as a combat athlete.

Q. Did you face any unique challenges as a woman entering this field?

To be honest, I haven't faced many challenges specifically because I'm a woman. Yes, MMA is mostly seen as a male-dominated sport, but I believe that if you're truly interested and passionate, no challenge is too big. You just have to be ready to work a little harder and stay committed. Once you put in the effort, gender doesn't matter—what matters is your dedication and mindset.

Q. Share with us your journey and experiences in the ADCC and AJP Tour 2025.

In December 2024, I participated in the ADCC Indian Open Championship, a grappling competition held in New Delhi, where I competed in the 55kg category and won a bronze medal. It was my first major national-level experience, and it gave

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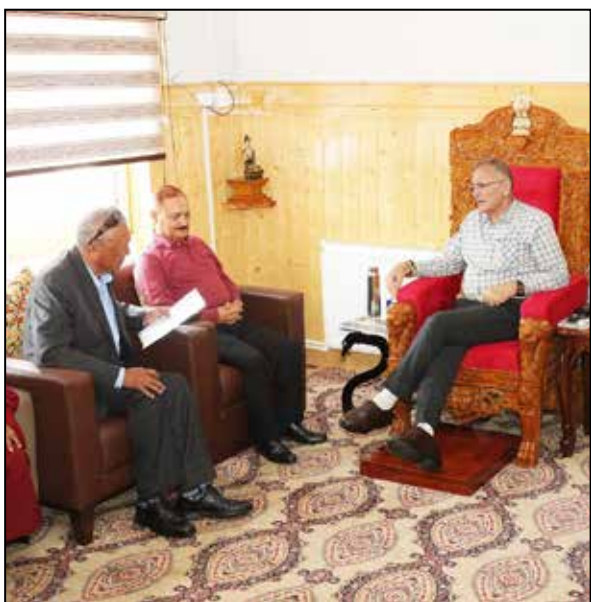
Fortnight Highlights



The NSS Unit of EJM College and Red Ribbon Club in Collaboration with J&K Aids Control Society celebrated International Youth Day under IEC Intensified Campaign, 2025. NSS Program Officers, members, other teaching faculty and more than 100 volunteers enthusiastically participated in an environmental pledge, followed by a walkathon inside the campus and cleanliness drive at Sindhu Ghat, Leh Ladakh.



Mission Indus Clean-Up, a cleanliness drive was conducted today at various panchayats in Turtuk Block. The event was attended by the BDO of Turtuk, officials from concerned departments, and Nambardars from various panchayats. A special drive was also conducted at Thang, the last Indian village near the Line of Control (LOC).



Interacting with a delegation of the Ladakh Buddhist Association and Ladakh Gonpa Association at the LG Secretariat, the Lt Governor stressed that adequate teachers must be appointed in gompa schools so that even young monks have access to the best quality education. He also underlined the importance of imparting vocational skills to young monks to make them self-sufficient.



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on August 2 to apprise him of the overall situation in the Union Territory of Ladakh.



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, met with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi to discuss key developmental priorities concerning the Union Territory of Ladakh.



As part of Mission Clean Indus 2025, Government Degree College Khaltse conducted a cleanliness drive. The entire college community, including students and faculty, actively participated, cleaning classrooms, the library, the girls' hostel, and surrounding areas. A poster-making competition themed “Mission Clean Indus” was also organized for students.



As part of LAHDC Leh ongoing preventive healthcare initiatives, an HPV vaccination drive is being conducted at CHC Khaltse and Nubra for girls. The drive aims to protect adolescent girls against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and reduce the risk of cervical cancer.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, along with Dy. Chairman Tsering Angchuk, Councilors Rigzin Lundup, and Tsering Sangdub, met Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi.

Fortnightly News

In Focus: Tracing Barley’s Himalayan roots — And saving it from extinction ...Continuity of page 4

- of the subcontinent. At the ancient site of Mehrgarh Civilization, where the earliest evidence has been found that barley was the dominant crop and was apparently supplemented with some wheat. The barley found was the well-developed domesticate, six-row barley. A small amount of wild barley and two-row domesticated barley have also been recovered, although archaeologists do not think that barley was independently domesticated in this region. However, the early barley and wheat in Mehrgarh have predominantly small spherical grains, indicating that varieties adapted to local conditions were developed there.
3. Agro-pastoralism in India included threshing, planting crops in rows— either of two or of six—and storing grain in granaries. By the 5th millennium BCE agricultural communities became widespread in Kashmir.
4. Remains of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) grains found at archaeological sites in the Fertile Crescent indicate that about 10,000 years ago the crop was domesticated there from its wild relative *Hordeum spontaneum* (Badr et al, 2000);
5. Similar marginal habitats have been more recently colonized by *H. spontaneum* in the Aegean region, southeastern Iran, and central Asia, including Afghanistan and the Himalayan region (Zohary and Hopf 1993).
6. Badr et al, 2000 further states that the study of the geographic distribution of Bkn-3 alleles was based on 304 of the 317 wild accessions analyzed by AFLP fingerprinting and placed at least to a country. In addition, 5 accessions collected from natural stands in Himalayan region corresponding to the wild barley *H. agriocrithon* were analyzed, along with an additional 11 *H. spontaneum* lines, all from Israel. The *H. vulgare* lines included the 57 mentioned above, to which another 17 were added. Of these 74 lines, 21 were landraces from the Himalayan-Indian region.
7. It was concluded that the 317 *H. spontaneum* accessions selected for molecular fingerprinting did not show evident signs of genetic introgression from *H. vulgare*. The only exceptions were the four *H. spontaneum* lines sampled from natural stands in the Himalayan region (group 12): although most of their morphological traits fell within the range of those typical for wild groups, they had ears that virtually lacked awns.
8. Traces of Barley cultivation have also been found in post-Neolithic Bronze Age Harappan civilization 5700–3300 years before present (3).
9. Wang et al, (2015) mentioned that high levels of nucleotide diversity, haplotype diversity, and number of haplotypes were detected in the Tibetan and Southwest Asian wild barley populations and the haplotype analysis showed that the worldwide cultivars shared the same haplotypes with the Southwest Asia wild barley, and specially, the wild barley from the Tibet. They also mentioned that a close relationship between worldwide domesticated barley and the Tibetan wild barley, suggesting that Tibetan wild barley is one of the ancestors of domesticated barley. Their results corroborated previous findings that cultivated barley are not only derived from wild-barley genotypes in the Fertile Crescent, but also from those in Tibet of China (Dai et al., 2014).
10. The Israel-Jordan area in the southern part of the Fertile Crescent has the highest probability of being the geographical area within which wild barley was domesticated. Wild populations found in the southern part of the Fertile Crescent in western Iran have also contributed germplasm to the cultivated barley on its way to the Himalayas.
11. Gangal et.al. (2014) adds that there are several lines of evidence that support the idea of connection between the Neolithic in the Near East and in the Indian subcontinent. The prehistoric site of Mehrgarh in Baluchistan (modern Pakistan) is the earliest Neolithic site in the north-west Indian subcontinent, dated as early as 8500 BCE.[16] Neolithic domesticated crops in Mehrgarh include more than 90% barley and a small amount of wheat. There is good evidence for the local domestication of barley and the zebu cattle at Mehrgarh. It was also recorded that barley and wheat cultivation along with the rearing of cattle, sheep and goat was visible in Mehrgarh by 8000-6000 BCE.

Looking to the legacy of Ladakh region with regard to the repository of Himalayan biodiversity particularly barley, over the period of one decade, there has been a significant decline in the area under Grim (naked barley), wheat and barley, while there has been a significant increase in land under fodder crop (Alfalfa), fruits and vegetables and other millets and pulses in Leh district (Dolkar, 2018). The district population has also increased by 44% in twenty years (LAHDC 2012), partly due to rural-urban migration. As cash-poor farmers are traditionally working with a barter-exchange economy, now depend on access to the urban monetary market. It may be attributed and observed that Leh-Ladakh has been opened to tourism in 1974, creating thousands of jobs and with the start of tourism in Leh and hike in labour charges and more anthropogenic activities in Leh region, the interest of resource-poor farming community particularly the young workforce has shifted towards tourism and initiated fodder (alfalfa) cultivation as this Alfalfa does not require more attention and fetch more biomass as compared to crop cultivation. Crops are grown only for consumption purposes but fodder provides sufficient biomass for their livestock as well as if seeds are produced, that fetch sufficient return.

Text of concern- Area declining in Ladakh
Historically, subsistence agriculture has been a major component of Ladakh region for both society as well as the economy. Pastoralists trade dairy, wool, and pashmina goat fibre. Arable farming, of barley and wheat, is tightly constrained to the summer months, between May and September (LAHDC 2011). This is a challenging factor that barley which is a life-line of Ladakh region, is on the edge of extinct due to perennial alfalfa and high-tourism when the economy is expanding. Its importance is limited to daily-food-habits including traditional drink- alcoholic beverage production from barley is a well-established process practiced in Ladakh since centuries and no social activity is complete without it.
Varieties

Traditionally grown barley varieties are tall and weak stemmed and generally lodge even under relatively low soil fertility conditions. Therefore, researches on varietal improvement have restructured the plant type to take full advantage of higher level of soil fertility and irrigation. Some of the newly evolved varieties and their characteristics are described below:

Crops	Var. of crop	Tanslit	Meaning
Barley	Ne-nak (Lad, nak-nas)	-	Black-Barley
	Yang-ma	Gyong-ma	Early ripening
	Yang-Kar	Eyeing-dkar	White wealth
	Sermo	-	Yellow mother
	Tug-zur	Drug-zur	Six cornered

* All colours barleys are found in Ladakh region

Conclusions

- There is an immediate need to ensure the awareness with regard to its origin of the barley crop at Ladakh, and rejuvenating the barley cultivation in Ladakh to resource poor farming community towards about the origin and increase in the area under barley/ crop diversification not only for consumption but the economy in Leh-Ladakh is expanding, the increased demand from increased population, an Army base and tourism (Pelliciardi 2010).
- Importance of well-established traditional alcoholic beverage- Chhang has its own importance as no social activity is complete without it in Ladakh since centuries. Since Ladakh has been awarded UT status and industries might establish for this traditional alcoholic beverage and its further expansion significantly. This crop is also popular in many food habits and products in and outside Ladakh region.
- In addition, the indigenous knowledge about local foods and traditional agricultural practices in mountain areas is eroding and agricultural diversity as well as productivity is declining, further increasing the vulnerability of mountain people.

The authors M.S. Raghuvanshi1, Changchuk Lamo3, Jigmat Stanzin3, Stanzin Landol3, Anurag Saxena2, Abhay Shirale1and Hrittick Biswas. You can mail your comment and feedback on Email: omsai.msr@gmail.com

National Handloom Day 2025: LG stresses empowering Ladakhi artisans and youth Urges promotion of Ladakhi GI Tag products as livelihood for youth



Photo Caption: Lt Governor inspecting the stalls and interacting with artisans.
Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, along with First Lady Bindu Gupta, inaugurated the week-long National Handloom Day 2025 celebrations at Eco Park in Leh’s main market on August 7. The event showcased handloom products created by artisans, self-help groups (SHGs), and entrepreneurs from across Ladakh.

Appreciating the high-quality exhibits, the Lt Governor said the showcase proved that Ladakhi artisans are far ahead of others in their craft, with significant potential for further growth by using the region’s ancient culture and traditions as tools. He lauded their efforts to preserve centuries-old heritage through

modern techniques and reaffirmed the UT Ladakh Administration and the central government’s commitment to the holistic development of the region.

Highlighting the importance of empowering the youth, the Lt Governor emphasised that products from Ladakh with Geographical Indication (GI) tags could become a major source of livelihood. He assured that the administration would provide tools and machines at subsidised rates to help youth produce quality goods, particularly from materials like pashmina. By utilising modern machinery, Ladakhi youth could promote the “Vocal for Local” initiative and become job-creators instead of job-seekers.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, praised the showcased products, noting their exceptional craftsmanship. He highlighted that Ladakhi pashmina is considered among the finest in the world and said that indigenous production would place Ladakh prominently on the global map. He also shared details of ongoing initiatives to support artisans, including the purchase of a pashmina dehairing plant and adding value to pashmina products.

Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Ghulam Mehdi, spoke about Ladakh’s deep-rooted connection with handloom traditions and the opportunities given to artisans to present their work on national platforms, such as the “Enchanting Ladakh” event at Delhi Haat. He also detailed LAHDC’s initiatives, including establishing a Common Facilitation Centre and providing machines and equipment at subsidised rates.

Earlier, the Lt Governor inspected the stalls and interacted with artisans. The event also featured cultural performances and a fashion show by Ladakhi artists.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Stanzin Angmo, Mixed Martial Art Fighter ...Continuity of page 5

me a real sense of what high-level competition feels like.

Then in June 2025, I took part in the AJP Tour 2025 Abu Dhabi Jiu-Jitsu Pro—one of the most prestigious platforms in the sport. I competed in both Gi and No-Gi categories and was proud to win a gold and a silver medal. Competing on such a recognized stage felt incredible, and securing medals there was truly a proud moment for me.

Both of these competitions helped me understand the sport on a much deeper level. I learned new techniques, recognized mistakes I need to work on, and gained a lot more strength, courage, and clarity about how I want to grow as an athlete. These experiences really tested my patience, strength, and preparation—and most importantly, they shaped me into a fighter in every sense.

Q. How do you see the potential and scope in MMA, especially for women?

In Ladakh, the participation of women in MMA is still very limited compared to men. There's definitely a need for more awareness and encouragement so that more women feel confident to take up the sport. I believe MMA is not just a sport—it's also a powerful form of self-defense, especially for women. It teaches discipline, builds confidence, and strengthens both the body and mind.

MMA is a full-contact combat sport that combines striking and grappling techniques from various martial arts around the world. It has immense potential—not just as a competitive sport but also as a way to empower individuals, especially women.

Also, being from Ladakh gives us a natural advantage. Due to the high altitude and challenging terrain, people here often have strong stamina and endurance, which can be a real bonus in combat sports. With the right training and support, I believe Ladakh has great potential to produce top-level MMA athletes—both men and women.

Q. Are there any female fighters who inspired or influenced you?

Yes, definitely. I'm really inspired by Sonam Zomba, an MMA fighter from Arunachal Pradesh, and Stamp Fairtex, a Muay Thai kickboxer and mixed martial artist from Thailand. Both of them motivate me to train harder and stay focused on my goals.

Watching them fight with such strength, confidence, and skill makes me feel truly inspired. Sometimes I think, "I wish I had discovered this sport earlier." Maybe I could have learned so much more by now. But I also believe it's never too late, and seeing women like them succeed gives me the push to keep moving forward and give my best every day.

Q.What are your short-term and long-term goals in MMA?

Right now, I don't have any very specific goals, but my main aim is to excel in the sport and keep improving every day. In the short term, I'm focusing on grappling and Jiu-Jitsu, building a strong foundation and gaining as much competition experience as I can.

In the long term, I definitely want to compete on international platforms and represent Ladakh and India. I also hope to learn Muay Thai to expand my skill set and become a more complete fighter. Step by step, I want to grow not just as an athlete, but also as someone who can inspire others, especially young girls from Ladakh, to pursue combat sports.

Q. What advice would you give to young girls who want to pursue MMA?

If you're interested in MMA, I would say—just go for it! But before starting, it's important to have a conversation with your parents. Help them understand the sport and why you're passionate about it. Support and encouragement from family can really help you grow and stay motivated.

Many girls worry about injuries, but I believe injuries can happen in any sport. What matters is that we take proper precautions, train safely, and stay disciplined. MMA is not just about fighting—it's about building mental and physical strength, confidence, and self-defense skills.

If possible, start training at an early age. It gives you more time to learn, grow, and get exposure. The earlier you start, the more skilled and confident you'll become over time.

District administration Kargil holds counselling sessions for KSSRB aspirants



Photo Caption: Aspirants attending the district-wide counselling sessions for upcoming LAHDC KSSRB recruitment examination.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: In a bid to empower local youth, the District Administration Kargil, in collaboration with Ladakh Police, the University of Ladakh, and Government Polytechnic College Kargil, organised district-wide counselling sessions on August 9 for candidates appearing in the upcoming LAHDC KSSRB recruitment examination.

The sessions, held at the University of Ladakh Kargil Campus Khumbathang, Government Degree College Drass, and Government Polytechnic College Kargil, saw an impressive

turnout of around 500 aspirants eager to refine their preparation strategies. At the UoL Kargil Campus, Superintendent of Police, Kacho Ishtiyag Ahmad Khan and Assistant Information Officer Dr. Anwar Ali, along with Dr. Mehboob Ali, Incharge Administration, offered motivational insights and practical guidance.

In Drass, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Jahangeer Akhone (JKAS), DySP DAR Tundup Dorjay, and Revenue Department official Mehboob Ilahi shared proven tips for success. Meanwhile, at Government Polytechnic College Kargil, Assistant Director Information Raza Ali Abidi, SHO Kargil Kacho Sadat, and DySP UT-DRF Kargil Asif Mustafa delivered engaging and inspirational talks.

Covering topics from strategic exam preparation to the use of modern learning tools, the sessions concluded with interactive Q&A segments, giving aspirants the chance to directly connect with experts.

The District Administration reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Kargil's youth, pledging to continue initiatives that build confidence and help them excel in competitive examinations and future careers.

Har Ghar Tiranga:Cyclists ride for unity and national pride in Kargil



Photo Caption: Cyclists taking part in the vibrant Tiranga Cycle Rally in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: As part of the ongoing Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, the Tourism Department Kargil, in collaboration with Downhill Kargil, organized a vibrant Tiranga Cycle Rally on August 10.

The rally was flagged off from the Tourist Facilitation Center (TFC) Biamathang by Rakesh Kumar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner/CEO, LAHDC Kargil, in the presence of Muhammad Ali Tak, Assistant Director Tourism Kargil, and Imteyaz Ali, member of Downhill Kargil. Around 30 cyclists from across the

district took part, riding through Biamathang, Kargil Market, Bypass Shilikhey, and Kako Shilikhey before returning to the TFC.

Held under the nationwide initiative to foster patriotism and national pride, the rally brought together cyclists from diverse backgrounds, promoting unity, brotherhood, and community spirit. Participants enthusiastically raised slogans like "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", "Har Ghar Tiranga, Ghar Ghar Tiranga", and "Tiranga Hamari Shaan Hai, Bharat Ki Pehchan Hai".

During the ride, they engaged with locals, highlighting the significance of the National Flag and encouraging people to proudly hoist it at their homes from August 13 to 15.

The event reaffirmed Kargil's collective resolve to uphold the values of independence, unity, and democracy, while honoring the sacrifices of countless freedom fighters. It also emphasized the Tiranga as a timeless symbol of India's sovereignty and pride.

Khaltse joins hands to keep Indus River clean



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KHALTSE: In line with the decision of the LAHDC Leh, led by Chief Executive Councillor Adv. Tashi Gyalson, a cleanliness drive along the Indus River was launched in Khaltse Sub Division on August 12.

The programme began with a briefing on the significance of the initiative, followed by the felicitation of workers and drivers engaged under SRMC. They were honoured with traditional khataks and incentives from the Sub Divisional Administration. Khaltse, in recognition of their dedicated service to the Sub Division Headquarters.

The rally commenced from the SDM Office, Khaltse, covering various stretches along the Indus River. At the Headquarters, Lamberdar of Khaltse, Stanzin Phurboo, along with personnel from the GREF and Army, were present. Specific areas were assigned to respective teams, and the drive was simultaneously conducted along the riverbanks in every village of the Sub Division.

Addressing the gathering, Sub Divisional Magistrate Mohd Sharif emphasised that protecting the Indus River's environment is a shared responsibility and urged participants to maintain cleanliness beyond the duration of the drive.

The event saw active participation from all Sub Divisional officers and officials, the Lamberdar, and personnel from the Army and GREF. The programme concluded with a pledge to protect and preserve the cleanliness of the Indus River.

LAHDC Leh conducts HPV vaccination drive for girls across the district



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, has launched a district-wide HPV vaccination drive for girls as part of its ongoing health initiatives on August 8.

The vaccination is being administered at multiple locations, including the Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) in Leh, Nubra block, Nyoma block, and Tangtse block. Ben-

eficiaries at these centres are being provided certificates after vaccination.

This targeted health intervention aims to safeguard adolescent girls against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and reduce the risk of cervical cancer in the region. LAHDC Leh has reiterated its commitment to strengthening preventive healthcare measures across all blocks of the district.

Kargil hosts Apricot exhibition to promote cultivation, processing, and export



Photo Caption: Dignitaries visiting exhibition stalls displaying a range of apricot and plum varieties presented by local farmers and entrepreneurs.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Department of Horticulture, Kargil, organized the Apricot Exhibition 2025 under the Government of India's flagship 'One District One Product (ODOP)' initiative on August 5 at the Syed Mehdi Memorial Auditorium Hall. The event celebrated the selection of apricot as the unique identity crop of Kargil district, aiming to promote its cultivation, processing, marketing, and export.

Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, attended the event as Chief Guest, while Rakesh Kumar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner/CEO, LAHDC Kargil, was the Guest of Honour.

The dignitaries visited exhibition stalls displaying a range of apricot and plum varieties presented by local farmers and entrepreneurs. They interacted with representatives from Ladakh Organic & Green Initiative Consultancy, Halman Apricot Kargil, and other stakeholders to gain insight into grading, packaging, quality control, and the export potential of apricot-based products.

In his address, CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoo commended the Director and Chief Horticulture Officer and their team for successfully designating apricot as Kargil's ODOP. He emphasized the cultural and economic significance of apricots to the region, calling them a symbol of local identity and economic opportunity. He reaffirmed LAHDC Kargil's commitment to supporting

apricot farmers through schemes offering subsidies, driers, pack houses, and essential equipment to improve processing and quality.

Dr. Akhoo also expressed gratitude to Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal for extending vital support by providing a drier plant to enhance apricot processing in the region.

Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar highlighted the enormous potential of the apricot economy and stressed the need for adopting modern technology in cultivation, value addition, and marketing. He announced plans for establishing a Center of Excellence in Kargil to provide scientific support and training to farmers. He urged attendees to spread awareness among the farming community about available government schemes and benefits for apricot growers.

Tsewang Phunchok, Director of Horticulture and Floriculture, expressed sincere appreciation to the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour, district officers, and the farming community for their active participation.

Ali Raza, Chief Horticulture Officer, presented the department's key achievements and ongoing efforts to obtain Geographical Indication (G.I.) tags for Halman Apricot and Karkitchoo Apple, a move expected to boost market value and farmer incomes. He also discussed cultivation zones, marketing strategies, and the department's initiatives promoting sustainable horticulture across the district.

A short documentary on apricot farming in Kargil, produced by the Department of Horticulture, was screened during the event. The film showcased the entire lifecycle of apricot cultivation — from harvesting to marketing — while highlighting both challenges and innovative practices adopted by local farmers.

The exhibition concluded with the distribution of prizes to farmers for presenting high-quality apricots and appreciation certificates to budding entrepreneurs contributing to the apricot value chain.

Sheep Husbandry Department Kargil launches Integrated Wool Development Programme in Zanskar



Photo Caption: Women and self-help groups receiving hand charkhas, pedal charkhas, and hand carders to promote home-based spinning and carding.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

ZANSKAR: The Sheep Husbandry Department, Kargil, officially launched the Integrated Wool Development Programme (IWDP) for 2025–26 under the aegis of the Central Wool Development Board, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, in the Zanskar Subdivision on August 9.

The launch was marked by a grand Sheep Show-cum-Seminar, which drew over 250 sheep breeders, departmental officials, and public representatives, underscoring Zanskar's deep-rooted connection to traditional sheep farming and wool production.

The event was inaugurated by Er. Punchok Tashi, Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, as Chief Guest, with Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Director, Sheep Husbandry Department UT Ladakh, as Guest of Honour, and Mohammad Hassan, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Zanskar, as Special Guest.

Dr. Zakir Hussain, Officer Incharge Pashmina Goat Farm Khangral, welcomed the guests with traditional khataks and badges. Dr. Niyaz Ul Hasnain, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, LAHDC Kargil, highlighted recent departmental initiatives, including the sanctioning of five community shelter sheds and five rarzis under the Special Development Package (SDP) in Zanskar.

The IWDP launch featured three key components:

1. Machine Sheep Shearing Training: Twenty local farmers received hands-on training in machine-based wool shearing to improve efficiency, hygiene, and wool quality, replacing traditional manual methods. The shift aims to increase productivity, reduce labour intensity, and minimise wool damage.

2. Distribution of Wool Processing Tools:

The department distributed hand charkhas, pedal charkhas, and hand carders to promote home-based spinning and carding, especially among women and self-help groups, fostering grassroots entrepreneurship.

3. Recognition of Outstanding Breeders:

Awards were presented to exemplary breeders for their dedication to livestock rearing, encouraging others to adopt best practices.

In his address, Er. Punchok Tashi lauded the department's proactive outreach to remote areas like Zanskar and stressed integrating modern tools with traditional knowledge to enhance wool quality and market value. He assured full LAHDC support for developing the ancestral tradition of Nambu/Frug using scientific methods.

Dr. Iftikhar Hussain reaffirmed the department's commitment to supporting farmers through technical training, infrastructure, and market linkages, promising more community shelter sheds and rarzis under the SDP.

Mohammad Hassan, SDM Zanskar, described the IWDP launch as a milestone in achieving self-reliant wool production, livestock development, and rural empowerment. He noted that the programme's focus on technology, skills, and tools will have a lasting impact on income generation, employment, and the preservation of Ladakh's rich wool heritage.

NOTICE

I, Spalzes Angmo D/o Tashi Stobgais R/o Skara, Leh UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my father's name has been wrongly recorded as Tashi Stobgias instead of correct and actual name Tashi Stobgais in my ST Certificate duly issued by Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh with Registration No. 90/ST-Leh/ 2015 and Dated on 28-04-2015. Now, I'm applying for changes in my ST Certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice.

