

Fortnightly News

Echoes of Valor: First-ever Wanla Lonpo festival celebrated in Sham valley



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

WANLA: In a powerful celebration of heritage, unity, and cultural resurgence, the historic village of Wanla in Sham Valley hosted the first-ever Wanla Lonpo Festival, titled “Echoes of Valor” on July 10. The event honoured the legacy of the revered Lonpo of Wanla, drawing enthusiastic participation from villagers, monks, artists, and tourists.

The day began at Wanla Khar, where guests and folk artists assembled at the newly built Lonpo statue. Following a traditional welcome, the auspicious Losar Apo dance was performed. A ceremonial lamp was lit at the Lhagang, after which a vibrant cultural procession—featuring Lonpo’s portrait—moved from the Gonpa through Sharchhogs and Namtsas to the main venue.

At the festival ground, monks offered Tashis Chhotpa as the Lonpo’s portrait was respectfully placed. The programme showcased a colourful blend of traditional performances, including Abchi Chhams, Karok dance, a dramatized play on the life of Lonpo, and folk dances by cultural troupes from Fanjila, Hinju, Hunupata, and Wanla Mal.

A key highlight of the day was the official launch of the book “Wanla: History and Culture” by Sonam Angchok, which adds a scholarly layer to the preservation of Wanla’s cultural and historical legacy.

CEC Tashi Gyalson, the chief guest, congratulated the people of Wanla for reviving the spirit of the Lonpo and lauded the collective efforts of Wanla ‘A’ and ‘B’ villages, Goba, Phudo, and Junu Langyas. He emphasised that the spiritual, administrative, and cultural contributions of the Wanla Lonpo must never be forgotten and announced that the festival would now be celebrated annually.

He further noted the importance of linking development with cultural preservation, mentioning ongoing developmental projects in Wanla and the wider constituency. CEC Gyalson appreciated the monks, artists, and youth whose efforts have elevated Wanla as an emerging spiritual and cultural tourism destination.

AD Tourism Padma Angmo welcomed dignitaries and guests, including domestic and international tourists, and highlighted the role of such festivals in promoting Sham Valley’s rich cultural landscape.

Tsewang Paljor, Deputy Secretary, Department of Culture, called the festival an important platform for protecting Ladakh’s heritage, monasteries, and community traditions, and urged continued community unity in preserving cultural identity.

The festival featured mesmerising performances from Fanjila, Hinju, Hunupata, Sharba, Goba, and Wanla Mal, with special dances such as Chaspa, Shondol, Ursi Losar, and Losar Karok capturing the vibrant spirit of the event. The active participation of the Wanla Ama Tsogspa further enriched the celebration.

As the sun set over Sham Valley, the Wanla Lonpo Festival concluded not only as a tribute to the past but as a powerful beginning toward a culturally enriched and unified future.

Among the prominent dignitaries present were Executive Councillor, Ghulam Mehdi; Councillor of Khalti Constituency, Lobzang Sherab; Sham LBA, President Tsering Norboo, Sham LBA Women President Tsering Tsomo, Dr. Kunzes Dolma, VP, LBA, Leh, Ven. Dorje Lopon from Wanla Gonpa; BJP State President Tashi Gyalson Khachu, District President of the Indian National Congress Rigzin Namgyal, Stanzin Dolkar, President Mahila Morcha of Congress, Leh, LBA Youth Representatives, Morup Namgyal (Padmashree) and Tsering Namgyal (Padmashree).

Also in attendance were Tsewang Paljor, Dy. Secretary Culture; Mohd. Sharif, SDM Khalti; Thinles Zangpo Executive Engineer, R&B Khalti; Pankaj Rajput BDO Khalti; President Goba Association of Sham, Gobas of Wanla A and B, Goba members from across the Sham region, as well as the Presidents and members of both the Ama Tsogspa and Junu Tsogspa, former Sarpanches and other prominent citizens.

H.E. Khanchen Konchok Rangdol Rinpoche enthroned as 33rd Drikung Khanchen; First Ladakhi to hold the post

Monastic representatives from 16 major monasteries across Ladakh were joined by Padma Shri Morup Namgyal, goba members, and a large gathering of devotees, adding to the spiritual and communal significance of the occasion.

CEC Tashi Gyalson, speaking on behalf of the people of Ladakh, congratulated H.E. Rinpoche, calling the enthronement “a moment of pride not only for the Drikung lineage but for all of Ladakh.” He highlighted

Rinpoche’s commitment to education and social welfare, particularly in supporting institutions like Ratnashri School, which provides quality education and hostel facilities to children from remote areas. He assured continued support from LAHDC Leh in future endeavours aligned with Rinpoche’s vision.

Ven. Konchok Tsepal, Nominated Sanga Councillor, called the day “truly historic,” noting that H.E. Rangdol Rinpoche is the first Ladakhi among three Khanchens

appointed since 1959. Ven. Dorje Stanzin, President of the Ladakh Gonpa Association, offered his congratulations on behalf of Ladakh’s monastic community, affirming unity and deep reverence.

As the ceremony concluded, the enthronement of H.E. Khanchen Konchok Rangdol Rinpoche stood not only as a spiritual milestone but also as a call for unity, cultural preservation, and shared responsibility for Ladakh’s future.

...Continuity of page 1

L-G BD Mishra launches ‘Mudu Unna’ Pashmina logo for Ladakh women SHGs in Delhi



Photo Caption: During the launch of official logo of Mudu Unna (Soft Wool) Pashmina Ladakh in New Delhi.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), in the presence of First Lady Neelam Mishra, launched the official logo of Mudu Unna (Soft Wool) Pashmina Ladakh in New Delhi on July 12. The initiative is dedicated to promoting women’s Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Ladakh under the concept, ‘Pashmina: The Soft Gold of Ladakh’.

The name Mudu Unna was inspired by the Pali language—Mudu meaning “soft” and Unna meaning “wool.” The logo was con-

ceptualized by First Lady Neelam Mishra and designed by Kaninika Mishra.

Addressing the gathering, LG Mishra emphasized the significance of this initiative in supporting local livelihoods, especially for communities engaged in rearing pashmina goats in the high-altitude region of Changthang. He highlighted the UT Administration’s efforts in promoting Ladakhi Pashmina, including the provision of kid pens to reduce winter mortality rates of pashmina goat kids. He expressed hope that this branding effort will signifi-

cantly empower women SHGs and contribute to sustainable economic development.

Earlier, Sonam Chhosdon, JKAS, Deputy Resident Commissioner, Ladakh Bhawan, New Delhi, underscored the importance of developing an umbrella brand for women artisans of Ladakh. She explained that Mudu Unna aims to unify the efforts of multiple SHGs and cooperatives under a single, recognizable identity; Enhance market access by representing authenticity, quality, and sustainability; Empower women by ensuring fair wages, skill development opportunities, and collective bargaining power and Preserve and promote traditional techniques, ensuring their transmission to future generations.

The launch marks a significant step toward branding and marketing Ladakhi Pashmina at a national and global level, while supporting women-led enterprises across the region.

UPSC to initiate recruitment for Gazetted Posts in the Union Territory of Ladakh



Photo Caption: Officials of UT Ladakh with the Secretary of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: In a significant development for Ladakh, the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, met with the Secretary of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Shashi Ranjan, at the UPSC Headquarters in New Delhi on July 9. Also present were Joint Secretary (Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh), Ministry of Home Affairs, Prashant Lokhande, and Secretary of the General Administration Department, UT Ladakh, Michael M. D’Souza.

The meeting focused on addressing the acute shortage

of Gazetted officers in Ladakh, especially in light of the growing administrative and developmental responsibilities following the creation of the Union Territory.

Although the official window for submission of requisitions for Gazetted posts under the 2025 UPSC recruitment calendar had closed on March 31, the Commission has made a special exception for Ladakh. This decision acknowledges both the career aspirations of Ladakhi youth and the urgent staffing needs of critical departments. Notably, no Gazetted-

ed-level recruitment has been conducted in Ladakh since October 2019, resulting in numerous vacancies across key sectors such as Health and School Education.

In the first phase, recruitment will be initiated for the following posts:

- 125 Medical Officers – Health Department
- 75 Lecturers – School Education Department
- 32 Accounts Officers – Finance Department

Recruitment to remaining Gazetted vacancies will be taken up in a phased manner thereafter.

Chief Secretary Dr. Kotwal expressed gratitude to the UPSC for its collaborative approach in finalising the Recruitment Rules and expediting the recruitment process. He also thanked the Commission for acting promptly following the finalisation of Ladakh’s domicile and reservation framework by the UT Administration.

DC Leh reviews healthcare delivery, suggests key reforms in NHM contracts



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk, convened a crucial meeting of the District Health Society Leh to review the status of healthcare delivery and discuss strategies to enhance health services in the district. The meeting was held on July 11 in the VC Room of the DC Office, Leh.

During the meeting, the District Program Officer (NHM) presented a detailed report on the updated contract draft agreement. The agreement covers aspects such as contractual appointments, renewal options,

annual increments, security deposit clauses, notice period requirements, leave entitlements, and other provisions.

Key discussions were also held on the waiting list for nurses. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Leh, Dr. Dolma Chuskit, confirmed that the waiting list is currently at 50% capacity and remains valid for one year, enabling timely replacements in case of mid-term staff departures. She also briefed the DC on the status of village ambulances, their drivers, and wage structures. The Executive Engineer, PHE,

raised concerns about issues with the geothermal heating system at SNM Hospital.

DC Leh suggested several modifications to the draft agreement. He also recommended that NHM appointees be entitled to leave as per the provisions of the State Health Society, UT Ladakh. Furthermore, he directed officials to explore housing options for hospital staff under the Public Infrastructure Plan. The DC also emphasized the need to identify sustainable technical solutions for the raised issues.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Officer Sonam Nurboo; Program Officer (ICDS); Chief Education Officer; Chief Medical Officer; Medical Superintendent Leh; District Social Welfare Officer; District Panchayat Officer; Executive Officer, MC Leh; Executive Engineer, PHE Leh; and other officials.

Chief Secretary reviews recruitment progress; GAD trains revenue officers on Domicile Certification in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, chaired a review meeting on July 8 to assess the progress of referring vacant posts to the designated recruitment boards — the Ladakh Subordinate Services Staff Selection Board (LSSSSB), the Leh Autonomous Hill Development Subordinate Services Recruitment Board (LAHD-SSRB), and the LAHDC-Kargil Subordinate Services Recruitment Board (LAHDC-KSSRB).

The Chief Secretary was informed that approximately 841 vacancies are being referred to LAHDC-KSSRB, 547 to LAHD-SSRB, and 211 to LSSSSB. He emphasized the importance of timely and accurate referral of vacancies in line with the revised reservation rules to facilitate efficient recruitment and human resource planning across the Union Territory.

Dr. Kotwal directed all administrative departments to thoroughly verify both existing and anticipated vacancies — including those arising from retirements up to December 31, 2025 — and submit the requisitions to the appropriate recruitment boards in accordance with the updated reservation rosters.

He further instructed the recruitment boards to notify the syllabus for upcoming examinations to ensure transparency and to give candidates sufficient time for preparation.

Later in the afternoon, the General Administration Department (GAD) conducted a structured training session for competent authorities — including Tehsildars and their dealing assistants from both Leh and Kargil districts — on the streamlined issuance of Domicile Certificates.

Held at the DC Conference Hall, Leh, the training was led by Michael M. D’Souza, Administrative Secretary, GAD. The session aimed to ensure clarity, legal compliance, and uniform administrative procedures under the Ladakh Civil Services Decentralization and Recruitment – Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2025.

A detailed presentation was delivered on the procedural framework and documentation requirements for issuing domicile certificates. The training focused on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), verification protocols, and proper record-keeping to ensure accountability and consistency across all tehsils.

Field-level implementation challenges were discussed, with Tehsildars encouraged to share best practices and experiences to improve service delivery. Special attention was given to the Ladakh Reservation (Amendment) Rules, 2025, including updated formats for Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates for UPSC-recruited gazetted posts and Actual Line of Control (ALC) certificates.

The session was attended by Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk; Additional Secretary GAD, Rigzin Spalgon; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Leh, Shabir Hussain; Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary, Mohd Taqi; OSD to the Chief Secretary, Mohd Shabir; Under Secretary GAD, Sandeep Singh; along with all Tehsildars and dealing assistants from Leh and Kargil. Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kargil, Jahangir Akhone, and Naib Tehsildars participated via video conferencing.

LAHDC Leh gears up for rPal Ngam Duston celebration on August 5



Photo Caption: Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson chaired a preparatory meeting on July 12 to review arrangements for the upcoming Ladakh rPal Ngam Duston 2025, scheduled to be held on August 5 to commemorate UT Ladakh Declaration Day.

The meeting was attended by Executive Councillors Ghulam Mehdi and Tashi Namgyal Yakzee, along with key stakeholders and cultural representatives.

Discussions focused on the overall structure of the event, including theatre and musical performances, traditional costume presentations, and the detailed timeline and flow of the day’s events. A morning cultural procession from Leh Palace to the Polo Ground was proposed, culminating in a grand cultural showcase at NDS Sports Ground in the evening.

CEC Tashi Gyalson stressed the importance of ensuring the celebration truly reflects Ladakh’s rich cultural diversity and identity. He directed all departments to work in close coordination to ensure the success of the event, which aims to honour Ladakh’s legacy and reinforce regional pride.

A follow-up meeting will be held soon to finalise the remaining arrangements.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Chief Controller of Finance, LAHDC Leh; Tsewang Paljor, Deputy Secretary, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages; PT Kunzang, President of ALTA; Shri Mipham Othsal, Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee; Shri Sonam Stobgais from the National School of Drama; Former CEC Gyal P Wangyal; and Padma Shri Awardee Morup Namgyal.

NOTICE

I, Ishay Dolker D/o Tsering Lamchung R/o Saspol, Leh UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my name has been wrongly recorded as Ishay Dolkar instead of correct and actual name Ishay Dolker in my ST Certificate duly issued by Saspol Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh with Registration No. 38-42/leh/S/STL and Dated on 09-09-2015. Now, I'm applying for changes in my ST Certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Saspol Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

Whereas, Chhering Sangroop S/o Sonam Stobdan R/o Lakjung Nubra, Tehsil Sumoor District Leh, UT Ladakh, has claimed that his name has been wrongly entered as Tsering Sangrup instead of actual and correct name Chhering Sangroop in his Pancard bearing Number HHVPS5733M. Now he is applying for the correction in the Pancard. Objection, if any may be conveyed to concern office within 7 days from the date of publication.

Fortnightly News

Week-long national training for booth level officers concludes at DC office Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A comprehensive week-long National Training Program for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) successfully concluded on July 12 at the Conference Hall, DC Office Leh, marking a significant step toward strengthening electoral processes at the grassroots level.

On the final day of the program, participants were awarded certificates by Deputy District Election Officer, Padma Angmo.

The training, which began on July 8, aimed to equip BLOs with the skills and knowledge necessary for accurate, transparent, and inclusive electoral roll management.

BLOs from various tehsils and sub-di-

visions of Leh district actively participated in interactive sessions led by State Level Master Trainer Chozin Palmo, and Resource Persons Kunzang Dolma and Kunzes Angmo.

The curriculum focused on key responsibilities such as house-to-house voter verification, additions and deletions in the electoral roll, correction of voter details, and facilitating new voter registrations. A strong emphasis was placed on promoting electoral awareness, especially among marginalized groups. The training followed the guideline of accommodating 50 participants per batch, ensuring interactive learning and meaningful discussions among BLOs, AEROs, and BLO Supervisors.

The initiative reaffirmed the commitment of the Chief Election Office and District Election Office, Leh, to building a robust and transparent electoral system through continuous training and support for field-level election functionaries. Certificates were distributed to all participants at the conclusion of the program, acknowledging their dedication and preparedness to perform their electoral duties efficiently and responsibly.

Chief Secretary chairs 12th UTLBC meeting

Reviews banking performance and sectoral initiatives in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, chaired the 12th Union Territory Level Bankers' Committee (UTLBC) meeting on July 3 to review the performance of the banking sector for the quarter ending March 2025.

It was informed that banks in Ladakh achieved 128% of the annual credit target by disbursing ₹1,182.31 crore. Additionally, ₹2,789.71 crore was disbursed under priority and non-priority sector lending, achieving 148% of the target. The UT recorded a 12% year-on-year growth in total deposits, reaching ₹10,260.63 crore as of March 2025, while total credit grew by 10%, amounting to ₹4,589.41 crore. The Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio for the quarter stood at 44.73%.

Jayant Mani, Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India, welcomed Dr. Kotwal and other dignitaries. A detailed presentation highlighting banking performance and key achievements was delivered by Tsering Wangmo, Assistant General Manager and Convenor, UTLBC Ladakh.

Dr. Kotwal directed banks with CD Ratios below 40%—including Bank of Baroda, J&K Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, AXIS Bank, YES Bank, IndusInd Bank, Bandhan Bank, and JKSCB—to submit a monitorable action plan to the UTLBC within 15 days.

Under a special agenda, the committee acknowledged the adverse impact

of the April 2025 incident in Jammu & Kashmir on Ladakh's tourism sector. A resolution was passed proposing the formation of a committee comprising SBI, PNB, and J&K Bank to devise a recovery strategy.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized greater outreach for the PM Vishwakarma Yojana in artisan-dense regions such as Bogdag, Khamtsi, and Chilling—renowned for stone sculptures, carved religious inscriptions (Manis), and bronze utensils.

Dr. Kotwal instructed all banks to extend credit under the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme without demanding collateral, in line with RBI guidelines. The Regional Director of RBI Jammu, Chandra Shekhar Azad, also reiterated that banks should provide loans up to ₹10 lakh without collateral security.

Additionally, the Chief Secretary directed all major banks to ensure enrollment of eligible beneficiaries under the PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), urging active participation in the Jan Suraksha Saturation Campaign, running from July 1 to September 30, 2025. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar; Administrative Secretary Vikram Singh Malik; General Manager, NABARD, Vikas Mittal; Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk; senior officials from relevant departments; and representatives from member banks and financial institutions.

Director Health & Medical Education inspects health infrastructure projects in Khalste Block



Photo Caption: Dr. Tashi Thinlas, Director of the Health & Medical Education Department, UT Ladakh, inspecting the ongoing healthcare infrastructure projects.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KHALTSE: Dr. Tashi Thinlas, Director of the Health & Medical Education Department, UT Ladakh, conducted a one-day inspection of ongoing healthcare infrastructure projects across various villages in Khalste Block on July 7. He was accompanied by the Block Medical Officer (BMO) Khalsti, Section Officer (Planning), and Junior Engineer, R&B Khalsti.

The inspection covered the Ayushman Arogya Mandir sites at Mangue, Hemis Shukpachan, Ullay Tokpo, Saspochoy, and Liker. A key focus was the review of the construction of 4-unit staff quarters being

developed under the Special Development Package (SDP) at each location, with each project sanctioned at a cost of ₹1.6765 lakh. The team expressed overall satisfaction with the progress of the works.

Dr. Thinlas directed the BMO and the concerned R&B representative to initiate the official handover process without delay and ensure that any pending payments to contractors are cleared promptly.

During the visit, villagers—led by local representatives—appealed for the sanction of a new ambulance, noting that the current one, funded under

MPLADS, will be decommissioned by the end of 2025.

However, concerns were raised regarding the sub-standard construction quality of the NTPHC building at Hemis Shukpachan, being executed under the District Capex Budget. The team urged immediate corrective measures.

Later in the evening, Dr. Thinlas, along with the SO (Planning) and local villagers of Liker, led by the Nambardar, visited the construction site of the NTPHC building and 4-unit staff quarters under SDP in Liker for further review.

DC Leh discusses tourism revival strategy with stakeholders



Photo Caption: Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Romil Singh Donk (IAS) chairing a key meeting with the tourism stakeholders.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Romil Singh Donk (IAS) chaired a key meeting to address the alarming decline in tourism and the timely allocation of funds for its promotion on July 8. The meeting was convened following an earlier commitment by Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), Adv. Tashi Gyalson, to sanction an additional ₹1 crore for tourism-related initiatives.

The discussion focused on the strategic and timely utilization of the ₹1 crore fund to boost tourism in the region, which has seen a significant dip in visitor numbers compared to the previous year. Participants highlighted the urgent need for intervention to revive Ladakh's tourism-driven economy.

Rigzin Wangmo Lachic,

President of the All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association (ALHGHA), presented a detailed proposal for Ladakh's participation in ITB Berlin 2026—a prestigious international tourism trade fair scheduled for March next year. She recommended allocating ₹75 lakhs from the proposed fund for ITB Berlin, with the remaining ₹25 lakhs designated for digital and print promotional campaigns. She emphasized the need for early fund release and active coordination with the Department of Tourism to ensure Ladakh's impactful presence at the global event.

P.T. Kunzang, President of the All Ladakh Tourism Trade Alliance (ALTTA), expressed deep concern over the steady decline in tourism funding since the formation of the Union

Territory. He stressed the importance of the tourism sector as the cornerstone of Ladakh's economy, warning that continued neglect could lead to severe economic repercussions.

DC Romil Singh Donk acknowledged the urgency of the situation and assured the stakeholders of proactive steps to overcome the financial and promotional hurdles. He further stated that a separate meeting would be convened with CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson to address the issue of fund disbursement and long-term planning.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Tsewang Gyalson, Assistant Director Tourism Padma Angmo, Assistant Tourism Officer Leh, and presidents and representatives from ALHGHA, ALTOA, and ALTTA.

Mission Shakti launches Physiotherapy program for differently-abled students in Leh

Six-month initiative at PM Shri Government High School Chuchot Yokma focuses on inclusive therapy and support



Photo Caption: During the physiotherapy program for differently-abled students at PM Shri Government High School, Chuchot Yokma.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW), Leh, under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative of Mission Shakti, launched a six-month physiotherapy program for differently-abled students at PM Shri Government High School, Chuchot Yokma on July 8.

The program, spearheaded by Dr. Stanzin Angmo, is designed to support students with Down syndrome, Autism, and Intellectual Disabilities through a structured regimen of specialized ther-

pies. Key therapeutic interventions include Balance Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Electrotherapy, and Exercise Therapy, all aimed at enhancing the students' physical and cognitive development.

This initiative reflects Mission Shakti's broader vision of inclusive development and its ongoing commitment to empowering vulnerable and marginalized communities through sustained, holistic support.

DC Leh reviews preparations for upcoming PMO Director's visit to vibrant villages



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ahead of the upcoming visit of Sweta Singh, IFS, Director at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), to the Vibrant Villages of Leh district, Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk (IAS), chaired a high-level review meeting at the DC Office on July 14 to assess progress and finalise preparations.

During the meeting, the DC directed all line departments to submit detailed progress reports under their respective sectors. Special emphasis was laid on the Health and Education Departments, which were instructed to provide photographic evidence of ongoing construction works to ensure transparency and accountability.

The DC announced that weekly review meetings will be held every Saturday at 11 AM, during which departments must present updated photographs along with financial and physical progress reports.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrates of Durbuk and

Nyoma were tasked with conducting on-site inspections, reviewing construction progress, and coordinating with implementing agencies. The DC also stressed the importance of systematic documentation, including records and photographs of visiting dignitaries.

ADDC Sonam Nurboo (JKAS) highlighted the need for community engagement during the PMO Director's visit. He instructed departments to ensure their representatives are present during public interactions and prepared to provide a brief overview of their department's initiatives.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Sonam Nurboo, CPO Tsewang Gyalson, Joint Director PD&MD K. Mohd Hussain, Superintendent Engineer PW(R&B) Circle Leh, Chief Medical Officer Leh, Chief Education Officer Leh, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Leh, District Youth Services and Sports Officer Leh, District Social Welfare Officer Leh, and the SDMs of Nyoma and Durbuk.

Ladakh Umlingla Challenge 2025 kicks off with Bib expo in Leh

World's highest road ultra marathon draws participants from across India and abroad



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The second edition of the Ladakh Umlingla Challenge, the world's highest altitude road ultra marathon, officially began with a Bib Expo held in Leh on July 13. The event marks the beginning of a week-long journey into one of the most grueling endurance races on the planet.

Organised by Sarmang Adventure Tours and the Sarmang Society, the Ladakh Umlingla Challenge takes place at Umling La Pass, located at an altitude of 5,799 meters (19,024 ft)—significantly higher than Everest Base Camp and the Everest

Marathon.

This year's race has attracted runners from across the country, including Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Ladakh, as well as an international participant from Nepal.

Among the standout participants is Retired Brigadier Sanjay Dishit (64), the oldest in the field, and Susmita Jha (50), the only female participant. Marking her 50th birthday, Susmita is running the 50K category, embodying the event's spirit with her motto: "Summit or Surrender."

Manoj Kumar from Nepal, who recently completed the Everest Marathon, is taking on the 70K Ultra challenge at Umling La,

further raising the stakes in this ultimate test of Himalayan endurance.

Anil Mohan, Race Director and Founder of the Sarmang Group, stated, "This isn't just a race. It's a test of character, commitment, and courage. Running at nearly 6,000 meters isn't about beating others—it's about conquering yourself."

The organisers expressed gratitude to all partners, volunteers, and local authorities for their support. With its extreme altitude, breathtaking terrain, and powerful human stories, the Umlingla Challenge continues to serve as a tribute to resilience and adventure.

The race, scheduled for July 20, includes four categories: 70K

Ultra, 50K Ultra, 21.1K Half Marathon, and 10K Distance Run. Leading up to the event, participants will undergo acclimatization and medical check-ups, with scheduled movement to Hanle and Chisumla, the race base.

The full event schedule includes the Bib Expo on July 13, acclimatization and medicals from July 14 to 17, departure to Hanle on July 18, shift to Chisumla on July 19, race day on July 20, and the closing ceremony on July 21. Combining extreme altitude, remote beauty, and the power of human spirit, the Ladakh Umlingla Challenge promises not just a race, but a transformative journey—one that celebrates resilience, adventure, and the pursuit of limits.

People’s Voice:

Debate Rekindled on Ladakh’s Domicile Rules

By Mahreen Khan



Tundup Nurboo cheetah, Councillor Phyang:

‘Months before the official gazette notification on domicile was issued, a draft version had already been circulated. At that time, many warned that if the 15-year domicile clause were passed, it would mark a turning

point — potentially the beginning of the end for Ladakh’s unique identity. Yet today, we see it being celebrated. It is now being stated that the domicile provision is limited to job recruitment — but that is only partially accurate.

A domicile certificate is more than a document for employment eligibility; it officially validates someone’s identity as a resident of Ladakh. For instance, by 2026, students who complete their Class 10 or 12 from Ladakh may become eligible for domicile status. Over time, this may create a scenario where non-native residents could outnumber locals — effectively making Ladakhis a minority in their own land.

Our Council has a provision for what is termed ‘Principal Minorities’, under which special seats are allocated. These seats are determined by the Central Government, and there’s a possibility that such posts could wield more influence than even the Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of Ladakh. If such a shift occurs, Ladakhis may have little or no say in critical administrative decisions.

Previously, we had the Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC), which ensured safeguards — including the eligibility criteria for non-gazetted posts, which could only be filled by LRC holders. That protection no longer exists. Now, any non-local who meets the 15-year requirement can acquire a domicile certificate and become eligible for those posts.

This dilemma could have been addressed if LRC had been given precedence over the domicile provision. The LRC would have enabled 100% reservation for Ladakhis and safeguarded our rights. Instead, we are now witnessing a real-time influx of outsiders into multiple sectors, threatening to dilute the distinct culture, values, and identity of Ladakh.

To the people of Ladakh, I urge you: do not be misled by temporary assurances or half-baked promises. No meaningful action has followed these announcements. We were once promised district status — it never materialized. Now, we are told domicile will empower us, but the reality may prove otherwise.



This is not just a policy issue; it’s a question of our collective future.”

Tsewang Dorjay, Ex LBA Youth wing Vice President:

The domicile provision introduced by the Apex Body and KDA is one of the most damaging developments, particularly for Ladakhi youth. The cutoff period—from 2019 to 2034—essentially creates a window during which anyone residing in Ladakh becomes eligible for domicile. This will lead to a gradual, but irreversible erosion of opportunities for genuine Ladakhis, draining us socially, economically, and culturally.

Once non-locals acquire domicile certificates, they will be entitled to claim ‘Principal Minority’ status. This could entitle them to reserved seats in the Hill Council or other forms of political representation — a development that signals dilution of Ladakh’s autonomy and identity in its very homeland.

Even today, in the heart of Leh Bazaar, from start to end, there are only seven to eight Ladakhi shopkeepers — the majority of businesses are already operated by non-locals. If this is the situation without the full effects of domicile in place, imagine the transformation by 2034, when thousands more become eligible. This is not just about

jobs; LRC-like protections must be extended to all sectors, including trade and business.

The broader implication is clear: the unchecked implementation of the domicile policy will likely lead to social tensions between locals and non-locals, undermining the harmony Ladakh has preserved for generations.

For the last six to seven years, the push for the Sixth Schedule has consistently underscored the need to safeguard Ladakh’s culture, land, environment, and employment rights. It’s no secret that the Sixth Schedule is the most appropriate and effective framework for Ladakh’s long-term prosperity and protection.

It is time for our politicians to rise above personal interests and political ambitions and confront the destructive implications of the domicile policy before it consumes Ladakh entirely. If not the Sixth Schedule itself, then any comparable safeguard with equal legal strength must be secured. Accepting anything less would be a betrayal of Ladakh and its people.

To the youth of Ladakh, I say this: look beyond the limited scope of government jobs. Focus also on preserving and revitalizing Ladakh’s business culture, which is under serious threat from external encroachment. This is about securing your future and your identity.



PT Kunzang, Former General Secretary, BJP:

On May 27, a significant development took place in Delhi where a high-level meeting was held between the Apex

Body of Leh and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). The core agenda was to address the pressing issue of youth unemployment in Ladakh, primarily caused by uncertainties around domicile eligibility.

...continues on page 6

The World of Juniors

Paper Bag Day is observed every year on 12 July to raise awareness about the importance of using paper bags as an eco-friendly alternative to plastic bags. With the growing threat of plastic pollution, this day reminds us to make sustainable choices in our daily lives. Though observed globally on July 12, some countries mark it on different dates.

The history of paper bags dates back to 1852, when Francis Wolle, an American, invented the first paper bag-making machine. In 1871, Margaret E. Knight developed a machine that produced flat-bottomed bags, earning her the title “Mother of the Grocery Bag.” Later, in 1883, Charles Stillwell introduced square-bottomed bags with pleated sides, making them easier to fold and store. By 1912, Walter Deubener added handles to the design, increasing convenience.

Despite these innovations, plastic bags became popular in the 1970s due to lower production costs. However, plastics—especially LDPE, HDPE, and LLDPE—are non-biodegradable, non-renewable, and can take hundreds of years to decompose. They pollute oceans and landfills, harming ecosystems and wildlife.

World Paper Bag Day

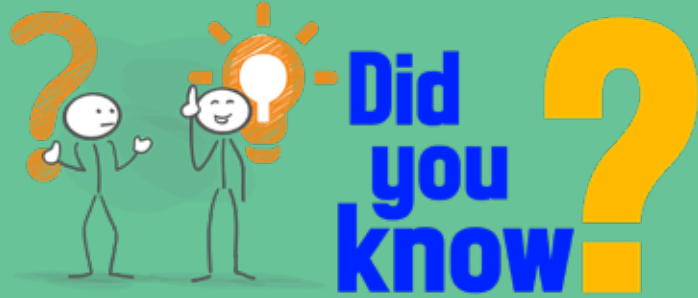


In contrast, paper bags are biodegradable, recyclable, and made from renewable resources, making them a much more sustainable option. Paper Bag Day urges people to choose environmentally friendly alternatives and reduce their dependence on plastics.

The day is a call to reflect on our consumption habits. By using paper bags, we not only reduce plastic waste but also support the use of materials that are less harmful to the planet. Today, paper bags are not only functional but have also gained popularity for their minimal and aesthetic appeal, making them a preferred choice for many eco-conscious brands.

Let’s celebrate Paper Bag Day by taking small steps toward a greener, cleaner planet.

Courtesy: Observervoice.com



A Day on Venus is Longer Than a Year on Venus

Venus is a fascinating planet! Did you know it takes longer for Venus to rotate once on its axis than it does for it to orbit the Sun? A single day on Venus is about 243 Earth days, while a year on Venus is around 225 Earth days. So, if you lived there, you’d have a birthday before the day was over!

There’s a Jellyfish That Can Live Forever

The Turritopsis dohrnii, also known as the immortal jellyfish, can potentially live forever. When it’s injured or old, it can revert to its juvenile form and start its life cycle all over again. This process is called transdifferentiation.

Octopuses Have Three Hearts

Octopuses are incredible creatures with not one, not two, but three hearts! Two hearts pump blood to the gills, while the third heart pumps it to the rest of the body. These extra hearts help them sur-

vive in the deep sea where oxygen levels are low.

Honey Never Spoils

Honey is one of the few foods that can last forever. Archaeologists have found pots of honey in ancient Egyptian tombs that are over 3,000 years old and still perfectly edible! The secret is in its natural preservatives and low moisture content.

There Are More Stars in the Universe Than Grains of Sand on Earth

Look up at the night sky and try to imagine counting all the stars. It’s impossible! Scientists estimate there are about 10 billion galaxies in the observable universe, each with about 100 billion stars. That’s way more than all the grains of sand on all the beaches in the world!

A Group of Flamingos is Called a “Flamboyance”

Flamingos are already pretty fancy with their pink feathers, but did you know that a group of them is called a “flamboyance”? It’s a fitting name for such flashy and fabulous birds!

The World’s Largest Snowflake

The largest snowflake ever recorded was 15 inches wide and 8 inches thick. It fell in Fort Keogh, Montana, USA, in January 1887.

The Shortest War in History Lasted Only 38 Minutes

In 1896, the Anglo-Zanzibar War between the British Empire and the Sultanate of Zanzibar holds the record for the shortest war in history, lasting only 38 minutes! The British emerged victorious in record time.

Courtesy: HelloSubs

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

Believing in yourself is the way ahead



The tragedy of life is that most of us fail to realise that until we believe in ourselves, there is nothing much we can do. In such a scenario, one has to lead a lesser life. Each one of us is gifted with the potential to do great things, and the more we try to exploit our potential, the more we succeed.

We hear and talk of great achievers in life. Mind you, most of them were normal people with average intelligence. What made them succeed and most of us are left behind? Yes, the only difference: They believed in self-conviction with consistency and hard work.

believed in self-conviction with consistency and hard work.

We need to believe that it is only by believing in our inner strength that helps us do wonders. That is because believing in ourselves makes the rest of the things as obstacles fall in line.

In fact, understand that your potential is infinite, and you can work to its maximum so long as you do not put limitations before yourself. Therefore, the fact of the matter is that you have to conquer yourself, meaning thereby that you have to remove your limitations and make yourself understand the limitless nature of your real self. As someone had said, you need to have the audacity to be great, and that will come only by realising your own potential.

It is true that, at times, all of us, including the greatly successful, suffer from a dip in our self-confidence. This is quite normal because life is not all rosy. A little of self-doubt makes you introspect and that makes you a gentle guy. Also, you need to realise that such moments are momentary, and you have to be up and going once again to reach your post.

It is also true that at times when things really don’t go well and you feel fallen low, you need to read some ‘believe in yourself’ quotes. That works wonders.

And, finally, let’s take a quote of Sir Edmund Hillary: “It is not the mountain that we have to conquer but ourselves.”

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with
Abida Afreen, Everester

Q. You are the first Muslim woman from Ladakh to scale Mount Everest. Tell us about yourself and how you got into mountaineering, including the selection process for the Everest Summit.

Jullay everyone! I am Senior Under Officer Abida Afreen from the 1 Ladakh NCC Battalion, and currently a second-year student at Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Leh. I come from Chuchot Shamma in Leh district. I completed my Class 10 from Imamia Mission School and pursued Class 11 and 12 at Government Higher Secondary School, Chuchot Shamma. I am now pursuing my graduation from EJM College, Leh.

My journey into mountaineering began after I joined the National Cadet Corps (NCC). I came across a notice from the Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh Directorate about the Mount Everest Summit Expedition. I expressed my interest to my ANO ma'am, and she encouraged me to apply.

The first round of selection trials was held in Leh, where candidates from both Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh participated. Following this, 250 cadets from across India were shortlisted and called to New Delhi for the next stage of trials. Out of those, 36 cadets were selected for further training.

As part of the expedition preparation, we completed a pre-Everest summit to Mount Abi Gamin, a 7,355-meter peak in the Garhwal Himalayas. Based on our performance, 16 cadets were shortlisted for a Basic Mountaineering Course—half were sent to the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi, and the rest to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling.

After completing the course, we underwent an intense and physically demanding final selection phase at Siachen Base Camp, one of the toughest high-altitude training grounds. From there, 10 cadets were selected for the final Everest Summit team.

Our full training and preparation spanned from August 2024 to March 2025. After successfully completing the process, we were called to New Delhi to officially begin our Everest expedition.

Q. Was it an easy decision for you to make? How did your family react to it?

Choosing mountaineering—and especially deciding to aim

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal



MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“Believe in yourself and never give up. No matter what you achieve in life, the most important thing is to stay humble and grounded. Success means more when it’s carried with humility.”

for the Everest Summit—was not an easy decision for me. My family was initially hesitant. They kept asking, “How can we send our daughter so far away?” They were naturally concerned about the hardships and challenges involved.

But I was determined. I had already experienced basic mountaineering through NCC, and I knew deep down that I could do it. I spoke to them openly and confidently about my decision. Eventually, they trusted me—more importantly, they trusted my dream. Seeing my passion and growth, they agreed to support me.

As a Muslim girl, I also feel proud to be breaking stereotypes. I hope my journey inspires other girls like me who want to pursue something adventurous and different.

Q. Tell us about your experience of the Everest expedition.

The Everest expedition was both challenging and unforgettable. From the initial selection process to the training, the pre-Everest climb, and finally reaching the summit—each moment was full of learning, growth, and resilience. Many people take years to prepare for Everest, so I feel incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity at such a young age.

Our trek to Everest Base Camp took about 10 days, walking 7 to 8 hours daily. The journey was physically demanding, but also enriching as we explored new landscapes and dealt with high-altitude challenges. Despite the difficulties, we kept each other motivated and focused on our goal.

Before the final summit, we climbed Lobuche Peak (6,119 meters) to acclimatize and get familiar with the terrain. This helped us prepare mentally and physically for what lay ahead. We officially began our Everest climb on May 14. One of the most difficult sections was the Khumbu Icefall, located between Base Camp and Camp 1. Crossing swinging ladders over deep crevasses while carrying heavy gear was terrifying and physically taxing. However, we successfully made it through Camp 1 and Camp 2.

Between Camp 3 and Camp 4, we faced heavy human traffic, freezing temperatures, and symptoms of low oxygen levels. Our legs and hands were numb, but being part of a strong and supportive team made all the difference. We pushed through together.

For the final summit, we started our climb on May 17 at 7 p.m., and after walking continuously through the night, we reached

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Fortnight Highlights



Department of Tourism, in collaboration with Firgun Foundation, conducting a training session on Tourism Value Chain and Homestay Management for trainers and youth at the Food Craft Institute, Leh.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, met with the players of 1 FC Ladakh Club, who are gearing up for their maiden appearance in the prestigious Durand Cup 2025. Adding to the excitement, global sportswear brand PUMA has come on board as the official jersey sponsor for the club, marking a bold step toward professionalising football in the region and building a distinct sporting identity for Ladakh.



Ladakh Clinches 13 Medals at the 20th National Ice Skating Championship in Dehradun; CEC Tashi Gyalson congratulates young athletes and coach Abass Nordak for their outstanding performance and for strengthening Ladakh's growing reputation as a rising powerhouse in Winter Sports Across India.



LAHDC Kargil hosts High-Level Academic Dialogue on Climate Resilience in the Himalayas; Executive Councillor Kacho Mohammad Feroz leads meaningful interaction with distinguished scholars from HSE University Russia, University of Delhi, and other Institutions as part of the International Summer School on Himalayan Sustainability to foster collaborative research and strategic solutions for climate challenges in Ladakh.



In a meeting with Union Home Secretary, CEC Tashi Gyalson advocates for concrete and targeted Ladakh-Specific reforms including the establishment of dedicated administrative and police services, revival measure for the affected tourism sector, and strengthening of communication infrastructure to support remote access and emergency preparedness.



CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, Executive Councillor Tashi Yakzee, Newly Elected BJP, Ladakh President Khachu Tashi, Councillor Ven. Konchok Tsephel, met with the Chief Minister of Delhi, Rekha Gupta in New Delhi. During the meeting, they raised the urgent need to resume and complete the pending construction of a Foot Over Bridge at Buddha Vihar, Delhi, and the issue of persistent illegal encroachments around the Buddha Vihara access point, which have been affecting the sanctity and peaceful atmosphere of the area.



In honour of the 90th Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson has declared July 2025 as the 'Month of Compassion'. In keeping with the spirit of compassion, the team handed over essential items tailored to the needs of three elderly care institutions in Leh which included Mahabodhi Karuna Charitable Hospital, HelpAge India Old Age Home, Shey, and SOS Old Age Home, Leh.



A new book titled “Wanla- History and Culture” authored by Sonam Angchok, a dedicated farmer and native of Wanla village, was officially launched on 10th July 2025. The launch took place during the inaugural Wanla Lonpo Festival, the first of its kind celebrated in the village to honour its rich heritage and ancestral legacies.

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People’s Voice:
Debate Rekindled on Ladakh’s Domicile Rules

Under the Constitution of India, domicile is a mandatory requirement for gazetted posts, whereas for non-gazetted posts, the Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC) had previously been deemed sufficient. This distinction created confusion and delays in the recruitment process.

Recognizing these challenges, and keeping the hardships of Ladakhi youth in perspective, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has now released an official gazette notification outlining the domicile law for Ladakh. This paves the way for restarting the recruitment process, especially in government sectors.

According to the new notification, non-local residents will be eligible for domicile in Ladakh if they meet any one of the following criteria:

- Resided in Ladakh from 2019 to 2024;
- Have studied in Ladakh from Class 7 onwards, or appeared for Class 10 or 12 board exams from Ladakh;
- Engaged in business or educational activities continuously for 15 years;
- Government servants who have completed 10 years of service in Ladakh.

However, the scope of this domicile certificate is strictly limited to job recruitment, specifically within the 5% quota reserved for non-locals. The domicile cannot be used to claim rights in sectors such as business, land, or property — only government employment.

Additionally, any non-local applying for domicile in Ladakh must relinquish domicile rights in their parent state or UT, as Indian law allows a person to hold domicile in only one state or UT. The introduction of the domicile law is a major step forward for Ladakh and a testament to the united efforts of the Apex Body, KDA, and various Ladakhi civil society organizations. It ensures clarity in the recruitment framework and helps address long-standing hurdles in the employment sector.

I commend the Ladakhi leadership for achieving this milestone. Though the number of gazetted posts in Ladakh may remain limited, the domicile law will streamline access to these opportunities and safeguard the interests of local youth.



Tundup Thinles, Congress:
The 15-year domicile clause is ill-suited for Ladakh, which is geographically, demographically, and strategically distinct from other Indian states.

In 2022, “Resident Certificate” was introduced to facilitate subordinate-level job recruitment. However, by the end of 2023, all recruitment processes were abruptly halted. Upon further inquiry, it was found that the domicile policy for Ladakh was legally vulnerable and open to challenge.

In response, a public deliberation was organized by concerned youth, inviting the Apex Body, various stakeholders, and Hill Council Chairman Tashi Gyalson. The conclusion of that meeting was to develop a blueprint for a domicile policy tailored specifically for Ladakh. Over the next three months, an in-depth study was conducted, resulting in an 18-page draft domicile framework modeled after Sikkim’s “cut-off” domicile system, which sets strict criteria for eligibility.

This draft was shared with both Kargil and Zaskar, and within two days, the Kargil Council unanimously supported it. The Apex Body also backed the proposal. On October 30, 2024, a milestone meeting convened by CEC Tashi Gyalson saw unanimous support for the cut-off based domicile policy. The current reintroduction of the 15-year clause, betrays the consensus reached last year.

I question the assertion made by CEC Tashi Gyalson that the 15-year domicile was “unique” and “fitting” for Ladakh. “Other states have similar provisions, so how can it be considered unique?” If Sikkim can adopt a cut-off-based domicile under the Constitution, why not Ladakh? Ladakh is a Trans-Himalayan region of immense strategic and cultural importance, with 97% of its population belonging to Scheduled Tribes. Surrounded by two nuclear-armed neighbors, its unique demographic and geopolitical sensitivity demands robust, legally sound, and region-specific safeguards — not a one-size-fits-all policy.

The employment was used as an excuse to push the 15-year domicile clause, stirring confusion and anxiety among the youth. “Why was the Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC), which was already functional, not incorporated into the policy?”

Arunachal Pradesh, which, despite enjoying statehood, an Inner Line Permit system, and other constitutional safeguards, still faces threats to its cultural integrity and demands for the inclusion under 6th schedule. Only the Sixth Schedule can provide Ladakh the level of protection it truly needs.

I urge all ruling and opposition leaders, secular groups, and communities in Ladakh to unite against the implementation of the 15-year domicile clause.

If this is implemented, it will legally open the doors for outsiders to acquire domicile in Ladakh. Such claims, once granted, will be nearly impossible to challenge. This poses a serious and irreversible threat to Ladakh’s land, culture, and identity.

NOTICE



Whereas, Phuntsog Nurboo S/o Tsering Gonbo, Date of Birth 01-02-1968 R/o Nimoo, Leh UT Ladakh has claimed that his name has been wrongly recorded as Phunchok Norboo instead of Phuntsog Nurboo in his passport bearing number M4893028. As per Aadhar Card the name is Phuntsog Nurboo and produced an affidavit duly verified by Notary Leh with certificate No. IN-LA-09385078529410X and is applying for the correction in the passport. Objection, if any may be conveyed to Regional Passport office, Srinagar within 7 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

No JC 589284K Rank Nb Sub Tsering Angchok Unit 4 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO has claimed that his name has been wrongly entered as Tsering Angchuk instead of Tsering Angchok in the Army record of, Unit 4 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO and produced an affidavit duly verified by Notary public Leh with Certificate No. IN-LA09344672802617X to this office for making necessary correction. Hence the notice is hereby served through press to file objection if any in this office, Unit4 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO within 7 days from date of publication failing which necessary correction will be made.

...Continuity of page 5

In Conversation with Abida Afreen, Everester

the top at 3:30 a.m. on May 18. Standing on the summit of Mount Everest, holding the Indian tricolor, was the most emotional and proudest moment of my life—a moment that words can’t truly capture.

The entire ascent took four days, and we descended safely in two days. It was a journey filled with perseverance, teamwork, and deep personal transformation.

Q. Was there any particular moment or incident during the expedition that has stayed with you?

Yes, one moment that I’ll never forget was at Camp 3. We had been walking continuously from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., completely exhausted. Despite our fatigue, we weren’t allowed to sleep immediately due to health concerns at high altitude. So, we all gathered in one tent and started playing Antakshari to keep our spirits up.

That moment made me realize the true strength of teamwork. The bond we shared as a group gave us the motivation we needed to keep going. We were not just climbing for ourselves—we were climbing as a team, supporting each other every step of the way.

Looking back, I feel that the journey itself was more beautiful and meaningful than the destination. It’s the little moments like these that made the expedition unforgettable.

Q. What do you think about the mountaineering potential in Ladakh, and what should be done to promote it?

Ladakh, being a high-altitude region, has immense potential for mountaineering. There are numerous known and unexplored peaks that offer great opportunities for adventure and professional climbing. However, I feel this potential is still largely untapped.

During the expedition, I often felt a bit embarrassed when senior climbers and fellow cadets asked me about the peaks in Ladakh—whether I had climbed any or knew about them. That made me realize how important it is for us, as Ladakhis, to explore and promote our own mountains.

My interest in mountaineering truly began after I joined NCC, and it has grown since then. I’ve also been inspired by experienced climbers from the Ladakh Mountain Guide Association, whom I met during the Ice Climbing Festival. They were incredibly supportive and even gave me valuable advice and training tips, which helped me a lot during my journey.

We are fortunate to have such skilled instructors in Ladakh. To promote mountaineering further, we need more awareness, training programs, and institutional support—especially for youth who want to pursue this field seriously.

Q. What advice would you give to women aspiring to take up mountaineering?

My message to all women is: dream big and never lose hope. Whether it’s mountaineering or any other field, don’t be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Believe in yourself, be confident, and keep moving forward.

And no matter what you achieve or how far you go, always stay humble. That’s what truly defines strength and success.

Q. Are you planning to scale more peaks? Do you have any specific targets ahead?

At the moment, I don’t have any specific targets. Mountaineering is a wonderful sport, but it’s also quite expensive, which makes it difficult to pursue individually.

However, if I get an opportunity to join a team or support an expedition, I would definitely be ready and willing to take it up. My passion for mountaineering continues, and I’m open to future challenges.

DC Kargil conducts midnight surprise inspection at district Hospital

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Rakesh Kumar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner and CEO of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil, conducted a surprise midnight inspection at the District Hospital Kargil, Kurbathang, on July 12.

The inspection covered various sections of the hospital, including patient wards, emergency services, medical stores, staff attendance, and the attendants’ rest room, to assess the availability and quality of services during late-night hours.

Interacting with the hospital staff,

the Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of punctuality, dedication, and sincerity in performing duties—especially in critical sectors like healthcare that directly impact public welfare.

He also cautioned that similar surprise inspections may be conducted at any government institution, reaffirming the administration’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery.

“The welfare of the people remains our top priority. Every government



employee must ensure that essential services are delivered efficiently, round the clock,” stated DC Rakesh Kumar.

CEC Kargil lays foundation stone for ₹13 crore finance complex at Kurbathang



Photo Caption: CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, laying the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art Finance Complex at Kurbathang.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: In a major step toward strengthening administrative infrastructure in the region, Chairman/CEC of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, laid the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art Finance Complex at Kurbathang on July 10. The ceremony was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Inteeaz Kacho, Councillor Abdul Wahid, Chief Controller Finance, Chief Planning Officer, Executive Engineer R&B, and other senior officials.

The Finance Complex, with an estimated cost of ₹1313.92 lakh, is

being funded under the Special Development Plan (SDP). Officials informed the CEC that the tender has been awarded, and construction is scheduled to begin shortly.

The upcoming facility will be equipped with modern amenities, aiming to create a more efficient and conducive work environment for finance and administrative personnel. Speaking at the event, CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoon emphasized the importance of maintaining construction quality and using high-grade materials. He instructed the executing agency to strictly adhere to

timelines and ensure no delay in project execution.

“It is essential to complete the project on time and to the highest standards, so officials can benefit from a functional, modern workspace without unnecessary delay,” the CEC stated.

The Finance Complex is expected to significantly improve the administrative capabilities of LAHDC Kargil, contributing to smoother governance and regional development.

Fortnightly News

‘Month of Compassion’: Animal Welfare Camp organized in Leh market



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: As part of the ongoing ‘Month of Compassion’ initiative, the Animal Husbandry Department, in collaboration with Chamba Animal Care Centre, organised an Animal Health Awareness and Adoption Camp at Main Market, Leh on July 9. The initiative aims to deliver vital veterinary services, raise public awareness on animal welfare, and encourage animal adoption, fostering a compassionate approach to animal care in the community.

Similar awareness and veterinary outreach camps were conducted in other villages under the same campaign. At Sakti village, the camp witnessed strong public participation, notably from women. Local farmers received valuable information on animal diseases, vaccination drives, artificial insemination, and various departmental welfare schemes. Grievances raised by farmers were duly noted, and both on-site and door-to-door treatments were provided for livestock in need.

Extending the campaign’s reach further, staff from the Block Veterinary Office (BVO) Nubra also conducted various activities in Bogdang village, as part of the ‘Month of Compassion’ and ‘Dharti Aaba Abhiyan’ campaigns.

Textiles ministry distributes incentives to Durbuk sheep herders



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DURBUK: Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Padmini Singla, accompanied by Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Director of the Sheep Husbandry Department, UT Ladakh, and Mohd Ismail Ganie (JKAS), Sub-divisional Magistrate of Durbuk, distributed essential incentives to sheep breeders and herders in Durbuk Block on July 3.

These included portable tents, nomadic accessories such as pashmina combs, shoes, solar lights, milk-churning machines, and predator-proof corrals equipped with LED lighting.

During the visit, Singla personally engaged with each breeder, attentively listening to their grievances and demands. Meanwhile, Dr. Iftikhar Hussain briefed her on the significant issues and challenges faced by sheep and goat herders across the Ladakh region. Block Officer Dr. Nasreen Fatima also provided a comprehensive overview of the Wool Development Board’s Ministry of Textiles initiatives in the Changthang area, highlighting more than a decade of sustained development efforts.

Together, this collaborative effort underscores the Ministry’s commitment to improving the lives and livelihoods of Durbuk’s pastoralist community.

ADC Kargil flags off cycle ride promoting eco-tourism and sustainability



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: ADC Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho, flagged off a bicycle rally from the historic Iqbal Bridge to Batalik via Chiktan on July 12, in an initiative aimed at promoting environmental awareness, eco-tourism, and sustainable practices among youth.

The cycling team is expected to reach Bartchey today and continue their journey toward Batalik, engaging with local homestays and interacting with village communities to spread awareness about eco-tourism and environmental conservation.

ADC Kacho applauded the students’ commitment to sustainability and assured full support from the district administration for similar youth-led initiatives. He also appealed to the public to adopt environment-friendly practices, such as home-based plantations, avoiding single-use plastics, and creatively repurposing waste materials.

“If plastic must be used, let us transform it into art instead of polluting our rivers and drains,” he urged.

Addressing the media, ADC Kacho praised LEADS for conceptualising and executing the event. He acknowledged the efforts of LEADS head Imtiyaz Nazrana, and team members Idrees and Rehan, for mobilising students and crafting a route that connects cultural heritage and remote communities.

“The initiative to start the ride from the heritage site of Iqbal

CEC, Dr. Jaffer Akhoon visits flood-affected areas to assess damages



Photo Caption: Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon along with other officials assessing the flood-affected village.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon conducted an extensive visit to the flood-affected villages of Stakpa, Malikbar Thama, Malikbar Kilma, Yakza, and surrounding areas on July 9 to assess damages, review ongoing restoration work, and listen to public grievances.

Dr. Akhoon evaluated progress on the diversion of floodwaters back to their original course and the restoration of essential services. He interacted with local residents to assess the availability of drinking water, electricity, and other basic needs. He assured that clearing of mud and debris from link roads will be prioritized.

During his visit to Stakpa, CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon was appraised by locals of several pressing issues, including frequent flood damage, the need for protective stream walls, up-grading of the Middle School, shortage of Hindi and Math teachers, and contamination of the drinking water supply due to clay and sand inflow.

Addressing the public, Dr. Akhoon reiterated LAHDC Kargil’s commitment to the welfare of the affected communities. He informed that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the stream protection wall has already been prepared under the Special Development Package (SDP) and the project is slated for execution in the next working season.

To resolve the water crisis, the CEC directed the Executive Engineer, PHE to take immediate action to restore clean water supply. He also instructed the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kargil to ensure timely disbursement of compensation under the disaster relief fund.

Regarding education, he confirmed with the ZEO Kargil that eight teachers, including a Hindi teacher, are currently posted for 55 students at Middle School Stakpa. He assured the public that any issues related to the attachment or detachment of teachers will be resolved promptly in coordination with the Education Department.

Further, the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Kargil was directed to prioritize the restoration of irrigation canals, especially under the NREGA scheme, to ensure uninterrupted water supply for agriculture.

At Malikbar Thama, residents expressed their gratitude to CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, ADC Kargil, and accompanying officials for visiting their village and attentively listening to their concerns. The villagers requested the construction of concrete retaining walls along the link road, repair of the JJM water pipeline, establishment of a medical sub-centre, and the appointment of a Hindi teacher.

The CEC assured the public that their demands would be addressed promptly and directed the concerned departments to initiate immediate restoration work.

In Malikbar Kilma, villagers raised serious concerns about frequent Brown Bear attacks posing threats

to both livestock and human lives. They also sought the installation of electricity poles to improve power supply, the establishment of a medical sub-centre, and early restoration of irrigation canals.

Responding to these concerns, Dr. Akhoon directed the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Kargil to undertake urgent mitigation measures to safeguard residents. He reaffirmed that LAHDC Kargil will extend full support and work in close coordination with all relevant departments to address these issues effectively.

At Yakza, residents raised several infrastructure-related demands during the visit of CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon. These included the construction of an irrigation canal from Braknak to Yakza, a link road from Mizat to Yakza, extension of the existing ice hockey rink and its water supply system, and a motorable bridge from Bhag Umba to Hati Yakza. The CEC assured the public that all possible assistance would be extended to fulfill these demands in a phased and prioritized manner.

During his visit to Lankerchey, the public informed Dr. Akhoon about a newly emerging insect infestation damaging wooden logs used for house construction. Despite repeated use of pesticides, the issue persists, causing concern among residents. The CEC directed the Chief Agriculture Officer and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Kargil to investigate the issue thoroughly, identify the cause, and come up with an effective and timely solution. He assured the residents that necessary intervention will be ensured without delay.

Dr. Akhoon also conducted an overall review of the irrigation canals and khuls across the region. Stressing the urgent need for cleaning and restoration, he directed the concerned departments to deploy machinery immediately for the removal of accumulated mud, stones, and debris to restore proper water flow for agricultural use.

In addition, locals informed the CEC about a completely blocked irrigation canal that had disrupted water supply in the area. Dr. Akhoon assured them that interim drinking water arrangements would be made until full restoration of the canal is achieved.

The CEC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil Imteeaz Kacho; Councillor Lankerchey Ghulam Haider; Assistant Commissioner Development Shafiq Ahmad; Superintending Engineer, PHE/I&FC Kargil Skalzang Dorjay; Executive Engineer, I&FC Ghulam Hussain; Executive Engineer, PHE Mohammad Hassan; Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sankoo; Project Officer, Wage Employment; Divisional Forest Officer Kargil; Chief Agriculture Officer Kargil; Executive Engineer, SVD Sankoo; Executive Engineer, PMGSY Kargil; Executive Engineer, REW Kargil; Deputy Director, Command Area Development; Assistant Director, Fisheries Kargil; Tehsildar Sankoo, and Block Development Officer Sankoo, along with other concerned officers.

NOTICE

I, Stanzin Nordon biological daughter of No 9925990L Rank Nk Stanzin Punchok Unit 3 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO claim that my name Stanzin Nordon has been wrongly entered as Stanzin Nosdon instead of Stanzin Nordon in the service record of my father Stanzin Punchok, Unit 3 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO and produced an affidavit duly verified by Notary public Leh with Certificate No. IN-LA09374712591625X to this office for making necessary correction. Hence the notice is hereby served through press to file objection if any in this office, Unit 3 Ladakh Scouts C/o 56APO within 7 days from date of publication failing which necessary correction will be made.

CEC meets GOC 14 Corps to boost collaboration on Mission Indus and Sustainability



Photo Caption: CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson met with Lt. Gen. Hitesh Bhalla, UYSM, SC**, SM, VSM, General Officer Commanding, 14 Corps.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson met with Lt. Gen. Hitesh Bhalla, UYSM, SC**, SM, VSM, General Officer Commanding, 14 Corps, at Army Headquarters, Leh on July 3 to discuss enhanced collaboration on environmental sustainability, waste management, and livelihood initiatives.

CEC Gyalson apprised the GOC of the ongoing Mission Mode Cleanliness Drive focused on cleaning the Indus River and its tributaries. Lt. Gen. Bhalla appreciated the Council’s proactive approach and reaffirmed the Indian Army’s commitment to supporting this crucial environmental mission.

A key highlight of the discussion was the Army’s innovative waste-to-resource initiative, particularly in the Siachen region. The project has successfully transformed collected waste into usable products—such as jackets made from recycled materials—one of which was presented to the CEC as a token of collaboration.

Commending the initiative, CEC Gyalson emphasized the need to expand such efforts under the broader

Wealth from Waste vision. The two leaders discussed engaging Self Help Groups (SHGs) to promote alternative livelihoods, including the creative use of poultry waste—such as feathers from local slaughterhouses—for developing marketable products.

They also deliberated on the waste disposal systems of Army units and civilian settlements located along the Indus River. A consensus was reached to conduct a time-bound review and implement structured reforms to ensure environmental compliance and operational efficiency.

It was mutually agreed to convene a joint review meeting in the near future to formulate a comprehensive roadmap for waste management, ecological conservation, and sustainability across Ladakh’s strategic zones.

CEC Gyalson also raised concerns on behalf of the Truck Union and the 407 Union, whose Presidents were present at the meeting. Lt. Gen. Bhalla assured that the Army would look into the transportation-related issues and extend necessary support.

GDC Kargil hosts interactive session on climate resilience in the Himalayas



Photo Caption: Experts and Scholars during the interactive program on “Confronting the Climate Change in the Indian Himalayas: Pathways to Resilience” at GDC Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Government Degree College (GDC) Kargil, in collaboration with HSE University, St. Petersburg (Russia), PGDAV College, University of Delhi, and Bhaderwah Campus, University of Jammu, organised an interactive program on “Confronting the Climate Change in the Indian Himalayas: Pathways to Resilience” at the college seminar hall on July 12.

The session brought together academicians, scholars, and students to explore locally grounded and globally relevant solutions to climate challenges in the fragile Himalayan region.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Disket Angmo, Principal, GDC Kargil, stated that Ladakh is at the forefront of climate change and that resilience must be understood not only in terms of mountains and ecosystems but also the adaptability of local communities. She reaffirmed the college’s commitment to sustainability and region-specific learning.

Dr. Tsering Tundup, Organising Secretary of the summer school program, delivered the introductory remarks. Dr. Pradeep Singh, Convener of the event, encouraged students to go beyond textbook definitions and develop out-of-the-box solutions to local climate challenges.

Prof. Alexander Sorokin, Dean of Social Sciences at HSE University, St. Petersburg (Russia), presented a comparative ecological study between Ladakh and Russia’s Altai region. He highlighted the importance of reviving traditional ecological practices to inform international research and address regional conflicts.

Dr. Fayaz Ahmed Kacho, Research Scholar at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, stressed the value of traditional knowledge systems in building climate resilience. “We shouldn’t be ashamed to revive and adopt local practices—they may be our best tools for a sustainable future,” he said.

Dr. Richa Agarwal, PGDAV College, University of Delhi, echoed similar sentiments, urging students to explore climate-friendly livelihoods and entrepreneurship opportunities rooted in local practices to protect Ladakh’s fragile environment.

Egor Petrov, a naval architecture graduate and summer school participant, shared his personal takeaways from the program and visit to Ladakh.

The session was attended by around 100 students and concluded with an interactive Q&A.

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