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In Conversation with
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REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

Owner, Publisher & Printer: Tundup Dorje
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Designer: Stanzin Rabgyas (CAGO)
Published at: Reach Ladakh, Skara Yokma, Airport Road, near Councillor Quarter
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 +91 8899418322

Printed at: Ala Printing Press
 3636 Katra Dina Baig
 Lal Quan Delhi -110006

Grand welcome for Sacred Buddha Relics in Ladakh

Thousands line streets; exposition to continue Ladakh till May 14



Photo Caption: The sacred Buddha relics brought by Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche and Khenpo Thinlas Chosal of Matho Monastery.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Deep spiritual fervour, the sacred Piprahwa relics of Tathagata Buddha arrived in Leh on April 29, marking the beginning of a historic spiritual event in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena accorded a warm and reverential welcome to the relics at the Technical Area of Leh Airport after their arrival from New Delhi, where they are preserved.

The reception ceremony featured traditional performances, ceremonial honours, and special prayers. The relics were brought by Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche and Khenpo Thinlas Chosal of Matho Monastery in a special Indian Air Force aircraft.

Several prominent religious and public figures were present on the occasion, including Khamtak Rinpoche, Rigyal Rinpoche, Ladakh Gonpa Association President Ven. Dorje Stanzin, Ladakh Buddhist Association Presi-

dent Chering Dorje Lakruk, former MPs Thupstan Chewang and Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, and former CEC LAHDC Leh Tashi Gyalson, along with representatives of various organisations.

The Ladakh Police presented a ceremonial guard of honour, while monks performed prayers. The Lieutenant Governor offered khataks and prayers on behalf of the people, invoking peace and well-being.

Following the reception, the relics were taken in a grand procession to Jivetsal, where they will be placed for public exposition beginning May 1, coinciding with the 2569th Buddha Purnima. thousands of devotees, dressed in traditional attire, lined the route to catch a glimpse of the relics.

Describing the occasion as "highly auspicious," Saxena said the arrival of the relics has blessed the region. He noted that while the relics have been displayed internationally, this is the first time they have been brought out

of their original place of preservation for exposition within India. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for selecting Ladakh for the event and urged people to participate in large numbers.

The relics will remain on display at Jivetsal from May 2 to May 10, followed by exposition in Zanskar on May 11 and 12, and at the Dharma Centre in Leh from May 13 to 14. They will be returned to Delhi on May 15.

The Piprahwa relics have been exhibited in several countries, including Thailand, Mongolia, Vietnam, Russia, Singapore, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, attracting global reverence. In July 2025, a collection of associated relics and offerings was repatriated to India after more than a century in colonial possession. Authorities have made extensive preparations for the event, including beautification drives and infrastructure upgrades across Leh, to accommodate the expected influx of devotees and tourists.

All India Power Engineers Federation calls Ladakh Power Joint Venture 'Privatization in Disguise'

Federation raises concerns over rising costs, weakened oversight, and long-term risks



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF), led by Chairman Shailendra Dubey, has strongly opposed the proposed joint venture arrangement for the Ladakh Power Development Department (LPDD), describing it as a step toward the privatization of a strategically critical public utility.

AIPEF expressed serious concern that the proposed model prioritizes commercial interests over public welfare, national security, and the long-term sustainability of Ladakh's power sector.

According to the federation, the joint venture model is likely to result in higher electricity tariffs due to provisions such as Return on Equity (RoE) and the commercialization of operations. This, it warned, would disproportionately impact poor and low-income households in Ladakh, where affordability is already a major con-

cern. The current welfare-oriented functioning of LPDD, AIPEF said, would be replaced by a profit-driven model, undermining the principle of universal and equitable access to electricity. While the continuation of subsidies has been mentioned, it remains uncertain and dependent on future budgetary support, thereby exposing consumers to policy risks. The federation also cautioned that mechanisms such as incentives for arrears recovery could lead to aggressive disconnections, adversely affecting economically weaker sections. Additionally, the proposed 25-year license period would lock consumers into a system with limited safeguards against tariff shocks.

Highlighting the region's strategic importance, AIPEF noted that Ladakh's location along sensitive borders with

China and Pakistan makes its power infrastructure a matter of national security.

It warned that transferring control of critical electricity infrastructure to a joint venture entity, including provisions for third-party engagement, could dilute direct government oversight and create potential security vulnerabilities, including cyber threats.

"In times of conflict or national emergency, reliance on a commercial entity could compromise responsiveness and alignment with national priorities," the federation stated. It also expressed concern that the fragmentation of command structures through the separation of operational functions could weaken co-ordinated decision-making in such a sensitive region.

AIPEF further argued that despite being labeled a joint venture, the structure effectively transfers control to a corporate entity, amounting to "privatization in disguise."

It alleged that public assets built through government investment are being transferred without adequate safeguards, while liabilities such as employee benefits remain with the government creating an imbalanced arrangement where profits are privatized and risks are socialized.

The move, it added, could also reduce transparency and democratic accountability, as public grievances would shift from a government department to a corporate framework.

...continues on page 2

'Historic step': L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurates five new districts in Ladakh

Directs DCs, SPs to address public concerns and maintain law and order



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena and officials during the inauguration of five new districts in Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Following the approval of a notification for the creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh on April 27, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on April 29 formally inaugurated the new districts—Changthang, Nubra, Zanskar, Sham, and Drass—marking a significant step towards decentralised governance and inclusive development.

With this development, the total number of districts in Ladakh has increased from two to seven.

On April 28, the Lieutenant Governor approved the appointment of Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs) in the newly created districts to ensure that administrative work commences immediately. With this prompt

action, key posts in all five districts Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zanskar, and Drass have been filled.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the newly appointed DCs and SPs to adopt a people-centric approach by regularly visiting villages, organising outreach programmes, and ensuring prompt redressal of public grievances. He also emphasised the need to maintain law and order to preserve Ladakh's peaceful environment.

He said that the remaining posts of subordinate officials would also be filled on priority, along with necessary logistical arrangements, to ensure smooth and effective functioning of the new districts. He added that a robust administrative framework is being put in place to support long-term governance and development goals, translating the vision of district creation into tangible benefits for the people.

Emphasising the importance of decentralised governance, Saxena said it would significantly improve service delivery, enhance administrative efficiency, and strengthen law and order at the grassroots level.

Key appointments in new districts:

S No.	District Name	Deputy Commissioner	Superintendent of Police
1	Changthang	Nitish Rajoria, IAS	SZ Abbas Jaffari, JKPS
2	Nubra	Mukul Bainswal, IAS	Stanzin Losal, JKPS
3	Zanskar	Omkar Rajendra Gundage, IAS	Rizzen Sandup, JKPS
4	Sham	Kunzes Angmo, JKAS	Ajaz Malik, JKPS
5	Drass	Inteez Kacho, JKAS	Ishtyag Ahmad, JKPS

The formation of these districts was approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs in August 2024.

Congratulating the people of Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor

said the move fulfils a long-pending demand of local representatives and aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Governance at Doorsteps." He described it as a "new beginning" aimed at bringing administration closer to remote communities.

Highlighting Ladakh's vast and challenging terrain, Saxena noted that residents often travel long distances to access basic services. He said the creation of new districts would improve accessibility, ensure faster service delivery, and strengthen administrative outreach.

Describing the decision as "historic," he said it would usher in a new era of inclusive development by ensuring efficient delivery of services at people's doorsteps. He added that the move aligns with the vision of a developed and prosperous Ladakh following its designation as a Union Territory in 2019.

Of the five new districts, Nubra (headquarters: Diskit), Sham (Khaltse), and Changthang (Nyoma) have been carved out of Leh district, while Zanskar (Padum) and Drass (Drass-Ranbirpura) have been carved out of Kargil district.

Following the notification, the territorial limits of all seven districts have also been defined. Leh district will now comprise 44 revenue villages, Nubra 30, Changthang 24, Sham 27, Zanskar 26, and Drass 19, while Kargil district will have 80 revenue villages.

Highlighting the significance of the move, the Lieutenant Governor said it reflects the Government of India's commitment to unlocking Ladakh's potential and ensuring balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development.

...continues on page 2

Fortnightly News

All India Power Engineers Federation calls Ladakh Power Joint Venture 'Privatization in Disguise' ...Continuity of page 1

On employment concerns, AIPEF said that while existing employees may receive temporary protection, future recruitment is likely to be on contractual terms, weakening job security and institutional strength. Over time, this could erode technical expertise within the public sector.

The federation also questioned the suitability of private operators, stating that they may lack the local knowledge and sensitivity required to function effectively in Ladakh's unique and harsh conditions, potentially affecting service quality.

AIPEF argued that the proposed model does not address the sector's financial challenges, as it continues to rely on government support in the form of revenue gap funding while adding the burden of profit margins. It warned that tariff-linked incentives could encourage cost escalation rather than efficiency, and that long-term contractual commitments would limit future policy flexibility.

Instead of privatization, AIPEF urged the government to strengthen the public utility model through capaci-

ty building, governance reforms, and enhanced central support.

"Given Ladakh's strategic importance and difficult terrain, the power sector must remain under public control, subsidized, and aligned with national priorities rather than commercial interests," it said.

The federation emphasized that electricity in Ladakh is not merely an economic commodity but a social lifeline and a strategic necessity.

It cautioned that the proposed joint venture could lead to:

- Increased tariffs for poor consumers
- Loss of sovereign control over critical infrastructure
- Heightened national security vulnerabilities

AIPEF has urged the government to reconsider the proposal in the larger public and national interest and to engage with stakeholders before taking any irreversible decision.

'Historic step': L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurates five new districts in Ladakh ...Continuity of page 1

Ladakh, one of India's largest Union Territories by geographical area, has long faced administrative challenges due to its difficult terrain, sparse population, and remote settlements. The creation of additional districts is expected to decentralise governance, reduce travel distances often exceeding 300 kilometres and ensure quicker delivery of public services.

The move is also likely to generate employment opportunities through the establishment of new admin-

istrative offices, infrastructure, and allied services, thereby boosting local employment, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

Notably, the Ministry of Home Affairs had directed the Ladakh administration in August 2024 to constitute a committee to examine various aspects of district formation. The committee conducted extensive consultations and field visits before finalising its report.

33 e-buses sanctioned for Ladakh in major mobility push

Centre clears eco-friendly fleet to boost public transport and connectivity



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a significant boost to public transport and sustainable mobility in the Union Territory of Ladakh, 33 electric buses have been sanctioned by the Government of India under the PM-eBus Sewa scheme.

The fleet will comprise 7-metre electric buses; specifically designed to suit Ladakh's challenging terrain and road conditions. The initiative is expected to transform public transport in the region by promoting clean energy, reducing pollution, and enhancing the overall travel experience. Officials said the delivery of the e-buses is expected within a month.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena thanked the centre for fulfilling the long-pending demand and termed the move a major step towards sustainable development in the region.

"The sanctioning of electric buses marks a significant step towards building a sustainable and environmentally friendly public transport system in Ladakh. It reflects our commitment to preserving the fragile ecosystem while improving connectivity and accessibility. These buses will reduce carbon emissions and provide an affordable and efficient mode of transport for residents," he said.

The initiative aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote sustainable development and move towards a carbon-neutral Ladakh.

The deployment of e-buses is expected to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the ecologically fragile Trans-Himalayan region. Their compact 7-metre size makes them suitable for Ladakh's geography, ensuring smoother and more efficient mobility across difficult terrain.

In addition to environmental benefits, the new fleet will offer an affordable and reliable transport option, particularly benefiting residents in remote and far-flung areas, thereby strengthening the public transport network.

Since assuming office, the Lieutenant Governor has been actively promoting eco-friendly initiatives aimed at preserving Ladakh's pristine environment. The UT Administration has prioritised reducing dependence on fossil fuels through measures such as electric mobility and solar energy adoption.

Ladakhi entrepreneur Thinley Norboo wins Gold at World Cheese championship



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Department of Animal Husbandry, UT Ladakh, on April 24 congratulated Thinley Norboo on his historic achievement of winning a Gold Medal at the prestigious World Cheese Championship held in Brazil. Norboo earned the top honour for his traditional product, Yak Churpi, bringing global recognition to Ladakh's rich pastoral heritage.

Commending the achievement, Rudra Gaud, Secretary, Animal Husbandry, UT Ladakh, extended his congratulations and highlighted the vast potential of indigenous Ladakhi dairy products in international markets. He encouraged youth, particularly from nomadic and pastoral communities, to focus on value addition, branding, and global marketing of traditional products.

The Department also acknowledged the collaborative efforts behind this success. Special appreciation was

extended to the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for providing technical support and a platform for participation. The role of Ladakh Oma was also recognised for facilitating logistics and ensuring Norboo's successful participation in the global event.

Following his return, Norboo was felicitated by the Director of Animal Husbandry, UT Ladakh, along with the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO), Leh, in recognition of his dedication and contribution to promoting Ladakh's dairy and livestock sector internationally.

This achievement underscores the exceptional quality of Himalayan Yak Churpi and opens new avenues for the socio-economic upliftment of nomadic herder communities across Ladakh.

ITBP signs MoU with Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre for counselling & yoga training

Officers and jawans to receive structured yoga sessions for stress management and mental wellness



Photo Caption: Bhikkhu Sanghasena on behalf of MIMC and Tashi Namgyal, Deputy Inspector General, ITBP North-West Frontier signing the MoU.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a significant step towards strengthening mental resilience and overall well-being of personnel deployed in extreme conditions, the North-West Frontier of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), Leh, on April 25.

The initiative aims to introduce structured counselling programmes and yoga sessions focused on stress management and mental wellness for forces operating in high-altitude environments.

The MoU was signed by Bhikkhu

Sanghasena on behalf of MIMC and Tashi Namgyal, Deputy Inspector General, ITBP North-West Frontier. For over three decades, Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre has played a pioneering role in promoting yoga and meditation across Ladakh, contributing significantly to community well-being. The Centre is the only institute in the region accredited by the Yoga Certification Board under the Ministry of AYUSH, reflecting its commitment to maintaining high standards in yoga education and practice.

Further underscoring its excellence, MIMC is a recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Outstanding

Contribution for Promotion and Development of Yoga, recognising its remarkable contribution at the national level. Hundreds of armed forces personnel have already benefited from yoga sessions conducted by the Centre.

Serving in the harsh and demanding terrain of Ladakh presents unique physical and psychological challenges to armed forces personnel. Recognising this, the initiative reflects a progressive approach to holistic fitness—integrating both mental and physical well-being to ensure personnel remain resilient in adverse conditions.

Under the MoU, officers and jawans of ITBP will undergo structured yoga training conducted by experienced instructors from MIMC. These sessions aim to enhance physical endurance while also promoting emotional balance, mental clarity, and psychological well-being—essential for those stationed in high-altitude, high-stress zones.

This collaboration marks a forward-looking initiative by both institutions, blending traditional wisdom with modern needs. By integrating yoga, meditation, and counselling into the daily lives of security personnel, the partnership sets a strong precedent for prioritising mental health and holistic wellness within India's armed forces.

Luxury coaches rolled out in Ladakh to improve public transport

LG Saxena says initiative will benefit locals and tourists alike



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a significant move to strengthen public transport and improve travel comfort in the Union Territory of Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on April 29 flagged off a fleet of luxury coaches from Lok Niwas. He also unveiled the traditional uniform for drivers of the Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation (SIDCO).

As part of the initiative, SIDCO has

procured 10 luxury 17-seater coaches and five luxury 13-seater coaches to modernise Ladakh's public transport system.

The state-of-the-art vehicles are equipped with advanced safety features, including Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), enhanced braking systems, and reinforced body structures, ensuring improved passenger safety and reliability.

"The introduction of these modern luxury coaches reflects our commitment to improving public transport in Ladakh while ensuring safety, comfort, and reliability for passengers," Saxena said.

Highlighting the region's unique geographical challenges, he stressed the need for high-quality transport facilities catering to both residents and tourists. "This initiative will not only enhance connectivity but also contribute to the growth of tourism and overall development of Ladakh," he added.

The buses are expected to provide a smoother and more comfortable travel experience, particularly for long-distance journeys across Ladakh's rugged and high-altitude terrain.

The addition of this fleet marks a key step towards upgrading transport infrastructure in the region, making travel more efficient, safe, and accessible.

NCC conducts career counselling, leadership workshop at EJM college Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 1 Ladakh Battalion NCC on April 29 conducted a workshop on career opportunities in the Armed Forces and leadership development in collaboration with Tamil Nadu-based NGO Vizhi Awakening and Government EJM College, Leh. The workshop aimed to inspire youth to pursue careers in the Armed Forces and to develop leadership qualities among students.

Commander Elantamizh Komahan of the Indian Navy attended the programme as the chief guest. Also present were the Administrative Officer of 1 Ladakh Battalion NCC, Principal of Government EJM College Dr Stanzin Yangdol, faculty members, and other officials.

The session featured motivational talks by representatives of Vizhi Awakening Trust, an organisation dedicated to youth development and leadership training. Awakener Jenny

Francina A and Awakener S. Hari-priya, both accomplished NCC cadets and youth mentors, shared their personal journeys and experiences in NCC.

They provided insights into leadership, discipline, and preparation for competitive defence examinations such as NDA, CDS, and AFCAT, encouraging students to build confidence, develop life skills, and consider careers in the Armed Forces. Addressing the gathering, Commander Komahan highlighted the wide range of opportunities available in the Indian Navy and urged students to serve the nation with dedication and pride.

The programme emphasised the importance of discipline, leadership, and nation-building among youth. The NCC Administrative Officer also mentored cadets on the nuances of Services Selection Board

(SSB) interviews and preparation for UPSC examinations.

Principal Dr Stanzin Yangdol and ANO Lt Dr Ujwala Anand Rao Koche appreciated the initiative and expressed gratitude to the organisers and speakers for conducting an informative and inspiring session.

The workshop provided detailed guidance on various entry routes into the Armed Forces, preparation strategies for examinations, and mentorship support for aspirants.

A total of 65 students, including 13 participants from Tamil Nadu and 52 students from EJM College and Ringiup School Leh, took part in the programme. The event also served as a platform for cultural exchange, reflecting the NCC motto of "Unity and Discipline."

Fortnightly News

Ladakh signs MoU with Lulu Retail for global export of Apricots

1,000 MT to be exported this season; major boost for farmers and GI-tagged varieties



Photo Caption: During the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UAE-based global retail conglomerate Lulu Retail for the export of 1,000 metric tonnes (MT) of apricots from Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh's famed apricots, known for their exceptional sweetness and flavour, are set to enter global markets in a big way this season. Following a major push by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena to promote branding and export of the region's GI-tagged "Raktsey Karpo" variety, along with the locally prized Halman variety, the UT Administration has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UAE-based global retail conglomerate Lulu Retail for the export of 1,000 metric tonnes (MT) of apricots.

This marks a historic milestone for Ladakh, with export volumes witnessing a massive jump from just 1,500 kg over the past two years.

The MoU was signed on April 15 through the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Government of India. It was formalised between Bhupesh Chaudhary, Secretary, Horticulture, UT Ladakh, and Salim M.A., Group Director (Global Operations), Lulu Retail, in the presence of the Lieutenant Governor.

Prior to the signing, the Lieutenant Governor held detailed discussions with representatives of Lulu Retail and APEDA to assess export potential. Under the agreement, Lulu Retail will procure at least 1,000 MT of apricots directly from farmers in Ladakh and handle processing, packaging, transportation, and global marketing, while maintaining the region's unique identity.

At present, farmers face significant challenges in sorting, cleaning, packaging, and marketing apricots using traditional methods, often resulting in considerable

post-harvest losses. With the new arrangement, farmers will be able to hand over their produce at the time of harvest, with the exporter managing the entire value chain—from plucking to international sales—thereby reducing losses and ensuring better returns.

"The unique apricots of Ladakh are an agricultural heritage of the region. This MoU aims to unlock the immense yet underutilised potential of apricot cultivation, ensuring better pricing for farmers while eliminating processing and marketing challenges. It will also strengthen Ladakh's recognition at national and international levels," the Lieutenant Governor said while addressing a two-day national workshop on "Enhancing Apricot Cultivation and Value Chain in Ladakh."

Terming the agreement "historic," he said it would provide direct economic benefits to farmers by opening international export channels. He added that efforts are also underway to explore export opportunities for Ladakhi apples.

The Lieutenant Governor further stressed the need to establish processing units within Ladakh to minimise wastage and enhance value addition. He assured full administrative support for infrastructure development and promotion of Ladakhi products in global markets. He also announced plans to launch Ladakh's own e-commerce platform, on the lines of major marketplaces, to provide farmers with direct access to consumers.

Later, the Lieutenant Governor inspected stalls showcasing horticulture, handloom, and handicraft products set up by self-help groups (SHGs) and local entrepreneurs.

Chief Secretary reviews issues of transport associations in Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, chaired a meeting on April 22 to deliberate on issues raised by various transport associations in Leh, focusing on ensuring smooth operations, maintaining law and order, and safeguarding the interests of the tourism sector.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Mazda Union, Biker Union, Tempo Union 207, Taxi Operators Union, and the Transport Federation Cooperative. They highlighted concerns related to membership renewal, co-operative functioning, and operational challenges. A key issue discussed was the renewal process and timelines for membership in taxi cooperative societies.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary expressed concern over the practice of setting up checkpoints and junction controls by certain unions. He noted that such measures inconvenience tourists and negatively impact

their experience, particularly in a region like Ladakh where tourism is a key economic driver. He emphasized that maintaining law and order is the responsibility of the police and questioned the need for parallel arrangements when law enforcement agencies are already deployed round-the-clock. Representatives of the transport associations explained that the existing token system is intended to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for drivers by maintaining an orderly queue for tourist bookings.

While acknowledging the intent, the Chief Secretary directed that such systems must operate strictly within the legal framework and should not inconvenience visitors or interfere with official duties. He instructed that no unauthorized checkpoints or junctions be set up on roads and that all legal matters be handled in coordination with police authorities.

The meeting also discussed issues related to

the Biker Association, including the operation of vehicles with different number plates across regions of Ladakh, permit requirements, and compliance with provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. The need for regulatory uniformity and improved coordination among stakeholders was emphasized.

To address the concerns comprehensively, the Chief Secretary directed that a separate meeting be convened with the All Ladakh Tour Operators Association, transport unions, and police authorities to ensure clarity, uniformity, and a coordinated approach to resolving pending issues.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the Director General of Police, Leh; Secretary, Transport; Senior Superintendent of Police, Leh; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh; Under Secretary, Transport; representatives of transport associations; and other concerned officers.

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat visits Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre

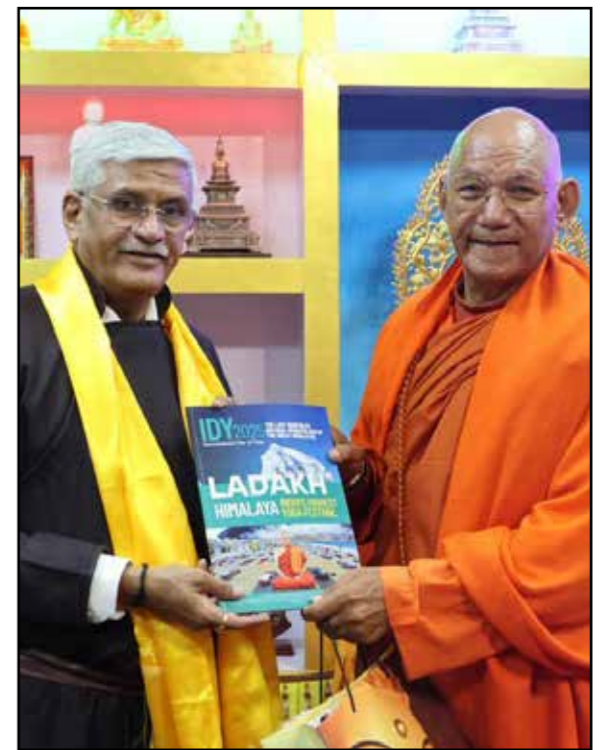


Photo Caption: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism with Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder and Spiritual Director of MIMC.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, visited the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) on April 24.

He was received by Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder and Spiritual Director of MIMC, who welcomed the Minister and expressed appreciation for his visit despite a busy schedule.

During the visit, Bhikkhu Sanghasena briefed the Minister on the Centre's wide range of humanitarian and spiritual initiatives. These include educational programmes for underprivileged children, healthcare services, an old-age home, facilities for the visually impaired, nunneries for spiritual education, and a Yoga and Meditation Centre promoting holistic well-being.

Highlighting ongoing developmental efforts, he informed the Minister about the ambitious Buddha Park project within the campus, underscoring its potential to emerge as a major spiritual and tourist attraction in the region. A formal memorandum seeking support from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for its

timely completion was also submitted.

Appreciating the Centre's role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions at the grassroots level. He noted that the Government of India continues to support such initiatives that contribute to cultural enrichment, social welfare, and spiritual development.

Responding positively, the Minister assured that all possible assistance would be extended for the Buddha Park project and other initiatives of MIMC.

Tashi Gyalson accompanied the Minister during the visit.

The Minister later toured the Devachan campus, including the Yoga and Meditation Centre, where he appreciated the serene environment and the institution's holistic approach to community service and spiritual growth. Expressing gratitude, Bhikkhu Sanghasena thanked the Minister for his visit. In response, the Minister assured that he would return for a more comprehensive tour and further engagement with the Centre's activities.

Big relief for tourism sector as Ladakh eases rules

Five-year registrations, fewer documents, and single-window framework introduced

Category / Parameter	Then	Now
Travel Agent Validity	1 year	5 years
Travel Agent Documents Required	7 documents	4 documents
Travel Agent Classification	Separate registrations for Adventure and Mountaineering	Unified registration for all activities
Hotel Registration Validity	5 years	Provisional: 18 months Permanent: 5 years
Hotel Registration Documents Required	9 documents	Provisional: 2 documents Permanent: 7 documents

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a major step to promote ease of doing business and boost the tourism sector in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on April 24 has approved a set of landmark reforms aimed at deregulating the tourism industry and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

The reforms seek to reduce the compliance burden on stakeholders and establish a unified, streamlined, and citizen-friendly registration framework for tourism units across the Union Territory.

The initiative follows a series of meetings held by the Lieutenant Governor with tourism stakeholders and associations. It aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance."

The new framework introduces a unified registration system for all tourism units, significantly reduces documentary requirements, and eliminates redundant classifications. It simplifies procedures for registration, renewal, and transfer, while promoting

digital, time-bound approvals. The reforms are also expected to enhance transparency, encourage local entrepreneurship, and strengthen the tourism ecosystem through ease of compliance. Calling it a "transformative step," the Lieutenant Governor said the reforms would make processes simpler, more transparent, and people-friendly. "Reducing compliance burden and ensuring ease of doing business will empower local stakeholders and enhance Ladakh's standing as a premier tourist destination," he said, adding that the measures would help position Ladakh among top tourism destinations globally.

As part of the reforms, the validity of registration for tour operators has been extended from one year to five years, eliminating the need for annual renewals.

In another major change, separate registrations for "Adventure Tour Operator" and "Mountaineering Tour Operator," each requiring an additional fee of ₹3,000, have been scrapped. A unified category titled "Travel Agent"

has been introduced, allowing registered entities to undertake all permitted activities under the Registration of Tourist Act.

The number of documents required for tour operator registration has been reduced from seven to four. Requirements such as character certificates, fixed bank balance, and educational qualifications have also been removed, making the process more accessible.

For hotels, the earlier classification into Category I and Category II (Standard, Deluxe, Luxury) has been discontinued. The revised framework requires only two documents for a provisional licence valid for 18 months, and seven documents for a permanent licence valid for five years.

Similarly, the homestay registration process previously marked by multiple procedural requirements has been simplified with reduced documentation. This is expected to encourage community-based tourism and create livelihood opportunities for local residents.

The reforms also streamline procedures for transfer of registration, which earlier involved extensive documentation and delays. Simplified mechanisms have been introduced to ensure quicker and more efficient ownership transfers.

Additionally, processes related to cancellation of registration and change of business name have been rationalised, making them faster, more transparent, and less cumbersome for stakeholders.

Ladakh Fire & Rescue Service gets new identity framework

L-G Saxena approves emblem, flag and insignia



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, on April 26 approved the official emblem, flag, logo, and various insignia of the Fire and Rescue Service Department.

The approval follows a proposal submitted by the department to establish a distinct and unified identity aligned with national standards while reflecting Ladakh's unique cultural and geographical character.

After detailed examination, the Lieutenant Governor accorded approval for the notification of the Ladakh Fire & Rescue Service Emblem, Flag, Logo, Cap Badge, Shoulder Badge, and Belt Badge. These identity elements are designed to promote uniformity, discipline, and a strong sense of institutional pride among personnel, while also enhancing public recognition and trust.

"The approval of a comprehensive identity framework for the Fire and Rescue Service reflects the Administration's continued commitment to building efficient, responsive, and culturally rooted institutions in the Union Territory. The integration of cultural elements into the

logo and insignia not only instils pride among personnel but also symbolises the department's deep connection with the land and its people. A professional, well-recognised force is crucial for ensuring efficient emergency response and building public trust," said Lieutenant Governor Saxena.

The newly approved logo is a blend of national symbolism and Ladakh's cultural identity. At its core is the National Emblem of India, representing authority, integrity, and service. Traditional firefighting symbols such as flames, crossed axes, and rescue motifs signify courage, preparedness, and the department's commitment to safeguarding lives and property.

The design also incorporates elements inspired by Ladakh's landscape and heritage. Motifs reflecting the region's mountainous terrain symbolise resilience and adaptability, while subtle influences of traditional Ladakhi art highlight its rich cultural legacy. The colour scheme combines vibrant tones representing bravery and action with earthy hues that mirror Ladakh's natural environment.

In Focus:

A Revisit to Ladakh's Flawed Politics

By Nawang Tsering Shakpo

Politics in Ladakh, since India's independence in 1947, has remained deeply flawed, shaped by neglect, limited representation, and delayed administrative justice. For many years after independence, Ladakh remained physically and politically isolated from the rest of the country. It was only in 1962–63 that the region began to see some degree of connectivity. However, an earlier and significant moment came on May 24, 1948, when an Indian Air Force DC-3 Dakota aircraft, piloted by Air Commodore Mehar Singh, landed on a hastily prepared airstrip in Leh. This operation was critical in securing Ladakh from Pakistani tribal invaders and reinforcing India's military presence in the region.

In the aftermath of these developments, Ladakhi leaders, under the leadership of Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, travelled to Srinagar and New Delhi to highlight the region's grievances. They spoke of the neglect and "step-motherly treatment" Ladakh faced under the Jammu and Kashmir government and sought fair inclusion in the democratic framework.

Responding to these concerns, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, along with Sheikh Abdullah, visited Leh on July 4, 1949. In the absence of proper road connectivity, the dignitaries travelled on horseback to reach various parts of the region. Nehru assured the people of Ladakh that they would receive fair treatment and supported Bakula Rinpoche as their representative in the state legislature. He also directed Sheikh Abdullah to work closely with Bakula for the welfare of the region.

Despite these assurances, the Kashmir-based administration paid limited attention to Ladakh. Development funds allocated by the Centre were unevenly distributed, and policies such as the land abolition laws were implemented without adequately considering local concerns. Ladakh also suffered from inadequate political representation. The region did not have a separate parliamentary constituency and was instead clubbed with Ganderbal, effectively limiting the ability of Ladakhis to voice their concerns at the national level.

Economically, Ladakh remained dependent on its traditional trade routes with Xinjiang, which continued until the Sino-In-



dian War disrupted them permanently. This war not only altered geopolitical realities but also dealt a severe blow to Ladakh's economy, cutting off a vital source of livelihood for its people.

Frustrated by continued neglect, Kushok Bakula Rinpoche began openly criticising the Srinagar-centric administration. Relations between him and Sheikh Abdullah remained strained until Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad assumed power in 1953. Under Bakshi's leadership, Bakula was inducted into the cabinet and served as a minister until his election to the Lok Sabha in 1967. However, after Bakula's departure from state politics, Ladakh once again faced marginalisation. The ruling Congress party in the state allegedly fostered internal divisions by splitting into factions, weakening Ladakh's political voice. In response, the people of Ladakh united and launched agitations demanding fair representation and recognition of their language and culture. These movements led to the creation of posts for Ladakhi language teachers, ministerial representation for both Leh and Kargil, and the establishment of the Gajendragadkar Commission to examine issues related to fund allocation and development. The commission's recommendations marked one of the early political successes for Ladakh.

The demand for Union Territory (UT) status gained momentum in 1973 after Balraj Madhok advocated for Ladakh's separation from Jammu and Kashmir on grounds of national security and administrative efficiency. With the support of Kushok Bakula, the demand intensified and gained national attention. However, internal divisions among Ladakhi leaders weakened the movement, as some opposed separation on the grounds of national integration, even while supporting demands such as Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The 1970s and 1980s saw continued political uncertainty. Promises of regional autonomy remained largely unfulfilled. In 1989, large-scale protests erupted in Leh over the demand for ST status. The situation turned tragic when police firing resulted in the deaths of three protesters. This incident marked a turning point in Ladakh's political history. In response, Kushok Bakula wrote a strongly worded letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, highlighting the plight of Ladakh's minority communities. His intervention played a crucial role in the eventual granting of ST status to sections of the Ladakhi population.

In the 1990s, the creation of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) in Leh and Kargil marked an important step towards decentralised governance. These councils were intended to provide greater administrative autonomy and address local development needs. However, while they improved governance at the local level, they did not fully address the broader political aspirations of the people.

The demand for Union Territory status continued to grow stronger over the years. Meanwhile, the Kashmir Valley witnessed significant political unrest, including the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990. Recognising the distinct identity and challenges of Ladakh, various committees and interlocutors recommended separating Ladakh from the Kashmir Division. Eventually, on February 8, 2019, Ladakh was granted divisional status by Governor Satya Pal Malik.

A historic decision followed later that year. On October 5, 2019, the Government of India granted Union Territory status to Ladakh after the abrogation of Article 370. This move was widely

The World of Juniors

World Book Day is celebrated on 23 April because the date has strong literary importance. UNESCO selected it in 1995 as a tribute to books and authors, and it is associated with Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, among other literary figures. The observance also traces part of its inspiration to Spain, where a book celebration was linked to Cervantes and later merged in Catalonia with the popular tradition of books and roses on Saint George's Day.

The history of world book day has two major phases:

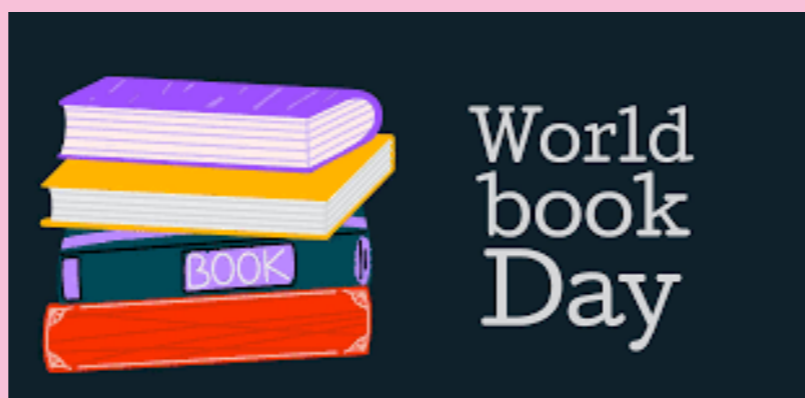
1. Spanish Origin

The original idea was proposed in 1922 by Vicente Clavel in Barcelona to honour Miguel de Cervantes and encourage book sales. It was first celebrated in Spain in 1926 and later moved to 23 April.

2. UNESCO Global Observance

In 1995, UNESCO officially established World Book and Copyright Day on 23 April, turning it into a worldwide celebration of reading, authors, and books.

One of the most important parts of World Book and Copyright Day is



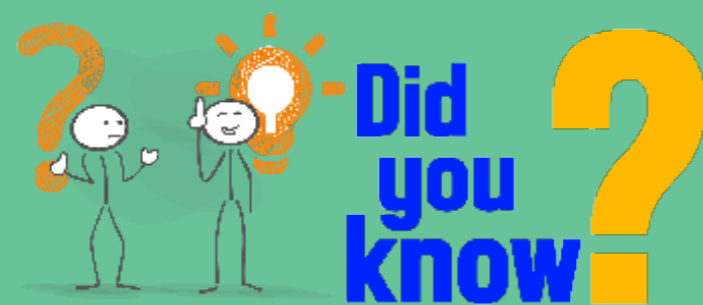
UNESCO's World Book Capital initiative. Every year, UNESCO and international organizations representing publishers, libraries, booksellers, and authors choose a city that will promote books and reading through year-long activities.

World Book Capital 2025 and 2026

- 2025: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2026: Rabat, Morocco

UNESCO says Rabat's 2026 programme will focus on improving access to books, supporting the local publishing industry, and strengthening literacy for all citizens. Whether you celebrate by reading a new book, visiting a library, exchanging books with friends, or helping a child discover reading, world book day is the perfect time to honour the joy and power of books.

Courtesy: Vedantu



- The closest living relative to humans are chimpanzees, bonobos, and gorillas. We share between 98 and 99.6% of DNA with these species. Gorillas can even catch colds from humans.

- Most of the Earth's longest-surviving species are found in the ocean. While cyanobacteria are technically the oldest living organisms on Earth, having appeared 2.8 billion years ago, the ocean sponge has also been on Earth for 580 million years, and jellyfish have been here for 550 million years.

- The Amazon rainforest is an amazing place. The Amazon produces over 20% of the world's oxygen, and contains more than half of the world's species of plants, animals, and insects.

- Many animals exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence. For

example, cows form bonds akin to friendships, and often have a "best friend," and Gentoo Penguins bring a potential mate a pebble to "propose."

- The U.S. Constitution was signed on September 17th, 1787. It was meant not to "grant" rights, but to protect the rights people were born with.

- Until 1992, female athletes competing in the Olympics had to undergo mandatory sex verification testing, due to fears that male athletes would disguise themselves as female to gain an advantage. The Olympic Committee still maintains the right to conduct testing if "suspicions arise." There were no such requirements for male athletes.

- Basketball legend Michael Jordan also played baseball, and allegedly still received his basketball salary while a member of the Chicago White Sox system.

- Queen Elizabeth II is the longest-serving British monarch. She has been on the throne for 67 years. The 93 year old queen's heir is currently her son Charles, who is 70.

Courtesy: blog.prepscholar.com

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

Good is not good enough!



Just being good is no good. You can be called successful only if you make yourself great! Actually, American author Jim Collins says that good is the enemy of great. That means any person can be good because that is not a great thing to achieve. What is of crucial importance for life to shine is that you need to be great!

True, everybody can't be great because of several reasons. But many of us can. The basic requirements to become great could be: Great planning, hard work, persistence, honesty, patience and, above all, leadership qualities to put the 'elements' of your goals on the 'express way'.

You know for sure that in today's fast-paced world, good is no more any good! Therefore, one has to stand out and be an exemplary person for others to follow. One has to be courageous and good enough to confront the brutal facts. That means that one has to face the stark realities of life, and the need to develop a culture of great discipline, responsibility and accountability.

Today's world is run by technology. You need to use technology in a manner that it helps you speed up momentum through consistency and good day-to-day planning so that your 'game of life' is supported by it. And the fact that you are to remain the master of your own destiny, and not the means driven by AI.

Another crucial principle is that you need to be heavily resilient in order to fail failures. It needs creativity to a great extent, and out-of-box solutions.

Once you adopt all these steps, all that you need to do is to gear up your momentum through consistent effort, and day-to-day planning.

There could be many other principles that could take you from good to great. The fact remains that you need to have a combination of some of the crucial principles. Your task could be quite challenging, but, mind you, the rewards would be surprisingly great.

The punchline: Each one of us has the required potential but most of us lack the will to exploit it. As a result, mediocrity marks our lives!

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

Fortnightly News

**In Conversation with
Tashi Angchuk: A lifetime of service to Ladakhi patients**

Q. You have been working for Ladakhi patients for decades. Can you share how this journey began and evolved over the years?

I have been involved in social welfare work since 1977. At the time, I was running a small business that required frequent travel to Delhi, and alongside that, I began helping Ladakhi patients who had come there for treatment. What started as a small effort gradually turned into a long-term commitment.

In 1987, I met the late Ven. Lama Lobzang, which became a turning point in my journey. I started working closely with him to support patients from Ladakh. In those days, the number of patients was relatively low, and most were referred to Chandigarh for treatment. Later, when Lama Lobzang began staying in Delhi, patients were increasingly referred there instead.

During that period, student unions in both Chandigarh and Delhi played a vital role. They helped arrange blood donations, assisted with travel, and supported patients in many other ways. Their contribution was invaluable in ensuring that patients from Ladakh received timely care and assistance.

Q. How did working with late Ven. Lama Lobzang influence your work, and how has support for Ladakhi patients evolved over the years?

Working with late Ven. Lama Lobzang was a great source of motivation for me to dedicate myself to the welfare of people in need. His efforts made a significant difference because of his initiative, patients from Ladakh were able to access treatment and medication more easily at major institutions like All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Over the years, the number of patient referrals has increased considerably compared to earlier times. Alongside this, many individuals and organisations have come forward to support patients selflessly. For instance, Mila Tiles has been providing free accommodation to patients in Delhi. Similarly, a Geshe from Basgo has also arranged lodging facilities for those in need. In addition, many patients continue to stay at Ashoka Mission, which has become an important support base for Ladakhi patients undergoing treatment.

Q. What kind of support do you and your team provide to Ladakhi patients referred outside the region for treatment?

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal



MESSAGE TO THE READERS
“ Help those in need with compassion, but also with responsibility. Always verify medical cases before donating so that genuine patients receive the support they truly deserve. ”

Our work is primarily focused on easing the burden on patients and their families during a very difficult time. Doctors at Sonam Norboo Memorial Hospital inform us whenever a patient is referred outside Ladakh. From there, we coordinate with our team in Delhi to facilitate their further treatment.

We assist patients with all necessary documentation, guide them through procedures, and provide counselling, especially to those who are critically ill. We also make them aware of various government schemes they can avail to reduce their financial burden. Our aim is to ensure that patients and their families feel supported and are able to focus on recovery without being overwhelmed by logistical and financial challenges.

Q. How have disease patterns and health concerns in Ladakh changed over the years?

Earlier, the number of patients from Ladakh was relatively low, and the range of diseases was limited. Most cases we encountered were related to heart conditions. However, over the years, there has been a noticeable rise not only in the number of patients but also in the variety of illnesses.

Today, we are seeing a significant increase in cancer cases being referred outside Ladakh. Considering the small population of the region, the number of such cases is quite high and continues to rise each year, which is deeply concerning. This trend may be linked to changing lifestyles and dietary habits.

In addition to this, cases related to heart disease and other health issues have also increased. Road accidents have become another major concern, with many cases resulting in serious consequences. Accidents occurring under the influence of alcohol, in particular, have emerged as a significant issue that needs urgent attention.

Q. How have the challenges faced by patients changed over time?

The challenges faced by patients today are much fewer compared to earlier days. In the past, patients struggled with accommodation and there was a lack of support systems in cities like Delhi. It was often difficult to find assistance during treatment.

Today, the situation has improved significantly. There are several government schemes that help ease the financial burden on patients, along with better accommodation facilities. In addition, there is a strong network of support, including blood donors and volunteers who come forward to help. Overall, ac-

...continues on page 6

Fortnight Highlights



The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena attended the funeral of the Lion of Ladakh, late Col. Sonam Wangchuk (Retd), MVC, who passed away on April 10. In a solemn ceremony, the Lieutenant Governor laid a wreath and paid rich tributes to the decorated Kargil War hero.



The “Jung sJabs” Programme under the Administrative at Doorstep successfully conducted at Nyoma village under the chairmanship of Feroz Ahmed Naib Tehsildar, Nyoma sub-division. The programme aimed to strengthen public outreach, enhance awareness, and ensure effective delivery of government welfare schemes and services at the grassroots level.



The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena called on the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi to discuss key infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening road connectivity and boosting overall development in the Ladakh region.



The staff, students, grandparents, and members of the MIMC Devachan Family on April 26 offered prayers in memory of two distinguished sons of Ladakh—Sonam Wangchuk (Retd.) and P. Stobdan. Their passing this month has left a profound sense of loss across Ladakh and the nation.



World Heritage Day 2026 was celebrated with enthusiasm and strong community participation in Kargil through a meaningful heritage walk organised in and around Goma village on April 18. The programme was held under the global theme “Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters,” highlighting the urgent need to safeguard cultural heritage in vulnerable regions like Ladakh.



ICDS Project Shargole organised a tehsil-level awareness programme on Poshan Pakhwada and early child marriage at Government Higher Secondary School (HSS), Shargole, on April 20. The event was held in collaboration with the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) Kargil and Government HSS Shargole, aiming to raise awareness among children, adolescents, and the general public.



Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra on April 20 chaired a meeting to review and strengthen the strategy for enhancing Pashmina collection and production processes across the region. The meeting primarily focused on improving the efficiency of raw Pashmina collection, scientific processing, and value addition to ensure higher returns for local producers.



World Heritage Day 2026 was observed in Leh with great enthusiasm and intellectual engagement under the theme “Ancient Art, Modern Challenges: Safeguarding Petroglyphs and Shaping Tourism Circuits in Ladakh.”

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Tashi Angchuk: A lifetime of service to Ladakhi patients

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cess to care and support has become much more organised and accessible than before.

Q. What keeps you motivated to continue this work after so many years?

I have been helping people for a very long time, and now I have reached a stage where I simply cannot think of giving it up. Helping others gives me immense satisfaction. Seeing someone receive support and relief from their suffering brings me a deep sense of inner peace.

I spent around 15 years in Delhi assisting patients, and I continue this work now in Leh. Over time, I have become so deeply involved in this service that it feels like a part of who I am. It is not just something I do—it is something I cannot let go of.

Q. What is your view on public donations and crowdfunding for patients in need?

Donating to patients in financial need is a deeply compassionate act, and it is something we should all be encouraged to do. However, it is equally important that such support is guided by proper verification. Before contributing, there should be consultation with doctors to understand the treatment cost, case history, and actual requirements.

In today's social media-driven world, we often see donation campaigns being circulated widely. While many are genuine, there have also been instances where funds are misused. If such practices continue, they may eventually undermine trust and make it harder for genuinely needy patients to receive support.

Therefore, it is very important to ensure transparency and authenticity by consulting medical professionals and verifying details before initiating or contributing to any donation effort.

In Focus: A Revisit to Ladakh's Flawed Politics

...Continuity of page 4

seen as the culmination of decades of struggle by the people of Ladakh for direct governance from the Centre.

However, the transition to Union Territory status has brought new challenges. While the administrative structure has expanded significantly—with the presence of multiple IAS and IPS officers—concerns have emerged regarding the effectiveness of governance and the lack of legislative powers. Ladakh currently does not have an elected legislative assembly, limiting the role of local representatives in decision-making.

Additionally, there is a growing perception among locals that employment opportunities have declined under the new system. Despite the presence of two Hill Councils with elected representatives, their powers remain limited, and many key decisions are taken at higher administrative levels.

In recent years, civil society groups such as the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance have spearheaded movements demanding statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. These demands aim to safeguard land, culture, and employment rights while ensuring greater autonomy. Despite several rounds of discussions with the Central Government, no concrete resolution has been reached, leading to increasing frustration among the people.

In my view, the Government of India must act decisively to address these concerns. Granting statehood or extending Sixth Schedule provisions to Ladakh—on the lines of regions like the Northeast or models such as Puducherry—could provide a balanced solution. Such measures would ensure both administrative efficiency and democratic participation.

Ladakh holds immense strategic importance for India, sharing borders with China and Pakistan. It is often described as the crown of the nation, not only for its geography but also for its cultural and historical significance. Ensuring the happiness, stability, and prosperity of its people is therefore not just a regional concern but a matter of national interest.

The continued delay in addressing Ladakh's demands risks deepening public discontent. The Central Government must move beyond symbolic measures and take concrete steps to ensure inclusive governance, protect local interests, and fulfil the long-standing aspirations of the people.

Only a politically empowered and economically secure Ladakh can truly contribute to the strength and unity of the nation.

(The writer is the Founder Director of Centre for Research on Ladakh. You can send your views and comment at sntsering52@gmail.com)

Union Minister Shekhawat, L-G Saxena inaugurate Sound and Light show at Leh Palace

Project to enhance heritage tourism and visitor experience in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a major boost to cultural and heritage tourism in Ladakh, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurated a Sound and Light Show at the historic Leh Palace on April 24.

The project, implemented by the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) under the Ministry of Tourism, has been executed at a cost of ₹8.57 crore, reflecting the Government of India's commitment to strengthening tourism infrastructure in heritage destinations like Ladakh.

Built in the 17th century by Sengge Namgyal, Leh Palace served as the residence of the Namgyal dynasty and the region's administrative and ceremonial centre. Over time, it has become a symbol of Ladakh's rich political, cultural, and spiritual history.

The newly inaugurated show presents Ladakh's heritage through immersive multimedia techniques, making history more engaging and accessible to visitors. It also demonstrates how modern visitor experiences can be integrated within protected heritage sites while

preserving their authenticity.

Highlighting the initiative, Shekhawat said Ladakh particularly Leh holds immense tourism potential and is entering a new phase of development. He noted that under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the region has witnessed focused efforts on infrastructure, environmental conservation, and heritage preservation.

Describing the project as a moment of pride, he said the show brings Ladakh's history, including the legacy of the Namgyal dynasty, to life. He added that the immersive experience would help connect both domestic and international tourists with the region's cultural roots.

The Minister emphasised that Ladakh is not just a tourist destination but a land of deep civilisational heritage, where spirituality, culture, and natural beauty coexist. He also lauded the efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Ministry of Culture in preserving and revitalising heritage assets.

L-G Saxena said the project marks a significant step towards promoting sustainable cultural tourism in Ladakh. He noted that it will enhance visitors' understanding of the region's history while enriching their overall experience.

He further highlighted that the initiative would promote night-time tourism, creating new opportunities for local guides, performers, hospitality providers, transport operators, and small businesses, thereby contributing to employment generation and economic growth.

Reiterating the Administration's vision, the Lieutenant Governor said Ladakh's natural beauty, combined with its vibrant culture and heritage, positions it as a premier global tourism destination, with continued efforts being made to provide a world-class experience for visitors.

L-G Saxena lays foundation for India's first Petroglyph Park in Leh

Project at Sindhu Ghat aims to preserve Ladakh's endangered rock art; calls heritage conservation an ethical responsibility



Photo Caption: LG, Vinai Kumar Saxena laying the foundation stone for India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park at Sindhu Ghat.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, on April 18 laid the foundation stone for India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park at Sindhu Ghat, on the banks of the Indus River in Leh.

The proposed park aims to serve as a dedicated conservation and interpretation space for Ladakh's centuries-old rock carvings (petroglyphs), which are increasingly under threat due to unregulated tourism, rapid infrastructure development, and lack of awareness. The facility will house petroglyphs collected from vulnerable and isolated locations across the region, ensuring their preservation for future generations while making them accessible to visitors in a curated and educational setting. Petroglyphs are prehistoric images, symbols, or carvings etched, pecked, or engraved directly onto rock surfaces.

On the occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to strengthen collaborative efforts for long-term preservation of Ladakh's heritage.

Officials informed that nearly 400 sites across Ladakh contain petroglyphs, found either in clusters or in isolated locations. While cluster sites are relatively easier to conserve, isolated petroglyphs particularly those along the Indus and Zaskar rivers face significant risk from construction activities and low public awareness.

These endangered artefacts will be carefully relocated to the conservation park for protection and display. Some of the oldest petroglyphs feature inscriptions in Chinese, Arabic, Sanskrit, and other ancient languages.

Addressing a workshop on the occasion of World Heritage Day under the theme "Ancient Art, Modern Challenges: Safeguarding Petroglyphs and Shaping

Tourism Circuits in Ladakh," the Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the park marks a significant step towards preserving the region's ancient art and history. He described Ladakh as a "repository of ancient heritage," noting that it hosts one of the most extensive collections of prehistoric rock art in South and Central Asia.

"Beyond natural weathering and climate stress, human activities such as road construction, blasting, and unregulated tourism pose serious risks to these petroglyphs. Conservation of heritage must be treated as an ethical responsibility and integrated into development planning," he said.

He further noted that the carvings depict early human life, including hunting scenes, animals such as ibex and snow leopards, and later symbols of Buddhist faith, including stupas and inscriptions reflecting a cultural transition over centuries.

The Lieutenant Governor also stressed the need to develop curated heritage circuits, including petroglyph and Buddhist circuits, to manage tourist flow responsibly while promoting lesser-known sites.

Describing petroglyphs as "open-air museums" and "civilisations carved on stone," he said they represent a continuous record of human history from the Palaeolithic Age to later historic periods. Found in regions such as Domkhar, Dah-Hanu, Alchi, Chilling, and Tangtse, these carvings illustrate ancient trade routes, migration patterns, belief systems, and ecological histories.

Calling for greater community participation, the Lieutenant Governor urged local residents, monks, youth, and stakeholders to act as custodians of Ladakh's heritage. He reiterated that sustainable preservation requires collective effort, awareness, and respect for cultural and ecological sensitivities.

144 pilgrims leave Kargil in first Hajj 2026 caravan



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Shabbir Hussain, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, along with Mohd Ali Majaz, Chairman of the Hajj Committee Ladakh, on April 26 flagged off the first caravan of Ladakhi pilgrims for Hajj 2026 from Kharul amid emotional farewells and prayers.

The first caravan comprises 144 pilgrims and is scheduled to depart from Srinagar to Madina on April 30, 2026. In total, 325 pilgrims from Ladakh have been selected to undertake the sacred pilgrimage this year.

The second caravan will depart from Ladakh on May 2, 2026 and is set to fly from Srinagar on May 2, 2026.

Fortnightly News

Joint Secretary (Broadcasting) reviews measures to strengthen Akashvani Kargil



Photo Caption: Prithul Kumar, Joint Secretary (Broadcasting), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting holding a review meeting with officers and staff of Akashvani from Kargil and Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Prithul Kumar, Joint Secretary (Broadcasting), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, on April 25 held a review meeting with officers and staff of Akashvani from Kargil and Leh to assess operational challenges and chart measures for strengthening local broadcasting services.

The meeting was attended by Gurbinder Singh, Sonam Anchuk, Khurshid Ahmad, along with the Deputy Director Leh and other officials and staff.

Detailed deliberations focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Akashvani Kargil. Key issues included concerns over the shifting of a sanctioned administrative post from Kargil to Leh, which has resulted in functional constraints; the need to establish a separate cluster with allied stations; the initiation of a Programme Generating Facility (PGF) at Kargil; expansion of locally produced programmes; and strengthening manpower to better serve regional languages, culture, and public interest.

The meeting highlighted the urgency of administrative reforms, including the restoration of Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) powers to prevent delays in artist payments and contractual processes, and the appointment of a separate Cluster Head for Akashvani Kargil to address region-specific operational requirements.

Participants also emphasised the introduction of morning programmes in Purgi and other local dialects, along with the engagement of local cultural experts and artists to enhance authenticity and relevance. Increasing local content was seen as essential for preserving and promoting Kargil's rich art, language, and cultural heritage.

Addressing the gathering, the Joint Secretary noted the strong public reliance on radio in Kargil and highlighted the district's unique geography and strategic importance as key reasons to further strengthen broadcasting services. He observed that Kargil's distinct linguistic and cultural diversity deserves focused preservation, with radio serving as a vital medium for documentation and dissemination.

Assuring prompt action, he stated that all feasible steps would be taken to address the concerns raised and to strengthen both infrastructure and administrative mechanisms.

Earlier, the Joint Secretary also held a brief meeting with Mohammad Hanifa Jan, during which similar issues concerning Akashvani Kargil were discussed. In addition, Arif Ladakhi, on behalf of the Dard Aryan community, submitted a memorandum seeking the introduction of programmes in Brokskat. Compere, announcers, and artists of Akashvani Kargil also presented a memorandum demanding restoration of the DDG post, resolution of pending payments, and the commencement of morning transmissions.

Felicitation ceremony for CBSE class 10 toppers held at CEO Office Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The School Education Department, Kargil, Ladakh organised a felicitation ceremony on April 20 at the Chief Education Office, Kargil, to honour the CBSE Class 10 toppers of the district. Chief Education Officer Kargil, Sonam Wangchuk, felicitated the meritorious students in the presence of Councillor Taisuru, Abdul Hadi.

The toppers honoured during the ceremony were: joint 1st position holders Aquba Rabiya (GHS Panikhar) and Nargis Banoo (PM SHRI HS Lankoor), both scoring 458/500 (91.6%); 2nd position holder Mohamad Sakib (HSS Panikhar) with 440/500 (88%); and joint 3rd position holders Bintul Huda (HSS Drass) and Sakina Banoo (HS Tambis), both

securing 438/500 (87.6%).

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Education Officer congratulated the students on their remarkable achievement and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence in their academic pursuits. He also advised them to become responsible and exemplary citizens.

Councillor Abdul Hadi extended his congratulations to the toppers and motivated them to achieve even greater success in the future. As a token of appreciation, he presented the students with cash rewards.

The students expressed their gratitude to the School Education Department, Ladakh—particularly the Administrative Secretary, Director of Education, Chief Education Officer, and their teachers—for their continuous support and guidance.

The event concluded on a positive note, celebrating academic excellence and inspiring students across the district to aim higher.

STEM Lab bus initiative makes science learning interactive in Leh



Photo Caption: Students enthusiastically participating in a series of hands-on activities during Stem activities at Riglam Model School.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a significant step towards promoting experiential and practical learning, interactive STEM activities were organised at Riglam Model School, Leh, with the STEM Lab Bus formally flagged off by Principal, DIET Leh, Mirza Mehdi on April 27.

Students enthusiastically participated in a series of

hands-on activities, focusing on basic experiments in Chemistry, Biology, and Physics. These demonstrations enabled learners to witness scientific principles in action, transforming abstract concepts into tangible experiences.

The sessions created a lively and engaging environment, with students actively participating and displaying keen curiosity. The initiative encouraged them to develop a positive outlook towards science and technology, motivating exploration beyond textbooks.

The programme proved effective in enhancing comprehension, boosting confidence, and nurturing scientific thinking among students. The enthusiastic response highlighted the success of activity-based learning methods.

Through such innovative initiatives, DIET Leh continues to strengthen its mission of making education engaging, meaningful, and accessible for all learners.

MP Hanifa Jan flags off school buses in Kargil under MPLADS



Photo Caption: Mohammad Hanifa Jan, MP Ladakh handing over the four school buses in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Mohammad Hanifa Jan, Member of Parliament (MP) Ladakh, on April 25 flagged off four school buses at the Council Secretariat Kargil under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).

The buses have been procured to strengthen transportation facilities for various government schools and SKUAST-Kashmir, Kargil, ensuring improved accessibility and convenience for students. Of the four buses, three were sanctioned during the 17th Lok Sabha tenure, while one has been procured under the 18th Lok Sabha period.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Aga Syed Mujtaba, Shabbir Hussain, Councillors Feroz Khan and Mohd Amin, Chief Education Officer Sonam Wangchuk, and Fazian, along with other officials.

The initiative under MPLADS reflects continued efforts to strengthen educational support systems and ensure that students, particularly in remote areas, have access to safe and reliable transportation.

Administrative secretary PWD reviews PMGSY progress, stresses timely completion

Focus on new districts, data accuracy, and last-mile connectivity



Photo Caption: Administrative Secretary, Public Works (R&B), Baseer Ul Haq Chaudhary.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Administrative Secretary, Public Works (R&B), Baseer Ul Haq Chaudhary on April 28 chaired a high-level review meeting to assess progress and finalise key aspects of ongoing and proposed infrastructure works under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), with special emphasis on road and bridge projects under PMGSY-III across the Union Territory.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on the status of road and bridge infrastructure. Chaudhary underscored the importance of adhering to timelines and directed that all works under PMGSY-III be completed within the financial year 2026-27. He also stressed the need for systematic maintenance of previously constructed assets to ensure their durability and serviceability.

Emphasising data integrity and institutional accountability, he instructed officials to ensure that all project-related data is accurate, authenticated, and regularly updated. He also called for the expeditious preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) under PMGSY-IV, highlighting the need for a robust and well-documented data framework in line with ministry guidelines.

Reviewing project execution, the Administrative

Secretary sought updates on pending road stretches and warned that delays during the current working season would be viewed seriously. He directed officials to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and proactively address bottlenecks to ensure smooth progress.

He further instructed that all pending DPRs under PMGSY-IV be finalised at the earliest, with clear technical justification at every stage, and emphasised regular supervision and periodic reviews to maintain implementation momentum.

Chaudhary laid special focus on road projects in the newly created districts of Sham, Changthang, Drass, Zaskar, and Nubra, directing that these be completed within the current year. He also reviewed connectivity challenges in remote areas, including Hundar Dok in Nubra district, and reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring motorable road connectivity to all villages, thereby achieving seamless last-mile access.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, PWD; Joint Director Finance; Executive Engineers of R&B divisions; Junior Engineers; and other concerned officials.

L-G V.K. Saxena removes bar on higher qualifications for govt employees

Major reform to allow career progression for Ladakhi youth

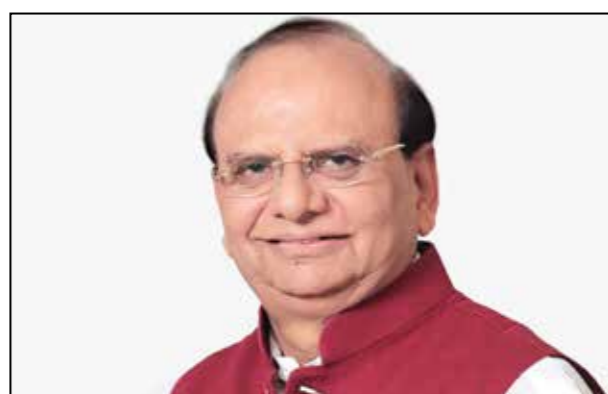


Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena has ordered the removal of restrictions that barred government employees—despite being graduates—from applying for higher, graduate-level posts if they were appointed to positions requiring lower qualifications.

The decision, which comes into immediate effect, marks a significant administrative reform aimed at ensuring fair career progression for youth in Ladakh.

Earlier, candidates with higher qualifications who secured jobs meant for 10th or 12th pass applicants were required to submit affidavits declaring they did not possess higher qualifications. As a result, they were later deemed ineligible for recruitment to graduate-level posts, effectively limiting their career advancement.

Terming the provision “unjustified” and “restrictive,” the Lieutenant Governor said such rules were contrary to the fundamental right to seek appropriate employment.

The move is expected to benefit thousands of employees

working in lower-qualification roles such as Orderly and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), who were previously barred from competing for higher posts. The restriction had also discouraged many qualified youth from applying for such jobs due to concerns over limited career growth.

The decision follows multiple representations from affected candidates who had been declared ineligible for higher posts due to earlier affidavits.

After a detailed review, the Lieutenant Governor noted that such provisions disproportionately impacted youth in Ladakh, where employment opportunities are limited and government jobs remain a key aspiration.

“Accordingly, the provision contained in Para 3 of the Office Memorandum dated 25.03.2026 is hereby set aside on the grounds of being unjustified and restrictive. All candidates already in government service, including those appointed based on such declarations or undertakings, shall be allowed to appear in future graduate-level examinations and apply for higher posts, subject to fulfilment of the prescribed eligibility conditions. This relaxation shall apply uniformly to all existing employees and will not be denied on the basis of earlier affidavits regarding non-possession of higher qualifications. This order shall come into effect immediately,” ordered Vinai Kumar Saxena.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the decision would have far-reaching implications and significantly safeguard the interests of Ladakhi youth. “It is the responsibility of the Administration to ensure equal opportunities for all sections of society, irrespective of educational qualifications. The UT Administration remains committed to responsive and inclusive governance, and will take proactive steps to address genuine public concerns, ensuring that no eligible candidate is disadvantaged by such unjustified and restrictive provisions,” he said.

NOTICE

I, Stanzin Dolma D/o Sanzin Gyalson R/o Zaskar UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my father's name has been wrongly recorded as Stanzin Gyalson instead of correct and actual name Sanzin Gyalson in my ST Certificate duly issued by Office of the Tehsildar Zaskar UT Ladakh with Registration No. Teh-Z/ BG/ STC/ 21/18 and Dated on 03-04-2021. Now, I'm applying for changes in my ST Certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Office of the Tehsildar Zaskar UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

Whereas Jigmet Rinchen S/o Sonam Pambar R/o Liksey, Leh UT Ladakh has lost the Birth Certificate issued by Registrar Birth & Death, Municipal Committee Leh with Registration No. 3149 and Date of Birth 06-05-1996 and now he has applied for issuance of duplicate Birth Certificate in lieu of lost documents. Hence the notice is hereby served through press to file objection if any in this office of Registrar Birth & Death, Municipal Committee Leh within 7 days from date of publication failing which new Birth Certificate will be issued accordingly.

Registrar Birth & Death,
Municipal Committee Leh

Igoo celebrates launch of Ladakh Model High School



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

IGOO: Ladakh Model High School Igo was inaugurated on April 27 by Bhanu Prabha, Administrative Secretary, School Education Department, UT Ladakh, in the presence of officials, the Headmaster, SMDC members, Goba, and local villagers.

The upgradation of Government High School Igo into a model school marks a significant milestone in strengthening the education sector in the region. The initiative reflects the Administration's commitment to enhancing educational standards, improving infrastructure, and ensuring the holistic development of students.

The inaugural ceremony witnessed the participation of the school Headmaster, teaching staff, parents, students, VEC Chairman, Goba, Shakya Tsokpa President and members, along with other prominent members of the community.

During her visit, the Administrative Secretary conducted a detailed inspection of the campus, including the nursery section, classrooms, and both boys' and girls' hostels. She interacted with the Headmaster, teachers, VEC Chairman, Goba, and representatives of the Shakya Tsokpa, discussing key aspects such as hostel facilities, classroom conditions, and overall institutional development.

Bhanu Prabha appreciated the efforts of the school authorities, SMDC, and parents for their active cooperation in developing and maintaining the institution.

The programme was further enlivened by cultural performances presented by students, including traditional dances, songs, and modern acts, adding vibrancy to the occasion.

The inauguration marks a new beginning in the pursuit of quality education and a brighter future for students in the region.

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