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Ladakh celebrates 86th birth anniversary of Staktsang Raspa Ngawang Tenzin Chokyi Nyima



Photo Caption: Monks of Hemis Monastery praying at assembly hall during His Holiness Lama Staktsang Raspa 86th birthday.

By Stanzin Dasal

LEH: The 86th birth anniversary of His Holiness Staktsang Raspa Ngawang Tenzin Chokyi Nyima was celebrated with great religious fervour and devotion across Ladakh on May 25.

A large number of devotees, monks, dignitaries and local residents gathered at different monasteries to participate in the celebrations and seek blessings on the auspicious occasion. The occasion highlighted the spiritual contributions and teachings of His Holiness Ladakh Chosgon Staktsang Raspa and reflected the deep reverence and respect held for him across Ladakh.

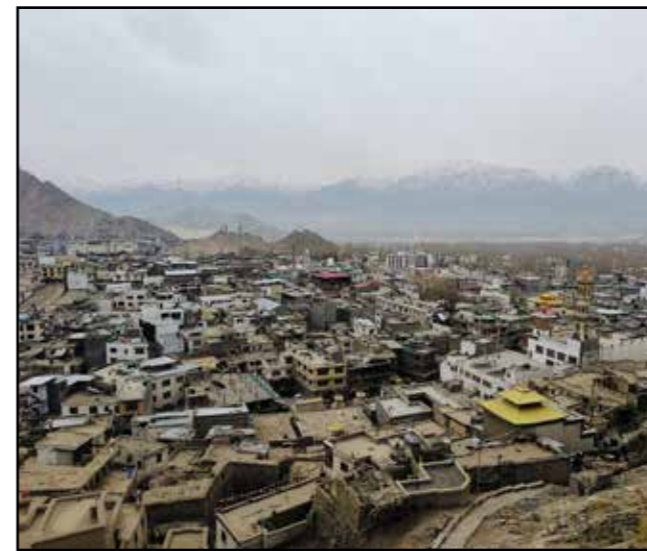
Congratulating the 6th Ladakh Skyabgon Lama on his 86th birthday, Ven. Dorjay Stanzin said that long-life prayers and other Buddhist rituals were conducted at Hemis Mon-

astery. He added that monasteries in different villages across Ladakh were also celebrating the birth anniversary of His Holiness.

"We pray for His Holiness's long life and hope to receive an opportunity to seek his blessings in Ladakh one day," said Ven. Dorjay Stanzin. The Sixth Staktsang Raspa, Ngawang Tenzin Chokyi Nyima, was born in Central Tibet in 1941 and was brought to Hemis Monastery in 1945 for enthronement. After returning to Tibet in the 1950s, he was allowed to visit Ladakh for a brief period in the late 1980s following repeated appeals from the people of the region.

Some accounts mention that changing political circumstances later prevented his return to Ladakh.

Apex Body-KDA, centre reach in-principle deal on Ladakh safeguards



According to the understanding reached during the talks, legislative, executive, and financial powers would rest with elected representatives through a Union Territory-level legislative body. The members said all bureaucrats in the UT, including the Chief Secretary, would function under the executive authority of the elected government, headed by a proposed Chief Minister.

In a joint statement, the LAB and KDA said the agreement aims to restore democratic governance in Ladakh while providing constitutional safeguards on the lines of Articles 371A, 371F, and 371G — provisions currently applicable to Nagaland, Sikkim, and Mizoram.

The sub-committee comprising senior representatives from LAB, KDA, and the MHA held extensive deliberations on Ladakh's administrative and political future. During the meeting, both LAB and KDA reiterated the long-standing aspirations of the people of Ladakh, including demands for restoration of democracy, constitutional safeguards, statehood, and Sixth Schedule protections.

The discussions, described by both sides as "detailed and constructive," resulted in broad agreement on several key issues. Under the proposed framework, legislative, executive, and financial authority would be vested in elected representatives through a UT-level legislative body.

By Stanzin Dasal

LEH: In what could become a defining moment in Ladakh's political journey, the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have reached an in-principle understanding with the Government of India on constitutional safeguards and the restoration of democratic governance in the Union Territory.

The breakthrough came during crucial discussions held in New Delhi on May 22 between representatives of LAB-KDA and officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), where the future administrative and political framework of Ladakh took centre stage.

For the people of Ladakh, the meeting carried significance far beyond politics. It reflected years of growing concern over identity, land rights, employment security, and political representation following the abrogation of

Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state in 2019. Although Ladakh was granted Union Territory status, the absence of a legislature and constitutional protections soon triggered apprehensions across both Leh and Kargil districts.

Speaking after the meeting, Chering Dorje Lakruk said, "This is only the initial stage. The MHA panel will share the draft agreement, and both the Apex Body and KDA will also submit their drafts."

He cautioned against premature celebration, noting that several details still need to be worked out.

"It is not the stage for celebrations yet. We still have to examine the finer details of the agreement. For now, there is only an in-principle consensus on some issues," he added.

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Fortnightly News

Apex Body-KDA, centre reach in-principle deal on Ladakh safeguards

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MHA officials reportedly explained that Ladakh cannot currently be granted full statehood because it lacks adequate revenue generation to meet major expenditures such as government salaries. However, they indicated that the proposed arrangement could pave the way for eventual statehood once Ladakh fulfills the necessary revenue criteria.

The KDA and LAB stated that they would continue working closely with the MHA, along with legal and

constitutional experts, to finalise the operational details of the proposed framework.

As Ladakh stands at this political crossroads, the coming months are likely to determine whether the region's long-standing aspirations for democratic empowerment and constitutional protection finally find a lasting framework.

Ladakh signs landmark MoU with ITBP for supply of local food products

L-G VK Saxena calls MoU a crucial step to empower border communities and strengthen local livelihoods



Photo Caption: During the signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP), North West Frontier (NWF) and the Department of Cooperatives, UT Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a major initiative aimed at strengthening local farmers and cooperative institutions, promoting livelihoods in border areas, and ensuring the supply of fresh produce to security personnel, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP), North West Frontier (NWF), and the Department of Cooperatives, UT Ladakh, on May 27.

The MoU will facilitate the procurement and supply of essential food items and allied products through local Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), thereby providing assured market linkages for their produce.

The agreement was signed by Deputy Inspector General, ITBP NWF, Laxman Yadav, and Secretary, Cooperatives, UT Ladakh, Bhanu Prabha, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena. The MoU has initially been signed for a period of three years.

The initiative is expected to address one of the key challenges faced by farmers in Ladakh — the lack of stable markets for their produce, which often results

in financial losses. The move aligns with the vision of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has directed the Indian Army and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to procure local agricultural and handicraft products through cooperative institutions to generate employment and promote economic self-reliance in border regions.

Under the arrangement, ITBP has earmarked an initial allocation of ₹21 lakh during the current financial year for the procurement of vegetables and allied products through registered cooperative societies, FPOs, and PACS in Ladakh.

Describing the initiative as a historic step, Lieutenant Governor Saxena said the MoU would economically empower local cooperative institutions and residents of Ladakh, particularly those living in border areas, while also strengthening local supply chains.

“The ₹21 lakh allocation by ITBP for the procurement of vegetables and allied products is a good beginning. This initiative will encourage farmers in border villages to cultivate more vegetables, improve their livelihoods, and strengthen local economic activity. Greenhouses being developed under the Vibrant Village Programme will further help farmers increase vegetable production, which can directly supply fresh produce to ITBP personnel deployed in remote areas,” Saxena said.

The Lieutenant Governor further observed that the initiative would contribute to reverse migration in border villages by creating livelihood opportunities and strengthening rural economies.

The MoU establishes a structured institutional mechanism for the procurement of locally produced agricultural, horticultural, livestock, and dairy products through cooperative institutions functioning under the administrative control of the Additional Registrar, Cooperative Societies, UT Ladakh.

The arrangement is expected to create assured market linkages for local producers and enhance the financial sustainability of cooperative institutions operating in remote areas.

Ladakh moves towards India's first geothermal energy project

L-G approves extension of MoU with ONGC for clean energy initiative in Puga Valley



Photo Caption: India's first commercial geothermal energy exploration project in the Puga Valley region. Photo Courtesy: ONGC

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh is poised for a major clean energy transformation with the launch of India's first commercial geothermal energy exploration project in the Puga Valley region. Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved a five-year extension of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) for setting up the country's first geothermal power project in Ladakh.

The project, to be developed at an altitude of over 14,000 feet in Puga Valley, is being seen as a milestone in India's renewable energy sector.

The earlier tripartite MoU signed on February 6, 2021, between the Ladakh Administration, LAHDC Leh, and the ONGC Energy Centre had expired on February 5, 2026. ONGC had sought an extension citing incomplete work due to extreme weather conditions and challenging terrain in the region.

Recognising the strategic and environmental importance of the project, the Lieutenant Governor approved the extension of the agreement for another five years.

Under the MoU, ONGC will establish a 1 MWe pilot geothermal power plant in Puga Valley and prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for large-scale commercial exploitation of geothermal energy in Ladakh. Geothermal energy is generated by harnessing heat from beneath the Earth's crust. The heat, produced naturally within the planet's core, warms underground rocks and water reservoirs, creating a renewable source of energy. India currently does not have any large-scale commercial geothermal power plant, making the Puga Valley project the first initiative of its kind in the country.

According to the agreement, ONGC Energy Centre will deepen the existing geothermal well up to 1,000 metres during the 2026 working season. Another geothermal well of similar depth will be drilled in the next phase of the project. Testing, evaluation, and commissioning of the pilot power plant are expected during the financial year 2026-27.

In Phase II, extensive geothermal surveys and scientific investigations will also be conducted in the Chumathang area, followed by drilling activities and preparation of a DPR for commercial-scale geothermal development across Ladakh.

The Puga Valley and Chumathang regions fall within the Himalayan geothermal belt, where tectonic plate activity generates intense underground heat. Test wells drilled in Puga Valley have reportedly tapped high-pressure steam and hot fluids, recording temperatures exceeding 200 degrees Celsius at depths of around 400 metres.

Officials said the geothermal initiative, alongside Ladakh's growing solar energy projects, could significantly reduce dependence on conventional fuels, lower carbon emissions, and position Ladakh as a leading renewable energy hub in India.

“The geothermal energy project in Puga Valley has the potential to become a game changer for Ladakh and a landmark initiative in India's clean energy journey,” Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

“Sustainably harnessing geothermal energy will not only strengthen Ladakh's energy security but also significantly contribute towards the vision of making Ladakh a carbon-neutral and environmentally sustainable region. This MoU extension is crucial for completing scientific exploration and laying the foundation for large-scale geothermal power generation in Ladakh,” he added.

Despite harsh climatic conditions, difficult terrain, and technical challenges, ONGC successfully drilled the first geothermal well to a depth of 405 metres in 2025, making it the deepest geothermal well drilled in Ladakh so far.

Geothermometric studies and geothermal sample analysis revealed subsurface temperatures exceeding 240 degrees Celsius — considered suitable for geothermal power generation. The proposed pilot plant is expected to operate at a turbine inlet temperature of approximately 200 degrees Celsius, with a targeted generation capacity of 1 MW.

11 Narcotics cases registered in Leh, officials review enforcement measures



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 38th meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) Mechanism and the 7th review meeting of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) for Leh district were held on May 25 at the VC Hall, DC Office Leh, under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Leh, Romil Singh Donk.

Representatives from various departments, law enforcement agencies, health institutions, and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Srinagar, attended the meeting.

The committee discussed key issues including drug trafficking trends, cross-state investigations, awareness campaigns in schools and colleges, strengthening drug detection systems, rehabilitation measures, and drug demand reduction activities.

Officials informed the meeting that 11 narcotics-related cases have been registered in Leh district so far, in-

cluding cases involving heroin, charas, peddler network tracking, and a breakthrough involving a Delhi-based gang linked to drug peddling in Leh.

Concerns were raised over changing drug trafficking patterns, overdose cases, and smuggling routes in the region. Authorities also reviewed and stressed strict enforcement of CCTV surveillance, permit-based sales, and implementation of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) regulations during market inspection drives.

The committee emphasised the need for surveys and case studies to identify the causes behind the rising incidence of substance abuse among youth. Awareness programmes being conducted by the police department and promotion of the Tele-MANAS mental health helpline (14416) through the Information Department were also discussed.

Dr. Padma Angmo presented up-

dates regarding rehabilitation and counselling efforts at the de-addiction centre. She also expressed concern over the increasing involvement of women and minors in substance abuse cases and suggested involving child welfare authorities wherever necessary.

During the meeting, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Changthang, Nitish Rajora, suggested a coordinated awareness and enforcement mechanism involving tehsildars, ASHA workers, school heads, hostel wardens, and police personnel.

The Deputy Commissioner Leh also directed the manager of the District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC), Leh, to improve the functioning of the centre within seven days.

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment towards strengthening awareness, rehabilitation, and enforcement measures to combat drug abuse in the district.

First-ever Rock Check Dam over Indus inaugurated in Leh

Eco-friendly initiative built without cement or concrete aims to address seasonal water scarcity in Ladakh



Photo Caption: Rock Check Dam over the River Indus at Upshi in Leh district.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

UPSHI: In a significant step towards addressing seasonal water scarcity and strengthening agricultural sustainability in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on May 27 inaugurated an innovative Rock Check Dam over the River Indus at Upshi in Leh district.

The project, located around 44 kilometres from Leh at an altitude of 11,400 feet, is the first rock check dam of its kind in India and has been conceptualised as an eco-friendly, cost-effective, and sustainable solution to Ladakh's water crisis.

Built using large rocks sourced directly from the riverbed and surrounding areas, the check dam has been designed to hold and regulate river water without the use of cement or concrete, making it an environmentally sustainable initiative. Lieutenant Governor Saxena has named the initiative the “Sindhu Jal Samridhi Abhiyan” (SJSJA), aimed at augmenting water availability by constructing rock check dams at strategic locations along the river, particularly at narrow passages where tapping river water is relatively easier and more effective. The locations for these structures are identified in consultation with local villagers and community members. The Lieutenant Governor has directed the Irrigation and Flood Control Department to construct three more such check dams within a month on an experimental basis.

In several parts of Ladakh, the Indus River becomes shallow during certain seasons, making it difficult for conventional pumps and motors to lift water to uphill agricultural fields. These rock check dams are expected to play a crucial role by creating pondage areas capable of storing substantial quantities of water for irrigation during the peak sowing season.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said the Sindhu Jal Samridhi Abhiyan would significantly improve irrigation facilities, strengthen water security, and support sustainable agriculture in remote villages of Ladakh.

“It is another innovative and eco-friendly project aimed at achieving long-term water security in Ladakh after the successful launch of Project Him Sarovar. The Rock Check Dam has been conceived as a model of sustainable water and agricultural security while preserving the fragile ecological character of Ladakh's ecosystem. The initiative has received an encouraging response from villagers,” Saxena said. Unlike conventional cement-concrete check dams, the rock check dam functions as a semi-permanent barrier across the river channel. It slows down the velocity of flowing water and creates a large pondage area while allowing excess water to pass through, thereby generating a cascading effect and improving oxidation in the river.

The rock check dam at Upshi is nearly 200 feet long, with a base width of 30 feet on the riverbed for enhanced stability. The top deck is 15 feet wide and rises approximately five feet above the riverbed. The structure has been specially designed to withstand high water pressure during peak river flow.

Officials informed that the current flow of water in the Indus River is around 25 cusecs (cubic feet per second), which is expected to increase nearly eightfold to around 200 cusecs during July and August. The design of the rock weir ensures that the structure remains stable and does not get washed away even during high discharge periods. Remarkably, the construction of the check dam was completed within just seven days, from May 12 to 18, 2026, during which the Lieutenant Governor conducted three site visits to monitor the progress of the project.

Nearly 180 metric tonnes of rocks, each weighing between 500 kilograms and 10 metric tonnes, were carefully interlocked within the riverbed to construct the check dam. The structure has successfully created a vast pondage area extending nearly 1,500 feet (approximately 500 metres) upstream, storing an estimated 40 million litres of water. The water depth along the riverbanks measures around four to five feet, while the depth in the middle of the river reaches nearly 10 feet.

Fortnightly News

Chief Secretary holds interactive session with entrepreneurs of Ladakh



Photo Caption: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra during an interactive session with entrepreneurs from various sectors across Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on May 20 chaired the second interactive session with entrepreneurs from various sectors across Ladakh to discuss challenges, opportunities, and practical pathways for strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Union Territory.

The interactive session was organised as a follow-up to the earlier introductory meeting, with the present deliberations focusing on execution strategies, sector-specific challenges, institutional support, and converting ideas into actionable outcomes.

Entrepreneurs representing sectors such as local product development, AI-driven initiatives, waste management, textiles and handicrafts, fashion, consultancy and service sectors, film and media, educational organisations, and NGOs participated in the discussions and shared their experiences, ideas, and expectations from the Administration.

The entrepreneurs highlighted several issues affecting their respective sectors, particularly in the areas of skill development, market linkages, funding support, branding, infrastructure, and policy facilitation. Representatives from the textile and handicraft sector raised concerns regarding the sustainability of artisan training programmes, stating that many trained individuals eventually leave the field due to lack of economic opportunities and market connectivity.

Special emphasis was laid on the condition of Pashmina producers and nomadic communities. Participants stressed the need to support local nomads and artisans through better infrastructure, value-addition facilities, and awareness among youth regarding traditional livelihoods and the cultural importance of Pashmina production. Issues related to rural livelihoods, youth engagement, education, and preservation of indigenous crafts were also discussed extensively.

Describing the interaction as highly constructive, the Chief Secretary appreciated the openness with which entrepreneurs shared their concerns and ideas. He emphasized the need for deeper engagement with sector-specific stakeholders and stated that the Administration aims to create structured dialogue platforms to

better understand challenges and design targeted interventions.

Kundra highlighted that the Administration is working towards developing a comprehensive startup ecosystem in Ladakh, including a dedicated Startup Policy expected to be finalised in the coming weeks. He informed participants that the proposed policy would focus on incubation support, seed funding, co-working spaces, capital subsidies, innovation support, and institutional partnerships with premier institutions such as IIM Calcutta.

The Chief Secretary also discussed the importance of creating common facility centres and collaborative workspaces for sectors such as handicrafts, textiles, filmmaking, design, AI, and renewable energy innovation. He stressed the need for proper documentation of sectoral requirements, formation of producer groups and FPOs, and development of market-driven strategies for products such as Pashmina, apricot-based products, mushrooms, and other local value-added goods.

He further emphasized the importance of connecting entrepreneurs with government schemes, financial institutions, and startup support mechanisms. Kundra informed that awareness camps and district-level outreach programmes would be conducted to educate entrepreneurs and youth about funding opportunities, startup schemes, bank loan provisions, and government support initiatives.

The Chief Secretary stated that the Administration intends to institutionalize regular government-industry dialogue platforms with actionable agendas for each sector, including wildlife, education, crafts, tourism, media, and technology. He also stressed the need for creating common digital platforms and online sales portals to improve visibility and market access for local entrepreneurs and products.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, School Education, Bhanu Prabha; Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Moses Kunzang; Consultant to the Administration functioning as OSD (Special Projects); and entrepreneurs and representatives from various sectors and organizations across Ladakh.

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena approves Reconstitution of Ladakh Police (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Board

Reconstituted Board to ensure transparent, merit-based and technology-enabled recruitment in Ladakh Police

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, has accorded sanction to the reconstitution of the Ladakh Police (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Board with the objective of strengthening transparent, fair and efficient recruitment processes in Ladakh Police.

The reconstitution of the Board has been approved following a proposal received from the Police Headquarters, Ladakh, in view of administrative changes and the unavailability of certain members of the earlier Board. As a result, Police Headquarters proposed the constitution of a fresh Recruitment Board to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of recruitment examinations in Ladakh Police.

The Board is responsible for conducting recruitment examinations for all notified Group 'B' (Non-Gazetted) posts, including Sub-Inspector (Level-6C), and Group 'C' posts, including Constable (Level-02) cadre and Follower Level-SL-2 posts of Ladakh Police.

Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, stated that the reconstitution of the Recruitment Board reflects the commitment of the UT Administration towards ensuring fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment opportunities for the youth of Ladakh. "The Administration is

committed to providing every youth of Ladakh with equal and transparent opportunities in public service. A credible and professionally managed recruitment system would further strengthen the confidence of aspiring candidates and create greater employment opportunities for the local youth," Saxena said.

The newly reconstituted Ladakh Police (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Board shall comprise Koshal Kumar Sharma, DIG, Leh-Kargil Range, as Chairman; Vikas Kumar, SSP Traffic Ladakh, as Member Secretary, along with Fulzele Piyush Nirakar, SP Security, Shri Raam R, SP District Leh, Nitin Yadav, SP District Kargil, Padma Dorjee, DySP DAR Leh, and Anayatullah, DySP Headquarters Kargil, as members of the Board.

The Board has been entrusted with the task of ensuring a fair, transparent, technology-enabled and merit-based recruitment process through the Transparent Recruitment Process (TRP). The Board has been mandated to use biometric verification, CCTV surveillance, digital attendance systems, online applications and other technological safeguards approved by the Board to maintain integrity and credibility in the recruitment process.

Leh gets first public green space with redeveloped Choglamsar forest

Project introduces nature trails, cycling tracks, biodiversity zones, and eco-friendly amenities



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Leh city received its first public green space with the inauguration of the restored and redeveloped Choglamsar Protected Forest on the banks of the River Indus on May 25.

The redeveloped forest, equipped with nature-oriented recreational and public amenities such as a nature trail, nature park, cycle track, biodiversity and wellness zones, gazebos, and viewpoints, was restored within just 45 days following Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena's first visit to the site on April 7, 2026. At the time, the forest area was reportedly in a dilapidated condition, with broken pavements, degraded landscapes, and a lack of basic public amenities.

Recognising its ecological, environmental, and social significance, the Lieutenant Governor directed the redevelopment of the forest area with facilities including pedestrian pathways, children's play areas, and public conveniences.

Following the directions, restoration work was undertaken in mission mode and completed within a short span of 45 days.

The upgraded facilities now include eco-friendly cycling tracks, dedicated children's play areas, gazebos, pedestrian pathways, resting spaces, and study corners equipped with books and literature on wildlife and environmental conservation.

Spread across nearly 27 acres along the River Indus and located around 7 km from Leh city, the Choglamsar Protected Forest was established in the 1970s on barren and erosion-prone land. Over the years, despite playing a significant role in stabilising the Indus riverbanks, conserving soil, enhancing biodiversity, and strengthening the fragile ecological balance of the Himalayan region, the forest had fallen into neglect and required urgent restoration and upgradation.

Addressing the gathering, Lieutenant Governor Saxena described the Choglamsar Protected Forest as one of Ladakh's most valuable ecological assets and said it symbolises resilience, restoration, and harmony between humanity and nature.

"At a time when climate change poses serious challenges to fragile mountain ecosystems, Choglamsar

Protected Forest stands as a powerful example of ecological restoration and environmental stewardship. Our objective is not merely to develop a park, but to create a model ecological destination rooted in the principle of 'Conservation First', where conservation, education, recreation, and community participation coexist in harmony," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also released a brochure on the Choglamsar Protected Forest highlighting its ecological significance, conservation objectives, and management initiatives.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment and the University of Ladakh for undertaking comprehensive research-based engagement on the conservation and propagation of the endangered Juniper species (*Juniperus semiglobosa*), the State Tree of Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor also formally released the new uniform code for forest and wildlife field staff of the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment.

Saxena appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Forest Department, environmental experts, local stakeholders, and all individuals associated with the preservation and restoration of the protected forest.

LG Vinai Kumar Saxena participates in celebrations marking formation of Sham district

Says creation of new district will strengthen governance, generate employment and accelerate development in western Ladakh



Photo Caption: Celebrations marking the creation of Sham as a new district in Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Vinai Kumar Saxena on May 26 visited Khatse and participated in the celebrations marking the creation of Sham as a new district in Ladakh. This was the Lieutenant Governor's first visit to Sham after its inception as a new district.

Amid enthusiastic public participation and cultural performances, the Lieutenant Governor was accorded a grand traditional welcome by villagers, public representatives, students, cultural troupes and members of civil society on his arrival at Khatse, the district headquarters.

The creation of Sham district follows the approval granted by the Lieutenant Governor on April 27, 2026, for the creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh. Sham district comprises 27 revenue villages, including five villages carved out from Kargil district and 22 villages from Leh district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated the people on the fulfilment of their long-pending aspiration. He stated that the creation

of the new district reflects the personal attention and commitment of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah towards the development of Ladakh and border areas.

The Lieutenant Governor said that with the creation of the new district, governance and public services would now become more accessible and responsive at the doorstep of the people. He added that the formation of Sham district would act as a bridge between the Administration and the public, ensuring faster service delivery and better governance.

Describing Sham as the "Apricot Valley" of Ladakh, Saxena said the GI-tagged "Raktsey Karpo" apricot variety, which is grown abundantly in Sham valley, is now being exported to international markets. He said that around 1,000 metric tonnes of fresh apricots would be exported this season — a historic milestone for Ladakh's horticulture sector.

He stated that the UT Administration would facilitate packaging, branding and marketing of apricots through various institutional partnerships to

ensure better returns for farmers.

Saxena further informed that during his recent interaction with Chirag Paswan, support was assured for establishing food processing units and strengthening the horticulture sector in Ladakh. He observed that these initiatives would significantly benefit farmers, particularly from Sham, who are major producers of apricots and apples.

The Lieutenant Governor further stated that creation of the district would also lead to the generation of employment opportunities for local youth through the creation of new posts in government departments as well as indirect opportunities in construction, transport, trade, tourism and hospitality sectors.

"My aim is to ensure balanced and inclusive development of every region of Ladakh while protecting its fragile ecology. I want to see a real transformation in the lives of the people of Ladakh. With the support and cooperation of the people, Sham will emerge as a vibrant, progressive and self-reliant district in the coming years," Saxena said.

DG NCC Lt Gen Virendra Vats visits Ladakh, reviews NCC training and infrastructure

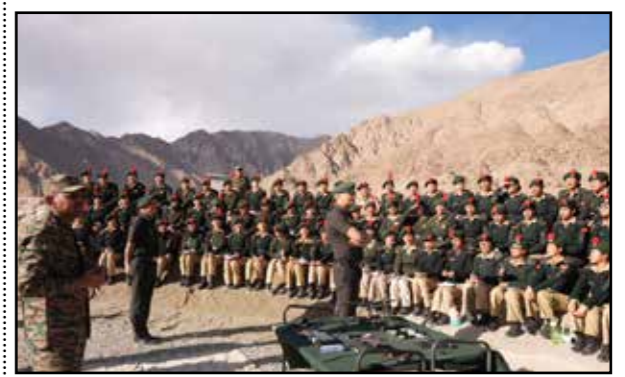


Photo Caption: Director General of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lt Gen Virendra Vats, YSM, SM, VSM interacting with the NCC cadets.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Director General of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lt Gen Virendra Vats, YSM, SM, VSM, visited 1 Ladakh Battalion NCC, Leh, during the ongoing Combined Annual Training Camp (CATC) being conducted from May 19 to 28 for 350 NCC cadets at the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, Gupuk, Leh.

During his visit, the DG NCC called on Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, and the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 14 Corps, Lt Gen Hitesh Bhalla, SC, SM, VSM, to discuss matters related to youth development, expansion of NCC activities across UT Ladakh, and strengthening NCC infrastructure in the region.

The DG NCC also visited the ongoing CATC organised by 1 Ladakh Battalion NCC, Leh, and interacted with NCC cadets drawn from various educational institutions across Leh-Ladakh. While interacting with the cadets, he lauded their enthusiasm, discipline, and commitment towards nation-building.

He appreciated the training being imparted by the NCC team in Leh and motivated the cadets to actively participate in various NCC camps of national importance and

contribute meaningfully towards nation-building. He also felicitated outstanding Associate NCC Officers (ANOs) and NCC cadets for their exemplary performance and achievements in various NCC activities.

Lt Gen Vats further visited the under-construction Ladakh NCC Training Academy at Phyang, Leh, where he reviewed the progress of ongoing construction works. He emphasized the timely completion of the project, which is expected to significantly enhance training facilities and opportunities for NCC cadets in the Ladakh region.

The visit highlighted the NCC's continued commitment towards empowering youth in remote and border areas and fostering leadership, discipline, and patriotism among the younger generation by grooming them as future leaders.

Highlighting the emerging security dynamics, rapid technological advancements, and the national vision of Viksit Bharat@2047, the DG NCC stated that the Ladakh NCC Training Academy at Phyang would emerge as a centre of excellence where NCC training would be dynamic, future-ready, and mission-oriented.

Indian Army conducts multi-speciality medical camp in Tia village, Ladakh

Fire & Fury Corps organises healthcare outreach under Operation Sadbhavana



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

TIA: The Fire & Fury Corps of the Indian Army successfully conducted a multi-speciality medical camp at Tia village in Ladakh on May 27 as part of the ongoing Operation Sadbhavana initiative.

Operation Sadbhavana, meaning "Goodwill," is the Indian Army's flagship humanitarian and civic action programme in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Active since 1998, the initiative focuses on education, healthcare, infrastructure, women's empowerment, and community development in remote areas with limited access to government services.

Healthcare initiatives, including multi-speciality medical camps, have remained a cornerstone of the programme, delivering essential medical support to remote and underserved populations across the region.

The medical camp witnessed the active participation of civilian doctors

specialising in medicine, surgery, paediatrics, gynaecology, dermatology, orthopaedics, and pulmonology. Free consultations and treatment were provided to local residents, ex-servicemen, and their families in the remote high-altitude village of Tia.

The initiative reaffirmed the Fire & Fury Corps' commitment to the well-being of people living in Ladakh's frontier areas. The camp addressed critical healthcare needs in a region where access to specialised medical services remains severely limited due to geographical isolation and extreme weather conditions.

Tia village, situated in a remote high-altitude region of Ladakh, continues to face persistent challenges in accessing quality healthcare because of its difficult terrain and harsh climatic conditions. This initiative directly benefited numerous local civilians and ex-servicemen families by providing specialised medical consultations and treatments that would otherwise be inaccessible.

The effort also underscored the Fire & Fury Corps' dedication to holistic development and to ensuring the health and welfare of citizens living in sensitive border areas, while fostering trust and national integration.

In Focus:

The Enigma of Tsan: Ladakh's Ancient Spirit Belief Lives On

By Dadul Singay

In Ladakh, there exists a mysterious supernatural entity known as Tsan, believed to predate human existence itself. It is regarded as one of the most powerful elements of indigenous supernatural folklore, often associated with unresolved illnesses, misfortunes, and disputes.



A Brief History of Tsan

The Tsan (Bar-Tsan in Ladakhi script) are a unique and powerful class of indigenous mountain warrior spirits deeply embedded in Ladakhi folklore and Tibetan Buddhist cosmology. In Himalayan belief systems, the universe is divided into three spiritual realms: Lhayoul, the realm of gods residing in the sky; Luyoul, inhabited by Nagas or underground serpent spirits dwelling in lakes, rivers, springs, and hidden treasures; and Tsanyoul (or Bar-Tsan), the intermediate realm between the heavens and the underworld, associated with mountains, wind corridors, and high mountain passes.

Tsan are portrayed as fierce, red-skinned warriors dressed in copper armour and helmets, carrying weapons such as spears, swords, and bows while riding swift red horses. From the front, they appear exceptionally attractive and gentle. However, from behind, they reveal a horrifying form, with their intestines and organs hanging out as though their bodies had been peeled open. According to local belief, merely glimpsing this terrifying side results in instant death.

Within Tsanyoul, the Tsan established territorial boundaries, and warrior clans often revolted against their king to seize power and expand their dominion. They travelled through mountain routes known as Tsan-lam, using these pathways during battles and territorial movements. These routes were traditionally marked with red dye in the mountains of Ladakh to warn humans against interfering with the spirits' path.

During this period, encounters between humans and Tsan were believed to cause severe illnesses and disputes. Symptoms reportedly included chills, violent shivering, dislocation of the lower limbs, and sudden loss of consciousness. To treat such conditions, mountain communities performed healing rituals involving the waving of turmeric water around the patient's head and offerings to Btsan-dol (Tsan stones).

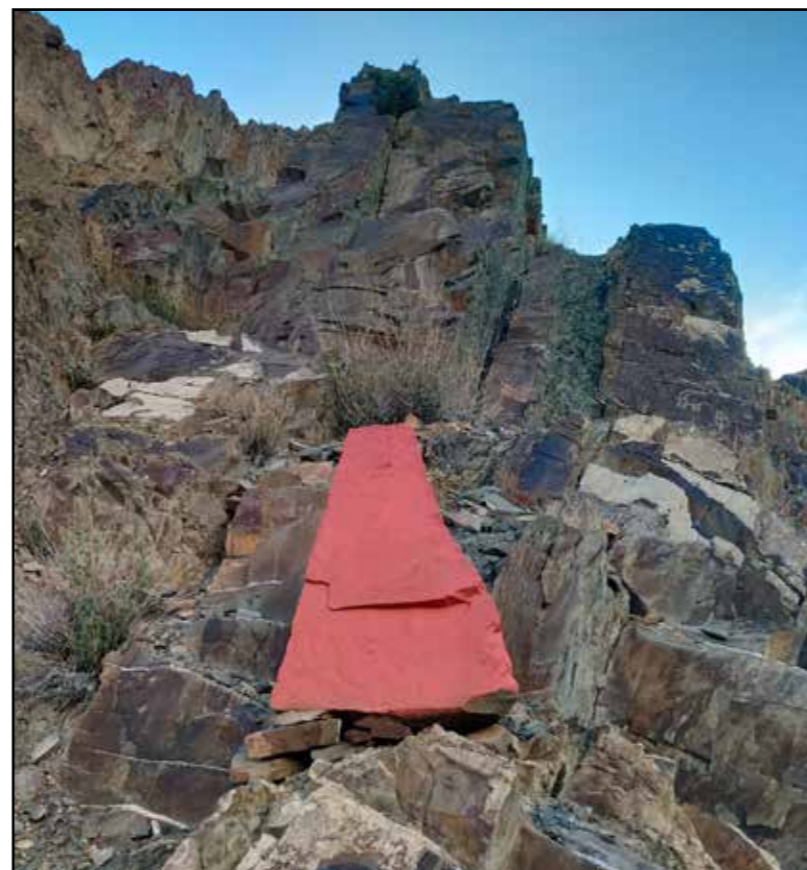
The routines of Tsan remain shrouded in mystery. According to local belief, they are encountered primarily during sunrise, midday, and just before nightfall—times when humans are thought to be physically weaker or less alert, allowing the Tsan to overpower them and spread illness or chaos. It is also believed that if a person constructs a modern house directly across a

Tsan-lam, the household will repeatedly suffer from misfortune.

Among indigenous mountain communities, illnesses attributed to Tsan are considered so powerful that neither doctors nor modern medicine can cure them. Therefore, offerings of Tsanchu (Tsak-chu) are made to the Btsan-dol. Families also build Tsan-khang shrines—small cube-shaped spirit houses painted red—on rooftops to protect themselves from Tsan.

Rigsun Gonpo and Spiritual Protection

Another important protective symbol is Rigsun Gonpo, or the Three Stupas, representing three major Bodhisattvas and their enlightened qualities. The white stupa symbolizes Avalokiteshvara, embodying compassion, peace, and purity. The yellow or orange stupa represents Manjushri, associated with wisdom, learning, and knowledge. The blue stupa signifies Vajrapani, symbolizing strength, power, and protection against powerful spirits such as Tsan, Lhande, and other malevolent entities.



It is common for households in Ladakh to construct these stupas on rooftops or along pathways to shield themselves from invisible spirits.

Childhood Encounters and Fear

My perception of Tsan (Bar-Tsan) has always been deeply ambivalent. I spent most of my childhood in my village, Kukshow, located approximately 110 kilometers from Leh and around 80 kilometers from Kargil, lying between the two towns. Before attending boarding school, I lived primarily with my grandmother in this small village surrounded by towering mountains and narrow alleyways.

Our home stood near a mountain path marked with red dye and lined with Btsan-dol stones. As a child, I found it terrifying to look toward those stone pillars or the mountainside. I was easily frightened, especially when going outside at night to use the washroom. Often, I would become so scared that I hurried back home midway. I even forced my sister to accompany me because I was too afraid to go alone.

Whenever I fell ill, I remember rituals being performed where turmeric water (Tsak-chu) was waved around my head under the assumption that I had encountered Tsan. Offerings were also made to the Tsan stone pillars nearby. I cannot recall whether these rituals truly cured my illnesses, but my family strongly believed they did. During that period, access to healthcare was extremely limited. Our village had only a small sub-center with a severe shortage of healthcare workers, making hospital visits difficult and sometimes impossible.

Villagers often recounted stories of people who had witnessed Tsan and later died from severe illness. These stories deeply affected me. I constantly feared that I might one day become one of those victims. Whenever I stepped outside during the evening, I would run back home without daring to look behind me. Even the sound of sliding pebbles on the mountainside would accelerate my heartbeat and fill me with terror.

As I grew older, my curiosity about Tsan intensified. I persistently questioned my grandmother about its existence, especially as science became my favorite subject in school. She described Tsan as red warriors with beautiful faces but horrifying backs, their organs exposed and swaying as they moved. She also described the sound of Tsan as resembling a woman running while wearing anklets. The descriptions felt like scenes from a terrifying horror film, yet I was compelled to believe they existed in the real world.

...continues on page 6

The World of

Juniors

World Bicycle Day will be celebrated on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, to highlight the importance of bicycles as a simple, affordable, healthy, and eco-friendly mode of transport. Celebrated every year on June 3, world bicycle day encourages people to use bicycles for fitness, daily travel, pollution reduction, and sustainable living.

The world bicycle day 2026 theme is "Cycling for a Greener Future." This theme focuses on how cycling can help reduce pollution, promote healthier lifestyles, support sustainable cities, and create a cleaner environment for future generations.

World Bicycle Day is a global observance declared by the United Nations to recognise the bicycle as a reliable, affordable, clean, and sustainable means of transport. The day celebrates the bicycle's role in improving health, reducing pollution, supporting mobility, and connecting communities.

The idea of World Bicycle Day was promoted by Professor Leszek Sibilski, a sociology professor and cycling advocate. He began a



grassroots campaign with his students to encourage the United Nations to recognise the value of bicycles globally.

In 2015, his academic work on bicycles and development helped build momentum for the cause. The campaign later received support from global mobility advocates and several UN member countries.

On April 12, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly officially declared June 3 as World Bicycle Day. The resolution was adopted by all 193 UN member states and supported by countries that recognised cycling as a tool for sustainable transport, health, and development.

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

The importance of a day in life



Some of us do take every single day seriously knowing very well that it is every single day that goes to determine one's course of life. Every day greets you with all the possibilities, and it is up to you to think, plan and take up the right course of action. If you reflect soon after waking up early in the morning, you will realise that the day has so many things to be done and so many others to be undone. A plan to do and undo becomes a must as the first step of the day.

American author James Clear has this lovely quote: "Call it the 1% rule; get 1% better each day and you will be 37 times better after a year. Big transformations are just small days repeated."

The point is that today is your day, and it holds everything for you. There is no point in getting back to yesterday because that is just a memory, and tomorrow could be just an imagination. It is today that demands your power of action that could lead to peace, progress and a better tomorrow.

As they say, it is the small actions on ordinary days that make a lasting impact. You can't expect to become great in one swift go. Hard work and a clear mind every single day can lead to great rewards. Take the example of Abraham Lincoln who is said to have read law besides a candlelight undauntedly, day after day.

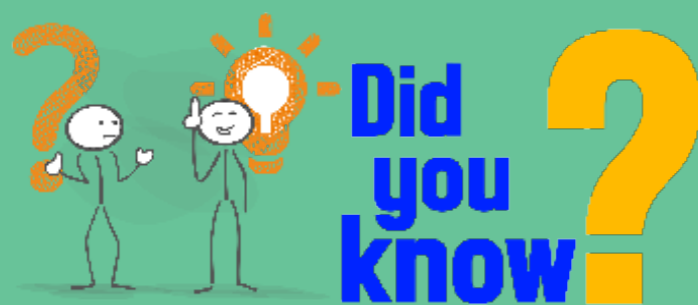
Any day, a good plan or a decision can change your course of life. Similarly, a bad decision can "wash off" all that you have achieved so far. In other words, every action and its results give you an idea of where you are headed to. A course correction may become a must many a time.

Therefore, to make it a meaningful day, one needs to build up one's clear intention. And then comes the get-set-go moment. Having gone through the day, it is a must that you reflect every evening. What has gone right and wrong has to be figured out. Mind you, you can't have a perfect day any day. All that you have to do is to be sincere with good intention.

The punchline: One's life is the reflection of the sum-total of many tiny bits of work done over a time. One must learn to value the importance of every single day.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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



• 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.

• 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."

• Seven of the 10 deadliest wars in history have taken place in China. The Taping Rebellion had twice as many deaths as World War 1.

• Isaac Asimov published so many books, essays, short fiction, and non-fiction, that if you read one per week it would take you 9 years to read all of his work.

• The Doctor Suess book Green Eggs and Ham uses only 50 different words. Doctor Suess wrote the book on a bet from his publisher that he couldn't write a book with fewer words than The Cat in the Hat, which has 225.

• Scientists have answered the question "what comes first the chicken or the egg?" The chicken came first because the egg shell contains a protein that can only be made from a hen.

• It is mainly men who experience colorblindness. 1/20 men experience color blindness as opposed to 1/200 women.

• Scientists were called "natural philosophers" until the 17th century because science didn't exist as a concept.

• When helium is cooled to absolute zero (-460 degrees Fahrenheit) it becomes a liquid and starts flowing upward, against gravity.

• The moon once had an atmosphere. Volcanic eruptions on the moon released trillions of tons of gas into the air, which created an atmosphere. The gases eventually became lost to space.

• When Einstein posed his Theory of Relativity, he didn't have the resources to prove this theory. However, the theory has been proven correct several times over the years. Most recently in 2018, scientists saw that as a black hole distorted light waves from a nearby star in a way that agrees with the theory.

Courtesy: Prepscholar

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Padma Stanzin: Beyond Disability, Towards Possibility

Q. Could you tell us about your early life, the challenges you faced as a person with a disability, and your journey in pursuing education?

Jullay, and thank you for hearing me out. I am Padma Stanzin, and I am 37 years old. I come from Shara village and was born with a disability. During my childhood, I used to watch other children going to school, which fascinated me greatly, and I always wished to join them. However, there were no proper facilities available, and the village school was located far from my home, making it difficult for me to attend.

When I was 14 years old, a group of people from the Namgyal Institute for People with Disabilities visited me. They asked whether I wanted to study, and I immediately said yes. They helped me secure admission to an inclusive school in Chuchot Yokma, where I studied until I completed my secondary education. Later, I completed my Class 12 from Boys Higher Secondary School.

Q. What inspired you to open a shop in Choglamsar, and what challenges did you face before becoming financially independent?

I opened the shop out of compulsion because I felt burdened asking my parents for money. At this age, I feel I should be supporting my parents, but my situation often made me feel dependent on them. I also felt shy asking my parents and siblings for money. That is why I started thinking seriously about what kind of work I could do independently.

I applied for many government jobs but could not secure one. I was rejected three times after interviews. Later, when the interview process was removed, I cleared the written examinations, but once again my hopes were shattered because there is no clear guideline regarding disability percentages for recruitment.

There are different types of disabilities, and no proper criteria defining which persons with disabilities qualify for jobs. Despite staying positive, my dream of getting a government job was repeatedly crushed.

During all this time, being financially dependent also troubled me deeply. I wanted to do something that would be easier for me as a wheelchair user. Then I thought opening a shop would be a good idea because I could order goods from wholesalers, sit at the shop, and sell items. Customers can pick up the things they need themselves and make the payment. This makes it easier for me to manage the shop and also helps me become financially independent.

Interviewed by Stanzin Dasal



Q. How do you see society's attitude towards specially abled people changing in Ladakh, and what more needs to be done for their empowerment?

The thinking towards specially abled people is changing in Ladakh. Earlier, many people considered persons with disabilities as useless and a burden on society. I myself have come across people saying, "You are disabled, you cannot do this or that, just sit at home," and similar discouraging remarks.

Today, such mindsets are gradually changing. We now come across people who motivate and encourage specially abled individuals. In towns, the mentality towards persons with disabilities has improved significantly, but in villages and far-flung rural areas, much change is still needed.

I believe that people with disabilities need confidence, support, and opportunities to prove themselves. Every person has their own potential, and it is important for society to recognise their abilities and provide them with opportunities to grow and contribute.

Q. What challenges have you faced in your life, and what kind of support did you receive from people around you?

I consider myself fortunate, and I believe it is because of my parents' blessings and God's grace that I did not have to go through many severe challenges in life. I am deeply grateful for the support I received from everyone around me, especially my friends, who always stood by my side.

They never made me feel that I was on a wheelchair or physically challenged. I will forever remain thankful to them and feel lucky to have such friends in my life.

I still remember an incident from my school days. There was an exposure tour planned outside Leh, and my principal called me and suggested that I stay back because travelling might be difficult for me. I agreed and said it was okay. Later, when my friends asked whether I was joining the trip, I told them that I could not go. Hearing this, all the students sat outside the school office and told the principal that if I was not allowed to join, they would also not go on the tour.

These are the kind of friends I have been blessed with—friends who supported me, treated me as one among them, and never allowed me to feel different because of my disability.

MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“ Disability is not a weakness. Every person deserves equal opportunities, respect, and support to live independently and achieve their dreams. I urge society to believe in specially abled people, encourage them, and help create a more inclusive and compassionate world. ”

...continues on page 6

Fortnight Highlights



Ladakh Astro Week 2026 at Tourist Bungalow Drass drew huge crowd of astronomy enthusiasts including tourists, students and the local people.



Eight students from the Union Territory of Ladakh, including seven from Leh district and one from Kargil district, participated in the two-day National Camp of Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) 2025-26 held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, Gujarat, from May 15 to 18, 2026.



Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on May 25 chaired an interactive session with Indian Forest Service (IFS) probationers of the 2025-2027 batch from the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) during their study visit to Ladakh. The interaction was held as part of the probationers' field exposure programme in the Union Territory.



As part of the ongoing Ladakh Astro Week 2026, the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) organised an Astro Tourism programme at Purig Guest House near TV Station Kurbathang, Kargil on May 24.



The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Subordinate Services Recruitment Board in coordination with the District Administration Leh successfully conducted the Physical Standard Test (PST) and Physical Efficiency Test (PET) for the post of Wildlife Forester at Fortune Resort, Spituk-Farka-Zinchen Road, Leh. A total of 20 candidates were shortlisted for document verification (DV) and were subsequently called for the PST/PET, out of which 15 candidates participated in the tests.



Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, inspecting the school building and residential hostel facility for specially abled students at Kurbathang and the Council Secretariat.



The Department of School Education, UT Ladakh, with support from 17000ft Foundation, launched a series of comprehensive initiatives aimed at strengthening learning in the early years and at the foundational stage across Government and Government-aided schools in Ladakh on May 21.



Managing Director and CEO of Bank of India, Rajneesh Karnatak extended CSR support to Lions Club International, Leh, for the development of library-cum-reading room infrastructure and other facilities at the Lions Club Children Hostel, Leh.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Padma Stanzin: Beyond Disability, Towards Possibility

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Q. What message would you like to give to society and families regarding the support and empowerment of specially abled people?

It is very important to motivate and support specially abled people. When I first thought about opening a shop, my family did not like the idea because they felt I would not be able to manage it and feared that people might fool or take advantage of me. In fact, the idea failed once because of their worries and concerns for my well-being.

I understand their concern for me, but at the same time, it is also important to think about what I am capable of doing and how I can become independent. That is why, the next time, I decided not to share the idea beforehand and simply went ahead with it.

Disability can happen to anyone, and it is important for society to understand, trust, and believe in people with disabilities. Segregated education and exclusion only strengthen stereotypes, disempower disabled people, and push them to the margins of society. It deprives them of the opportunity to grow, learn, and develop alongside their peers.

I urge everyone to support persons with disabilities, encourage them, and help them become independent and confident in life.

CEC Kargil meets Union Minister Kiren Rijju, discusses minority welfare and tourism development in Kargil



Photo Caption: CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo with Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijju.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NEW DELHI: CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo met Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijju, on May 23 to discuss developmental priorities and welfare initiatives for the Kargil region.

The meeting served as an important platform to deliberate on issues related to minority welfare schemes, tourism promotion and equitable developmental support for Kargil and its newly created districts.

During the interaction, Dr. Akhoo held detailed discussions with the Union Minister regarding the implementation of central minority welfare schemes and the benefits being extended to the people of Kargil region, including the newly formed districts.

He emphasised the need for effective outreach and timely implementation of these schemes across all districts to ensure that minority communities receive their rightful entitlements under various Government of India programmes.

The CEC also highlighted the immense tourism potential of the Kargil region and urged the Union Minister to ensure that the benefits of central schemes and investments are extended uniformly to the newly established districts as well. He stressed the need for the development of tourism infrastructure, improved connectivity and wider promotional efforts across the region.

Dr. Akhoo stated that the Kargil region, with its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes and strategic location, has the potential to emerge as one of the leading tourist destinations in the Union Territory of Ladakh, thereby generating employment and economic opportunities for the local population.

Both dignitaries also discussed matters related to the overall development and welfare of the Kargil region. The CEC apprised the Union Minister of the evolving administrative landscape following the creation of new districts and sought enhanced policy support and constructive intervention from the Ministry to ensure balanced and timely development across the region.

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, during which Dr. Akhoo expressed confidence that the support and guidance of the Union Minister would help accelerate developmental initiatives and ensure effective implementation of central government schemes across Kargil region.

Foundation stone laid for winter-friendly Government High School building in Chowkiyal



Photo Caption: Deputy Commissioner Dr. Imteaz Kacho laying the foundation stone for the new building of Government High School, Chowkiyal.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DRASS: Deputy Commissioner Dr. Imteaz Kacho, on May 23 laid the foundation stone for the new building of Government High School, Chowkiyal, along with Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle Kargil, Dr. Tsewang Thinglas; Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Dr. Vishal Atri (JKAS); Councillor, LAHDC-Kargil (Bhimbat Constituency), Abdul Wahid; Chief Education Officer Kargil, Sonam Wangchuk; and Executive Engineer, R&B-II Division Kargil, Er. Mansoor M. Nissar.

The foundation stone ceremony was followed by a function organised by the school, which was attended by officials, local residents including senior citizens, and students from various schools.

Students presented cultural song and dance performances during the event.

In his address, the Deputy Commissioner thanked the village community and school authorities for inviting him to the ceremony and appreciated Councillor Abdul Wahid for his efforts in initiating the project and promoting educational development in the area.

While appreciating the role of the Public Works Department, the DC directed the department to complete the construction within the stipulated timeframe while ensuring high-quality standards and making the building fully winter-friendly.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed satisfaction that the school building is being constructed at a central and suitable location. He hoped that after completion, the institution would emerge as a world-class educational centre.

“It would not be surprising if students from other parts of the country come here to study,” he remarked.

He further reiterated the Administration’s commitment towards strengthening quality education and improving infrastructure in the newly formed Drass district.

Superintending Engineer Dr. Tsewang Thinglas, Councillor Abdul Wahid, and Chief Education Officer Sonam Wangchuk also addressed the gathering.

Local residents and school authorities expressed gratitude to the District Administration for initiating the much-needed educational infrastructure project in the area.

The project is being executed under SAMAGRA by the R&B-II Division Kargil at an estimated cost of Rs 220 lakh. It aims to strengthen educational infrastructure in the region by providing improved facilities for students and staff.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner also met residents of Throngos on his way to Chowkiyal and interacted with them regarding local issues. Residents raised concerns related to education, handicrafts, skill development centres, and the need for a public park.

Women from the area sought support for establishing handicraft and skill centres to help generate livelihood opportunities. The Deputy Commissioner assured them that the issues would be looked into for early resolution.

NOTICE

I, Tsewang Dolma M/o Jigmath Saldon R/o Remala Skyagam, Zanskar UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my daughter's name has been wrongly recorded as Jigmet Saldon instead of correct and actual name Jigmath Saldon in her ST Certificate Registration NoTeh-Z/ STC/724-25 Dated 28-02-2024 and Resident Certificate No. Teh-Z/LRC/23-989 Dated 27-12-2023 duly issued by Tehsil Office, Zanskar UT Ladakh. Now, I'm applying for changes in her ST Certificate as well as Resident certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Tehsil Office, Zanskar UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.

NOTICE

An application has been received from one Tenzin Naljor S/o Tsering Sonam R/o Tashi Thongsmon, Leh UT Ladakh to transfer the vehicle No. JK 10B-3299 owned by Padma Angmo D/o Chering Wangaus R/o Samkar, Leh UT Ladakh. Now, it is therefore notified for general information that objection if any to the proposed transfer shall be filed in writing in the office of Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) within a period of 10 days from date of publication of this notice.

**No: ARTO/Leh/UT/2026-27/75-76
Date: 29-05-2026**

**Asstt. Regional Transport Officer
Leh Ladakh**

In Focus: The Enigma of Tsan: Ladakh's Ancient Spirit Belief Lives On

...Continuity of page 4

Science, Skepticism, and Reflection

During my summer vacations, I continued to observe younger relatives undergoing Tsak-chu rituals whenever they became ill. Initially, I was bewildered by what I considered pseudoscientific practices, though I rarely voiced my skepticism openly.

As I matured, science increasingly shaped my worldview. Learning about physics, Darwin’s theory of evolution, the Big Bang theory, and the Miller-Urey experiment strengthened my skepticism toward supernatural beliefs and spirits. These scientific ideas convinced me that such phenomena could not exist in reality.

Today, as a medical student pursuing a Bachelor of Medicine, I find it difficult to believe in the literal existence of Tsan. I strongly oppose relying solely on rituals such as Tsak-chu for treatment and instead encourage people to seek proper medical care or use medications such as paracetamol or NSAIDs when necessary.

Yet despite my skepticism, I also believe that these ancient rituals and traditions deserve preservation. Whether Tsan truly exists or not may lie beyond human comprehension. Many villagers continue to believe that certain illnesses are cured through rituals dedicated to Tsan. Perhaps this can be understood through the placebo effect—or perhaps through something we still do not fully understand.

What matters is that these traditions carry cultural, psychological, and communal significance. As long as they do not prevent people from accessing proper medical care, they remain an important part of Ladakh’s living heritage.

Tourists and travelers crossing mountain passes are often instructed not to shout, litter, or pluck local plants and flowers, as doing so is believed to offend the Tsan spirits.

Tsan in Monastic Rituals

During annual winter monastic festivals, particularly at Matho Monastery, protective Tsan spirits are believed to temporarily possess selected monks. Under this possession, monks perform astonishing ritual acts such as running blindfolded along high monastery parapets and drinking boiling water without apparent injury.

These practices remain mysteries that modern science has yet to fully explain or study comprehensively.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Agang Tsering Panchok Lay (Kukshow, Paldan Pa) and my Agu Lay Nawang Stanzin (Kukshow, Samphel Pa) for sharing their knowledge and descriptions of Tsan. Without their guidance, understanding this folklore in such depth would not have been possible.

The author is from Kukshow in the Sham region of Ladakh and is currently an intern doctor at Government Medical College (GMC), Baramulla.

Illegal dumping at Rongo slopes sparks swift cleanup drive in Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DRASS: Taking swift cognisance of a viral social media post highlighting the alarming accumulation of garbage at the Rongo slopes in Kurbathang, the District Administration Kargil launched an immediate cleanliness drive and cleared the entire site of waste on May 25.

The Rongo slopes, located below the Barchay and Tmail Colony area, had recently drawn public attention after images circulated online showing large-scale dumping of garbage, raising serious environmental and public health concerns.

Acting promptly, the District Administration, in coordination with the Municipal Committee Kargil, mobilised resources and manpower to undertake a comprehensive clean-up operation. The accumulated waste was removed, restoring the area and preventing further

environmental degradation.

In addition to the clean-up drive, the Administration imposed fines on individuals found responsible for illegal dumping at the site. Strict action was taken against violators under municipal sanitation by-laws to discourage such practices in the future.

The Administration once again urged the public to strictly follow waste segregation norms and dispose of garbage only at designated locations, as repeatedly notified through official channels.

It emphasised that irresponsible disposal of waste, especially in ecologically sensitive areas, poses a serious threat to water sources, public health, and the environment.

The District Administration further stated that, under the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules 2026, waste must be segregated at source into four categories—wet, dry, sanitary, and hazardous—and handed over to Municipal Committee collection vehicles.

The public was strictly advised to comply with these norms to ensure efficient waste management and prevent environmental hazards caused by improper disposal.

Reaffirming its commitment to maintaining cleanliness across Kargil, the District Administration appealed to citizens to cooperate in ensuring sustainable waste management practices for a cleaner and healthier region.

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena boosts traditional pottery, orders procurement of clay pots from Likir artisans

Initiative aims to revive traditional pottery, support women SHGs and preserve Ladakh's cultural heritage



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LIKIR: In a significant initiative aimed at reviving traditional pottery, strengthening rural livelihoods and promoting women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, on May 23 received 100 traditional clay flower pots prepared by women SHGs from Likir village.

The procurement order for the clay flower pots was placed at the direction of the Lieutenant Governor as part of efforts to support local artisans and strengthen livelihood opportunities in rural areas. In the first phase, 100 flower pots have been supplied by women SHGs from Likir, while an additional 125 clay pots are expected to be delivered in the coming weeks.

Likir village in Leh district has long been known for its skilled artisans and centuries-old tradition of clay pottery. However, over the years, local potters have received limited institutional support and continued to rely on traditional production techniques, restricting their ability to scale up production and expand market opportunities.

The latest initiative by the UT Administration is expected to provide a major boost to local pottery arti-

sans and strengthen women SHGs engaged in traditional handicrafts and livelihood generation activities.

“The potters and artisans of Likir possess exceptional talent and represent an important part of Ladakh’s rich cultural heritage. Traditional pottery is not merely an occupation but a centuries-old legacy that must be preserved and promoted. The UT Administration is committed to supporting local artisans and women SHGs through infrastructure, training, market linkages and livelihood support so that these traditional skills flourish and provide sustainable economic opportunities to local communities,” said LG Saxena.

During the interaction, women potters requested additional logistical support such as kilns (Bhatti), clay mixer machines and specialised training programmes for women SHGs to further strengthen pottery production and improve product quality. The Lieutenant Governor assured them that the Administration would examine their requirements and extend all possible support to strengthen the traditional pottery sector in Ladakh.

During his tenure as Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), LG Saxena had visited Likir village in 2018 and played a key role in promoting traditional livelihoods in the region, particularly clay pottery. On September 27, 2018, he distributed 100 electric potter wheels among local artisans in Likir and also facilitated training programmes for artisans.

Since assuming office as Lieutenant Governor, Saxena has further initiated measures to support local artisans and generate livelihood opportunities through the promotion and procurement of locally manufactured products.

Fortnightly News

Online applications open for academic session 2026-27 at Sindhu Central University

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Sindhu Central University, a Central University established by an Act of Parliament in 2021 at Village Khatse, has invited online applications for admission to various postgraduate programmes for the Academic Session 2026-27. The University presently offers MTech programmes in Atmospheric and Climate Science, Energy Technology and Policy, and AI for Sustainability, besides MSc in Astronomy and Astrophysics, MA in Buddhist Studies, and MA in Public Policy.

The programmes are being conducted at the University campus along with mentor institutions including Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur for laboratory work and practical training.

Interested students can apply online through the official university website, Sindhu Central University. Students presently pursuing their final-year studies are also eligible to apply and reserve seats in their desired programmes.

Candidates possessing valid scores in national-level examinations such as CUET (PG), GATE and other recognised entrance examinations can

seek direct admission as per university norms.

The University is also offering scholarships for all postgraduate programmes. Students have been advised to apply in advance to avail scholarship benefits and admission-related exemptions.

During the course of study, students will also have opportunities to participate in long-term research and community outreach programmes being undertaken by the University.

In a meeting held on May 25, 2026, between the Department of Education, UT Ladakh and University officials, emphasis was laid on encouraging students from Ladakh to avail the educational opportunities being provided by the University.

University officials have also been visiting colleges across the region to create awareness regarding the various programmes offered.

Students and interested candidates have been advised to visit the University website for detailed information regarding courses, eligibility criteria and admission procedures.

DC Kargil visits entrepreneurship and processing units at Kurbathang and Chanigund, assures support to local startups and artisans



Photo Caption: Deputy Commissioner/CEO LAHDC Kargil Rakesh Kumar visiting various entrepreneurship and processing units in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Deputy Commissioner/CEO LAHDC Kargil Rakesh Kumar on May 26 visited various entrepreneurship and processing units in Kurbathang and Chanigund to review their functioning and encourage local entrepreneurs working in different sectors.

The visit was conducted in the presence of officers from the Horticulture Department and other concerned departments.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the Halman Apricot Processing Unit at Kurbathang and reviewed various processing activities related to apricot and Sea Buckthorn products. The officials informed the DC about different processing techniques including boiling, steaming, pulp extraction and CO2 extraction methods. It was also informed that pro-

duction activities under the startup initiative are expected to commence from next month. The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the entrepreneurs and noted the increasing market demand for Sea Buckthorn oil and pulp products.

During the interaction with members of The Organic Ladakh Cooperative, the DC assured full administrative support and advised the concerned stakeholders to prepare detailed proposals regarding machinery and infrastructure so that necessary assistance under government schemes can be facilitated.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited the Ladakh Local Wood Carving Unit at Kurbathang and inspected various locally crafted wooden products including traditional tables and other decorative items.

Emphasizing the importance of preserving and promoting local craftsmanship, the DC assured support for marketing, promotion and export of locally made products to strengthen tourism and generate employment opportunities for local youth.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited the Mushroom Production Unit at Chanigund, where he interacted with local entrepreneurs and workers associated with the unit.

He appreciated their efforts towards self-employment and entrepreneurship and encouraged them to further expand their activities. The DC assured support through various government schemes aimed at promoting startups, skill development and sustainable livelihood opportunities in the district.

Zanskar hosts Ladakh Astro Festival 2026 celebration at Padum



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

ZANSKAR: The Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), organised the Ladakh Astro Festival 2026 - Zanskar Celebration at the Tourist Dak Bungalow, Padum, on May 23. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, tourists, local residents, officials, cultural artists and representatives of various organisations.

Deputy Commissioner Zanskar, Omkar

Rajendra Gundage (IAS); SSP Zanskar, Rigzin Sangdup; Councillor Cha Constituency, Stanzin Lakpa; and Councillor Karsha, Stanzin Jigmet, besides officers from various departments, teaching staff from different educational institutions and Government Degree College (GDC) Zanskar, representatives of political and religious organisations, cultural artists, students, local residents and tourists attended the programme.

The festival featured a range of activities including exhibition stalls, astrophotography displays, cultural performances, astro talks and guided stargazing sessions. Cultural troupes also presented traditional performances showcasing the rich heritage and culture of Zanskar.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said that with Zanskar emerging as a new district, developmental activities in the region would accelerate further in the coming years. Describing astrophysics as a highly knowledgeable field, he encouraged

students to take advantage of such educational initiatives. He also thanked the UT Administration, Tourism Department and all associated departments for organising the programme and assured full support for similar events in the future.

In his address, SSP Zanskar stressed the importance of students interacting with experts and learning about astrophysics, stating that the field offers immense opportunities and future scope.

Tourist Officer Zanskar, Ghulam Rasool Lal, said the objective of organising the programme was to promote Zanskar as an important destination for astro-tourism owing to its pristine dark skies and unique geographical conditions.

A special stargazing session was also conducted with the support of experts from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, and Starcapes, during which participants observed celestial objects under the clear night skies of Zanskar.

DLSA Kargil, GDC organise Biodiversity awareness tour to Fokar on International Biodiversity Day



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: On the occasion of International Biodiversity Day on May 22, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kargil, in collaboration with Government Degree College (GDC) Kargil, organised an educational and awareness tour to Fokar in Kargil district.

The programme was conducted with the objective of promoting awareness about biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability, and legal awareness related to environmental protection among students.

International Biodiversity Day is observed globally to highlight the importance of biodiversity and the urgent need to conserve ecosystems for future generations. The tour aimed to sensitise students towards ecological preservation and encourage active participation in environmental protection activities.

The tour commenced early in the morning from the college campus. Faculty members, representatives from DLSA Kargil, non-teaching staff, and a large number of students participated in the programme. Before departure, participants were briefed about the objectives of the tour, safety measures, and the significance of biodiversity conservation in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem of Ladakh.

As part of the programme, a nature walk was conducted from Shagaran to Rzung in the Fokar area. During the walk, students, faculty members, and DLSA officials explored the natural surroundings and closely observed the rich biodiver-

sity of the region.

Dr. Tsetan Dolkar, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, introduced students to various native plant species, medicinal herbs, and ecological features found in the area. She explained the importance of conserving local ecosystems and maintaining ecological balance in the fragile Himalayan environment.

The nature walk provided students with practical exposure to environmental studies and helped them develop a deeper appreciation for nature, wildlife, and biodiversity conservation.

At the Rzung area, the formal session began with an introductory address by Dr. Abid Hussain, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, who highlighted the importance of preserving local flora, fauna, water resources, and traditional ecological knowledge. He also discussed environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, habitat degradation, and unsustainable human practices.

Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Kargil, Chemit Yungyal, delivered a detailed talk on spiritual awareness and environmental protection. He emphasised the deep connection between nature and spirituality, stating that environmental conservation is not only a legal and social responsibility but also a moral and spiritual duty.

He encouraged students to adopt environmentally responsible practices in their daily lives and spread awareness regarding conservation within their

communities.

Advocate Nissar Hussain, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, Kargil, addressed the students on environmental laws, constitutional provisions related to environmental protection, and the role of citizens in safeguarding biodiversity.

Dr. Zakir Hussain, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, delivered an informative talk focusing on the ecological fragility of the Himalayan region and highlighted challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, and environmental degradation caused by human activities. He stressed the urgent need for sustainable practices and collective responsibility to protect the region's delicate ecosystem.

Interactive sessions were also held during the programme, where students shared their views, experiences, and suggestions regarding biodiversity conservation.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Zakir Hussain, who expressed gratitude to the Secretary DLSA Kargil, GDC Kargil administration, faculty members, and students for their active participation and support.

Refreshments were distributed among participants by DLSA staff members and para legal volunteers at the Shagaran area before the group returned to the college campus in the evening.

Overall, the educational tour to Fokar proved informative and impactful, enhancing environmental awareness among students and strengthening their understanding of biodiversity conservation, legal responsibility, and sustainable living practices.

The event reflected the commitment of DLSA Kargil and Government Degree College Kargil towards promoting environmental education and community engagement for the protection of nature and biodiversity.

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DC Drass conducts extensive tour of Mushko, Holiyal; engages with residents

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DRASS: In the first major public outreach initiative following the formation of Drass District, Deputy Commissioner Drass, Imteaz Kacho (JKAS), on May 23 conducted an extensive tour of Mushko and Holiyal villages to assess developmental requirements, understand public welfare aspirations and interact with local residents.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Vishal Atri (JKAS), Sub-Divisional Magistrate Drass; Abdul Samad, Councillor, LAHDC-Kargil; along with district and sectoral officers including Block Development Officer Shahid Sultan; Block Medical Officer Dr. Sajjad Hussain; Forest Range Officer Mohammad Ilyaz; Zonal Education Officer Mohammad Ibrahim; Block Veterinary Officer Dr. Mohammad Amin Naqvi; Assistant Executive Engineer, I&FC Mumtaz Hassan; Assistant Executive Engineer, R&B-II Zakir Hussain; Assistant Executive Engineer, PHE Zakir Hussain; Assistant Executive Engineer, PDD Mohammad Ali; Agriculture Extension Officer Stanzin Ldong; and Junior Engineers of the Public Health Engineering Department.

During the visit to Mushko, the village Numberdar and local residents welcomed the Deputy Commissioner at the Panchayat Ghar and highlighted various developmental concerns and public issues. Residents raised matters related to road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, healthcare facilities, irrigation, education and other essential public services. While expressing gratitude for the Deputy Commissioner's

visit, the villagers hoped for similar outreach programmes on a regular basis.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited the Government High School and reviewed the availability of teachers, infrastructure and student enrolment. He appreciated the efforts of the school management and Village Education Committee in maintaining quality education in the area.

Later, he inspected the newly constructed High School building, developed as per CBSE norms, and reviewed the pace of ongoing works. He directed the concerned officials to ensure the building is made winter-friendly and that all spaces are utilised optimally. The Assistant Executive Engineer, R&B-II, also sought the Deputy Commissioner's intervention regarding clearance of contractor liabilities.

During the visit to Holiyal, local residents welcomed the Deputy Commissioner at the Panchayat Ghar and thanked him for his maiden visit to the village. They raised several critical issues concerning road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, healthcare, irrigation, education and other public services. A charter of demands was also submitted to the Deputy Commissioner.

The Deputy Commissioner issued on-the-spot directions for the immediate redressal of urgent issues and assured residents that demands pertaining to larger developmental projects would be taken up with the concerned authorities.



Subsequently, he visited the Government Middle School, Holiyal, where he was welcomed by the Headmaster, teachers and students. He interacted with the staff and distributed prizes among students during the school's Upper Block Level Painting Competition, in the presence of the Councillor and accompanying officers.

During the tour of both villages, the Deputy Commissioner patiently listened to public grievances and directed the concerned departments to ensure timely redressal of genuine issues. He emphasised the need for coordinated efforts among departments to ensure effective implementation of developmental works and improved delivery of public services in rural areas.

Reiterating the administration's commitment to doorstep governance, the Deputy Commissioner assured residents of easy accessibility, prompt response and effective grievance redressal by the district administration.

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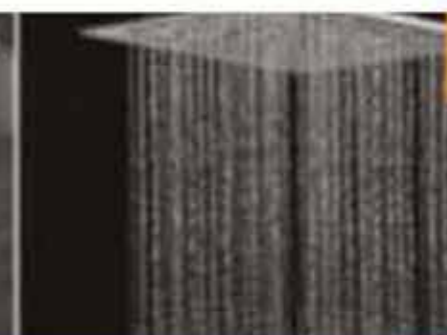
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