

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



In Conversation with
Chering Dorje Lakruk, President, Ladakh Buddhist Association

PEOPLE'S VOICE:
Ladakh Election: A call for unity and addressing regional concerns

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Chetsang Rinpoche unveils statue of Lonpo Tashi Nurbu Dadul Wangchuk in Wanla

Yangchen Dolma

WANLA: The 16-foot bronze statue of Wanle Lonpo Tashi Nurbu Dadul Wangchuk was consecrated and unveiled by His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche on June 10 at Wanla Monastery. The event was attended by several distinguished guests, including H.E. Rangdol Nyima Rinpoche, H.E. Tulku Sangay, CEC LAHDC Leh Tashi Gyalson, DC Leh Santosh Sukhadeve, and many other dignitaries.



The 16-foot bronze statue of Wanle Lonpo Tashi Nurbu Dadul Wangchuk.

His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche congratulated the villagers of Wanla on the establishment of the statue. He advised devotees, especially the younger generation, to follow the legacy of Wanla Lonchen Tashi Norbu Dadul Wangchuk by staying focused, building self-confidence, showing courage, and helping each other in their daily lives. His Holiness also praised the contributions of all stakeholders, led by the Chairman of LAHDC Leh, in ensuring the successful establishment of the statue, and artist Chemet Dorje.

Furthermore, His Holiness emphasized the importance of prioritizing education, especially for the youth, and strictly prohibiting gender inequality and caste discrimination. He called upon all religions in Ladakh to work together for prosperity.

CEC Tashi Gyalson expressed his gratitude and appreciation to His Holiness Drikung Skabgon Chetsang Rinpoche for his integral role in the project's inception and for infusing it with spiritual blessings.

He said, "Wanla Lonpo is the identity of Wanla pa's and today we have successfully honored its profound legacy. The fruition of our efforts over the past year, made possible by the dedicated team under the leadership of young sculptor Chemet Dorje and Contractor Angdu Gyamtso. Their dedication mirrors the proud spirit of Wanla Lonchen Norbu Dadul Wangchuk overlooking

us from the heights of Wanla Monastery."

"This statue resembles values of courage, wisdom, strength, honesty, and resilience, embodying the enduring legacy of the esteemed Wanla Lonchen Nurbu Dadul Wangchuk," he added.

Gratitude was extended to Prof. Viraf Mehta, a distinguished archaeologist and conservationist, for his invaluable expertise and thorough research contributions to this endeavor. The project's vision is to attract global travelers and establish the entire Sham region as a hub for future heritage preservation initiatives.

Nambardars of Wanla-A and Wanla-B, Skarma Rinchen and Tashi Dorje Wanla-B, expressed their gratitude and appreciation to everyone for their hard work. They noted that the ambitious project of constructing the statue of Wanla Lonpo was made possible only through the generous support of Advocate Tashi Gyalton, LAHDC-Leh, Artist Chemet Dorje, and the unconditional support of villagers, the Sanga Community of the Wanla Gompa, and other well-wishers.

On the occasion, the people of Wanla Phudo, in collaboration with the Cultural Academy Leh, showcased a drama titled "Ju Lonchen Khen," directed by Padma Shri Morup Nam-

yal. Students of the Government High School Wanla also presented traditional cultural performances.

Brief History of Lonpo Tashi Nurbu

Bagdar Skyabs is said to have settled in Wanla around the 11th century. Fascinated by the beautiful valley with its pure water and lush green trees, he decided to build his residence in Wanla. Inspired by Rinchen Zangpo's founding of monasteries in Alchi, Mangyu, and Sunda in lower Ladakh, he began constructing a castle in Saspol village. He is also said to have traveled to Kashmir with Lama Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo.

During this time, Upper Ladakh was ruled by Gyapa Cho and Lower Ladakh by Cho Bagdar Skyabs. In the 15th century, Lonpo Tashi Norbu, a descendant of Bagdar Skyabs, became the Lonpo of Wanla. Known for his bravery, warrior skills, and miraculous deeds, he became envied by other ministers. During a council meeting at Leh Palace, when no seat was reserved for him, he struck his sword into a pillar and created a seat for himself. It is said that he could travel from Wanla to Leh in a single day. He was married to Yangchen, a daughter of Domkhar Lonpo.

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Independent candidate Haneefa Jaan elected new MP from Ladakh amid call for change

Promises to address all key demands

Stanzin Dasal

LEH: In a landmark electoral outcome, Mohamad Haneefa Jaan, an Independent candidate from Kargil district, has secured victory in the Ladakh Parliamentary seat. Garnering a total of 65,259 votes, Haneefa Jaan's win was declared on June 4, marking a significant shift in the region's political landscape. He triumphed with a substantial margin of 27,862 votes over his closest competitor, Tsering Namgyal of the Indian National Congress (INC), who received 37,397 votes. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate, Tashi Gyalson, finished third with 31,956 votes, while 912 votes were cast for NOTA (None of the Above).



the new MP. Will he be able to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Ladakh?

Commitment to change

In his post-victory statement, Haneefa Jaan assured the public that he would focus on these critical issues. He emphasized his commitment to the agenda set forth by the Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). His election symbolizes a desire for new leadership that is attuned to the region's unique needs and challenges.

"I am honored by the trust placed in me by the people of Ladakh. My primary focus will be on addressing the key demands that have been long overdue. Together, we will work towards achieving full statehood, securing constitutional safeguards, and ensuring fair recruitment processes," Haneefa Jaan stated.

A Shift in Political Landscape

The BJP, which had held the Ladakh parliamentary seat for the past decade, faced a significant setback. Despite a campaign that emphasized infrastructural developments, the party finished third. Internal divisions over the mandate to fight election and unfulfilled promises from past elections contributed to their poor per-

formance. Dorjay Angchuk, BJP's election in-charge, expressed disappointment, attributing the loss to a "negative narrative" propagated by opposition parties.

"The Ladakh parliamentary seat has been held by a BJP MP for the past ten years, so we had hoped to continue for a third term, but it didn't happen. This time, it seems the election was not based on development but on a negative narrative pushed by Congress and others, which is very unfortunate," Angchuk remarked.

The Indian National Congress (INC), despite losing grip on the national stage, showed strong performance in Ladakh by securing 37,397 votes.

Tundup Nurbu, Chief Agent of INC, said, "First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Haji Hanifa Jaan on his decisive election victory. I also want to thank all the workers of the Congress party and congratulate the entire party for our significant improvement compared to the last election. The difference of 16,000 votes marks a substantial victory, and it indicates the potential for even better performance in future elections."

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Fortnightly News

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Ladakh Football School & Academy triumphs over Tibetan National Sports Association in Unity Cup final

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh Football School & Academy (LFS&A) secured a thrilling victory at The Unity Cup 2024, triumphing over the Tibetan National Sports Association (TNSA) in a gripping penalty shootout with a final score of 5-4.

The tournament, sponsored by Jullay Tiles, showcased the pinnacle of women's football prowess in the region, featuring a fierce competition among three formidable teams: TNSA, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, and LFS&A. The championship showdown unfolded at Leh Stadium on June 11, attracting an ardent crowd of supporters for both sides and infusing the atmosphere with palpable excitement. In a closely contested finale, both teams exhibited remarkable skill and resilience, culminating in a tense penalty shootout that ultimately saw LFS&A seize the championship.

The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Moses Kunzang, Joint Director of Youth Services and Sports (YSS); Tsering Tashi, District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Leh; and Tsewang Dorjay, Director of Jullay Tiles. Their



presence underscored the significance of the tournament and the escalating prominence of women's football in Ladakh.

Moses Kunzang extended heartfelt congratulations to the champions for their stellar performance and lauded the runner-up team for their valiant display, emphasizing the spirit of sportsmanship that characterized the tournament.

"The Unity Cup 2024 stands as a testament to the remarkable talent and unwavering dedication of our women athletes," remarked Moses Kunzang. "Both teams showcased exceptional skill and determination, and I take immense pride in the strides we are making to promote women's football in Ladakh."

Jullay Tiles, as the proud sponsor of the tournament, has played a pivotal role in championing the advancement of women's football in the region. Tsewang Dorjay, Director of Jullay Tiles, reiterated his company's steadfast

commitment to empowering female athletes and nurturing a vibrant sports culture in Ladakh.

The Ladakh Football Association, serving as the driving force behind the Unity Cup, remains steadfast in its mission to cultivate and propel women's football in the region. The association's unwavering endeavors are geared towards furnishing more avenues for women to partake in sports and elevating the caliber of football in Ladakh.

The Unity Cup 2024 not only celebrated the exceptional talent of these athletes but also fostered a sense of community and camaraderie, uniting individuals in their shared passion for the beautiful game. As the curtains draw on the tournament, the spirit of unity, solidarity, and sportsmanship it instilled will endure, serving as a beacon of inspiration for future generations of female footballers in Ladakh.

Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche visits Ladakh

Inaugurates 15th phase of "Go Green Go Organic"



His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche during the inauguration of 15th phase of the "Go Green Go Organic" mass plantation drive at Takmachik village.

Stanzin Padma

LEH: His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche embarked on a significant series of events in the Sham region of Leh district from June 5.

Celebrating World Environment Day, His Holiness inaugurated the 15th phase of the "Go Green Go Organic" mass plantation drive at Takmachik village. This initiative saw the planting of over 10,000 fruit saplings, underscoring Ladakh's commitment to sustainable and organic horticulture practices.

Present at the inauguration were esteemed fig-

ures including His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche, His Eminence Stakna Rinpoche, His Eminence Tsamthul Rinpoche, CEC Tashi Gyalsen, MP JTN, DC Santosh Sukhdev, EC Tashi Namgyal Yakzee, EC Ghulam Mehdi, and Go Green Director Dr. Thinles Dampo.

His Holiness emphasized the initiative's origins 20 years ago with the planting of Seabuckthorn, a plant native to Ladakh known for its economic value and rich in vitamin C and E. Over the past 12 years, this effort has led to the planting of approximately 2 million trees, including fruit trees,

contributing significantly to Ladakh's carbon neutrality goals. On June 6, His Holiness was warmly welcomed by the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) Sham and devotees at Khaltse Zerthang Gyalway Photang. The community expressed deep gratitude for His Holiness's environmental stewardship, which has positively impacted Ladakh as a whole. They celebrated His Holiness's presence with traditional offerings and expressions of devotion.

During his visit, on June 7, His Holiness conferred the "Great Generation of Bodhichitta according to Maitreya's Lineage of Vast Conduct (Drikung Semskyat Chenmo)" upon around 5000 attendees from various regions of Ladakh, imparting blessings and teachings.

Continuing his engagements, on June 8, His Holiness bestowed the "Great Drikung Phowa Jaktsug Ma" transmission and Longevity Empowerment upon over 15,000 devotees gathered at Zerthang Photang Khaltse. The event concluded with a life mandala offering and traditional performances in honor of His Holiness's visit.

Justice Bansi Lal Bhat chairs meeting on village welfare along Line of Control in Ladakh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chairman of the Reservation Commission for Actual Line of Control (ALC) Ladakh, Justice Bansi Lal Bhat, chaired a crucial meeting on June 12 at the Conference Hall, DC Office, Leh. The meeting focused on identifying essential amenities in villages adjacent to the actual line of control in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Justice Bansi Lal Bhat highlighted the historical underpinnings of the Constitution and the justice system, illustrating their pivotal role in advancing the welfare of marginalized communities. He underscored the commitment to justice and inclusivity, emphasizing that no individual should be excluded from the nation's progress, echoing the ethos of the Indian Constitution.

He stressed the imperative of ensuring the welfare of all residents, particularly



those previously overlooked in development initiatives. Justice Bansi Lal Bhat underscored the accessibility of justice for every individual as crucial for the region's comprehensive development. He further emphasized the role of the Indian Constitution in shaping India as a welfare state through its reservation policies, ensuring social justice and equitable development for remote communities.

In his directives, Justice Bansi Lal Bhat instructed line departments to compile and submit accurate records of villages adjoining the Actual Line of Control (ALC).

The meeting was attended by key officials includ-

ing the Director of the Social & Tribal Welfare Department, UT Ladakh; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh (Nodal Officer); Additional Secretary to the ALC Commission; Chief Engineer of PWD (R&B), PHE/I&FC, UT Ladakh; Superintendent Engineer, PDD, Ladakh; General Manager, BSNL, Leh; Chief Education Officer, Leh; Chief Medical Officer, Leh; Manager of Airtel Leh; Manager, JIO Leh; and other concerned officers. District Magistrate, Kargil; General Manager, BSNL, Kargil; Chief Education Officer, Kargil; Chief Medical Officer, Kargil; Manager of Airtel Kargil; Manager, JIO Kargil; and concerned officers participated virtually.

Chetsang Rinpoche unveils statue of Lonpo Tashi Nurbu Dadul Wangchuk in Wanla

Later, due to instigation by some villagers, the King of Ladakh placed him under house arrest and later took him to Skuru Nubra where he was put to death, but before that he made his last testament saying that he would not take rebirth for 500 years but would

appear in an oracle form for the well-being of all beings. This tradition continues to this day and as per the wishes of His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche, the oracular form of the lonpo appears in peaceful form. Following

the aspirations of His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche and His Eminence Ladakh Chosje Togdan Rinpoche, the current statue of Wanla Lonpo (16 feet in height) has been commissioned in a wrathful form, riding on a horse.

402 Agniveers pass out from Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Passing Out Parade of the third batch of the 402 well trained Agniveers was held at Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, Leh on June 4.

The ceremony conducted in consonance with the highest traditions of the Indian Army was reviewed by Chief of Staff, HQ 14 Corps and was attended by a spectrum of distinguished military officers, civil dignitaries and parents of Agniveers.

In his address to the young recruits, the Reviewing Officer congratulated them for the impressive parade

and urged them to devote their life in service to the Nation, as proud soldiers of the Indian Army. He also complimented the parents for motivating their wards to join Indian Army and instilling a sense of pride in them for the nation.

He also complimented the Ladakh Scouts personnel for their outstanding performance in all spheres and praised their exceptional valour and sacrifice while upholding sovereignty of the Nation.

He exhorted the young soldiers to continue to strive hard in pursuit of

excellence in all spheres and take a solemn vow to defend the sovereignty of the nation against all odds in the true spirits exemplified by the ethos of the Indian Army.

Six young Agniveers were also awarded medals during the parade for their outstanding achievements in training. Gaurav Padak was presented to the proud parents whose wards have joined the Regiment as Agniveers.

It was indeed a proud moment for the kin of the recruits, who had arrived from far flung areas to witness the grand ceremony.

Leh's first district De-Addiction Centre inaugurated

Marks new chapter in battle against substance abuse



During the inauguration of the District De-Addiction Centre Leh.

Nenzen Chodon

LEH: In a significant stride towards addressing the pervasive issue of addiction in Leh, the inauguration of the District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC) stands as a beacon of hope and resilience. Led by Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lt. Governor of UT Ladakh, the ceremony on June 1 marked a pivotal moment in the region's fight against substance abuse.

Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lt. Governor of UT Ladakh, addressed the gathering, hailing the inauguration of Leh's first de-addiction centre as a historic milestone. He credited the concerted efforts of the district administration, various departments, and charitable organizations for bringing the project to fruition.

Dr. Kotwal illuminated the pervasive stigma surrounding mental health and addiction issues within society, noting the reluctance of individuals to seek help. He emphasized the crucial roles of family and community in supporting individuals through their challenges and fostering an environment where seeking assistance is encouraged and embraced.

The newly minted DDAC has a facility meticulously designed to cater to the diverse needs of those grappling with addiction. Divided into specialized sections and rooms, the centre is designed to cater to the diverse needs of individuals seeking assistance.

District Social Welfare Officer, Nilza Angmo emphasized the profound significance of the DDAC. She underscored the collaborative effort of various stakeholders, emphasizing the transformative impact the centre will have. She said that the DDAC will serve as a beacon of hope for individuals grappling with addiction, offering them a supportive environment to embark on their journey to recovery.

District Magistrate/CEO of LAHDC Leh, Santosh Sukhdev, addressed the audience, describing drug abuse as a pervasive destroyer that affects not only the individual but also their entire family. Recognizing it as a significant challenge in Leh, he highlighted the proactive measures taken by the district administration, Social Welfare Department, Police, and Medical rep-

resentatives to conduct awareness campaigns in various settings, including schools, social gatherings, and religious events.

Santosh Sukhdev urged everyone to unite in the fight against drug abuse to create a drug-free environment in Ladakh for future generations.

Commissioner Secretary of Tribal and Social Welfare in Leh, Padma Angmo, extended congratulations on the opening of the facility. Stressing the importance of professional capacity building within the centre, she envisioned the DDAC not only as a beacon of hope for Leh but also as a model for similar centres nationwide. Padma Angmo expressed aspirations for establishing a DDAC in Kargil in the future, aiming to replicate the success of the Leh centre.

The inauguration of Leh's District De-Addiction Centre marks not only the opening of a facility but the dawn of a new era of hope, resilience, and community solidarity in the battle against substance abuse.

Independent candidate Haneefa Jaan elected new MP from Ladakh amid call for change

Looking Ahead

The Election Commission of India conducted the 2024 General Election to the Lok Sabha for 543 seats in seven phases, with the Ladakh Parliamentary Constituency voting on May 20th in the fifth phase. A total of 577 polling stations participated in Ladakh, including 298 in Leh district and 279 in Kargil district.

Ladakh, the largest constituency in the country by area, witnessed a 71.82% voter turnout, with 67.14% in Leh district and 76.15% in Kargil district.

45th death anniversary of freedom fighter Munshi Abdul Sattar observed



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 45th death anniversary of the late Munshi Abdul Sattar, the only freedom fighter from the Ladakh region, was observed on June 6. Family members and close relatives gathered to offer prayers in his memory.

Munshi Abdul Sattar participated in the Indian Freedom Struggle from 1929 to 1945 alongside other freedom fighters across India. In 1935, he attended a meeting in Delhi with Pandit Jawa-



harlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. In 1938, he was sentenced to jail in Skardu for his involvement in the freedom struggle.

Following India's independence in 1947, Munshi Abdul Sattar continued to work tirelessly for the welfare of the people of Ladakh alongside Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. His contributions were recognised when he was awarded the "Tamrapatra" by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on August 15, 1972.

ICRE-HFRI Shimla imparts training on cold desert medicinal plants



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Three days training cum demonstration programme on cultivation and conservation of important cold desert medicinal plants for livelihood generation commenced at National Institute of Sowa Rigpa (NISR), Leh, UT Ladakh on June 12.

The training cum demonstration programme is being organised by IC-FRE-Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh for other stakeholders and is sponsored by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Govt. of India.

The training programme is being attended by thirty representatives from different line departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Education, Sowa Rigpa, ITBP, NGOs, etc.

Director, NISR, Leh, Dr. Padma Gurmet said that the cold desert Ladakh region under the Indian Trans Himalayas is an emporium of medicinal and aromatic plants resource in the country. He also talked about the Medical and Aromatic plants (MAPs) of the cold desert region which are in great demand by pharmacies as well as for local consumption. As a result, the majority of them are threatened and face endangered status.

He elucidated the fact that large scale consumption and unscientific harvesting of medicinal and aromatic plants from the natural habitats has resulted in their extinction from the wild and presently ayurvedic and pharmaceutical industries are facing the problems of raw material.

Chief Technical Officer, HFRI and training coordinator Dr. Joginder Singh

Chauhan informed that the main objective of the training programme is to impart knowledge to the other stakeholders about rich medicinal wealth of cold-desert regions and train them as master trainers for further dissemination amongst various end users.

Director, HFRI Shimla, Dr. Sandeep Sharma said that cultivation of medicinal plants by the local communities assumes paramount significance and may be adopted as an alternate income-generating source which may fetch considerable benefits and improve the living standard as well.

Dr. Sandeep Sharma also talked about the nursery and plantation techniques of Juniperus polycarpus (Shur/shupka), which is an important tree species of cold desert region. He informed that this species is very difficult and with intense research, the institute has developed nursery and plantation technique of the species and has disseminated it to forest department of Himachal Pradesh, UT Ladakh and UT J&K through training and demonstration programmes.

Scientist, HFRI, Dr. Jagdish Singh said that heavy biotic pressure, ruthless extraction and illegal trade however are well acknowledged with other factors contributing to endangerment of medicinal plants. He added that cultivation of medicinal plants will reduce pressure on natural habits.

Associate Professor, NISR, Dr. Tashi Stobgais also interacted with participants about status, propagation and ex situ cultivation of trans-Himalaya medicinal plants.

Fortnightly News

Secretary Amit Sharma chairs meeting with German Cooperation on Indo-German Bilateral Water Security and Climate Adaptation Project

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a significant step towards bolstering water security and climate resilience in rural India, Secretary of Rural Development for the Union Territory of Ladakh, Amit Sharma, led a pivotal meeting with representatives from German Development Cooperation at the Civil Secretariat, Leh on June 11.



The meeting, focused on the Indo-German Bilateral Water Security and Climate Adaptation Project, brought together key stakeholders including the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, and German Development Cooperation.

Technical Advisor of the German Development Cooperation delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the project's objectives, strategies, and expected outcomes. Notably, discussions centered on addressing water scarcity and enhancing climate resilience, with particular emphasis on the challenges

faced in the Ladakh region.

Secretary Amit Sharma expressed gratitude for the expertise and dedication of the German Development Cooperation, highlighting the importance of international partnerships in tackling pressing issues like water security and climate change. He emphasized the project's role in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Germany, underscoring their shared commitment to sustainable rural development.

Furthermore, Secretary Sharma urged Sajjad Qadri, Director of Rural De-

velopment for UT Ladakh and Nodal Officer of the Indo-German Bilateral Project, to expedite implementation, especially within the ongoing WDC-PMKSY scheme.

The meeting served as a platform for discussing innovative water management practices, capacity-building initiatives, and community-driven approaches to climate adaptation. Representatives from the German Development Cooperation reaffirmed their commitment, stressing the importance of a coordinated approach for successful project implementation and desired outcomes.

Eco-Tourism training for IFS Officers commences in Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Training program on Eco-Tourism as Sustainable Livelihood has kicked off for Indian Forest Service (IFS) Officers in Leh. The initiative, hosted by the ICFRE-Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla and financially supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, aims to equip 25 IFS Officers from various states and union territories with essential skills and knowledge.

Kanchan Devi, IFS, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), commended the training initiatives undertaken by the Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) in Shimla. She highlighted the significance of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) as a major hub of biodiversity and stressed the importance of ecotourism as a means of generating employment while preserving the region's natural treasures. Devi underscored the necessity of ensuring that ecotourism initiatives do not disrupt the fragile ecosystems of the Himalayas, including the Trans-Himalayan region, and urged for meticulous planning to achieve this balance.

Dr. Mohamad Ibrahim, Scientist and Training Coordinator, outlined the primary objective of the training program: to equip IFS Officers with knowledge about Ecotourism as a Sustainable Livelihood, empowering them to explore Ecotourism opportunities within their respective areas of operation and to facilitate local employment generation.

Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Director of the Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla, also addressed

the participants, providing insights into the institute's mandate and its ongoing research endeavors, particularly in the realms of Conifer species and medicinal plants. He highlighted the institute's successful development of nursery and plantation techniques for Juniperus Polycarpus (Shukpa), a vital tree species in cold desert regions. Sharma mentioned the establishment of a demonstration plot for Shukpa at Badami Bagh, Leh, and the distribution of Shukpa seedlings among farmers in Kargil and Leh, underscoring the institute's commitment to practical conservation efforts and community engagement. During the technical session, Jigmet Takpa, IFS (Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Ladakh, UT), engaged with participants, extensively elaborating on the potential and opportunities for developing ecotourism in the Ladakh region. Drawing from his vast experience, Takpa illuminated the manifold works undertaken in ecotourism across Ladakh.

He implicitly underscored ecotourism's potential to preserve natural resources while enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. Takpa vividly discussed Ladakh's pristine biodiversity, highlighting its ecological significance and the adaptations nature has bestowed upon its inhabitants to endure the region's harsh environmental conditions.

B. M. Sharma, IFS (Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Ladakh, UT), delivered an informative discourse on the remarkable wildlife indigenous to the Ladakh region, including the elusive Snow Leopard and the elegant Black-necked Crane. Dr. Shar-

ma also expounded on the ecological importance of Juniper within the Ladakhi context. During the interactive session, he delved into the challenges and issues confronting wildlife management, while also exploring potential management strategies.

Over the course of the five-day training program, participants will embark on a series of field visits and engage in presentations and discussions aimed at deepening their understanding of ecotourism and its various dimensions.

The itinerary includes visits to Shey and Thiksey Monasteries, as well as the Meditation Centre, offering insights into pilgrimage tourism within the Leh region. Additionally, participants will explore Pather Sahib, the Hall of Fame, and Shanti Stupa. Excursions to Khardungla, Hunder, and the Nubra Valley will showcase adventure and sandune ecotourism, while a visit to Pangong Lake will highlight eco-tourism activities geared towards sustainable income generation and fostering interaction with local communities in Ladakh, UT.

The subsequent five days will feature presentations and discussions covering a range of topics, including the challenges and opportunities associated with ecotourism development, the impact of ecotourism on local rural communities in the Himalayan region, the role of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) in ecotourism promotion, ecotourism's role in transformative economies, the avian diversity of Ladakh as a potential recreational and ecotourism asset, ecological initiatives aimed at wildlife conservation to promote adventure ecotourism in the Himalayan region, and the interplay of sustainability and stakeholders in ecotourism endeavors.

Administrative Secretary inspects Sindhu Ghat ahead of 28th Sindhu Darshan Yatra

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Administrative Secretary of Tourism and Culture, UT Ladakh, Vikram Singh Malik, conducted an inspection of Sindhu Ghat in preparation for the upcoming 28th Sindhu Darshan Yatra on June 11. The purpose of the visit was to assess the venue and evaluate the preparations for this significant event.

Secretary Vikram Malik meticulously examined the infrastructure and amenities at Sindhu Ghat, ensuring that all necessary measures are in place to ensure



the comfort and convenience of the pilgrims and visitors. He stressed the importance of upholding cleanliness and safety standards throughout the duration of the event.

During his inspection, the Secretary underscored the collaborative efforts of various departments in or-

chestrating the event and ensuring its success. He noted that the Sindhu Darshan Yatra holds immense cultural and spiritual significance, drawing participants from across the nation and beyond. Secretary Malik emphasized that the yatra epitomizes the rich cultural heritage and communal harmony of the

region.

Secretary Vikram Malik engaged with officials and urged them to expedite any pending tasks. He instructed the concerned officers to install water dispensers for safe drinking water, prioritize hygiene and sanitation, and ensure timely publicity of the event. Additionally, he reviewed the condition of approach roads and logistical support to be provided during the yatra.

Accompanying the Administrative Secretary were the District Magistrate, Leh; Superintendent

of Police, Leh; Superintendent of Police, Security, Leh; Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Leh; Superintendent Engineer of the Power Development Department, Leh; Deputy Secretary of Culture Academy, Leh; Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Leh; Executive Engineer of Public Health Engineering, Leh; OSD Tourism to the Administrative Secretary; Officer of the Municipal Committee, Leh; Representatives from Sindhu Darshan Yatra Samiti; and officers from concerned departments.

Advisor chairs 2nd steering committee meeting of UT Ladakh CAMPA in Leh



Focuses on forest conservation and human-wildlife conflict mitigation in Leh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Advisor Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, chaired the second meeting of the Steering Committee of the Ladakh Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) at the Civil Secretariat in Leh on June 6. The meeting adhered to the provisions of section 18 (2) of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016.

The session began with a comprehensive virtual presentation by the Chief Conservator of Forests and CEO of Ladakh CAMPA, Sajjad Hussain Mufti (IFS), who highlighted the major achievements of the Forest and Wildlife Divisions of UT Ladakh for the fiscal year 2023-24. The presentation covered key topics under CAMPA sub-rules 5(2) and 5(3), including artificial regeneration, biodiversity conservation, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and wildlife habitat improvement.

Discussions and deliberations then focused on the Annual Plan of Operations (APOs) for the Forest and Wildlife Divisions of Leh and Kargil for the year 2024-25. Advisor Ladakh emphasized the importance of forests and wildlife, directing officials to concentrate on three key components:

- 1. Development of Modern Polyhouse Nurseries:** Utilizing the latest technology to support artificial regeneration projects across Ladakh.
- 2. Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Implementing projects like chain-link fencing to protect agricultural lands from wild ungulates and Kiangs, and constructing coral pens to prevent wild predators from attacking livestock.
- 3. Livelihood Generation in Protected Areas:** Promoting alternative income sources for local commu-

nities. Advisor Kotwal also encouraged the upscaling of the Homestay Policy, which provides equipment to beneficiaries wishing to operate homestays. He stressed the need to ensure irrigation facilities before initiating any plantation projects and directed officials to establish fire lines to manage forest fires.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including the Commissioner/Secretary of Social & Tribal Welfare, the Commissioner/Secretary of Agriculture, Horticulture & Floriculture, the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/Chief Wildlife Warden, the Director of Accounts and Treasuries, the Wildlife Warden Leh, the Divisional Forest Officers of Leh and Kargil, and the Deputy Director of Planning. The Commissioner/Secretary of Forest, Ecology, and Environment participated virtually.

Seminar on New Criminal Laws: Ladakh gears up for nationwide implementation



Officials during the seminar-cum-orientation program on the Three New Criminal Laws in Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Ladakh Legal Services Authority (LLSA), in collaboration with Ladakh Police, organised a one-day seminar-cum-orientation program on the Three New Criminal Laws set to be implemented nationwide from July 1st. The event took place on June 2 at the Arya Nagarjuna Auditorium, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh.

Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge of the High Court of Jammu Kashmir Ladakh and Executive Chairman of LLSA UT Ladakh, served as the Chief Guest, while Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal was the Guest of Honour.

The seminar featured four sessions. In the inaugural session, Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of the new criminal laws framed by Parliament. He highlighted the need to adapt to modern times, changes in crime patterns, and the necessity for thorough investigation, trial, and

justice. He praised the new laws for their stricter stance on offences against women.

The Three New Criminal Laws—The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam—will replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860; Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898; and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respectively, effective from July 1st.

Dr. Kotwal noted that about 40 percent of Ladakh police personnel have been trained to understand and effectively use the new laws. He expressed gratitude to Advocate E V Chandru and Advocate Sharat Chandru from Tamil Nadu for training the UT Ladakh officials.

Justice Sreedharan highlighted the multi-sectoral role of police personnel and the collaborative relationship between legal workers and the police. He praised the new laws for their stringent clauses regarding offences against women and emphasized

their role in societal betterment.

In the first session, Advocate E V Chandru provided a detailed overview of the Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita and engaged with participants. In the second session, Advocate Sharat Chandru presented on the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam. Additionally, Tsewang Phuntsok, CJM Leh, conducted a session on the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The third session featured Ishtiaq Kacho JKPS, AIG (CIV), and Mural Bhat, Consultant at KPMG, who discussed preparations for implementing the new laws in UT Ladakh, particularly concerning the police department and the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).

The program was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Leh, SSP Leh, CJM Leh, Member Secretary of Ladakh Legal Services Authority, senior police officers from the prosecution and forensic wings, judicial officials, advocates from Leh and Kargil, and police personnel.

ADC Kargil prepares for 10th Yoga Day celebrations



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Suhail Ahmed, convened a meeting to finalize arrangements for the upcoming 10th Yoga Day celebrations in Kargil, scheduled for June 21, 2024.

The meeting focused on organizing yoga sessions at various locations, including the main event at Khree Sultan Cho Stadium, Biamathang, as well as at all Higher Secondary Schools and Panchayat levels, under the theme "Empowerment of Women."

ADC Ahmed reviewed preparations for yoga trainers, yoga mats, seating, stage decorations, transportation, medical services, refreshments, security, promotion, publicity, and other essential logistics.

He instructed the Additional Director of Information to ensure widespread dissemination of event details through social me-

dia and other promotional channels well in advance. The ADC directed the Education Department officials to arrange for yoga sessions at Higher Secondary Schools and tasked the District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSO) with deploying yoga trainers and coordinating with other departments for orderly conduct of the event.

Additionally, arrangements for refreshments were entrusted to the Assistant Officer to the Deputy Commissioner.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Medical Officer Kargil, Assistant Superintendent of Police Kargil, Chief Education Officer Kargil, Assistant Officer to the Deputy Commissioner, officials from the Information Department, District Youth Services and Sports, Culture Academy Kargil, Municipality, Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), and other relevant officers.

MoHFW team reviews Vibrant Village Programme in Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Ghulam Mohd (JKAS), chaired a meeting with a team from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on June 8 at the VC Room, DC Office, to discuss the implementation of the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) in various villages.

The objective of the meeting was to identify existing gaps, monitor the progress of various activities and schemes, and plan future steps in the sectors of ICDS, health, education, and livelihood.

Chief Planning Officer, Tsewang Gyalson, briefed the team about the various proposals submitted under VVP, the ongoing activities in the villages, and the focus areas of development.

Dr. GB Singh, MD, DND, MoHFW, GoI, based on his visit to the villages under the Vibrant Village Programme, highlighted various issues and proposed several initiatives for improvement. During their visits, the team interacted with stakeholders involved in the Vibrant Village Programme and identified gaps in these areas.

Officials present during the meeting included ASP Leh, Regzin Sangdup; Chief Planning Officer, Tsewang Gyalson; District Panchayat Officer, Junaid Amin; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Dolma Choskit; CEO of the Education Department, Sonam Wangehuk, and other concerned officials.

People's Voice:

Ladakh Election: A call for unity and addressing regional concerns

Yangchen Dolma and Stanzin Padma



Sajjad Hussain Kargili, KDA Member: The Ladakh parliamentary election was conducted smoothly and positively, without communal language or regional bias. All three candidates effectively addressed Ladakh's issues. Haji Hanifa, a former president of the National Conference, is ideologically aligned with the KDA and Apex's demands, and I hope he will understand and advocate for these as he takes office.



Rinchen Dolker BJP State President Mahila Morcha: In the Ladakh Parliamentary seat, Haji Hanifa has been elected, and as we all live in a democratic country, I respect the public's decision. I had hoped that since the BJP fulfilled the long-pending demand of making Ladakh a UT, everyone would be in favor, but that wasn't the case for various reasons. The BJP focused on development more than playing politics. In every election, it used to be Kargil vs. Leh, and this time having two candidates from a national party, with one from Kargil, was a significant reason for Kargil's victory.

Since it is an independent candidate, there might be challenges in fulfilling all our demands because the BJP is in center again. If BJP had won this time, there was a higher chance of fulfilling our four-point agenda and other demands. This is the public's choice, and I respect that.

On the other hand, women have not been receiving mandates for a long time, and that is a very sad reality. They have been consistently overlooked, especially in Ladakh during parliamentary elections where securing a mandate is crucial. Under Narendra Modi's leadership, the BJP decided in the previous parliament to introduce a 33% reservation for women in parliament and assemblies starting from 2029. However, even in the council elections in Ladakh, there is no reservation for women. In the last 30 to 40 years, there have been no women elected representatives, and this issue goes beyond politics. None of the parties have given women a chance; they are all being ignored. Recently, there seems to be a slight shift in mentality towards the idea that women should be included.



Ex MLA Deldan Namgyal: This year's Lok Sabha elections had only one candidate from Kargil and two candidates from Leh, which led to an expected victory for Kargil. I want to congratulate Kargil's candidate, Haji Hanifa. Hanifa, an independent candidate supported by the Ladakh Democratic Alliance, is committed to addressing the demands and issues of the Apex and KDA. I hope that Haji Hanifa, being a Muslim, will not differentiate between Muslims and Buddhists, as both Leh and Kargil have significant responsibilities.

The BJP lost today, and it's their own fault for not fulfilling the public's demands and breaking their trust. I hope that Haji Hanifa will address Ladakh's demands outlined in the four-point agenda.

Today, Congress received good votes from Nubra, providing them with hope. Nubra views Congress as a beacon of hope since the BJP failed to fulfill promises made five years ago. The people in Nubra now expect Congress to address issues like granting district status, resolving wildlife concerns, stopping youth loans, and digitizing land records. There is hope and expectation that Hanifa will not ignore our demands, as the BJP did before.



Dorjay Angchuk, BJP Election In-Charge: The Ladakh parliamentary seat has been held by a BJP MP for the past ten years, so we had hoped to continue for a third term, but it didn't happen. This time, it seems that the election was not based on development but on a negative narrative pushed by Congress and others, which is very unfortunate. It was crucial for us to align with the upcoming central government for the future of Ladakh, but the public made their choice.

Regardless of whether it's Congress or an independent candidate, they can't accomplish the four-point agenda without the central government's support. They have misled the public, although we also favor protecting Ladakh. The polarization in Ladakh is occurring on communal and regional bases. Despite this, the BJP successfully achieved Union Territory status and the abrogation from Kashmir, which had been the Ladakhi people's demand for the last 70 years. We hoped the public would support the BJP, but it seems we missed a few points. Our failure to fulfill promises on time, such as granting separate district status for Zaskar and Nubra, has upset people. We must fulfill these promises and support Haji Hanifa Jaan, the elected MP.

During the last BJP campaign, the presence of CEC Tashi Gyalson led to significant improvements, countering earlier negative comments. His leadership quality received a great response from the public.



Tundup Nurboo, Chief Agent INC: First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Haji Hanifa Jaan on his decisive election victory. I also want to thank all the workers of the Congress party and congratulate the entire party for our significant improvement compared to the last election. The difference of 16,000 votes marks a substantial victory, and it indicates the potential for even better performance in future elections.

Observing the overall election, it was clear that it was not based on party lines but rather on a Leh vs. Kargil and Buddhist vs. Muslim divide, which is an undeniable fact. I believe this trend will continue for a few years, and I urge the leaders of my generation to strive towards avoiding such conflict-driven elections in the future.

On a party basis, we have consistently raised our voices in favor of students and the public regarding their issues, focusing primarily on the four-point agenda. Among these points, the sixth schedule is paramount because it ensures the security of our jobs, lands, and other resources. Statehood is an additional power that we will continue to demand for the next 20 years. The current necessity is the sixth schedule, which is seen as a solution for many problems, and it was included in the national manifesto of the Congress party. The loophole in this election was its basis on communal and regional lines.



Mehdi Shah, Social Activist and Educator: Religious and regional identities do indeed play a role in politics, but in this election, it doesn't seem that any candidate engaged in behavior that would create division or prejudice against any community. The religious or regional background of MPs doesn't inherently make an election communal; for example, the previous MP from Leh came from a different socio-religious background. Each of us has diverse identities and cultures, and the fundamental value lies in respecting, celebrating, and appreciating each other's cultures and regions.

MPs represent an entire region inclusive of all communities, rather than just one religion, emphasizing the importance of unity and inclusivity in representation. My expectations from the Honorable MP, Shri Hanifa Jaan, are firstly to create an inclusive environment and to be the voice of the Ladakh region, especially for marginalized communities. Additionally, it is crucial for him to effectively raise the four-point agenda in Parliament, which reflects the core aspirations of the entire Ladakh region. This includes advocating for statehood and the implementation of the sixth schedule.

...continues on page 6

Autistic Pride Day

It is observed every year on 18 June. The day is dedicated to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) for them to be autistic and proud and celebrate who they are. In 2005, the day was celebrated first time by the organisation Aspies For Freedom (AFF) so that people suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) could have one day where they could celebrate their neurodiversity and differences. One of the amazing qualities about this event is that it is not run by charities but by individuals with ASD. Autism is a complex neurobehavioural condition due to which patient face problems in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviours. Autistic Pride Day spread the message that people suffering from autism are not diseased but different. It acknowledges that autistic people are not sick but have a unique set of characteristics. On this day people living with the autism disease speak for themselves and celebrate in a unique way that autism affects each of them. After inspired by LGBT pride events, the first Autistic Pride Day was celebrated in 2005 by the online community Aspies for Freedom (AFF). Now it is observed in the whole world. Every year several events are organised around the world, connect one another and demonstrate to allistic people that people with autism are unique and should not be seen as cases for treatment. The symbol of this day is represented by rainbow infinity which represents "diversity with infinite variations and infinite possibilities". The symbol represents the diversity of autistic people and the infinite possibilities and variations within the autistic community.

DID YOU KNOW

- The third most common developmental disability is autism. It is diagnosed four times more often in boys as compared to girls. According to "Action for Autism" studies the prevalence rate is 1.7 million that is an estimated rate of 1 in 250 children. Approx 40 percent of children suffering from autism do not speak.
- According to UN, around 1 in 6 older people face some kind of abuse, this figure is higher than previously estimated and it is predicted that it will rise as populations aged worldwide.
- Chainsaws were first invented for childbirth. It was developed in Scotland in the late 18th Century to help aid and speed up the process of symphysiotomy (widening the pubic cartilage) and removal of disease-laden bone during childbirth. It wasn't until the start of the 20th Century that we started using chainsaws for woodchopping.
- You can actually die laughing. And a number of people have, typically due to intense laughter causing a heart attack or suffocation. Comedy shows should come with a warning.
- Ants don't have lungs. They instead breathe through spiracles, nine or ten tiny openings, depending on the species.
- A horse normally has more than one horsepower. A study in 1993 showed that the maximum power a horse can produce is 18,000W, around 24 horsepower.
- Your signature could reveal personality traits. A study in 2016 purports that among men, a larger signature correlates with higher social bravado and, among women, a bigger signature correlates with narcissistic traits.
- Giraffes hum to communicate with each other. It's thought that the low-frequency humming could be a form of "contact call" between individuals who have been separated from their herd, helping them to find each other in the dark. Some researchers think they sleep talk too.
- Glass sponges can live for 15,000 years. This makes them one of the longest-living organisms on Earth. The immortal jellyfish, however, could theoretically live forever (but scientists aren't sure)

(Courtesy: BBC Science Focus)

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

An open mind is a goldmine

Only those with an open mind get to live a great life. That is because an open mind is a dynamic mind, receptive to all ideas, filtering out the bad and retaining the good.

'Open mind' can be defined as one's willingness and readiness to wait and receive any idea and then see whether that is a good or not. In other words, an open mind is one that is receptive and flexible and it considers every pros and cons of an idea or a thing.

An open mind helps you in many ways. Besides making our life more flexible and dynamic, it gives us the choice to accept or reject after a thorough consideration of the merits and the demerits of an idea or a thing.

Here is a nice quote that best illustrates the advantages of an open mind. It is by American author Jeffrey R Anderson: "We often think that there is just one way to look at things – the way we always have. But there are infinite numbers of ways to look at everything."

That means that an open mind gives us a chance for a multitude of perspectives, and we can choose the best and the most useful. In short, an open mind gives us an open door that leads to a whole new realm of possibilities.

The point not to be missed is that it is an open mind that helps us get the best of all possibilities. And we stand to gain just because we keep our mind open to every possibility of doing a bit better every moment.

Besides, an open mind helps you keep away from conflicts with others, and that saves you from many problems and issues that could otherwise bedevil your life.

Similarly, an open mind becomes a reserve of knowledge useful to make the best decisions in life, and thereby to improve the quality of your life. With a little exaggeration, one can say that an open mind exposes you to the whole world and you become 'universal'!

Who does not want to be a universal guy!

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Chering Dorje Lakruk, President, Ladakh Buddhist Association

Interviewed by Nenzes Chodon

Q1. Congratulations on becoming the President of LBA. What inspired you to put forward your candidature for the president of LBA?

Thank you! Actually, I didn't initially aspire to the position of President of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA). It's quite burdensome to be part of the LBA and work as one of its members. In the previous tenure, I served as the Vice President while Thupstan Chhewang was the President. There were many initiatives and efforts undertaken by the ex-President, and as Vice President, I was well-acquainted with these projects. To ensure the continuity of these efforts, everyone encouraged me to contest in the election. I received maximum support from the General Council Members (GCMs) and ultimately won the election for the President of LBA.

Q2. What are your priorities and plans? What new changes do you want to bring in during your tenure?

Our priorities and plans for the tenure are comprehensive and aimed at enhancing the functionality and impact of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA). Firstly, one of our major responsibilities is to initiate the renovation work of Chowkhang Vihara in Leh. This plan was already set in motion by the previous general council, and we have invited volunteer architects to present their designs for the renovation. Currently, these designs are being examined by an expert committee, and the selection process is underway. Renovating Chowkhang and its surroundings, including the complexes and offices of LBA, is a significant task that requires meticulous planning and substantial funding. We are hopeful of receiving financial assistance from the tourism ministry, as we have made requests in this regard before.

Secondly, we have secured alternate land to construct the Monastery in Kargil (Kargil Gompa). This endeavor requires special attention and will progress simultaneously with other projects.

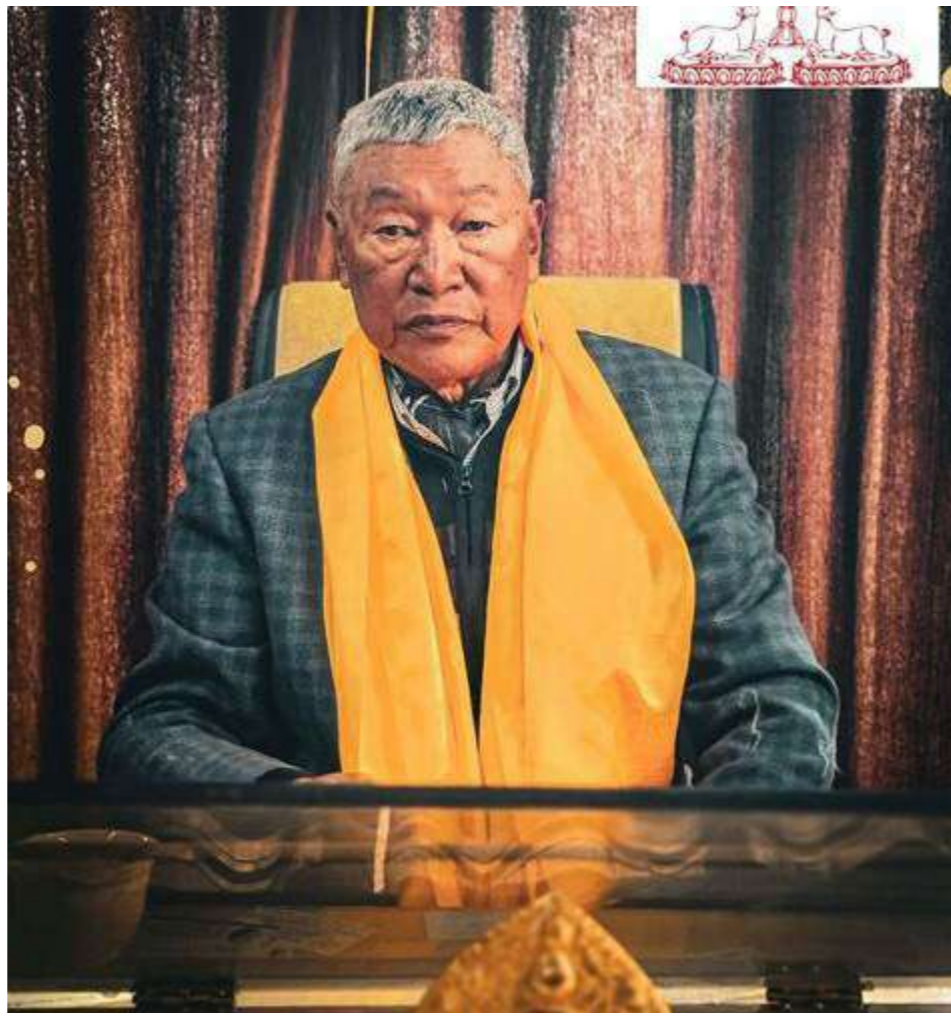
Additionally, there are various legal responsibilities that the LBA fulfills through its sub-committees. I intend to distribute these tasks to the branch offices of LBA across Ladakh as per their requirements to activate their roles effectively.

Furthermore, I aim to ensure active participation from all General Council members of LBA by assigning them specific duties. It is essential for every member of the association to take responsibility for its overall functioning, as the LBA represents the entire community.

Moreover, our plans and objectives need to reach the grassroots level to raise awareness about various societal aspects, such as the importance of our indigenous language and scripts, the significance of and the need to discourage unhealthy and detrimental cultural practices. This holistic approach will contribute to the upliftment and empowerment of our community.

Q3. As you are elected as the president of LBA, how do you view this platform?

The position of President of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) certainly draws significant attention. I understand that criticism comes with the role, and



I welcome constructive feedback. It is crucial for people to come forward and provide feedback directly, rather than criticizing from the sidelines. If I make any mistakes or if there are any issues, I encourage individuals to express their concerns at the LBA office.

One common habit among the public is posting mostly negative commentary on social media platforms. This should be avoided as much as possible. Personally, I do not pay much attention to such distractions. The association is accountable to anyone who comes to the office with their feedback. Using social media for commentary, especially when it is not constructive, is not appropriate.

I view this platform as an opportunity to foster open communication and accountability. It is vital to create an environment where concerns can be addressed directly and responsibly, ensuring that the association truly represents and serves the community effectively.

Q4. Over the years, we have seen criticism from certain sections of society regarding the LBA's involvement in political issues. What do you have to say about it?

It is rare to find someone completely distant from politics, as many individuals are part of some political party as workers or members. However, according to the rules of the LBA, anyone elected as a member of the association must resign from their primary membership in any political party. This is a key condition to ensure that members are apolitical and free from any party's political agenda. The LBA strives to maintain its focus on serving the community without political bias or influence.

Q4. What are the major challenges faced by the LBA and how you are going to tackle it?

The LBA faces numerous challenges that require thoughtful solutions:

Social Reforms in the Community:

Implementing and promoting social reforms is crucial. We need to address and rectify harmful cultural practices that are still prevalent.

Education for Youth:

Despite high educational qualifications, many youths are adopting detrimental cultural practices. Redirecting the youth from such behaviors is a significant challenge, not just for the LBA but for the entire community in Ladakh.

Declining Population Density:

The Buddhist population in Ladakh is declining, with many dedicating their lives to becoming monks and nuns. Ladakh, as a tribal region, risks losing its unique cultural identity with this population decline.

Dependence on External Labor:

There is a growing reliance on labor from outside Ladakh because local households have fewer family members, leading to a shortage of local manpower. This situation underscores the need for more Ladakhi people to participate in local labor.

Overall, it is essential for the entire society to recognize and address these issues collectively. Unity and concerted effort are key to overcoming these challenges.

MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“We are gearing up to collect donations for the refurbishment of Chowkhang Vihara in Leh and the construction of Kargil Gompa. Our plan is to mobilize our General Council members, CWC members, and LBA branch members across Ladakh to reach out to the public for donations. Your contribution is vital, and I urge each one of you to participate and make an effort.

Let's join hands to make these projects a reality for the betterment of our community.”

Fortnight Highlights



Munshi Habibullah Mission Higher Secondary School (MHMSS), Kargil, organized a traditional dress festival on June 1, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of the region.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson along with His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche; His Eminence Stakna Rinpoche, and MP Ladakh, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal warmly received His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche upon his arrival at KBR Airport in Leh on June 3



LAHDC Leh successfully concluded the Free Residential Coaching Program for the second batch under the "Rewe Odzer" program in collaboration with Sankalp IAS Academy in New Delhi.



Chairman/CEC LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson extended heartfelt appreciation to the Director of the National Institute of Sowa Rigpa, Padma Gurmet, for his remarkable achievement in successfully filling 16 Gazette posts ranging from Research Officer to Professor level.



On June 10, the 108 Emergency Ambulance Service, under the National Health Mission (NHM) Ladakh, successfully facilitated a childbirth while en route to the Community Health Center (CHC) in Khatlse.



District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Leh observed Anti-Tobacco Day at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Leh



After 55 long years, Vishwanath Saduram Suryavanshi from Maharashtra has been joyously reunited with his family. This heartwarming reunion was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the District Administration Leh, Chamtse organization, Helpage India, Elderline, and the youth wing of the Ladakh Buddhist Association.

Fortnightly News

CEC Dr. Jaffer prioritizes education, announces strategic plans for district

Reach Ladakh Correspondent
KARGIL: CEC, LAHDC, Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoo chaired a meeting with Director of School Education, UT Ladakh on June 7 to address the issues and discuss modalities for strengthening the educational framework in schools of Kargil district.



The meeting was attended by Executive Councillor for Education, Zakir Hussain, Executive Councillor for Information, Er Panchok Tashi, Director School Education, Ladakh Tsering Paldan, JKAS and Principals of Government Higher Secondary and High Schools.

The Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) reiterated that education remains the Council's top priority, emphasizing ongoing efforts to strengthen the educational framework in the district.

CEC sought suggestions from attendees on improving the educational system, particularly regarding the adoption of the CBSE pattern of education for students in the district.

Dr. Jaffer underscored the importance of aligning examination dates with national schedules to ensure consistency and fairness. The meeting also explored the potential expansion of Council Model Schools to enhance educational access and quality.

The CEC highlighted the necessity of robust professional development programs to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge required to deliver contemporary education, ensuring students are on par with their peers in other regions and capable of competing at the national level.

Development.

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The CEC highlighted the necessity of robust professional development programs to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge required to deliver contemporary education, ensuring students are on par with their peers in other regions and capable of competing at the national level.

Kargil Culture Academy hosts folk music and painting competition at Shakar Chiktan

Reach Ladakh Correspondent
KARGIL: Ladakh Academy of Art, Culture and Language (LAACL), Kargil, organized an on-the-spot Music and Painting Competition on June 12 at Govt. Modern Middle School Shakar Doo in Shakar-Chiktan Sub Division.



During the on-the-spot Music and Painting Competition at Govt. Modern Middle School Shakar Doo in Shakar-Chiktan Sub Division.

During the event, EC Zakir Hussain commended the Ladakh Cultural Academy for hosting the competition for children at Govt. Modern Middle School Shakar Doo. He highlighted the importance of such competitions in nurturing children's hidden talents and expressed optimism about their developmental impact.

Emphasizing education as a top priority for LAHDC Kargil, he reaffirmed the council's commitment to enhancing educational standards through the adoption of the Hill Council Model Schools. He assured full support to LAACL in its efforts to promote and preserve Ladakh's rich cultural heritage.

Additionally, EC Zakir Hussain posthumously honored late Sajad Ali, a dedicated physical teacher from Shakar-Chiktan Sub Division, recognizing his invaluable contributions to the education department and the community of Kargil.

EC further remarked that

the painting competition showcased colorful and imaginative artworks depicting Ladakh's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and daily life. The folk music competition featured melodious performances, highlighting children's love and pride in the rich culture and languages of Shakar-Chiktan division. EC noted the event's role in providing children a platform to showcase their talents and celebrate Purig cultural heritage.

CEO SD Namgyal congratulated Ladakh Cultural Academy, Kargil, for organizing such enriching events aimed at preserving Ladakhi culture and tradition. He emphasized the importance of co-curricular activities in nurturing students' overall development and creativity while promoting Ladakhi culture and language.

He urged students to participate actively in such events, contributing to the preservation of Ladakh's unique identity and ethnicity.

Renowned artists and musicians from Kargil served as judges for the competi-

tion, lauding the children's skills and creativity. Children from various schools in Shakar-Chiktan Sub Division participated enthusiastically, showcasing their talents in music and painting competitions. Notable winners included Farzana Batool, Mehvish Fatima, Zahara Batool, Tahira Banoo, Irfan Ali, Ruksana Fatima, Nargis Fatima, Zahara Batool, Sania Zehra, Fatima Kaneez, Nawaz Hussain, and Nasreen Fatima across different categories.

Deputy Secretary of LAACL, Nazir Hussain, reiterated the academy's commitment to promoting and preserving Ladakhi art, culture, and language through future events. He outlined the competition's objectives, emphasizing its role in introducing creative arts to young minds. Mohd Javed, Head Master of GMMS Shakar Doo, expressed gratitude to LAACL for choosing their school to host such impactful competitions. He highlighted the relevance of such programs in preparing children for competitive and creative challenges in today's era.

Himalayan Brown Bear Trust and Roots Ladakh Launch 'Humas: A Field Guide to Flora and Fauna of Drass'



Reach Ladakh Correspondent
DRASS: The Himalayan Brown Bear Trust, in collaboration with Roots Ladakh, launched their book, 'Humas: A Field Guide to the Flora and Fauna of Drass Valley', on June 10 at Government Degree College, Drass.

This comprehensive guide documents the unique plants, mammals, and birds of the Drass region, offering an unprecedented look at its rich biodiversity. Special guests included Kaneez Fatima, Rector of Ladakh University, Kargil Campus, and Shabir Hassan, Principal in-charge of Government Degree College, Drass.

Muzammil Hussain, Founder Trustee of the Himalayan Brown Bear Trust and Co-Founder of Roots Ladakh, expressed his enthusiasm about the project: "This book is our first attempt at understanding the natural history of the Drass region and putting its bio-

diversity on the global map. Through our efforts, we aim to create a space where the Himalayan Brown Bears and the people of the region coexist."

Er. Panchok Tashi commended the dedication of Roots Ladakh and the Himalayan Brown Bear Trust under the leadership of Muzammil Hussain for their innovative approaches to employment generation and conservation. He highlighted their previous initiatives, such as promoting Hunderman and Hinaskot, the Brown Bear Expedition in Drass Valley, and the Suru Boulder Fest. "This field guide is yet another step in their efforts to conserve our natural heritage," he added.

The release of Humas marks a significant milestone in the conservation efforts for Drass, aiming to raise awareness and foster a deeper understanding of its unique ecosystem.

International Archives week celebrates in Leh

Focus on record management and document preservation



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Department of Archives, Archaeology, and Museum, in collaboration with the Revenue Department of Leh, observed International Archives Week with an insightful event at the DC Conference Hall, Leh, on June 8.

The Assistant Commissioner of the Revenue Department, Leh, Shabir Hussain, was the chief guest on the occasion. The event focused on the crucial aspects of record management and the preservation of document heritage.

AD/Registering Officer, Antiquities in Ladakh, Khadim Hussain, presented an informative PowerPoint presentation on the importance of record management and the effective use of archives. His presentation highlighted the essential role that well-maintained records play in governance and heritage preservation.

Dr. Noor Jahan, a noted conservation specialist, delivered a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on the conservation of document heritage and re-

records. She emphasized the need for proper conservation techniques to preserve historical documents for future generations.

The event concluded with a pledge from all attendees to uphold the values of record management and document conservation, reinforcing their commitment to preserving the rich heritage of Ladakh.

The gathering saw participation from the staff of both the Revenue Department and the Archives Department.

Pagaria Welfare Foundation launches Toy Library initiative 'Project Khelona' in Rural Schools of Kargil, Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Pagaria Welfare Foundation, in collaboration with its Implementing Partners Himalayan Volunteer Tourism and Humas Upliftment Organisation Ladakh, has inaugurated Toy Libraries under the 'Project Khelona' initiative in both government and private schools across Kargil, Ladakh.

The initiative was unveiled on June 9 at Unity Public

School in Minjee, Kargil. This toy library, a first of its kind in rural Ladakh under 'Project Khelona,' was inaugurated by Chairman Ghulam Mehdi Sheikh, with Founder Altaf Hussain of Humas Upliftment Organisation Ladakh, and Ghulam Hassan, Principal of Unity Public School, among others in attendance.

The toy library is equipped with a diverse array of

Featuring over 38 different types of toys catering to various age groups, the library ensures that every child, from class 1st to 5th, has access to resources that stimulate learning and growth. With the launch of this initiative, over 70 children in Minjee, Kargil, now have the opportunity to enrich their educational experiences and academic performance through interactive play and learning.

teams would include fire brigades in case of fire incidents, ambulances from the BMO office, police teams, and veterinary teams in case of livestock damage.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer of PWD, Nubra; Tehsildar of Sumoor; SHO of Diskit; BMO of Diskit; Naib Tehsildar of Khalsar; LDO of Nubra; AEE of PHC; NEE of PDD; and all Panchayat Secretaries of Nubra sub-division, along with volunteers from all villages.

Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti: 24 students and teachers embark on motivational tour

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Students and two teachers from Higher Secondary Schools in the villages of Silmo, Biamah, and Chiktan were flagged off from the Tiger Hill Brigade on June 6 to participate in a motivational tour. This program was organized as a lead-up to the Rajat Jayanti of Kargil Vijay Diwas by the Forever in Operations Division. The initiative aimed to provide students with a holistic view of the region's rich cultural heritage, historical significance, and geographical marvels.

During the tour, the students visited Zorawar Fort in Leh, gaining exposure to India's glorious past, the treasures of its rulers, and vintage coins and postage stamps. They also toured the Hall of Fame in Leh,



which stands as a reminder of the great sacrifices made by soldiers to ensure the safety and sovereignty of the country.

This visit left an indelible impression on the young minds, instilling in them a sense of patriotism and admiration for the Armed Forces.

The tour included a visit to the Ladakh Scouts Regiment Centre and their historic museum, enriching

the students' knowledge about the pivotal role of community members in guarding the country's borders in the unforgiving terrain of the Ladakh region.

The Indian Army's initiative to organize such motivational tours reflects its commitment to nurturing youth, fostering national integration, and contributing to nation-building.

Minimally Invasive surgery camp in Kargil performs 12 successful surgeries

Mansoor Hosain Beigh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Al-Reza Health Care & Research Foundation, the health wing of Jamait Ul Ulema Isna Ashriya Kargil, in collaboration with the Department of Health Kargil, successfully conducted a two-day Minimally Invasive Surgery camp at District Hospital Kargil.

Led by renowned Minimally Invasive Surgeon from Kashmir, Dr. Akhtar Ganai, supported by Dr. Sajjad Hussain and Dr. Mohd Abass, both Consultant Surgeons of the Department of Minimally Invasive and Laparoscopic Surgery at District Hospital Kargil, the camp achieved the successful completion of 12 major and complicated surgeries. The anesthesia team, under the leadership of Dr. Abass Ali, played a crucial role in the camp's success.

The camp utilized two advanced laparoscopic machines with 4K systems in the state-of-the-art Modu-



During the Minimally Invasive Surgery camp at District Hospital Kargil.

lar OT theatres at District Hospital Kargil, equipped with the latest H2O2 Cold Plasma Sterilization technology.

Dr. Mohd Abass, President of Al-Reza HC & RF, expressed gratitude to Dr. Akhtar Ganai for his expertise and leadership during the camp. He extended thanks to the Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) Kargil, Kargil administration, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Deputy Medical Superintendent, doctors, paramedical staff, OT staff, and volunteers for their contributions.

Sheikh Nazir Mehdi Mo-

hammad, President of JUIAK, congratulated the doctors on the camp's success and appreciated the UT administration and CEC LAHDC Kargil for their support in equipping District Hospital Kargil with advanced equipment. He commended the doctors for introducing cutting-edge surgical techniques locally and acknowledged the efforts of paramedical staff, volunteers, and OT staff, wishing them continued success.

The initiative received widespread praise from residents across Kargil for bringing much-needed minimally invasive surgical care to the community.

Justice Puneet Gupta inaugurates e-Sewa Kendra and Knowledge hub



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NUBRA: Justice Puneet Gupta, Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Administrative Judge District Kargil), inaugurated the e-Sewa Kendra and e-Inaugurated the Knowledge Hub, Book Bank cum Reading Room at Zanskar on June 12.

Present at the inauguration were Malik Shabir Ahmad, Principal District and Sessions Judge Kargil; Shrikant Suse, Deputy Commissioner Kargil; Shree Ram R, SSP Kargil; Shafiq Mushtaq Lone, Munsiff/JMIC Sankoo, and other district officers. Romil Singh Donk, SDM Zanskar, and Mohd Hassan, Tehsildar Zanskar, participated virtually in the inauguration of the Knowledge Hub.

The e-Sewa Kendra provides the general public with information on their court cases across India, including case status, next dates, and uploaded orders. It also facilitates litigants and lawyers in ob-

taining certified copies of orders and judgments.

The Knowledge Hub, initiated by the Legal Services Authority and established by the Tehsil Legal Services Committee in collaboration with District/Sub-Divisional Administration, offers a Book Bank cum Reading Room. It houses books from various fields, particularly aiding students in preparation for competitive exams.

Justice Puneet Gupta later inspected all courts at the Old District Court Complex, Kargil, and met with members of the District Bar Association Kargil, led by President Reyaz Ahmad Khan. He also visited the New District Court Complex in Kurbang, Kargil, overseeing construction progress and issuing directives for its swift completion. He urged the concerned agency to expedite the work to ensure the timely establishment of the Court Complex.

People's Voice: Ladakh Election: A call for unity and addressing regional concerns

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Yangchen Dolker, Apex Youth Member: First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our new MP, Haji Hanifa Jaan, for being elected from Ladakh as an independent candidate. As a constituent and member of our community, I want to request our newly elected Member of Parliament to please keep in mind the importance of addressing the concerns surrounding the 6th Schedule and the four-point agenda. This legislative framework holds significant relevance for our region, and I believe it's crucial to ensure its proper implementation and protection.

The 6th Schedule plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the interests and autonomy of tribal areas, ensuring their socio-cultural and economic development while preserving their unique identity. However, there may be pressing issues or challenges that require attention and action. I urge Mr. Hanifa Jaan to advocate for measures that strengthen and uphold the provisions of the 6th Schedule. By doing so, he will not only represent our constituency effectively but also contribute to the overall welfare and prosperity of our region.

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