

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



In Conversation with

Tsering Wangdu, President, All Ladakh Gonpa Association

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President of India visits Siachen Base camp, interacts with troops



Photo Caption: President of India, Droupadi Murmu, with soldiers at Siachen Base Camp.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: President of India, Droupadi Murmu, visited the Siachen Base Camp in Nubra on September 26, marking a significant occasion in recognizing and honoring the sacrifices of the armed forces.

Upon arrival at Thoise Airport, the President was welcomed by key military and civilian dignitaries, including Lt Governor Brigadier (Dr.) BD Mishra (Retd), Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, GoC-in-C Northern Command Lt General MV Suchindra Kumar, CEC LAHDC-Leh Advocate Tashi Gyalton, Advisor to the LG Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, 14 Corps Commander Lt General Hitesh Bala, ADGP Ladakh S.D. Jamwal, IPS, 102 Brigade Commander Brig. Himanshu Hatkar, Member of Parliament Ladakh Haji Hanifa Jan, DC Leh Santosh Sukhadave, and SSP

Leh Shruti Arora.

Addressing the soldiers stationed in one of the world's most challenging environments, President Murmu expressed her deep gratitude for their service and dedication, gaining first-hand insights into their experiences and the harsh conditions they face. She highlighted their extraordinary sacrifice and endurance, braving heavy snowfall and temperatures as low as minus 50 degrees to safeguard the nation. As the supreme commander of the armed forces, the President said she felt immense pride and stated, "All citizens salute your bravery."

During her visit, the President also paid tribute to the Siachen War Memorial, which honors soldiers and officers martyred since the start of Operation Meghdoot on April 13,

1984. She acknowledged the enduring commitment of Indian Armed Forces personnel, who have maintained security in the region despite the extreme weather conditions. The President commended their remarkable resilience and sacrifices, which are deeply respected by all Indians.

This visit underscores the government's dedication to the welfare of its armed forces and serves to uplift the morale of the troops stationed at Siachen, reaffirming the nation's unwavering support for their courageous efforts.

The President's interaction with the soldiers reflects the nation's recognition of the critical role the armed forces play in safeguarding India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

LAHDC Kargil welcomes new nominated members with oath-taking ceremony



Hakima Khatoon, nominated member of the 5th Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil taking oath.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The nominated members of the 5th Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil, took their oath on September 24 at the Syed Mehdi Auditorium Hall, Kargil.

The ceremony was organized by the Election Authority, with the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Malik Shabeer Ahmad, administering the oath to the three nominated members: Namgyal Phuntsok, Regzin Gurmath, and Hakima Khatoon.

Prominent attendees included the Chairman/CEC of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, Executive Councilor for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (RD&PRD), Er. Panchok Tashi, Deputy Commissioner and Election Authority, Kargil, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Suhail Ahmad, along with councilors, district officials, religious leaders, and other dignitaries.

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Ladakh celebrates 50 years of tourism on World Tourism Day



Nenzes Chodon

LEH: Stakeholders from Leh-Ladakh's tourism sector gathered at Leh Palace on September 27 to celebrate World Tourism Day, themed "Tourism and Peace." This year marks Ladakh's 50th anniversary of tourism, dating back to 1974. The event was organized by the Tourism Department of Leh to commemorate this milestone.

Attendees included Additional District Development Commissioner Leh, Sonam Nurboo; Member of the Goa Board of Tourism, Mark Mendes; representatives from LTTA, ALTOA, ALHGHA, and the Biker Association; local community members; the Swadesh Darshan team; officials from the Tourism Department; and students from Moravian Mission School, Government Girls Higher Secondary School, and Government Boys Higher Secondary School.

The event commenced with a "Travel for Life" pledge, emphasizing a commitment to adopting a "planet-friendly, responsible lifestyle."

ADDC Sonam Nurboo praised Ladakh as a peaceful destination and highlighted the region's rich cultural, traditional, and ethnic heritage, which he described as the legacy of the ancestors. He emphasized that the tourism industry is deeply tied to peace, noting that the peaceful atmosphere in Ladakh attracts both domestic and international tourists. Nurboo honored the ancestors who maintained peace in the region and commended the local community for keeping peace as an integral part of their culture. He called the tourism sector the backbone and main driver of Ladakh's economy.

PT Kunzang, Chairman of the Ladakh Tourist Trade Alliance, spoke about the environmental challenges posed by the growth of the tourism sector. He urged students and youth to be mindful of their impact on the environment. Kunzang emphasized that Ladakh's culture, heritage, sacred sites, and remote trekking routes are key attractions

for tourists. He encouraged all attendees to serve as brand ambassadors for Ladakh by showcasing the region's culture and the warm hospitality of its people. Kunzang also highlighted that Ladakh will be celebrating 50 years of tourism throughout the year.

The theme "Tourism and Peace" underscores the importance of peace in a world often marked by violence. It highlights the role of peace in fostering growth in the tourism sector and within individuals. As part of the event, students and tourism stakeholders pledged to keep Ladakh clean, preserve its culture and heritage, avoid single-use plastics, and promote these initiatives among tourists.

The day concluded with a heritage walk and cleanliness drive, starting from Leh Palace and proceeding through Leh market. Students and stakeholders marched through the market, chanting slogans advocating for a healthier, greener, and cleaner Ladakh.

LBA Youth wing organises candlelight march in solidarity with Bangladeshi minorities



Nenzes Chodon

LEH: The Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) Youth wing organised a peaceful candlelight march on September 27, starting from Leh Gate and concluding at Chowkhang Vihara. The march was held to honor the victims of atrocities committed against minorities in Bangladesh, with Buddhists in Leh-Ladakh standing in solidarity with their counterparts and other persecuted minorities.

The event saw the participation of women representatives from various religious groups, LBA members, and several volunteers.

Jigmet Rabstan, President of the LBA Youth Wing, highlighted the alarming situation in Bangladesh, stating, "Minorities are being burned. The number of casualties has

reached 67, mostly from minority communities, including Buddhists. Fifty-two districts have been attacked almost 200 times, with many households and monasteries burned down."

The LBA Youth Wing plans to submit a memorandum to the Government of India and the Prime Minister through the DC office in Leh, urging the government to reconsider diplomatic relations with Bangladesh until the situation stabilizes and the safety of its citizens is ensured. The LBA also appealed to human rights commissions to prioritize the protection and safety of vulnerable communities in Bangladesh.

The march aimed to raise awareness both in India and globally about the ongoing human rights violations in Bangladesh.

Fortnightly News

Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan visits Ladakh's only Govt. inclusive school

Highlights the importance of holistic support for specially-abled students



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a step toward ensuring the well-being and holistic development of specially-abled children in the Union Territory of Ladakh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, Acting Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, visited the only Government Inclusive School at Chuchot Yokma, Leh, on September 21. The visit focused on reviewing the quality of care, educational standards, and the infrastructure available to students requiring specialized attention.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, accompanied by M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary, and Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary of the J&K Legal Services Authority (also in charge of the Juvenile Justice Committee), was warmly received by Phunstog Angmo, Secretary of DLSA Leh; Chemit Yourgiyal, Secretary of DLSA Kargil; Nema Stanzin, Deputy Chief LADC, Leh; Sonam Wangchuk, Chief Education Officer; and Mohsin Ali Khan, Headmaster, along

with Ladol, the school's Sign Language Special Teacher, other staff members, and students.

During his visit, Justice Tashi inspected the school's infrastructure, including classrooms, the activity center, residential facilities, and the multipurpose hall. He praised the school administration for creating an inclusive environment where all children, regardless of ability, can learn and grow. He acknowledged the school's efforts in ensuring that students with special needs are provided not only with quality education but also access to extracurricular activities such as cultural programs, sports, and arts. These initiatives, he noted, play a crucial role in building self-confidence and fostering holistic development. Specially-abled students also presented a cultural program during the visit.

Justice Tashi reviewed the residential facilities catering to students from distant villages and commended the arrangements

made for their accommodation. He urged the school management to continue offering a safe and nurturing environment and stressed the importance of regular medical check-ups. He also directed authorities to maintain consistent healthcare services, including therapeutic support and counseling, to enhance the children's overall well-being.

With a total strength of 98 students, 35 of whom are specially-abled, the school employs four special teachers to provide tailored education. Justice Tashi interacted with both staff and students, noting the importance of the therapy sessions, which are held four days a week and include occupational and physical therapy to address the students' unique needs.

During the interaction, staff raised concerns about the shortage of teaching staff, speech therapists, physiotherapists, drivers, hostel sweepers, and the need for a permanent warden. Justice Tashi assured them

that these issues would be taken up with the UT Ladakh Administration for prompt resolution. He emphasized the need for continuous improvement in the care and support provided to the children, lauded the dedication of the teachers and management, and encouraged them to continue fostering an inclusive atmosphere where every child is valued and has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Justice Tashi also praised Lamo, the hostel warden, for her efforts in caring for the specially-abled children and fostering an inclusive learning environment. He assured the institution of continued support to enhance its facilities and programs. This visit marked a significant step in promoting inclusive education and highlighted the judiciary's commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by specially-abled children in Ladakh, reflecting broader efforts to support and empower marginalized sections of society.

Union Minister of MSME virtually inaugurates centre for rural enterprise acceleration through technology (CREATE) at Leh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Union Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Jitan Ram Manjhi, virtually inaugurated the Centre for Rural Enterprise Acceleration through Technology (CREATE) at Leh. The event was attended by Minister of State (MoS) for MSME, Shobha Karandlaje, and Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd).

CREATE, developed by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in collaboration with the Department of Industries and Commerce, UT Ladakh, aims to accelerate rural enterprises in the region through technology.

Union Minister Manjhi emphasized that the establishment of CREATE in Ladakh would significantly contribute to the region's development, especially in promoting Pashmina production. He noted that life in Ladakh situated over 11,000 feet above sea level, presents unique challenges. However, initiatives like CREATE will provide employment opportunities and improve living conditions in line with the Prime Minister's vision of empowering the underprivileged through schemes like PM Vishwakarma.

Manjhi commended the Ladakh administration for its efforts to reduce the mortality rate of Pashmina goat kids, and highlighted the integral role of Khadi in the daily lives of Indians. He urged government officials to actively promote Khadi and assured continued support for Ladakh's development.

Calling the day "historic" for Ladakh, KVIC Chairman Manoj Kumar stated that CREATE would open up new job opportunities for the region's people. He emphasized that Ladakh produces the world's finest Pashmina, and the Centre would benefit Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and entrepreneurs involved in this sector. Additionally, the Centre will offer skill enhancement training to these groups.

Lieutenant Governor Brig (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) expressed gratitude to the Ministry of MSME for its role in improving the livelihoods of Ladakh's traditional handloom and handicraft artisans. He highlighted that the inauguration of CREATE will enhance the skills and income of artisans, entrepre-

neurs, and SHGs engaged in Pashmina production. Addressing the challenges of the Pashmina trade, such as low profitability and the high mortality rate of Pashmina goats in Ladakh's tough terrain, the LG pointed out steps taken by the UT Administration to tackle these issues.

The LG detailed initiatives such as the distribution of 1,000 Pashmina kid pens to reduce goat mortality and the regular check-ups conducted by veterinary doctors. Additionally, bottles for feeding Pashmina goat kids have been distributed to ensure proper nutrition. He also informed the Union Minister that a Pashmina Dehairing Plant will soon be installed in Leh.

Highlighting further developmental initiatives, the LG spoke about connecting apricot cultivation with tourism through events like the Ladakh Apricot Festival to attract more tourists. He also discussed efforts to improve the packaging of sea buckthorn products, enhancing the livelihoods of those involved in this sector.

The LG also shared details about the Milk Pasteurization Plants being set up in Leh and Kargil to cater to the needs of the local population and defense personnel. He praised the contribution of tourism to Ladakh's economy, noting the success of the Ladakh Homestay Policy in providing rural livelihoods.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to create "Lakshmi Didi" (women earning over a lakh rupees), the LG expressed his goal of empowering women in Ladakh's newly declared districts, ensuring they contribute to the region's economy. He also expressed hope for continued support from the Ministry of MSME for Ladakh's overall development.

Advisor to the UT Administration, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, highlighted the assistance provided by the Ministry of MSME and discussed the challenges faced by SHGs producing Pashmina products. He also elaborated on initiatives aimed at boosting rural livelihoods.

Short films, *Atmanirbhar Ladakh: Showcasing Entrepreneurial Potential* and *Ladakh Pashmina: The World's Finest*, were screened during the event.

Mahabodhi Centre and Royal Thai Embassy distribute 73 Buddha statues in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

CHOGAMSAR: In celebration of the 73rd birth anniversary of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun, the 10th King of the Chakri Dynasty of Thailand, 73 small Buddha statues were distributed at the Mahabodhi Sambodhi Retreat Centre on September 23. The event was organized by the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) in collaboration with the Royal Thai Embassy and the Wat Thai Royal Temple in Bodhgaya.

The Buddha statues were presented to esteemed dignitaries throughout Ladakh, convey-

ing a message of peace, compassion, and mutual respect. Three statues, sent directly by His Majesty the King of Thailand, were presented to the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, the Ladakh Gonpa Association, and the Ladakh Buddhist Association, with their respective Presidents receiving them in person.

Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder President and Spiritual Director, expressed heartfelt gratitude to Most Ven. Phra Dhambodhivong for choosing Ladakh for this significant ceremony. He emphasized the profound and enduring spir-

itual connection between the Buddhist communities of India and Thailand. Sanghasena acknowledged the dedication of the Buddhists of Thailand in diligently preserving the sacred teachings of Lord Buddha, especially during a time when these teachings had gradually faded in their birthplace, India. He noted that the unwavering commitment of Thai Buddhists has played a crucial role in the revival of Buddhism in India, restoring its spiritual legacy to its land of origin.

Ven. Sanghasena articulated the deep respect for Buddhism that exists in both India and

Thailand, underscoring its essential role in fostering peace amid global challenges such as climate change and social conflict. He highlighted how the teachings of Buddhism provide a moral compass and a framework for dialogue, urging communities to unite in the pursuit of harmony.

He expressed appreciation for the dedicated supporters who traveled from various villages, noting their commitment to honoring a shared heritage and their efforts to restore the teachings of Buddhism in India. This collective effort, he asserted, is vital not only for cultural preservation but also for revitalizing the spiritual essence of Buddhism in its birthplace. Additionally, he acknowledged the significant contributions of the Thai monarchy in this revival, expressing gratitude for their unwavering support and commitment to promoting Buddhist values, which are pivotal in strengthening ties between the two nations.

Notable attendees included Former Chief Secretary C. Phunsog; Former CEC Rigzen Spalbar; Dy. Chairman of LAHDC Leh Tsering Angchuk; Executive Councillor Tashi Namgyal Yakzee; Executive Councillor Stanzin Chospel; Councillors Thinles Norboo, Ishey Spalzung, Ven. Konchok

Tsephel, Phunchok Norboo, as well as the Presidents of the Ladakh Gonpa Association and the Ladakh Buddhist Association, along with leaders from the LBA, LBA Youth Wing, and LBA Women Wing.

The delegation attending the ceremony, led by the Lord Abbot of Wat Thai Royal Temple, included esteemed monks and representatives from the Royal Thai Embassy. Their presence embodies the spirit of friendship and cooperation that has flourished between the two nations. The distribution of the Buddha statues serves as a heartfelt symbol of goodwill, mutual respect, and our shared commitment to the teachings of Buddhism.

The ceremony commenced with an invocation led by Most Ven. Phra Dhambodhivong, the Lord Abbot of Wat Thai Royal Temple Bodhgaya.

MIMC has consistently dedicated itself to promoting peace-building and cultural preservation. Through various interfaith dialogues and vibrant festivals, they celebrate the rich Buddhist and Himalayan heritage. This event not only underscores their commitment to these values but also deepens the cultural bonds between the Buddhist communities of India, particularly in Ladakh, and Thailand.

L-G discusses funding and structure for UT Ladakh Sports Council at first meeting



First meeting of the UT Ladakh Sports Council at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, chaired the inaugural meeting of the UT Ladakh Sports Council on September 23 at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.

During the meeting, Secretary of Youth Services and Sports,

Vikram Singh Malik, briefed the LG on the transfer of funds and posts from the J&K Sports Council to UT Ladakh following the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir. He informed the council that UT Ladakh Sports Council was registered as a society in July 2024 and that Rs 7.89 crores, along with 22

posts, had been transferred by the J&K Sports Council.

Malik further outlined the roles, responsibilities, and future plans of the newly formed UT Ladakh Sports Council. He also provided details on the council's members, both official and non-official, as well as the structure of its various committees—including the Standing, Executive, and Finance Committees—along with the District Sports Council.

A series of proposals were submitted for the LG's approval, including the nomination of the Administrative Secretary, School Education, and a Sports Administrator as ex-officio members of the council. Other proposals included the appointment of a Secretary to the Sports Council, procurement of vehicles and buses, the manda-

tory requirement of a Ladakh Resident Certificate for association members, nomination of outstanding and eminent sportspersons from Ladakh as non-official members, framing of recruitment rules, and management of sports infrastructure through partnerships with registered sports associations. Malik also sought approval for revenue generation strategies, recruitment of outsourced staff, delegation of financial powers to the Secretary of YSS, and the adoption of the National Sports Code by the Sports Council.

Lt Governor Mishra suggested that outstanding sportspersons from Ladakh with experience at the UT level be nominated as non-official members of the Sports Council. He also recommended that the Joint Director of Youth Services and Sports serve as the Sports Adminis-

trator, given that this position is the top official in the Sports Department, capable of providing crucial support to the council in its early stages. The LG also emphasized the need to ensure representation of sportspersons from the general, female, and physically challenged categories.

The LG directed Secretary Malik to task relevant officials with actively exploring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding for sports development in Ladakh. The installation of chilling plants for the Ice Hockey rinks in Leh and Kargil was also discussed in detail during the meeting.

This first meeting of the UT Ladakh Sports Council marks an important step towards enhancing sports infrastructure and opportunities in the region.

Ladakh to become global hub for para sports with new high-altitude training center



CEC Gyalson, accompanied by D.P. Singh, D.I.G. (Ex-BSF), and Asha Shaikh, a physiotherapist at the Foundation, visited the Children with Special Needs School.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In a groundbreaking initiative to empower para-athletes, Chairman/CEC of LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson, announced a partnership with Aditya Mehta, founder of the Aditya Mehta Foundation (AMF), to establish the world's first high-altitude, high-performance para sports center in Ladakh.

The new center aims to become a global hub for training para-athletes across all 28 parasports disciplines. The mission of the Ladakh Parasports Academy is to screen, identify, and nurture aspiring athletes, guiding them to find their best-suited sport and shaping them into world-class competitors.

CEC Gyalson, accompanied by D.P. Singh, D.I.G. (Ex-BSF), and

Asha Shaikh, a physiotherapist at the Foundation, visited the Children with Special Needs School on September 21 to officially mark the commencement of this transformative project.

CEC Tashi Gyalson shared his vision, stating, "Ladakh is poised to nurture world-class para-athletes, and our partnership with the Aditya Mehta Foundation is a vital step toward realizing this dream."

He further emphasized the inherent abilities of children with special needs, highlighting that the high-performance center will provide unparalleled opportunities for athletes from Ladakh to excel in parasports,

gaining both dignity and global recognition. Gyalson noted that this initiative will not only develop athletic talent but also serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for individuals with disabilities, showcasing their potential.

The facility is designed to benefit children with special needs, not only from Ladakh but from across India and beyond. By collaborating with the Aditya Mehta Foundation, which is renowned as Asia's first para sports academy and rehabilitation center, this initiative aims to empower para-athletes and help them achieve their aspirations in international competitions.

While construction of the center is underway, CEC Gyalson em-

phasized the need for immediate action. He urged the Aditya Mehta Foundation to begin the early screening of children for potential training opportunities at AMF's esteemed academy in Hyderabad, ensuring they are well-prepared to represent India in the 2028-29 Paralympics, as well as in other national and international events.

This initiative reflects a strong commitment to inclusivity in sports and highlights the vital role that parasports play in promoting empowerment and dignity for individuals with disabilities. As the project progresses, it is expected to not only raise the standard of parasports in India but also position Ladakh as a global hub for high-altitude athletic training.

Fortnightly News

L-G reviews registration guidelines for Adventure Tour Operators in Ladakh



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), convening meeting with the officials on Registration and Renewal Guidelines for Adventure Tour Operators (ATOs).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), convened a meeting to discuss the Registration and Renewal Guidelines for Adventure Tour Operators (ATOs) in the region on September 23.

Secretary of Tourism and Culture, Vikram Singh Malik, briefed the LG on the guidelines, which aim to promote high-quality, safe, eco-friendly, and sustainable adventure sports in Ladakh. The guidelines also seek to foster responsible practices and integrate bonafide adventure tour operators into an organised framework. Malik highlighted the different types of adventure activities offered in Ladakh—land-based, air-based, and water-based—and elaborated on the registration and renewal procedures, including the fee structure, validity period, and the formation of advisory, regulatory, and inspection committees. He also covered the eligibility criteria and documentation required for registration and renewal, as well as the

responsibilities of ATOs and guides.

Lt Governor Mishra proposed shortening the registration validity from five years to three to better ensure the quality of operators, with renewals being contingent on performance. He suggested aligning the start of the new tourist season in Ladakh with April 1. Additionally, he directed that the Secretary of the Tourism Department should serve as the Head of the Advisory Committee.

The LG emphasized the importance of enforcing all six mandatory eligibility criteria for registration and renewal, which include: the applicant's proof of identity, possession of a Ladakh Resident Certificate, business incorporation details, proof of essential equipment, office address proof, and other certifications such as insurance details and no-objection certificates (NOCs). He also insisted that first-aid training be mandatory for ATOs.

He underscored the need for designated zones for paragliding activities and for ATOs to secure an NOC from the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, for conducting Para Motoring activities in Ladakh. Moreover, he instructed the Tourism Department to categorise adventure sports into two groups—high risk and very high risk—based on which children under 12 years may participate in these activities, either accompanied or unaccompanied by an adult.

Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of LAHDC Leh, Advocate Tashi Gyalson, recommended expanding the scope of adventure activities to include snow-based activities such as snowmobiling/snow scootering, jet skiing, and sandboarding.

This comprehensive review aims to streamline and standardise adventure tourism in Ladakh, prioritising both safety and sustainability.

Lt. Governor BD Mishra and First Lady Neelam Mishra visit Nubra valley, celebrate new district status



Lieutenant Governor Brigadier [Dr] BD Mishra [Retd] and First Lady Neelam Mishra during their visit to Nubra valley.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NUBRA: Lieutenant Governor Brigadier [Dr] BD Mishra [Retd] and First Lady Neelam Mishra visited Nubra Valley on September 25.

Upon arriving at the 54 RCC Headquarters, the Lt. Governor was honored with a guard of honor by the 2nd Ladakh Scout. His visit culminated in a reception at the Mini Stadium in Diskit, attended by community represen-

tatives, religious leaders, villagers, and students from the Nubra Sub-Division.

Notable attendees included Deputy CEC of LAHDC-Leh Tsering Angchok, Deputy Commissioner Leh Santosh Sukhadave (IAS), SSP Leh Shrutti Arora (IPS), Executive Councillor LAHDC-Leh Gulam Mehdi, Councillor Hundar Kunzang Lotus, Councillor Panamik Tser-

ing Sandup, Councillor Sumoor Rigzen Lundup, Nambardars of the Nubra Sub-Division, and other officials.

Tsering Norboo, President of the Ladakh Buddhist Association's Nubra wing, expressed gratitude to the Lt. Governor and First Lady for their presence and highlighted the significance of the recent conferment of District Status to the Nubra Sub-Division.

Deputy Chairman Tsering Angchok and Executive Councillor Ghulam Mehdi shared their appreciation for the new district status, acknowledging the contributions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Lt. Governor Brig [Dr] BD Mishra, and other officials, including CEC Leh Advocate Tashi Gyalton and ex-Member of Parliament Jamyang Tsering

Namgyal.

The Lt. Governor congratulated the people of Nubra on this pivotal achievement, noting that the proposal for five new districts in Ladakh was a strategic decision aimed at enhancing administrative efficiency in remote areas. He announced the formation of a committee for boundary demarcation, with a report expected within 90 days.

Emphasizing the importance of tourism and infrastructure development in the region, the Lt. Governor assured that all files related to these initiatives are actively progressing. He reiterated his commitment to a corruption-free, delay-free Ladakh, focusing on advancements in health, education, and law enforcement.

The Lt. Governor revealed the approval of ap-

proximately ₹400 crore in projects aimed at ensuring a water supply for Leh and Kargil towns for the next 30 years, alongside the establishment of Water Treatment Plants in both towns to provide clean drinking water.

He announced the completion of recruitment rules for gazetted posts by October 3, which will be submitted to the UPSC, thereby creating more employment opportunities in the region. Additionally, he spoke about the implementation of the 'Lakpati DiDi Scheme,' a vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Finally, the Lt. Governor committed to addressing the wildlife area demarcation issue once proposals are submitted by the Hill Councils of Leh, which, despite repeated requests, have not yet been submitted.

Road safety awareness song launched by ADGP Ladakh during traffic police Darbar



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), UT Ladakh, Dr. SD Singh Jamwal (IPS), chaired a darbar on September 24 at the Traffic Police Office in Leh, where he interacted with officers and officials of the Traffic Po-

lice Ladakh and listened to their grievances.

During his address, ADGP Dr. Jamwal praised the dedication of the Traffic Police in performing their daily duties with commitment, despite the challenges

posed by Ladakh's harsh summers and extreme winters. He highlighted that the Traffic Police are the most visible face of the Ladakh Police, interacting with citizens daily. Dr. Jamwal emphasized that, in addition to enforcing traffic regulations and issuing challans, traffic officers should be the first responders on the road, offering assistance to those in need. He assured the officers that their concerns would be addressed as a priority.

As part of the event, Dr. Jamwal launched the Road

Safety Awareness Song and video, produced under his supervision with the theme "I Drive Safe," and "Meri Safety, Mere Haath Mein." He commended Superintendent of Police, Traffic Ladakh, Kacho Ishtyaq AA Khan (JKPS), for composing the lyrics and the song, and also praised Motup Chospa for his work on cinematography, editing, and directing the video.

The event was attended by key officials, including Altaf Ahmed Shah (IPS), Stanzin Nurbu (JKPS), AIG Personnel, Deepak

Digra (JKPS), SP Security, Farhan Jahanzeb Naqash (JKPS), Staff Officer to the ADGP, along with other officers and officials of the Traffic Police.

SP Traffic Ladakh briefed the attendees on the importance of using such songs to raise public awareness about road safety.

To conclude the event, the ADGP presented a memento to Motup Chospa for his contribution and distributed appreciation letters to officers and officials who had performed exceptionally in their duties.

Awareness programme on mediation for public representatives held in Leh



Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh addressing the gathering during the one-day awareness programme on mediation for public representatives.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A one-day awareness programme on mediation for public representatives, heads of NGOs, civil society members, educationists, panel lawyers, and PLVs was held on September 22 at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS), Choglamsar, Leh.

The event was organized by the Mediation and Conciliation Committee of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, in collaboration with the Ladakh Legal Services Authority.

Brig. (Rtd) Dr. B.D. Mishra, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, inaugurated the programme in the presence of Chief Justice (A) Tashi Rabstan of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, who also chairs the Mediation and Conciliation Committee. Chief Executive Councillor of LAHDC Leh, Advocate Tashi Gyalson; Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the LG; and ADGP Ladakh, Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, were among the key dignitaries. In his address, the LG highlighted Ladakh's long-standing tradition of mediation, where religious and village leaders historically resolved disputes amicably without court intervention. He expressed optimism that initiatives

led by the Chief Justice would help establish Ladakh as a litigation-free region, where disputes are resolved through mediation.

Chief Justice (A) Tashi Rabstan, in his special address, underscored the value of combining traditional Ladakhi dispute resolution methods with modern mediation techniques. He emphasized that this blend would benefit not only society at large but also the parties involved in disputes. The Chief Justice also acknowledged the expertise of the resource persons, Veena Ralli and Senior Advocate J.P. Singh, both internationally recognized mediators.

Justice Tashi encouraged participants to absorb the mediation techniques taught during the technical sessions, which were specifically designed for Ladakh's public representatives, as they play a crucial role in maintaining societal bonds in the region. He also stressed the importance of organizing similar programmes at the block level for broader community benefit.

CEC Tashi Gyalson expressed his gratitude to the Chief Justice for organizing the second media-

tion programme in Ladakh, noting that mediation helps restore community bonds through win-win outcomes while saving time and money for the parties involved.

Veena Ralli, Senior Advocate and Organizing Secretary of Samadhan Delhi, provided an overview of the mediation concept during the session.

Other key attendees included M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary to the Chief Justice; Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary of J&K Legal Services Authority; Stanzin Chospel, Executive Councillor of LAHDC Leh; Rajender Sapru, Coordinator of the Mediation and Conciliation Committee; Senior Advocate J.P. Singh; Spalzes Angmo, Member Secretary of Ladakh Legal Services Authority; Manoj Parihar, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Leh; and several other dignitaries and public representatives.

Also present were representatives from religious organizations, women's and youth groups, heads of NGOs, village nambardars, para-legal volunteers, and members of the District Court and DLSA Leh.

L-G discusses Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: To enhance tourism and outdoor activities in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) chaired a meeting to discuss Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024 at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat on September 23.

Secretary, Tourism, Vikram Singh Malik informed the LG about the adoption of the Ladakh Mountaineering Policy from the Sikkim Model and the placement of the Policy in the public domain following which feedback/objections from the public/stakeholders were incorporated and the final draft was prepared. He apprised the LG of the vision, mission and objectives of the Ladakh Mountaineering Policy,

to be maintained by MTO; emergencies and rescues during expeditions; risk mitigation measures; mandatory insurance for all; responsibilities of MTOs and grievance redressal mechanism, etc.

LG highlighted the need for MTOs to have one technically qualified guide with first aid/CPR certification and office space, even if it is in his/her residence. He asked Vikram Malik to reduce the validity of registration from five years to three to keep a check on the quality of MTOs.

LG highlighted the need to formulate a Sanitation and Safety Committee and specify its members, functions, periodicity and reporting pattern. He also highlighted the need to specify a ratio of the expedition team and supporting staff to keep a check on the safety and security of the expedition team.

He also informed about documents required for MTO registration, registration validity and fee, experience and certificates required by the lead guide and instructor; essential equipment required by MTO; mountaineering expedition permit and fee structure, the formation of Governing Committee; SOPs and operation instructions, docu-

mentation to be maintained by MTO; emergencies and rescues during expeditions; risk mitigation measures; mandatory insurance for all; responsibilities of MTOs and grievance redressal mechanism, etc.

LG highlighted the need for MTOs to have one technically qualified guide with first aid/CPR certification and office space, even if it is in his/her residence. He asked Vikram Malik to reduce the validity of registration from five years to three to keep a check on the quality of MTOs.

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He stated that the age limit of the climbers should be between 18 to 65 years while climbers below 18 years of age can seek age relaxation from the medical officer stationed at the base camp. He emphasised raising the insurance amounts of supporting staff and expedition team members.

Ladakh Bhawan in Chandigarh: Lt. Governor emphasizes utility and efficiency

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) B.D. Mishra (Retd), chaired a meeting on September 20 to discuss the proposed construction of Ladakh Bhawan in Chandigarh.

Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, informed the LG that the UT Administration had purchased approximately 13.7 kanal of land in Chandigarh for around ₹62 crores. The

proposed Ladakh Bhawan will feature approximately 30 rooms and is intended to benefit patients, students, and serve as a transitional space for the working class from Ladakh. He further noted that the Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation (SIDCO) was tasked with overseeing the project, following which a tender was floated and Pureways Infra Private Limited engaged as consultants to prepare

the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

Architect Ashwani provided an overview of the site and floor plans for the proposed Ladakh Bhawan through a PowerPoint presentation.

The LG emphasized the importance of utility in the design, suggesting the inclusion of dormitory facilities instead of individual rooms to maximize space utilization.

Ladakh's 10th UTLBC meeting highlights credit growth and push for green initiatives



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh, chaired the 10th meeting of the Union Territory Level Bankers Committee (UTLBC) of Ladakh for the quarter ending June 30, 2024.

The Assistant General Manager of State Bank of India and UTLBC Convener for UT Ladakh, Tsering Morup, presented a detailed report on the achievements of banks under various schemes up to June 2024. Banks disbursed Rs. 529.08 crore in Priority Sector advances, achieving 57% of the Annual Credit Target (ACT) of Rs. 925.06 crore. Overall, banks in UT Ladakh achieved 55% of the target by disbursing Rs. 1032.79 crore in both Priority and Non-Priority sector advances, against the Annual Credit Plan (ACP) of Rs. 1887.66 crore by the end of Q1 2024.

The Chairman was informed that total deposits as of June 30, 2024, stood at Rs. 9170.61 crore, reflecting a 9% year-on-year growth compared to Rs. 8411.47 crore in June 2023. Total credit grew by 12.89%, with Rs. 4403.37 crore in June 2024 compared to Rs. 3900.55 crore in June 2023. The overall Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio for UT Ladakh stood at 48.02% for the quarter ending June 2024.

Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal directed the concerned departments to initiate a Solar Rooftop Scheme drive in Ladakh, enabling residents to benefit from

the initiative and support Ladakh's journey towards becoming a Green Union Territory. He urged banks to actively sanction loans under this scheme.

Dr. Kotwal further emphasized the need to expand the coverage of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and called for regular reviews of the scheme. He also highlighted the importance of promoting Government of India schemes such as the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, which aims to support traditional craftspeople, ensuring full realization of its objectives.

Vijendra Pal Singh, Deputy General Manager of the Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India (CERSAI), presented on the implementation of Central Know Your Customer (CKYC) in banks. Dr. Kotwal appreciated CERSAI's efforts and directed all banks to implement CKYC efficiently, stressing the need to avoid duplicity in account holders to maintain accurate data.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar, Commissioner Secretary Padma Angmo, Commissioner Secretary Vasanthakumar Namasivayam, Administrative Secretary Vikram Singh Malik, Deputy Commissioner Leh Santosh Sukhadave, and senior officials from State Bank of India, Reserve Bank of India, NABARD, and other member banks and financial institutions.

NOTICE

An application has been received from Nurboo Tundup S/o Tsepel Angdu R/o Tangtse Durbuk, Leh, Ladakh owner of vehicle no. LA 02A 3929 for issuance of duplicate Registration Certificate of the above said vehicle in lieu of the lost documents. Now, it is therefore notified for the general public information that objection if any shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer ARTO within a period of 7 days from date of publication of this notice.

Expert Talk:

Women in Policy and Decision Making

Stanzin Padma



**Advocate
Thinles Angmo:**

We all recognize that the population of both genders is roughly equal everywhere, including in Ladakh. However, when it comes to decision-making, women's policies, platforms, and politics, women remain underrepresented. We understand the reasons for this disparity, and now is the time to unite and move forward together. Both women and men face various issues, but for women, these challenges are often more profound and sensitive.

It has been nearly 30 years since the formation of the LAHDC, yet, unfortunately, not a single woman has been elected as a representative. While women have been nominated, they have not been granted the full status as outlined in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Act of 1997. This lack of representation persists across all parties, which seem indifferent to the clear stipulations of the Act that mandates the government to nominate four seats, including representatives from principal communities, minorities, and women.

I believe that at least two of these seats should be allocated for women, but injustice continues to prevail. It is essential that we address this issue to ensure fair representation and empowerment of women in decision-making processes. In our historically male-dominated society, women once felt confused and fearful. However, women have come a long way. In politics, confidence is crucial, and when paired with knowledge, one can contribute greatly to society. Interestingly, even many men today lack confidence. Women, by nature, are often more reserved and soft-spoken, and without proper exposure or guidance, they may continue to lag behind.

In a male-dominated society, men face fewer obstacles, whereas women have to prove their competence before even being considered for opportunities. Women must often demonstrate that they are fit for a position before being given a chance.

Moreover, a woman's service to society is paramount. She must be genuinely interested in contributing to all areas of life. With passion and dedication, women can achieve anything.

I would like to share my own experience as an example. In 2009, I contested the MP election as under the guidance of Thupstan Chhewang. Many people dismissed me as a young girl with no experience, assuming I might only get around 10,000 votes. Despite these assumptions, I remained confident and determined to fight for Ladakh's Union Territory status. Winning or losing was secondary; I wanted to prove myself in front of leaders like Thupstan Chhewang. I had only 21 days to campaign, but to everyone's surprise, I garnered over 23,000 votes. The outcome shocked me and those around me. This experience taught me that women must stay focused and determined in whatever they pursue. Women should take their goals seriously and have sincere intentions. Politics is a noble field—it's about serving the people, not self-interest.

It is crucial to elect a well-trained woman leader, regardless of religion, and to hold proper elections for women leaders within their own communities. For example, this year we had an election for the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), whereas in the past, leaders were often selected simply based on confidence, without considering their interest or commitment. I strongly believe that serious elections should be held, similar to those conducted for parent bodies or youth organizations. Candidates must understand and respect bylaws, duties, and responsibilities. If a woman is serious about these aspects, she can represent her religious community with dedication. Being elected should not be taken lightly. Unfortunately, in today's political environment, women are often not given the same status as men, and politics is viewed as a "dirty game." In the past, during the time of Mahatma Gandhi and other great leaders, politics was seen as a noble way to serve society, but that perception has changed, which discourages women from participating. Many women hesitate

to enter politics because of this negative image and fear.

I completely disagree with the notion that women don't support one another. Just like any human, people may have personal likes or dislikes, but that doesn't mean women, as a group, are unsupportive of each other. In my experience, I've received support from every women's organization, and I don't feel that women are inherently against one another. Instead, I believe women stand by each other when it truly matters.

It is essential for women to come together, change this mindset, and truly understand the meaning of politics. Politics is not about winning and then sitting like kings, collecting a pension. Politics is about serving humanity, delivering justice, and protecting people's rights.

Ladakh is a small region, and we are behind in many areas compared to others. Therefore, it is important for young people—both boys and girls—to consider politics as a viable profession. Politics offers a good salary and, more importantly, an opportunity to serve society and guide others. Many youths today think there are no job opportunities, but politics can provide a platform for them to make a difference. If we can encourage the next generation to engage in politics with the right mindset, it will lead to a dynamic change in Ladakh.

By doing so, we can set an example for the entire nation and show what politics truly means.



Tsering Nordon, Women Program Lead Secmol:

I find the society of Ladakh quite ironic. On one hand, there is a widespread belief that women are equal to men and should be treated as such, with progress being made. Yet, there hasn't been a single woman in Ladakh's political landscape up to now. Historically, the only exception is Rani Parwati Devi, who served as an MP. If we look at the records of the LAHDC, there is no



International Day of Non-Violence 2 October

The International Day of Non-Violence is observed on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

The Day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

Introducing the resolution in the General Assembly on behalf of 140 co-sponsors, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr.

Anand Sharma said that the wide and diverse sponsorship of the resolution was a reflection of the universal respect for Mahatma Gandhi and of the enduring relevance of his philosophy. Quoting the late leader's own words, he said: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man".

Gandhi and the struggle for non-violence

The name of Mahatma Gandhi transcends the bounds of race, religion and nation-states, and has emerged as the prophetic voice of the twenty-first century. The world remembers Gandhi not just for his passionate

adherence to the practice of non-violence and supreme humanism, but as the benchmark against which we test men and women in public life, political ideas and government policies, and the hopes and wishes of our shared planet.

Courtesy: un.org



SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

The joy and fun of travelling



Travelling in the true sense is nothing but meditation. One travels to be with the realities of life, and also to be one with the beauty of the Earth, in its remote corners. And to listen to its incessant 'music and songs'

Most of us travel to relax, and to have some thrill of life. Travelling gives you a chance to discover what had escaped your attention. And there is never an end to satisfy your curiosity to explore what is not yet seen. Therefore, the fun and joy that

travelling give is of great importance to change your perspective of the world and life as such.

As Saint Augustine has put it so aptly, "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page".

That says it all. You are left as having an incomplete life if you don't travel, or stop travelling.

Travelling is of great importance because, as someone had said, that travelling is the most important and powerful way of self-healing. Yes, quite true. Nothing 'cures' you as much as travelling does. Nature has a way of making you forget your worries by making you appreciate its beauty and be happy like the flowering, smiling and dancing plants and animals of the Earth.

Travelling has the power to open one's heart and mind to the vast reserve of knowledge our Earth holds. You keep on exploring the new, no, the newest, and yet you will have a chance to get a new newest of the new the next time. That is because Nature keeps on refreshing itself, and, after some time it presents a new self! That is why we say that nature never tires of keeping itself fully updated and renewed to the full so that it shines all the time and all the more!

My recent journey to some of the heavenly places presented somewhat such pleasures of the heart and the mind. One never feels quenched of the thirst of the sublime beauty of the unknown beauties of the unknown places that our Earth has in plenty. Mother Nature loves you, and that is why you feel as if you were in the lap of beauty and happiness.

Courtesy: WongWorld

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

DID YOU KNOW

1. Baby rabbits are called kits.
2. The unicorn is the national animal of Scotland. It was apparently chosen because of its connection with dominance and chivalry as well as purity and innocence in Celtic mythology.
3. The first aeroplane flew on December 17, 1903. Wilbur and Orville Wright made four brief flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, with their first powered aircraft, aka the first airplane.
4. Venus is the only planet to spin clockwise. It travels around the sun once every 225 Earth days but it rotates clockwise once every 243 days.
5. Nutmeg is a hallucinogen. The spice contains Myristicin, a natural compound that has mind-altering effects if ingested in large doses.
6. A 73-year-old bottle of French Burgundy became the most expensive bottle of wine ever sold at auction in 2018, going for \$558,000 (approx £439,300).
7. A chef's hat has 100 pleats. Apparently, it is meant to represent the 100 ways you can cook an egg.
8. The Spanish national anthem has no words. The 'Marcha Real' is one of only four national anthems in the world (along with those of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and San Marino) to have no official lyrics.
9. The Japanese word 'Kuchi zamishi' is the act of eating when you are not hungry because your mouth is lonely.
10. The probability of a blue lobster existing is widely touted as being one in two million. Bright blue lobsters are so-coloured because of a genetic abnormality that causes them to produce more of a certain protein than others.
11. There's only one letter that doesn't appear in any American state name. There's a Z in Arizona and an X in Texas, but no Q in any of them.

Courtesy: cosmopolitan.com

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Tsering Wangdu, President, All Ladakh Gonpa Association

Q. Tell us about yourself.

Jullay! I am Tsering Wangdu, and I hail from Khampa Soma in Matho Village. Born in 1971, I am the middle child among seven siblings. I attended the local government school for my first two grades but had to leave due to financial difficulties, which necessitated my work as a sheep herder.

At the age of 11, I chose to become a monk, offering my hair to His Eminence Luding Khen Rinpoche as part of the initiation ritual. I later lived and studied with my maternal uncle, who was also a monk, in his Tashak (rooms for monks) at the monastery.

After spending two years at the Gompa, I had the opportunity to pursue further studies at Magon Gompa in Dehradun at the age of 13. At that time, monasteries in Ladakh did not provide adequate educational facilities for monks. I spent seven years in Dehradun, completing my studies. Taking the Getsul ordination is essential for a monk in Buddhism, and it involves keeping vows similar to those of fully ordained monks.

After fulfilling my academic and spiritual commitments, I returned to Ladakh and became a part of Matho Monastery.

Q. How did you acquire the position of President in the All Ladakh Gonpa Association?

The All Ladakh Gonpa Association was founded in 1949 by Padma Bhushan, His Eminence Bakula Rinpoche, with the aim of restoring the precious teachings of the Nyingma, Kagyud, Sakya, and Gelug schools, which had been lost and deteriorated over time. Monks from various monasteries convened and unanimously recognized the need for such an association. H.E. Bakula Rinpoche was elected as its first president, a position he held for 42 years, along with ten members representing the ten largest monasteries.

Subsequently, the presidency was passed on to various Rinpoche and heads of monasteries. Matho Monastery was eligible for the presidency, and Gen Stanzin Wangtak of Matho Monastery served as president for three-year tenure. Unfortunately, he had to resign before completing his term due to illness, and I was appointed as his replacement to continue and complete the remaining tenure.

The All Ladakh Gonpa Association (LGA) consists of 16 monasteries along with additional appointed members. The association serves several vital functions:

Interviewed by Nenzes Chodon



MESSAGE TO THE READERS

“While Bhoti Day highlights the significance of our language, one day isn't enough to celebrate it. Our language and script are vital to our identity. I urge the youth to use Bhoti script instead of writing in English, as it helps improve grammar and clarity over time.

As followers of Buddha, let's practice compassion, kindness, and peace, while also avoiding drugs and alcohol to focus on the teachings of Buddhism.”

1. Unity among Monks: LGA fosters unity among the monks of the 16 monasteries and across all four schools of Buddhism: Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug.

2. Promotion of Modern Education: Recognizing the importance of modern education, the LGA plays a crucial role in promoting educational initiatives for monks and nuns residing in various monasteries throughout Ladakh.

3. Maintenance of Responsibilities: The association ensures that the duties and responsibilities within monasteries are upheld, maintaining their integrity and traditions.

4. Social Welfare and Cultural Preservation: LGA is committed to eliminating social evils within the community while preserving and promoting our Rigjung, scripture, and language.

Q. What is the status of Gonpas (monasteries) in Ladakh?

Compared to earlier times, monasteries in Ladakh have seen significant development, particularly in terms of infrastructure. Many monasteries are now well-preserved, with modern facilities integrated where necessary, and several have undergone reconstruction or repairs.

However, a concerning trend is the decline in the admission of young monks across most monasteries. If this trend continues, it may eventually impact the overall population of Buddhist monks in the region.

Q. As you mentioned the declining population of monks in monasteries, how can this be prevented, considering that monks are a crucial part of Buddhism?

To prevent the decline in the monk population, one important step is to reconsider birth control practices, as a larger population can help sustain the tradition of monasticism.

Additionally, Gonpa schools, which are branches of the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, are established in many parts of Ladakh, but they lack the same level of facilities, teachers, and infrastructure as government schools in the villages. Improving these schools is essential for attracting and educating new generations of monks.

Parents also need to consider the importance of monks in the Buddhist community. Monks play a vital role in preserving and spreading the teachings of Buddha, while also offering spiritual guidance to followers. Supporting monastic education and encouraging more youth to join monasteries can help ensure the future of Buddhism in Ladakh.

...continues on page 6

Fortnight Highlights



The ceremonial foundation stone for the Ven. Lama Lobzang Memorial Park was laid by Chairman/CEC, LAHDC, Adv. Tashi Gyalson. The Ven. Lama Lobzang Memorial Park aims to honor the legacy of Ven. Lama Lobzang and will serve as a place of reflection and community gathering.



The NSS volunteers of EJM College Leh, started the Swachhta Abhiyan 2024 by cleaning the area around Sindhu Ghat. 35 students and 3 NSS staff members participated in the cleanliness drive.



Medical Health checkup for workers of Tsangda project was conducted under the 'Swachhta hi Seva' campaign at SRMC Choglamsar Leh by Block Development Office/ RDD Leh.



Rural Development Department Khaltse, conducted sanitation drive around the river, stream and ponds of Panchayat Halqa Kanji at Khaltse block, under the banner of "Swachhata Hi Seva" Campaign.



Justice Tashi Rabstan officially sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh High Court during a ceremony held on September 27. The oath was administered by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, with the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brig. (Dr.) B.D. Mishra, and First Lady Neelam Mishra in attendance.



Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED), under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, in collaboration with District Administration organized a Tribal Artisan Empanelment Mela (TAeM) at Handloom Department, Kargil.



A day long cleanliness drive was conducted at Agling Spituk under the banner of "Swachhta hi Seva" campaign. Officials of BDO Leh took part in the programme.



The Department of Social and Tribal Welfare organized a training session on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace for the faculty and students of Government Degree College Kargil.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with
Tsering Wangdu, President, All Ladakh Gonpa Association

...Continuity of page 5

Q. In the past, some monasteries have unfortunately been robbed. Can you tell us about these incidents and what actions the administration has taken to ensure the safety of precious religious items in monasteries?

You are correct; unfortunately, about a month ago, there was a theft in the prayer hall and a few small Lhakhangs (houses of gods) at one of the monasteries. Additionally, one of the 16 major monasteries in the region was robbed in the past. In response to these incidents, the Ladakh Police issued an order to install CCTV cameras in monasteries to deter theft. However, even with these precautions, Matho Gonpa was robbed between 1 and 2 a.m. The four thieves were able to evade identification in the CCTV footage, as their faces and hands were fully covered. It was observed that the thieves primarily targeted silver items. Following these events, the heads of all the larger monasteries convened to discuss the issue and appealed to the UT administration to enhance security measures in the monasteries. Monasteries house valuables that are not only spiritually significant but also have substantial monetary value, including antique statues worth crores.

In response to these concerns, the CEC of LAHDC, Leh, has provided additional CCTV cameras and solar-powered streetlights. He has also assured us that he will consider our request for security guards to further enhance the safety of these important religious sites.

Q. What is the function of Gonpa schools and what is the role of the Gonpa Association in setting up these schools?

In the 1950s, due to the unfavorable situation in Tibet after its occupation by China, it became difficult for monks to go there for their studies. The 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche met with then Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to appeal for the establishment of an institution for monks to continue their education. Prime Minister Nehru suggested that the community start it themselves, and the government would consider supporting it later.

The initiative began with a Gonpa school on a small piece of land belonging to Hemis Gonpa at Chutey Rantak. Later, in 1959, this effort evolved into the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS), which is now a deemed university under the Ministry of Culture. This institution is a testament to the dedication and struggle of the monks who worked hard to secure a proper education for future generations.

Gonpa schools, which are branches of CIBS, number around 50 across Ladakh. It was agreed that CIBS would provide teachers and books for these schools, which are spread across various regions. Scholarships were also introduced to support students financially.

However, Gonpa schools still lag behind government schools in terms of adequate teaching staff and facilities, which is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Q. What difficulties do monks, nuns, and monasteries face in Ladakh?

The government does provide essential facilities for monks and nuns in monasteries, and compared to many years ago, monasteries are now more advanced with modern amenities. However, challenges remain. One of the primary concerns is the protection of the "Four Jungwa," the four elements of nature—earth, water, fire, and air—which need to be safeguarded from the pollution caused by human activity. The environmental degradation threatens not just our ecosystem but also the spiritual sanctity of our surroundings.

Additionally, when monks and nuns grow old, they face the difficulty of having no children to care for them. Despite dedicating their entire lives to the service of the monastery, they often have to rely on distant relatives for support in their later years, which can be a struggle. This issue was brought up during the first-ever Sangha Council held at Zen Ladakh, attended by rinpoches, venerable monks, and experts. It was a key point of discussion, and we hope for positive steps to address these challenges in the future.

Q. What are your plans for the future as President of the All Ladakh Gonpa Association?

The Dharma Centre in Choglamsar, which once was just a pile of rocks, has significantly transformed. Over the past two years, it has become the gathering place for monks and nuns during Monlam Chenmo (the Great Prayer). The area now includes large and small prayer halls, proper parking space, a garden, and an old-age home for monks and nuns in one corner. We've requested the administration to repair the old-age home building to ensure it can provide the necessary support, including meals, for those in need.

Looking ahead, we plan to organize workshops and training sessions every one or two months for monks and nuns. These will focus on scripture and language studies, as well as traditional practices such as painting, the formation of skilkhor (the Wheel of Life), mandalas, and other important aspects of Buddhist art and teachings.

14 CORPS OP SIGNAL REGT TENDER NOTICE FOR WET CANTEEN IN UNIT AREA

14 Corps Operating Signal Regiment is hereby inviting Quotation/ bids for allotment of Wet Canteen in unit area wef 01 Oct 2024. Priority will be given to Ex-Serviceman and War Widows. Detailed terms and conditions and queries (if any) can be clarified from the mobile number 9462935629. before submission of Tender/ Bids.

Terms and conditions are as enumerated below:

Wet Canteen will offer sale of following items:

1. Snacks (e.g. omelette, Samosa etc.) & Beverages (Only soft drinks).
2. Stationary, Magazines, Confectionary, Grocery, Vegetable and Fruits.
3. Hosiery, Army Dress items and Cloth.

In case of Ex-serviceman, photocopy of following documents (self-attested) are required to be submitted alongwith Quotation/Bids:

- (a) Discharge Book.
- (b) Pension Payment Order (PPO)
- (c) ESM Identity Card.
- (d) PAN Card & Aadhar Card.
- (e) Experience Certificate (If any).

In case of Civilians, photocopy of following documents (self-attested) are required to be submitted alongwith Quotation/Bids:

- (a) PAN Card & Aadhar Card.
- (b) Residential Certificate.
- (c) TAN Registration Certificate.
- (d) Police Verification Certificate.

Account Officer

Horticulture department organises annual exhibition at Batalik



Annual exhibition for 2024-2025 at Batalik village, showcasing an impressive 377 varieties of fruits.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Horticulture Department of Kargil concluded its annual exhibition for 2024-2025 at Batalik village on September 25, showcasing an impressive 377 varieties of fruits that underscore the region's rich horticultural diversity.

Director of Horticulture Ladakh, Tsewang Phunchok, along with other officials, inspected the various fruit displays presented by local growers. He noted that the exhibition serves as a model for other farmers, encouraging them to adopt similar practices to enhance the quality of their fruits.

Phunchok emphasized that horticultural practices should evolve with changing trends and demands. He urged fruit growers to stay informed about advancements in processing, packaging, and marketing to improve their economic outcomes.

The Director highlighted that the exhibition provides an invaluable opportunity for fruit growers to exchange knowledge and urged farmers to collaborate with the department to benefit from its various schemes. He assured them of full support in cultivating high-quality fruits.

Dr. Mansoor Hussain, a scientist at KVK Kargil, advocated for the use of organic and vermicompost fertilizers for healthy cultivation and environmental conservation. He stressed the importance of organic and natural farming while promoting the integration of modern technology and methods.

Chief Horticulture Officer Mohd Zaffar urged farmers to effectively utilize government schemes and coordinate with the department to maximize the benefits of welfare initiatives. He spoke about the many varieties displayed at the exhibition, including apricots, apples, peaches, and pears, and expressed gratitude to the 21-Garhwal for their support in organizing the event.

Subject Matter Specialist Kunzang Wangmo provided detailed information on various departmental schemes available for fruit growers. Commanding Officer A.K. Maletha of the 21-Garhwal also addressed the audience, expressing

his satisfaction with the event held in the area.

Officials reported that the exhibition attracted 105 fruit growers, comprising 54 males and 51 females. The displayed varieties included 34 types of fresh apples, 16 varieties of late apricots, 76 types of fresh peaches, 6 varieties of fresh pears, 28 kinds of fresh grapes, and assorted dry fruits.

The department also showcased various horticulture-related machines and tool kits, educating farmers about their usage and benefits. An expert committee evaluated the exhibition and awarded prizes to top growers in different categories. The Director and other dignitaries presented these awards to the winners of the locally grown fruits during the annual event.

The event was attended by Commanding Officer A.K. Maletha, Chief Horticulture Officer Mohd Zaffar, Subject Matter Specialist Kunzang Wangmo, Scientist Dr. Mansoor Hussain, farmers, and other officials.

A new era in learning: Ladakh inaugurates first PM eVIDYA academic film studio



Shweta Parakh, Founder & Director of Purple People Labs, leading the tour of the acoustically designed studio to the guests.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh's first PM eVIDYA Academic Film Studio was officially inaugurated at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh on September 21, marking a transformative moment for the region's educational landscape.

The launch of this studio promises to enhance learning experiences and promote innovative teaching methods. It represents a major advancement in educational resources, empowering both educators and students and ushering in a new era of creativity in Ladakh.

Chairman/CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalsong served as the chief guest, with Dy. Chairman Tsering Angchuk as the guest of honor. Other notable attendees included filmmaker and producer Jitendra Mishra, wellness mentor Larra Shah, Director of School Education Ladakh Tsering Paldan, along with Principals, Headmasters, ZEOs, and students from various schools.

Shweta Parakh, Founder & Director of Purple

People Labs, led the tour of the acoustically designed studio, offering insights into its layout and sharing her vision for upcoming expert talk shows.

The PM eVIDYA initiative, spearheaded by the Ministry of Education, India, aims to provide free, high-quality educational content to 250 million schoolchildren nationwide. With more than 200 dedicated DTH channels, the program ensures that even the most remote areas have access to grade-specific learning resources. Five channels have been allocated to Ladakh, facilitating the creation of educational content tailored to the region's unique needs and languages.

Dy. Chairman Tsering Angchuk emphasized the significance of the studio for the local community, stating, "This studio is not merely a facility; it is a platform that empowers students to harness their creativity and showcase their talents. We are committed to amplifying local voices and ensuring that education

meets the unique needs of our region." His remarks highlighted the studio's role in enabling students to explore filmmaking and storytelling as powerful educational tools.

CEC Tashi Gyalsong expressed gratitude to the team behind the establishment of the studio and thanked Jitendra Mishra and Larra Shah for their presence and inspiration. He noted that the completion of the studio marks a substantial achievement for the PM eVIDYA initiative and the allocation of five channels to Ladakh. Gyalsong underscored that the studio will serve as a vital platform for students to share their stories and showcase their talents, providing a space where young voices can be heard and appreciated.

Gyalsong further highlighted the opportunities that have emerged since Ladakh became a Union Territory, seeing the studio as part of a new era of growth and development in the region.

He conveyed optimism for the future, believing that initiatives like this will greatly benefit Ladakh's students and communities. Jitendra Mishra expressed

his excitement about connecting with the community, outlining future projects aimed at enhancing creativity and collaboration. He emphasized his commitment to fostering innovation and the positive impact these initiatives will have on both local talent and the industry.

Larra Shah shared her insights on the importance of storytelling in education, stating, "Empowering children to share their own stories is crucial for fostering confidence and creativity. This initiative will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on our students and their communities. By allowing them to express themselves through film, we are opening doors to new opportunities." Over the next 18 months, Purple People Labs will collaborate with newly trained teachers and students to co-produce curriculum-based content. Eventually, full operations will transition to the local team under the guidance of the LAHDC.

This inauguration is not only a significant milestone for Ladakh but also aligns with the broader mission of PM eVIDYA to blend education with entertainment. By empowering local voices and fostering storytelling, the project aims to create a richer, more inclusive educational environment where every child has access to high-quality learning experiences.

The PM eVIDYA Academic Film Studio offers hope and opportunity for Ladakh's students, enabling them to engage with their education in creative and innovative ways. This landmark initiative is poised to contribute to a brighter future for the region, ensuring that every child can realize their full potential through the power of education.

NOTICE

An application has been received from one Stanzin Norphel S/o Sonam Jorgais R/o Pinchimik Nubra UT Ladakh to transfer the vehicle No. LA 02 0222 owned by Asgar Ali S/o Haji Ghulam Abass R/o Taqi Rambirpur Thiksey, 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/ UTL/2024-25/377-78
Date: 25-09-24

Asstt. Regional Transport Officer
Leh Ladakh

Fortnightly News

...Continuity of page 5 Expert Talk: Women in Policy and Decision Making

record of elected female representatives, which is shameful for our society, as women have not been given the chance to participate. There are women who are interested in entering politics and who could potentially perform far better than men. Many women still believe that politics is a space reserved for men and that they cannot enter it. While 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha has recently been passed—though it took a long time—this is a positive step forward for India. Women's reservation is a welcome step, but there is much more that needs to be addressed.

Specifically, if we look at the structure of political parties, we see that key positions like president, vice president, and general secretary are mostly held by men, while women are relegated to separate "women's wings" that are often dormant and overshadowed by the larger party structures. It is disheartening to see that no political party includes policies for women in their election manifestos. During the last LAHDC election, I expected a push for women's reservation, but it wasn't there. The entire society is to blame for this, as they continue to view the situation as it always has been. It's crucial that we change the internal structures of political parties to give women an equal chance to rise to leadership roles. Women in our society need a push. While there has historically been a gap between men and women, it is time to close that gap for good.

Women need to be trained on how to speak confidently in public, communicate their ideas, and connect with the community.

As my ancestors used to tell me, in earlier times, during village gatherings, children and mothers were not invited—only fathers attended, which meant men had more exposure and knew how to speak effectively. Due to the lack of such experiences, women often remain at a disadvantage. Another reason women may lose is the inability to connect with people on a personal level, often due to societal or personal reasons. Another issue is the perception that politics is only for men. They've only seen men as CECs, ECs, and Councillors, so they lack visible female role models in politics, despite many women having contributed to Ladakh's history—though their contributions are often overshadowed.

Another challenge arises when women marry and become mothers, as they are burdened with household responsibilities. They feel torn between managing home life and pursuing a political career, and societal expectations.

There should be policies framed by leaders to address this, but unfortunately, most leadership roles are held by men. Framing policies without women's involvement is bound to fail. For instance, if you're spreading awareness about menstruation in villages, how can you do so effectively without understanding how a woman's body functions? The same applies to issues like maternity, postpartum health, women's rights, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. I've never seen any significant policies or historical laws on these matters. There needs to be at least one woman in the room when such decisions are being made.

To address these barriers, financial support should be provided to women candidates, including assistance with pamphlets, campaigns, and training sessions. Every profession offers some form of training, yet politics, a vast and complex field, often lacks structured training programs. There should be initiatives to lead and mentor these women.

We run a women's leadership program at SECMOL, where for the past three to four years, we've been training college girls who are passionate about politics and eager to develop leadership skills. Many girls show great interest in joining politics, but they encounter several barriers, with financial constraints being the most significant. They often worry about how to fund campaigns, which discourages them from taking the plunge.

I believe we can start making breakthroughs with the younger generation, as today's youth are more open-minded. If we begin training them now, in ten years, we could see women leading the Hill Council. Grooming and mentorship sessions are essential, and SECMOL is already working on building confidence, leadership qualities, and self-awareness in women.

We should also seek mentorship from veteran leaders to groom women for political roles. Pairing them with experienced leaders as mentors would help them gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

From my experience over the past few years, I've met many women who are interested in politics but haven't had the opportunity, platform, or support to take that step forward. By providing the right tools and opportunities, we can break this mentality, and with time, women will emerge as honest and capable leaders.



Paragliding trial in Suru Valley.

Suru valley set to become adventure tourism hub after successful paragliding trial

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Deputy Commissioner/CEO, LAHDC Kargil, Shrikant Balasahab Suse, along with Councilor Parkachik and Assistant Director Tourism, Rehmatullah Bhat, observed the successful paragliding trial in Suru Valley on September 26.

The much-anticipated paragliding activity in Suru Valley took a significant step forward with the successful trial run. This marks a major milestone for the valley, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, as it is poised to become a hub for adventure tourism.

The paragliding flights, conducted under professional supervision, were closely monitored to ensure safety and overall preparedness at the site.

Councilor Parkachik expressed excitement, noting that this development

will attract both adventure enthusiasts and tourists, boost local businesses, and showcase the valley's natural beauty to the world.

Deputy Commissioner Suse and AD Tourism Bhat echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the

importance of maintaining high safety and quality standards. "We are fully committed to ensuring that all aspects of this project meet the highest standards in terms of both safety and the visitor experience," the DC said, adding that today's trial is a promising sign of future success.

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File No. Auction/CAZRI-RRSLeh

Date : 27.09.2024

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UT-level science exhibition 2024 showcases Ladakhi students' innovations



Participants of the UT-Level Science Exhibition.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The School Education Department, UT Ladakh successfully organized the UT-Level Science Exhibition under the prestigious Rashtriya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani 2024. Aimed at fostering scientific curiosity and innovation among school students, the event saw enthusiastic participation from young minds across the region. The exhibition was divided into two categories: Senior (Classes 9-12) and Junior (Classes 6-8), showcasing the ingenuity and scientific aptitude of students from various government schools.

Students presented a wide range of innovative projects addressing global and regional challenges. Key themes included Lifestyle for Environment, Sustainable Agriculture, Computational Thinking, Communication

and Transportation, and Health. Each project demonstrated students' ability to merge creativity with scientific knowledge, offering practical solutions and technological innovations for real-world problems. The interactive displays captivated attendees, highlighting the potential of these young innovators to contribute meaningfully to the scientific community.

Deputy Chairman of LAHDC, Leh, Tsering Angchuk praised the students' passion and commitment. He remarked, "It is incredibly encouraging to witness our

students deeply engaged in scientific exploration. Initiatives like this nurture a culture of innovation and critical thinking among the youth. The level of participation and the quality of the projects on display are truly impressive."

Principal Secretary of School Education UT Ladakh, Sanjeev Khirwar (IAS) congratulated the students for their hard work and innovation, commending the winners and encouraging all participants to continue pursuing excellence. He noted, "The creativity and ingenuity on display today are a testament to the bright future of science and technology in Ladakh." He urged participants to aim even higher as they prepare for the upcoming national-level exhibition.

The exhibition concluded with a prize distribution ceremony recognizing outstanding projects for their innovation and scientific rigor. The winning teams will advance to the national-level competition, representing UT Ladakh on a larger platform.

Principal of DIET Leh, Deldan Angmo, expressed her gratitude to the organizers, participants, and attendees for making the event a resounding success. She reiterated the critical role such initiatives play in fostering scientific inquiry and reaffirmed DIET Leh's commitment to supporting educational excellence.

Overland Escape hosts 10-day familiarization trip



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Overland Escape, one of Ladakh's most reputed travel companies, hosted its second Familiarization (FAM) and Educational trip of the year from September 15 to 24. This 10-day journey showcased Ladakh's stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage to travel agents from across India, offering them an immersive experience to better understand the unique offerings of this enchanting region.

Celebrating 25 years in the travel industry, Overland Escape curated a detailed itinerary that covered some of Ladakh's most iconic and lesser-known destinations. Key highlights of the program included, Leh, Ule and Aryan Valley, Kargil & Drass, Lamayuru, Nubra Valley, Turtuk & Thang and Pangong Lake.

In addition to sightseeing, the trip featured cultural performances designed to showcase Ladakh's vibrant traditions, including an Aryan Valley cultural program, the Shina program in Drass, and a unique polo match paired with a cultural program in Chushot.

The agents experienced Ladakh's rugged beauty

while gaining in-depth knowledge to better promote the destination to their clients. Overland Escape's meticulous planning, which included both popular and off-the-beaten-path destinations, ensured a well-rounded experience of Ladakh.

As Ladakh continues to rise in popularity as a travel destination, educational trips like these provide essential firsthand knowledge for industry professionals, empowering them to offer clients authentic and customized itineraries.

The trip was supported by several local businesses, including Mountain Vibes Ladakh, The Grand Dragon, Zen Ladakh, Sia Residency, Tsokar Retreat Hotel, Gawaling Ladakh, Dolkher Resort, Pangong Hotel, Lotus Hotel, Ule Ethnic Resort, Apple Orchard Ule, The Kargil, Kaiser Palace, Hotel Hevan Kargil, Chhuttuk Heights, Highland Mountain Resort, D'meadows Drass, Stone Hedge, The Dunes, The Creek Deskit, La Shayok, Onpo Hotel, Ldumra Oasis, Pangong Retreat, Gongma Residency, Tresma Restaurant Thiksey, Aryan Valley Camp, and Aryan Residency.

10th meeting of Ladakh's State Wildlife Board focuses on preservation and awareness



During the 10th Meeting of the State Board for Wildlife at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) B.D. Mishra (Retd), chaired the 10th Meeting of the State Board for Wildlife at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat on September 20.

During the meeting, the LG requested wildlife expert Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, IAS (Retd), to assist the UT Administration with three key tasks: profiling wildlife in Ladakh, drafting a comprehensive wildlife policy, and implementing preservation strategies through the appointment of Army officials as honorary wildlife wardens. He emphasized the importance of raising public awareness about wildlife preservation and the urgent need to combat poaching and trafficking.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Brij Mohan Sharma, IFS, presented the meeting's agenda, which included the confirmation of minutes from the 9th meeting, verification of impact and safety zones for the Mandal Thang Field Firing Range in the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary, and the reporting of a newly spotted species of bear—the Tibetan Brown Bear/Tibetan Blue Bear—in the High Altitude Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary. This sighting was verified by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and published in the journal Oryx. Other agenda points included population surveys of Tibetan Gazelles, the notification of the State Tree (Shukpa) and State Flower (Tser-sNon), compensation for man-animal conflicts, and a training

workshop for Army/ITBP officials.

The LG approved all agenda points, stressing the need to protect the Tibetan Blue Bear by including it in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. He termed the killing of wildlife a cognizable offense and assured the Board that he would communicate this to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 14 Corps.

Additionally, the LG released posters and pamphlets titled "The Big Seven of Ladakh," which feature the Brown Bear ('Denmo'), the State Bird (Black-Necked Crane), the State Plant (Shukpa), the State Animal (Snow Leopard), and the State Flower (Tser-sNon) to raise awareness among school students about Ladakh's rich biodiversity. He emphasized the importance of publicizing these materials to instill pride in Ladakh's natural heritage for future generations.

Wildlife expert Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh highlighted the Army's crucial role in wildlife preservation and the threat posed by feral dogs to Ladakh's wildlife, advocating for population control measures.

Key attendees included Member of Parliament Mohamad Haneefa Jan, Deputy Chairman of LAHDC Leh Tsering Angchuk, Advisor to the LG Dr. Pawan Kotwal, ADGP Ladakh Police Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, and various other government officials and wildlife experts, both in-person and virtually.

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