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JANUARY 16-31, 2025

# REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



## In Conversation with

Tamchos Gurmet, Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety Ladakh

## Expert Talk:

Linguistic Divide in Ladakh: Bhoti or Ladakhi?

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## 9th Annual Hemis Winter Festival promotes peace, unity, and social awareness



Stanzin Dasal

**HEMIS:** The 9th edition of the Annual Hemis Winter Festival began on January 12 at Hemis Monastery, led by His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche. The five-day-long festival led by His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche attracted thousands of devotees at the monastery.

The festival was initiated under the guidance of His Holiness Drukpa Rinpoche and is held every year to honor the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of Ladakh. This year's celebration holds special significance with a focus on the recitation of the "Ami Dewa Sri" mantra and prayer, for the purpose of world peace and harmony.

His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche highlighted that the festival is not just a spiritual event but also a platform for addressing important social concerns. While the primary

aim is spiritual development, the event serves as a call to action for raising awareness about various social issues. Topics such as environmental sustainability, the importance of moral education, the fostering of unity, and the promotion of peace and harmony were discussed during the event. His Eminence emphasized that it is essential to strike a balance between the spiritual and social needs of the community, aiming to bring about positive and meaningful change in the lives of the people.

His Eminence called on people to practice selflessness as a means to achieve mental peace and spiritual growth. He emphasized that true spiritual development arises from inner transformation, and it is through positive changes within oneself that individuals can contribute to the greater good of society.

During his address with media, His Eminence expressed deep concern about the challenges that modern society faces, particularly the erosion of patience and understanding. He stated, "In today's fast-paced world, we are witnessing a breakdown in patience. This is not just a challenge in Ladakh but a universal concern. With the rapid pace of modernization, life has become more complicated, and people, especially the youth, are struggling to keep up with these changes. There is a growing gap between the expectations of parents and the experiences of the youth, which often leads to stress and anxiety." He continued by stressing the importance of understanding and communication between the generations, urging people to come together and address these issues with

...continues on page 2

## Chadar Trek 2025 kicks off: First batch of 30 adventurers embark on the frozen journey



Additional Deputy Commissioner Ghulam Mohammad, flagging off the first batch of Chadar Trek 2025.

Stanzin Padma

**LEH:** Marking the beginning of an exhilarating journey, the Chadar Trek 2025 flagged off its first batch of 30 adventurous trekkers on January 13, setting off on the frozen Zaskar River.

The event was graced by Additional Deputy Commissioner Ghulam Mohammad, who officially flagged off the expedition.

The Chadar Trek is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and challenging terrain. Trekkers will navigate through frozen waterfalls, ice caves, and scenic villages in temperatures dipping below -20°C.

Ghulam Mohammad, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Leh, said, "The UT administration, along with LAHDC and the district administration, has flagged off the first batch of the Chadar Trek 2025. Following last year's unsuccessful ice formation, our team took extra precautions this year. A

committee was formed by the district administration, which conducted two surveillance missions to check the ice conditions, ensuring a safe and successful expedition for all participants. Furthermore, the UT administration, LAHDC, and the district administration have worked tirelessly to promote winter tourism and make Ladakh a winter hub for tourists. The Chadar Trek has been operating for many years, and we have shared SOPs with all relevant agencies, including ALTOA, HDRF, and district police. We have held meetings to discuss safety measures and ensure a successful trek."

The AD Tourism Leh emphasized that various stakeholders, including LAHDC, the district administration, the tourism department, and LMG, share the trek responsibility. "We first constituted a committee to check the ice formation along the Chadar route to ensure there were

no safety issues. Once we confirmed that the ice had formed successfully, we were able to proceed with the trek. Medical check-ups were also carried out, and UT DRF issued an advisory with important guidelines to avoid any unwanted incidents," said AD Tourism Leh.

"Everything has been arranged to ensure the trekkers have an enjoyable and adventurous experience. We are committed to ensuring that the trek remains safe and successful. Additionally, environmental precautions have been put in place. All agencies have been urged to remind trekkers to collect their waste and dispose of it responsibly at the rural department shed in Nimmo, where it will be sold at a minimal rate for proper disposal."

The trek will begin at 11:00 am each day and conclude around 4:00 pm. The expedition will last for 40 days.

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## Fortnightly News

### 9th Annual Hemis Winter Festival promotes peace, unity, and social awareness

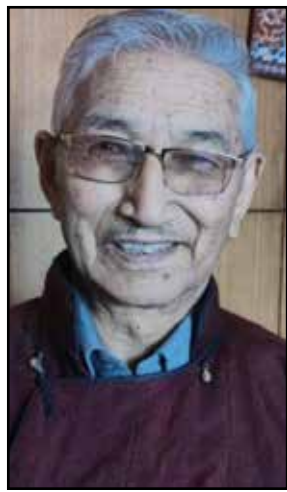
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empathy and guidance. He emphasized the need to break down the barriers of misunderstanding and work towards fostering a more compassionate society, especially among the youth who are most affected by these social dynamics.

The Hemis Winter Festival thus serves not only as

a spiritual gathering but as a reminder of the broader social issues that need attention. Through prayer, reflection, and shared learning, the festival aims to inspire participants to bring about positive changes both in their own lives and within the community at large.

### Ladakh bids farewell to Professor Dr. Jamyang Gyalton



Deskrit Angmo

**CHOGLAMSAR:** Dr. Jamyang Gyalton, a prominent author, State Award recipient in literature, and esteemed professor, passed away on January 4. His funeral was held on January 9 at his residence in Choglamsar, Leh. Family members, friends, students, and monks gathered to pay their respects to the late scholar. Executive Councilor Tashi Namgyal Yakzee and other renowned figures from the community were also in attendance.

One of his former students, visibly moved by the loss, shared, "Dr. Jamyang Gyalton was more than just a teacher; he was a guiding light for many of us. His wisdom and compassion extended beyond the classroom. He was a parent figure to us, and we are here to honor his memory and offer our condolences to his family."

Dr. Gyalton made significant contributions to the study of social issues and the history of Ladakh. He served as a professor of Bhoti Language and Lit-

erature at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS) in Choglamsar, Leh. His legacy will continue to inspire and influence future generations through his teachings and the values he imparted.

On January 4, a condolence prayer was also held in the Conference Hall of the Council Secretariat, LAHDC Leh, to honor the memory of the late Prof. (Dr.) Jamyang Gyalton.

Deputy Chairman Tsering Angchuk emphasized the profound influence of Prof. Gyalton's work on Ladakh's intellectual and cultural heritage. He acknowledged the late scholar's unwavering dedication to preserving Ladakh's traditions through his literary and academic endeavors. Angchuk also proposed the compilation and publication of Dr. Gyalton's biography as a valuable resource for researchers, students, and the broader community.

Nominated Councillor for Sangha, Ven. Konchok Tsepel, delivered a heartfelt speech on Dr. Gyalton's academic achievements. He praised the scholar's monumental contributions to Buddhist studies, including his numerous published books and research papers. Ven. Tsepel highlighted Dr. Gyalton's efforts in documenting and safeguarding Ladakh's linguistic and cultural richness, describing them as invaluable. He affirmed that Dr. Gyalton's legacy would inspire future generations of scholars and students.

### Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal reviews preparations for 76th Republic Day in Ladakh



Advisor to the UT Administration of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Advisor to the UT Administration of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, reviewed the preparations for the 76th Republic Day celebrations during a meeting held at the Conference Hall, UT Secretariat, Leh on January 8.

As per the schedule, the main Republic Day function in Leh will be hosted at the historic Polo Ground, while in Kargil, the celebrations will take place at Khree Sultan Cho Stadium.

During the meeting, Dr. Kotwal directed all concerned officials to ensure seamless coordination for the smooth and successful conduct of the event. The Key aspects discussed

included Traffic Management to provide a hassle-free flow of vehicles around the venues, provision of clean drinking water for attendees, availability of clean public toilets at the event locations, deployment of health personnel to provide immediate medical assistance if required, arrangements for refreshments, particularly for children participating in the celebrations.

He also directed officials to ensure proper illumination of government buildings, iconic landmarks, and historical sites as part of the festive decor. Dr. Kotwal stressed the need for meticulous planning to deliver a well-organized and dignified event.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, DGP; Yetindara M. Maralkar, Administrative Secretary, FCS&CA; Michael M. D'Souza, Administrative Secretary, GAD; Shashanka Ala, Administrative Secretary, IT; Bhanu Prabha, Secretary, Higher Education; Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhdeve; Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Srikanth Balasaheb Suse, and other senior officers.

### Kangs Sing and Maryul Spamo dominate in Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2 finals



Team Kangs Sing and Maryul Spamo, champions of the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2.

Deskrit Angmo

**LEH:** Team Kangs Sing and Maryul Spamo emerged as champions in the men's and women's categories, respectively, at the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2.

The men's final, played on January 13 at the NDS Ice Hockey Rink, saw Kangs Sing defeat Changthang Shans with a 5-2 scoreline. In the women's grand finale, held on January 12, Maryul Spamo triumphed over Changla Lamos with a 3-2 victory.

The Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2 officially kicked off on January 5 at the Nawang Dorjay Stobdan (NDS) Stadium, organized in collaboration with the UT Administration of Ladakh and the Ice Hockey Association of Ladakh. This season featured 30 exciting matches, including 23 in the men's category and 7 in the women's category.

The grand closing ceremony was attended by Vikram Singh Malik, Sports Secretary of UT Ladakh; Surinder Khatri, DIG, North West Frontier, ITBP; Vigyat Singh, Director of Operations at Royal Enfield Social Mission; and PT Kunzang, Vice President of the Ice Hockey Association of Ladakh (IHAL), among other distinguished guests. These dignitaries presented medals, trophies, and cash prizes to the winners.

The winning teams, Kangs Sing and Maryul Spamo, were awarded the championship trophy along

with a cash prize of ₹2.5 lakh each. The runners-up, Changthang Shans and Changla Lamos, received the runners-up trophy and a cash prize of ₹1.5 lakh each. Mushtaq Ahmed Giri, captain of Kangs Sing, and Padma Chorol, captain of Maryul Spamo, were named the standout players of the match and awarded the title of "Best Player," along with a cash prize of ₹25,000 each. The Fair Play Awards (Team) were presented to Humas Warriors in the men's category and Sham Eagles in the women's category, with both teams receiving ₹25,000 as a cash prize.

Vikram Singh Malik, Secretary of Sports, stated, "This league has truly showcased the essence of Ladakh—unity, perseverance, and excellence. It has been inspiring to witness the incredible efforts of both the teams and the community in making this event a grand success. Initiatives like these are helping to build a stronger foundation for ice hockey in Ladakh, and I am confident that the sport will continue to grow, reaching even greater heights in the years ahead."

As part of its ongoing commitment to advancing the sport, Royal Enfield provided state-of-the-art skate sharpening machines for community use. These machines will help players, especially those from remote areas, maintain their skates and ensure optimal performance during competitions.

The event also featured the unveiling of the league's jerseys and trophies. The trophy, designed by local artist Nawang Gyalton, beautifully combines elements of ice hockey and the snow leopard, symbolizing Ladakh's unique cultural connection to the sport. Teams also showcased their new jerseys made from recycled PET bottles, in collaboration with T10 Sports.

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Vigyat Singh, Director of Operations at Royal Enfield Social Mission, remarked, "The Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League is more than just a tournament; it is a celebration of the community coming together over a sport during the harsh winters, showcasing their indomitable spirit and immense sporting talent. Season 2 has been nothing short of extraordinary, and we are proud to have led this incredible journey. We remain committed to nurturing ice hockey and empowering Himalayan communities to build resilience for a brighter future."

The Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2 has solidified Ladakh's status as a hub for winter sports, providing a competitive platform for local talent and inspiring future generations to embrace the sport. As the season comes to a close, the league stands as a symbol of Himalayan unity, resilience, and the transformative power of sports.

### Traffic Police organises road safety rally in Leh as part of National Safety Month



Stanzin Padma

**LEH:** The Traffic Police of Leh organized a road safety awareness rally on January 13 at the Ice Hockey Rink in Guphuks, as part of the National Road Safety Month.

The event was chaired by Altaf Ahmad Shah IPS, SSP Traffic Leh, along with dignitaries including Shruti Arora IPS, SSP Leh, and Kunzes Dolma JKPS, DYSP Leh.

SSP Altaf Ahmad Shah emphasized that the road safety awareness initiative had been underway for 13 days, with efforts extending to both Leh and Kargil. He stated, "We are conducting events throughout January to promote road safety, with participation from multiple departments, including the traffic police, ARTO, district police, and

the office of the Deputy Commissioner. Ladakh, being a popular tourist destination, necessitates heightened awareness regarding road safety."

During the event, students, including children, skated on ice while carrying banners featuring slogans such as "Dad, drive safely, we are waiting for you," "I skate as my father drives me safely," and "Don't text and drive, keep the roads alive." The campaign also included innovative slogans to further spread awareness.

SSP Shah expressed hope that Ladakh would become an even safer and more attractive destination for tourists, stressing the importance of continued road safety efforts.

sored by LAHDC Leh to countries like Vietnam and Thailand, which resulted in a surge in visitors from these regions.

Stakeholders warned that if tourism is neglected further, the industry in Ladakh could collapse entirely. Those with loans or investments in tourism-related businesses could struggle to repay them, leading to widespread financial difficulties. The LTTA appealed for the revival of travel exchanges like OTM, WTM, and SATTE, alongside fresh promotional activities and the publication of an updated tourism calendar.

The LTTA's message was clear: without prompt and focused intervention, Ladakh's tourism industry could face irreversible damage.

### Candlelight march and prayers in Leh for Tibet earthquake victims



Stanzin Dasal

**LEH:** In a show of solidarity with the victims of the recent earthquake in Tibet, the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) Youth Wing and Sonamling Tibetan Settlement organized a candlelight vigil in Leh on January 8.

The march began at Leh Gate and culminated at Chowkhang Vihara, where hundreds of people gathered to pray for the victims of the earthquake. The 6.8-magnitude quake, which struck on January 7, had its epicenter in Tingri, a rural county about 80 km (50 miles) north of Mount Everest, with a population of around 60,000 people. The tremors also shook buildings in neighboring Nepal, Bhutan, and India.

The quake impacted the Shigatse region of Tibet, home to approximately 800,000 people. Shigatse city, the administrative center of the region, holds significant cultural importance as the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, a key figure in Tibetan Buddhism.

Expressing his condolences, LBA President Chering Dorje Lakruk said, "We are deeply saddened by this tragedy, which has claimed hundreds of lives and left many injured. The affected region, near Mount Everest, is facing even greater challenges due to the harsh cold weather." He urged everyone to pray for the victims.

### Khelo India Winter Games 2025 to feature 600 athletes, opening ceremony on January 23



During the review meeting of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025, at the Conference Hall, UT Secretariat, Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor and Chairman of the Executive Committee for Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025, chaired a comprehensive review meeting on January 10 at the Conference Hall, UT Secretariat, Leh, to assess the ongoing preparations for the upcoming event.

The second edition of the Khelo India Winter Games is scheduled to take place in Leh from January 23 to 27, 2025. The grand opening ceremony will be held on January 23 at the NDS Ice Hockey Stadium.

Dr. Stanzin Thakchos, OSD to the Secretary of Youth Services & Sports, delivered a detailed presentation on the event's preparations, revealing that approximately 600 athletes are expected to participate. The event will be hosted across three venues, with departments actively collaborating to ensure its smooth execution.

He also announced that Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Youth

Dhondup Tashi, Chief Representative Officer of Sonamling Tibetan Settlement, shared his support: "We stand in solidarity with our Tibetan brothers and sisters in these difficult times. We pray for the deceased and for the quick recovery of all those facing hardships."

He also expressed gratitude to the people of Ladakh for their unwavering support.

Jigmet Rafstan, President of the LBA Youth Wing, stated that the candlelight march and prayer session at Chowkhang Vihara were organized in support of those affected by the devastating earthquake.

The event concluded with a special prayer session at Chowkhang Vihara, with participation from monks, locals, and the Tibetan community, like Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir-Srinagar have seen an increase in tourism, while Ladakh has experienced a 40% reduction in footfall.

To rectify the situation, LTTA members called for immediate action. They emphasized the need for renewed promotion efforts, citing the success of previous delegations sponsored by LAHDC Leh to countries like Vietnam and Thailand, which resulted in a surge in visitors from these regions.

Stakeholders warned that if tourism is neglected further, the industry in Ladakh could collapse entirely. Those with loans or investments in tourism-related businesses could struggle to repay them, leading to widespread financial difficulties. The LTTA appealed for the revival of travel exchanges like OTM, WTM, and SATTE, alongside fresh promotional activities and the publication of an updated tourism calendar.

The LTTA's message was clear: without prompt and focused intervention, Ladakh's tourism industry could face irreversible damage.

### Leh Police seizes 6.58 grams of Heroin, arrest drug peddler



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** The District Police Leh apprehended a drug peddler on January 11, recovering approximately 6.58 grams of a heroin-like substance from the accused's possession.

The arrest was made by a police team led by Inspector Stanzin Paljor, in charge of the Police Post Housing Colony, while conducting routine patrols in the IBEX Colony area. The suspect, identified as Bharat Kapahi, a resident of Jammu, was intercepted during the operation.

A case (FIR No. 04/2025) under Sections 8/21/22 of the NDPS Act has been filed at Police Station Leh. The accused has been arrested, and the contraband has been seized. An investigation into the matter is currently underway.

Leh Police remains committed to fostering a drug-free society and urges the community to report any suspicious activities related to drug trafficking or peddling.



## Fortnightly News

### Executive Councillors discuss specialized Paralympic training initiative



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Executive Councillors Stanzin Chospheh and Ghulam Mehdi chaired a significant meeting to discuss the upcoming specialized training initiative under the 2028 Paralympic Mission.

This initiative aims to equip athletes with disabilities for international competitions, including the prestigious Paralympic Games. The training will be conducted by the

renowned Aditya Mehra Foundation, which is dedicated to providing world-class coaching and resources to help these athletes reach their full potential.

Asha Shaikh, a physiotherapist and medical classifier, joined the meeting online and provided a comprehensive briefing for parents and participants. She outlined the assessment process, in-

cluding eligibility criteria, IQ tests, and other necessary evaluations to ensure athletes meet the program's standards.

Five students, accompanied by two parents and one escort, have been selected for this initiative. They will depart on January 12, 2025, to begin their specialized training.

The Executive Councillors extended their best wishes to the athletes and their families, reaffirming their commitment to supporting athletes with disabilities and ensuring access to the resources needed to excel on the global stage.

The meeting was attended by the Youth Services and Sports Officer, physical education teachers, and parents of the selected students.

### ADC Kargil reviews preparations for National Voters' Day celebration



Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kargil, Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kargil, Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din, on January 11, reviewed the arrangements for the celebration of National Voters' Day (NVD) in the district, scheduled for January 25.

The meeting was attended by SDM Drass, Vishal Atri, Chief Education Officer Kargil, S. D. Namgyal, Executive Engineer PDD Kargil, Feroz Ahmad, Executive Engineer Mechanical Mohd Hassan, SVEEP Nodal Officer, Tehsilars (AEROs), and other concerned officers and officials.

The meeting decided that the main NVD function will be held at Khree Sultan Cho Sports Stadium, Biamathang, Kargil, on January 25. The ADC was briefed on the program details for the event.

The ADC emphasized the need for officers to work with dedication and coordination to ensure a vibrant celebration. He directed the concerned officials to ensure maximum public participation in the NVD event through social media and other platforms for widespread awareness and outreach. As per past practice, a pledge will be

taken at every office to commemorate National Voters' Day.

Further, the ADC instructed the PDD to ensure uninterrupted power supply, directed the MC Kargil to provide toilet facilities, and asked DIPR Kargil to install a PA system and cover the event. The Chief Education Officer was directed to facilitate the active participation of students in the NVD event.

The meeting also decided that NVD celebrations would be held at the Tehsil and Booth levels across the district.

### LSSSSB prepares to issue first job advertisement in January 2025



Ladakh Subordinate Services Selection Board (LSSSSB) meeting at the UT Secretariat's Conference Hall in Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh and Chairman of the Ladakh Subordinate Services Selection Board (LSSSSB), presided over a meeting at the UT Secretariat's Conference Hall in Leh on January 10. The discussion focused on finalizing the notification and timelines for the advertisement of posts under the Ladakh Subordinate Services Staff Selection Board.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar; Secretary, GAD, Ladakh, Michael D'Souza; SIO, NIC, Ladakh, Sunil Kaul; Director, NIC, Ladakh, Punchok Paldan; Secretary, LSSSSB, Rigzin Spalgon; and Under Secretary, LSSSSB, Jigmet Anghuk. Secretary GAD, Mi-

chael D'Souza, outlined the steps for notifying the posts, stating that the LSSSSB is set to issue its first-ever advertisement in January 2025. The notification is tentatively scheduled for release on January 13, with the registration portal opening on January 25. The application process will close on February 20, 2025. The examination is expected to be conducted on the first Sunday of April 2025, contingent on the reopening of National Highway NH1D.

He highlighted that the examination will be conducted in two parts: general and subject-specific. Additionally, the portal is being structured to facilitate a seamless application process, encompassing registration, application submission, and payment.

The Board engaged in an in-depth discussion on several aspects of the recruitment process, including the advertisement of posts, registration and payment mechanisms, guidelines for uploading photographs and signatures, document submission, and the design of the application form and admit card.

Dr. Kotwal emphasized the importance of adhering to recruitment rules while notifying the advertisements. He also directed the Board to simplify the application process to make it user-friendly for candidates. The meeting concluded with a commitment to ensure transparency and efficiency in the recruitment process, marking a significant step forward for the LSSSSB.

### Advisor chairs meeting on Digital India Land Records Modernization in Ladakh



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, chaired a meeting at VC Hall Secretariat, Leh on January 13, to review the progress of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) in Ladakh.

The meeting involved a detailed review of the project's progress since the last review. The DILRMP project aims to improve accessibility, transparency, and accuracy in land records across Ladakh. It plays a vital role in the region's revenue management and public ser-

vice infrastructure, including comprehensive digital upgrades for land record management.

During the meeting, the physical and financial status of the project was discussed, focusing on ongoing digitization of revenue records, the installation of compactors in Tehsil Modern Record Rooms, and the introduction of online citizen-centric services by the Revenue Department.

The Assistant Commissioner of Revenue (ACR), Leh, presented a comprehensive PowerPoint detailing the milestones

achieved and informed that the GIS web portal for land records will be launched on February 10. The presentation also identified additional resources, including the progress of village land record digitization, ongoing surveys, and demarcations, as well as the need for an effective Management Information System (MIS). Advisor Dr. Kotwal commended the efforts of the team while emphasizing the project's significance in ensuring accurate and accessible land records. He stressed the importance of reliable land records in reducing disputes, enhancing transparency, and supporting infrastructure and development projects in Ladakh. Dr. Kotwal urged for the timely and efficient completion of the remaining tasks.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve; Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Shrikant Suse; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Shabir Hussain; SDMs, and other relevant officials from the Revenue Department.

### Indian Ice Hockey Men's team delegation calls on L-G Mishra

Requests intervention for participation in 9th Asian Winter Games in China



A delegation of the Indian men's ice hockey team with Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** A delegation of the Indian men's ice hockey team, predominantly comprising players from Ladakh and led by Tsewang Gyaltsan, met the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), on January 10 at the LG Secretariat. The delegation sought the LG's intervention in facilitating the team's participation in the 9th Asian Winter Games, scheduled to be held in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China, from February 7 to 14, 2025.

Advisor to the LG, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, and Secretary of Youth Services and Sports, Vikram

Singh Malik, IAS, were also present during the meeting.

Tsewang Gyaltsan informed the LG about the Ministry of Youth Services and Sports' decision not to send the Indian men's ice hockey team to the games. He emphasized that the team had been rigorously preparing for this event and highlighted the potential setback for the players, most of whom hail from Ladakh, where the sport is played at altitudes exceeding 11,000 feet.

The Lieutenant Governor assured the delegation of

his support and, after discussions with the Union Minister of Youth Services and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, pledged to make all possible efforts to ensure the team's participation in the Asian Winter Games. LG Mishra emphasized the importance of such opportunities for Ladakhi youth, both for their development and for showcasing their talent on an international stage.

The delegation expressed gratitude to the LG for his commitment and hoped for a positive resolution to enable the team's representation at the prestigious event.

### Ministry of Finance restores capital expenditure for LAHDCs of Ladakh

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, convened a review meeting on January 13 at the Conference Hall of the UT Secretariat to discuss the expenditure under the SDP/State Capex and strategize the utilization of an additional ₹400 crore budget released by the Ministry of Finance for the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Dr. Safdar Ali, Director of Finance, provided a detailed presentation on both the budget estimates and the revised budget estimates for the financial year 2024-25. It was announced that the capital budget for the LAHDCs has been restored to ₹344.00 crore each, with the remaining funds reallocated according to the needs of various departments.

Advisor Dr. Kotwal emphasized the need for collective efforts from all officers to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in resource utilization. He stressed that every rupee



spent should contribute to Ladakh's holistic development. He further directed the officers to utilize the funds promptly and clear liabilities associated with the work completed by different departments. Dr. Kotwal underlined the importance of fiscal responsibility, timely execution, and continued collaboration to address any challenges during the execution phase.

The meeting was attended by key officials,

including Administrative Secretaries Vikram Singh Malik, Tourism & Culture; Michael D'Souza (PWD); Yetindara Maralkar (FCS&CA); Bhupesh Chaudhary (Agriculture & Horticulture); Shashanka Ala (RDD); Bhanu Prabha (Higher & School Education); Deputy Commissioners Santosh Sukhadeve (Leh) and Shrikant Suse (Kargil), as well as heads of various departments and other concerned officials.

### DIET Leh hosts winter orientation program for 160 head teachers



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** A five-day winter training program on capacity building and orientation for Head Teachers of Middle and Primary Schools in Leh district commenced at DIET Leh on January 8.

The program features resource persons from UT Chandigarh, including Dr. Openderjeet Kaur, Ravender Kumar, and Madu Balu, a Balvatika Specialist. They are joined by DIET Leh KRP Tsering Wangdus from the Curriculum and Assessment Wing. The sessions will focus on key topics such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Curriculum Framework Foundational Stage (NCF-FS), strategies to bridge the learning gap (Vidya Pravesh), and the implementation of the Holistic Progress Report

Card (HPC), all based on research findings from the 2024 Education Conclave.

The training emphasizes the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy skills, which are critical for future academic success. Over the course of five days, the orientation aims to empower Head Teachers with the knowledge and tools to implement FLN, NCF-FS, and HPC effectively in their schools.

This initiative highlights a strong commitment to improving educational standards while fostering professional development among educators. Around 160 Head Teachers from Middle and Primary Schools across the district are participating in the program.

### Ladakh's artisanal heritage featured at Grameen Bharat Mahotsav



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with artisans at Grameen Bharat Mahotsav.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on January 4, marking the commencement of an event dedicated to celebrating the progress of rural India.

With the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047,' the Mahotsav aims to promote rural infrastructure development, foster innovation, and support women entrepreneurs across India.

Running from January 4 to 9, the event features a wide array of cultural performances and exhibitions that showcase India's rich and diverse heritage. In

his inaugural address, Prime Minister Modi emphasized the significance of rural prosperity in achieving the vision of a developed India by 2047.

CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson, commended the Mahotsav for its role in promoting Ladakh's artistic heritage. He praised the platform for highlighting Ladakh's unique crafts, such as Shingskhos and pashmina products, and for supporting local artisans while bolstering rural economies.

The Mahotsav serves as a vital platform for empowering rural artisans and entrepreneurs, offering workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities to promote sustainable growth.

### SECI to undertake pilot Solar Power Project designed for livestock grazing

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** In a significant step towards building confidence among local stakeholders regarding the upcoming mega solar power project at Pang, a crucial meeting was held on January 1 under the chairmanship of Vikram Singh Malik, IAS, Administrative Secretary of the Power Development & New and Renewable Energy Department, UT Ladakh. Officials from SECI, Powergrid, and DIHAR participated to formalize an action plan for creating a livestock-grazing-friendly pilot solar project in the Pang area.

The Secretary directed the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to work on the project's modalities, with an emphasis on designing solar panels at a height that allows nomadic herders to graze their livestock freely beneath the panels without any

disruption. Additionally, the Secretary instructed the Revenue Department to identify a suitable two-hectare plot of land in the Pang area and conduct a joint survey with all stakeholders within the next 15 days. SECI has given in-principle approval to undertake the project.

To ensure progress, the Secretary of the Power Development Department (PDD) urged SECI to expedite the necessary paperwork so the pilot project can commence in the next working season.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the Chief Engineer of PDD, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Leh, senior officers from PDD and LREDA, scientists from DIHAR, and representatives from SECI and Powergrid.



## Expert Talk:

## Linguistic Divide in Ladakh: Bhoti or Ladakhi?

By Stanzin Padma



**Nawang Tsering Shaks-po, Founder Director of Centre for Research on Ladakh:**

In recent years, the term “Bhoti” has gained attention as a label for our language. However, I must clarify that this term does not exist historically or linguistically; the correct

term is “Pod-yik .” Referring to the language as “Bhoti” is a significant error since this term has no recognition or basis anywhere in the world.

The term “Ladakhi” is considered the mother tongue of Ladakh and is officially recognized under the constitution of Jammu & Kashmir, alongside five other languages. In contrast, Sikkim strongly opposes the term Bhoti, as their language, “Bhutia,” is specifically identified by the state government. Arunachal Pradesh faces its own linguistic confusion, as the Monpa language, their mother tongue, is written in the Podyik script. Ladakh is a united region with deep roots in Buddhism, guided by the compassion of spiritual leaders, monks, and nuns. The Tibetan holy texts, Kangyur and Tengyur, written in the Tibetan script (Yige), are integral to Ladakhi culture and spirituality. Every page of these sacred texts carries the phrase “Gyagar skat du, Pod skat du” (“In Indian script and Tibetan script”), which is also recited before every prayer. The term Bhoti is absent from these texts, and its usage risks causing spiritual disruption and societal confusion in the future.

Having worked under the Cultural Academy for 35 years, and now retired for over 15 years, I can confidently state that the term “Bhoti” was unheard of during my tenure. This sudden shift in the last decade is perplexing. Organizations like the Ladakh Buddhist Association and the Ladakh Gonpa Association have adopted the term “Bhoti,”

but this is a serious misstep. Accepting this term undermines our spiritual heritage and diminishes the significance of our holy texts written in Podyik. In 1974, the Himalayan Association was established with a vision centered around Podyik. However, over time, due to changes in societal perceptions and usage, the term Podyik was gradually replaced by Bhoti.

For decades, I have voiced my concerns about this issue, but only a few friends and followers have supported me. Many proponents of “Bhoti” are unaware of the historical and linguistic origins of Podyik. To address this, I have filed litigation in the High Court. The hearing will be held soon. I firmly believe that replacing “Podyik” with “Bhoti” will threaten the integrity of our language and culture.

In India, across 20 to 30 universities, the term “Tibetan” is used, not “Bhoti.” Obtaining a certificate in Bhoti is essentially meaningless, as it holds no academic or official recognition. For instance, at Delhi University, the Department of Buddhist Studies teaches Tibetan, not Bhoti. It has been nearly three years since the University of Ladakh was established, but this linguistic conflict has prevented a resolution. I personally requested the Vice-Chancellor to establish a department for Podyik. However, he rightly pointed out that while some people refer to it as Bhoti, this term has no basis or recognition anywhere in the world. He further explained that since Bhoti is not acknowledged in major academic centers like Delhi, Kolkata, or Mumbai, it is impractical to implement. Despite this, people continue to blindly follow the Himalayan Association’s usage of Bhoti.

Historically, the first Podyik book, “Podyik Gi Deb,” was launched in 1939 by Lotsava Tseten Phuntsok. After independence, leaders like Bakula Rinpoche introduced Podyik textbooks to Jammu & Kashmir’s government, which were in use for decades. The Hill Council later renamed these textbooks to “Bhoti,” a term without identity.

#### Awards and Recognition

The Sahitya Akademi, a prominent literary institution under the Government of India, provides awards to scholars for their contributions to language and literature. Three scholars from Ladakh have

been honored by the Akademi, including Tashi Rabgyas, who was recognized for Ladakhi, not Bhoti. I urge the Hill Council to address this issue, especially since the Home Minister recently discussed the importance of Ladakhi and Balti languages. I appeal to everyone to preserve and use our local language, i.e., Podyik or Ladakhi.

For instance, Doordarshan Leh broadcasts news and programs in Ladakhi, not Bhoti, clearly showing that Bhoti holds no identity in their operations. Similarly, Buddhist communities in Russia and the Himalayan region refer to the language as Podyik, and even during the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Podyik is used, not Bhoti. During my tenure, many individuals were awarded for their contributions to the Ladakhi language without any objections, and the government has not recognized Bhoti as a distinct language. In the Cultural Academy, positions such as Chief Editor Ladakhi, Assistant Editor Ladakhi, and Research Editor Ladakhi are designated specifically for the Ladakhi language, and these titles have never been altered to Bhoti. Previously, there were also five positions for Akashwani Executive Programs in Ladakhi, as well as roles in the Central Institute of Indian Languages.

However, this ongoing confusion surrounding Bhoti is now creating unnecessary challenges.

#### Solution

At the Union Territory (UT) level, the term “Bhoti” should be replaced with “Ladakhi,” which encompasses both Buddhist and Muslim communities. During my visit to Kargil, I found that many people prefer “Ladakhi” over “Bhoti,” as it fosters unity and respects the region’s diverse heritage. Changing the nomenclature to “Ladakhi” will promote harmony and eliminate unnecessary confusion. I urge the Hill Council to take decisive action on this matter to protect our cultural and linguistic heritage.

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## In Focus: 10th Annual Drukpa Council marks a New Year of spiritual renewal and cultural unity in Kathmandu

By Thinles Norboo Yoklo



The 10th Annual Drukpa Council (ADC) concluded in the first week of January 2025 at the newly reconstructed Naro Hall of Druk Amitabha Nunnery, nestled on the serene mountain outskirts of Kathmandu. This significant five-day gathering was graced by the presence of His Holiness the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa, the spiritual head of the Drukpa lineage.

The event was attended by the global Drukpa sangha and devotees, embodying the spirit of unity, resilience, and shared commitment as participants welcomed the New Year 2025. Throughout the council, traditional rituals, teachings, and cultural expressions helped participants reconnect with the spiritual heritage of the Himalayas, while emphasizing its preservation amid modern challenges.

During the closing ceremony, His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa emphasized the importance of cultivating single-minded devotion and faith in practicing Dharma. Comparing a lack of focus to entering a large supermarket without a clear purpose, His Holiness underscored the necessity of having clear intention and practical application in spiritual practice. “Good thoughts and motivations are meaningless unless practiced. In today’s world, we must make Dharma practical,” he said.

His teachings resonated deeply, offering a roadmap for integrating spiritual values into the complexities of modern life while preserving ancient wisdom.

Envisioned in 2009 by His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa, the ADC has grown into a cornerstone event for the Drukpa lineage. It serves as a platform to unite Drukpa masters, safeguard ancient traditions, and foster collaboration for the greater good.

His Eminence Gyalwa Dokhampa stated, “The ADC is vital for transmitting teachings and ensuring the continuity of spiritual practices. In an increasingly modern world, such platforms safeguard traditional knowledge and promote unity.”

His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche, an advisor to the ADC, remarked, “This council strengthens connections among masters and communities worldwide, ensuring the preservation and promotion of Buddha Dharma and the Drukpa lineage.”

His Eminence Drubpon Khamtak Rinpoche, Chair of the 10th ADC, highlighted the council’s role in nurturing Buddhist culture and fostering collaborations. He noted that the gathering showcased traditional art, music, and rituals, becoming an integral part of preserving Himalayan Buddhist culture and promoting inter-community friendships.

This year, over 500 young volunteers from the Himalayan regions, including Ladakh, played a crucial role in organizing the ADC. Their active participation demonstrated a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage and emphasized their role as torchbearers for future generations.

“These volunteers are pillars of support and representatives of our collective future,” Drubpon Khamtak Rinpoche remarked. “Their involvement strengthens their sense of identity in a rapidly changing world.”

The 10th ADC concluded with heartfelt gratitude expressed by His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa toward the organizers, volunteers, and attendees. The New Year celebration featured a vibrant Ladakhi Losar (New Year) celebration, attended by Dy. CEC LAHDC Leh Shri Tsering Angchuk as chief guest, and Executive Councillor Tashi Namgal Yakzee as guest of honor.

The New Year festivities included the sacred Marmay Molam and three circumambulations of the holy Phakspa Shingkun, led by His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa, marking an auspicious beginning to the year. Thousands of Ladakhis participated, adding a touch of cultural magnificence to the spiritual gathering.

As the ADC came to a close, participants left with renewed teachings and unity, carrying forward the inspiration of the council into the New Year.

## SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

### The New Year reading pleasure



*Surely, a New Year brings in, for all of us, hope and excitement in various fields of one’s interest. One such is the pleasure of reading throughout the year. The very idea of reading great minds’ works non-stop gives one a thrill that is quite rare in any other endeavour.*

*Book ‘hunting’ is my passions. I have already have bought some great books; and for the rest, I have a list of books that I hope to get hold of in due time. The first on the list is THE BOOK OF THE WHY by Judea Pearl, with a theme on the new science of cause and effect. The other books that I hope to read are: SMALL WINS EVERY DAY by Luke Coutinho; THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH by Eddie Jaku; UNTIL AUGUST by Gabriel Garcia; THE COMPOUND EFFECT by Darren Hardy, among others.*

*I already have THE BOOK OF THE WHY. And that keeps me in peace because by the time I finish reading it, I would have purchased some of the other books for the year. But it is not that I can get hold of all those books as per my plan. Past experience shows that there is always a few misses. In such a case, there is nothing to worry about as one can always look for other great books and read them with equally great interest.*

*And to tell you what I read in the year gone by, I could get to read most of the ones I had on my reading-list. Of them, the best one I read was DEEP WORK by Cal Newport that brings out to the fore science and passion in equal measure. The next was RICH DAD, POOR DAD by Robert T. KIYOSAKI that can be called one of the best books on life’s financial aspects. That was my second-time reading after decades. And the third was ATOMIC HABITS by JAMES CLEAR that lists the ways to cultivate good habits and shun the bad ones. The fourth one that I read with great pleasure was MINDSET by Dr Carlos S. Dweck that deals with the ways you need to adopt for a better life.*

*I am not claiming that I am going to read the best of the books. All that I am saying is that I will try to read some of the best books that I can get hold of.*

*Wish you a happy-reading year!*

*Courtesy: WongWorld*

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



## Fortnightly News

### In Conversation with Tamchos Gurmet, Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety Ladakh

Interviewed by Nenzes Chodon

**Q. Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain the role of the Food Safety Department?**

Jullay! I am Tamchos Gurmet, currently serving as the Assistant Commissioner for Food Safety in Ladakh. I have been working in this role for the past 15 years, ensuring the safety and quality of food products in the region.

The Food Safety Department operates under the Drugs & Food Control Organization of UT Ladakh and serves as the food regulatory authority. Guided by the standards set by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the department has initiated several schemes and awareness programs to ensure the safety of the food supply. Our responsibilities include food licensing, sampling, and quality control, all in accordance with the necessary guidelines and regulations to safeguard public health.

**Q. You mentioned that the department is responsible for licensing, sampling, and quality control. Could you elaborate on how these responsibilities are carried out?**

The department is supported by Field Food Safety Officers stationed at the block level, who are responsible for conducting food sampling, inspections, and overseeing licensing. A state-level Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the UT Administration and FSSAI to ensure timely execution of fieldwork. The inspections, sampling, and licensing processes are carried out with collaborative funding. Every year, around 3,000 food samples are tested from Ladakh, with 1,500 samples from Leh and 1,500 from Kargil. Each district has four Food Safety Officers, who are assigned specific targets for inspections, third-party audits, and hygiene ratings.

**Q. What areas are inspected, and from where are food samples collected?**

All food establishments, whether government or private, are subject to inspection. Hotels and restaurants are frequently inspected to ensure compliance with safety standards. Food samples are also collected from a variety of locations, including stores, Anganwadi centers, and mid-day meal schemes, among others.

**Q. What are the consequences for those found violating the rules or guidelines?**

In cases where food establishments are found to be unhygienic or operating without a proper license, the offenders

face penalties. A fine or challan is imposed on the shop or store owner, based on the order of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), who serves as the executive officer.

If a food product fails the sampling process and is deemed sub-standard or unsafe, fines are levied in accordance with legal provisions, ensuring strict adherence to food safety standards.

**Q. How is food sampling conducted? Could you provide a brief overview of the sampling process?**

Food samples are collected by the field food safety officers and transported to FSSAI-notified laboratories for testing. Currently, there are no such laboratories in Ladakh, so samples are sent to external facilities for analysis. Once the tests are conducted, a report is generated which determines whether the food product meets the required standards or is classified as sub-standard.

**Q. What challenges do field and food safety officers encounter during inspections and the collection of food samples?**

Initially, we faced challenges in convincing the public about the importance of food safety, and the society had limited co-operation. However, over time, the understanding of food safety has grown, and the community now recognizes its significance. The public has become much more cooperative during surveys and inspections.

After Ladakh became a Union Territory, we were provided with necessary resources, such as vehicles for transportation and adequate funding. Despite this, one of the main challenges remains reaching and covering different blocks during inspections, surveys, and campaigns due to the vast distances. The primary reason for this challenge is the shortage of manpower and human resources.

**Q. Brief us about the Food Safety on Wheel initiative?**

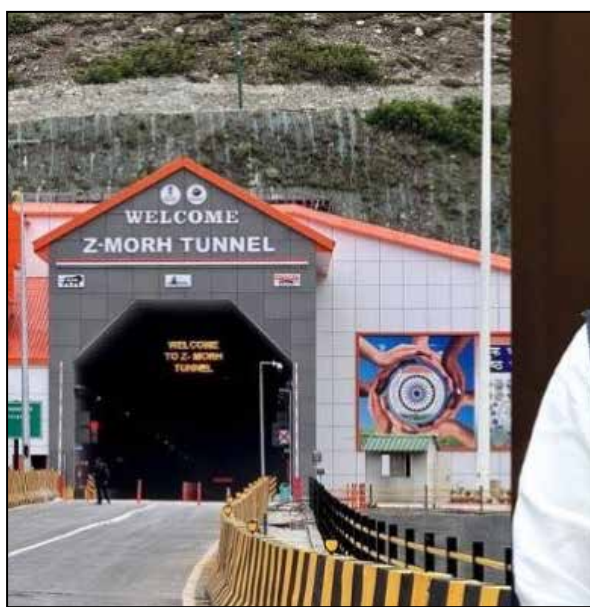
The Food Safety on Wheel initiative is a mobile van equipped with a laboratory setup that allows for rapid testing of food samples with immediate results. This mobile unit has traveled across various blocks, testing around 500-600 samples in areas such as Nubra, Tangtse, and Sham. During the campaign, about 80% of the samples tested negative, indicating no contamination. However, milk products around the Sakti area were found to be contaminated.



**MESSAGE TO THE READERS**  
**“Consumers should carefully inspect food products before purchasing, checking for unusual signs such as incorrect dates, leakages, inflated packaging, or suspicious milk products. Always ensure a proper bill is provided. Many complaints often arise only after a purchase is made, which can be avoided through vigilance. Every individual should act as a responsible consumer by verifying they are selecting safe and suitable products for consumption.”**

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## Fortnight Highlights



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson extended heartfelt congratulations to the people of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir on the inauguration of the Z-Morh Sonamarg Tunnel. He also expressed deep gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his visionary leadership in making this transformative project a reality in record time.



A total of 50 students from Ladakh, including 25 students each from Kargil and Leh, were sent by the Education Department to participate in Rashtriya Shivir Katha held in Gujarat.



Deputy Commissioner Leh, Santosh Sukhdeve discussing the observance of Road Safety Month in the district. The campaign aims to raise awareness about road safety and promote responsible driving practices.



Founder of the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena presented the Mahakaruna (Compassion in Action) Award 2025 to Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.



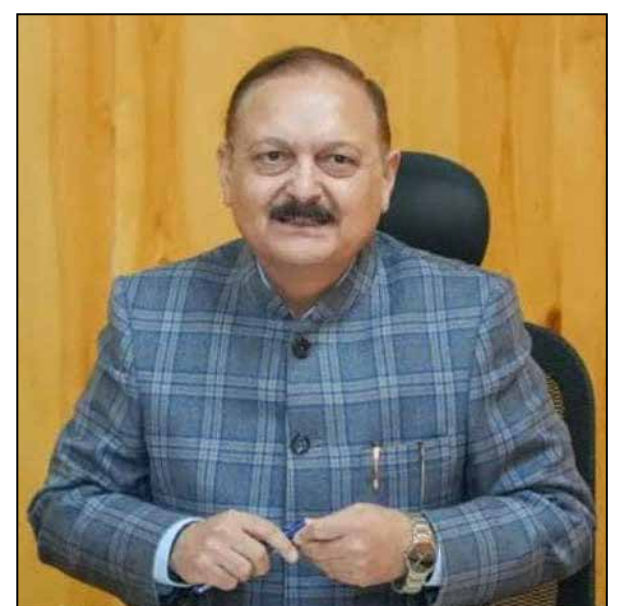
Executive Councillor (RDD), LAHDC, Leh, Tashi Namgyal Yakzee, inaugurated a newly constructed washing room at the Old Age Home in Shey. The new facility is aimed at improving the living conditions of the elderly residents at the Old Age Home by providing them with better sanitation facilities.



In a significant step towards empowering rural women, machines procured under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) scheme were distributed to LRLM SHG Zangla. This initiative aims to enhance livelihood opportunities and promote sustainable development in the region.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson visited Mahabodi School in Mysore to celebrate the Ladakhi Losar festival with students. During his visit, Chairman Gyalson engaged with the school management, faculty, and staff, discussing various matters and offering the council's support.



The Ministry of Home Affairs has created the position of Chief Secretary for Ladakh, a significant milestone in the region's governance. Dr. Pawan Kotwal, currently serving as Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, will be the first Chief Secretary of Ladakh.



## Fortnightly News

...Continuity of page 4

### Linguistic Divide in Ladakh: Bhoti or Ladakhi?



**Ven. Tsering Chosphe, Writer and General Secretary of Ladakh Gonpa Association**

There are rumors suggesting that the term “Bhoti language” does not exist in the context of Ladakhi. However, I believe it is incorrect to claim that the Bhoti language does not exist at all.

As a former student of CIBS, during my Class 9th and 10th in 1975, the subject taught was Both Basha, not Tibetan language. Our certificates and marks cards were issued by the renowned Sanskrit University in Banaras. Thus, Both Basha and Bhoti are synonymous, just as Ladakhi language is considered equivalent to Ladakhi identity. Currently, there is a dedicated Department of Bhoti at CIBS that provides certificates and degrees in the language. The term “Bhoti” was adopted after thorough discussions and meetings among scholars, who also pursued recognition of Bhoti language and script in the Indian Constitution.

The Bhoti language is widely used in Both Desh (Greater Tibet), encompassing all Himalayan regions. Its script, created in the 7th century by Thonmi Sambhota, forms the foundation for all regional languages. While regions like Tibet use dialects such as Phod Skat, Lhasa, and Kham, in Ladakh, people speak various dialects like Shamskat, Changskat, Nubrapa Skat, and Purgi. However, the shared script across these regions is Bhoti.

Surveys conducted by the Minority Commission of India in collaboration with the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, found that Bhoti holds a rich literary tradition. The commission recommended its inclusion in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. Chief Ministers from states such as Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim have also supported the recognition of Bhoti or its equivalents like Bhotiya. This decision was not made by an individual but collectively by leaders who agreed on Bhoti due to its historical significance and cultural resonance.

For those who believe Bhoti is a recent concept, the historical context proves otherwise. Discussions around Bhoti have been ongoing for decades, with the entire Himalayan region supporting its recognition. Personally, I firmly believe Bhoti is a legitimate language.

Secondly, while every region speaks its mother tongue, Bhoti serves as the common language across Ladakh, used by Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians alike. The Bhoti script, created in the 7th century by Thonmi Sambhota, became the foundation for literature and translations from other languages. In Ladakh, despite religious diversity, people historically spoke a unified language. Buddhists particularly benefited from the Bhoti script, as much of their sacred literature was written in Bhoti. While translations of the Quran and Bible into Bhoti exist, they remain incomplete compared to the extensive Buddhist literature. This has led to the misconception that Bhoti is solely a Buddhist language, which is not true—Bhoti belongs to all Ladakhis.

Recently, during a December 3rd meeting with the MHA, Bhoti and Urdu were verbally introduced as official languages of UT Ladakh. Formal documentation is expected soon, and Bhoti has already been ranked third among regional languages due to its rich literary tradition.

#### Solution:

- For a language to gain identity, it must have a substantial body of literature. Bhoti meets this criterion with its rich and historic literary tradition.
- Bhoti has been an old demand, and the recent notification by the government further supports its recognition.
- Surveys and ongoing procedures confirm that Bhoti exists as a language with a strong cultural and literary foundation.

### Friends Pashkum Red wins 16th CEC Ice Hockey Cup in Kargil



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Friends Pashkum Red clinched the 16th CEC Ice Hockey Cup 2024-25, defeating Drass Warriors 4-2 in an exciting final held at the Biamathang Ice Hockey Rink, Kargil.

The concluding ceremony was presided over by the Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun.

The event was attended by Executive Councillor for Tourism, Kacho Mohd Feroz; Joint Director, Sports, UT Ladakh, Tahir Zabdavi; Councillors Adv. Khadim Hussain (Baroo-Minjee), Manzoor ul Hussain (Yourbaltak), Abdul Hadi (Panikhar), Abdul Samad

(Ranbirpora), and Altaf Hussain (Chuliskambo); DYSSO Kargil, Abid Hussain; other district officials, and thousands of enthusiastic spectators.

Dr. Akhoun commended the District Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Department for successfully organizing the tournament. He congratulated both finalist teams for their exceptional performances and emphasized the potential of ice hockey to elevate Kargil's presence on national and international platforms.

“The Hill Council is dedicated to promoting winter sports, especially ice hockey. We are making every effort to improve

infrastructure and create opportunities for our athletes,” he stated.

Dr. Akhoun expressed optimism about the future of winter sports, noting that the completion of the Zojila Tunnel would significantly boost accessibility and development. He also acknowledged the contributions of the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh and the UT Administration in enhancing sports infrastructure across the region.

This year's tournament featured 32 men's teams and 6 women's teams. The event concluded with the distribution of medals and trophies to the winners and runners-up.

### In Conversation with Tamchos Gurmet, Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety Ladakh

...Continuity of page 5

The van conducts primary tests during our survey. If a product is found to be contaminated or sub-standard, we send a legal sample to external laboratories for further testing. Interestingly, the sample found in Sakti was later verified as pure and safe after testing at laboratories outside Ladakh

#### Q. What is food fortification, and how can consumers identify if a food product is fortified?

Food Fortification is an initiative launched across India, endorsed by the Prime Minister, with guidelines for ration stores to ensure that food products are fortified. In Ladakh, fortification is especially important due to the challenges of obtaining fresh vegetables, fruits, and other products during the harsh, long winter. This often leads to a rise in cases of anemia, making food fortification a crucial measure to address such health concerns.

When food is stored for winter, it can lose many of its nutrients. Food fortification involves adding micronutrients like Vitamin A, D, Folic Acid, and Iron to food products. For example, rice and flour at ration stores are fortified with Folic Acid, B12, and Iron. In Ladakh, wheat flour is also fortified, as local millers are trained by FSSAI experts on the fortification process. As a result, Ladakh has fortified wheat flour available in the market.

Cooking oil sold in Ladakh is 80% fortified with micronutrients such as Vitamin A and D, except for certain brands like Pmark. Additionally, we expect double-fortified salt (with added Folic Acid and Iron) to be available in the market soon.

To identify fortified products, look for the PlusF logo on packaging. These fortified products offer the same price, taste, and nutritional benefits without any compromise.

### Ladakh Scouts and LWIHF dominate 18th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship



Ladakh Scouts the winner of 18th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** The 18th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship (Women & Men) 2024-25 concluded with two thrilling finals at the Ice Hockey Rink, NDS Sports Complex, Leh, on January 2 and 3. The event was organised by the Department of Youth Services & Sports, LAHDC Leh, in collaboration with the Ladakh Winter Sports Club Leh.

In the women's final on Jan-

uary 2, Ladakh Women Ice Hockey Foundation (LW-IHF) defeated ITBP in a penalty shootout.

The Chief Guest for the women's final, Executive Councillor (Minority/Forest) Ghulam Mehdi, congratulated LWIHF on their victory and commended ITBP for their outstanding performance. He highlighted the significant upgrades to ice hockey infrastructure, not-

ing that these improvements provide better opportunities for local athletes to excel at national and international levels.

“LAHDC Leh remains committed to further enhancing sports facilities and creating more pathways for our youth to shine in winter sports,” he added.

Dignitaries present at the women's final included nominated Councillor Ven. Konchok Tsepel, JD Youth Services and Sports Moses Kunzang, and other officials. The men's final, held on January 3, saw Ladakh Scouts claim victory over ITBP in a high-energy match.

Deputy Chairman of LAHDC Leh, Tsering Angchuk, served as the Chief Guest for the men's final. He praised both teams for their outstanding performances and highlighted the immense progress made by Ladakhi athletes in ice hockey. He acknowledged the efforts of the Hill Council and the Ladakh Administra-

tion in nurturing local talent through improved infrastructure and initiatives like Khelo India.

“These advancements are pivotal for the development of ice hockey in Ladakh and for providing young athletes the platforms they need to compete at higher levels,” he stated.

The guest of honor for the men's final was Vikram Singh Malik, IAS, Administrative Secretary of Youth Services and Sports. Other notable attendees included former CEC Gyal P. Wangyal, Councillors, ADDC Leh Sonam Nurboo, Additional SP Leh Rigzen Sangdup, DIG ITBP, Tsering Tashi (District Youth and Sports Officer), and other officials.

A prize distribution ceremony followed both finals, celebrating the exceptional performances of the winners and runners-up.

### Livestock farmers in Nubra receive subsidized feed and training on livestock care



During the awareness program for livestock farmers in Nubra.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

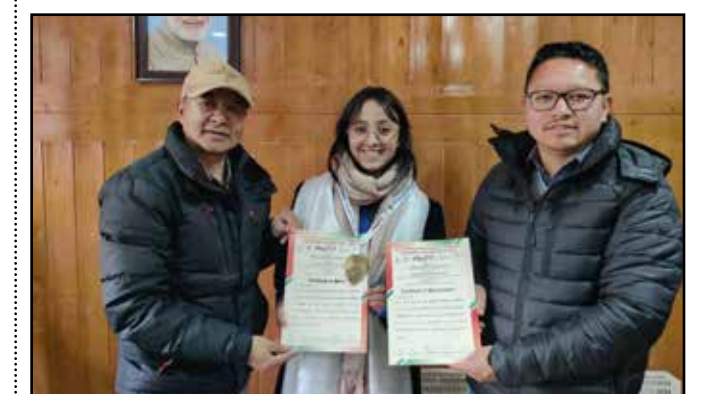
**NUBRA:** The Nubra Sheep Husbandry Department organised an awareness program in Tangyar on January 10, attended by livestock farmers from Tangyar, Khema, and Digger. During the event, 41 quintals of cattle feed were distributed to the participating farmers, with 75% of the cost subsidized by the LAHDC Leh.

The program focused on several key areas, including optimal nutrition for gravid livestock, the nutritional benefits of goat's milk, and the agricultural value of sheep

and goat manure in organic farming. It also highlighted the advantages of mechanical sheep rearing. Additionally, information on the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme and other departmental programs was shared with the livestock rearers.

The local head (Nambardar) concluded the program by submitting requests for the introduction of sheep breeds that produce wool in colors other than white, as well as the construction of small, predator-proof corrals at the individual household level.

### Nasrin Fatima wins gold at 5th National Taekwondo Championship 2024



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Executive Councillors Stanzin Chosphe and Ghulam Mehdi extended their heartfelt congratulations to Nasrin Fatima for clinching the Gold Medal in the Senior Female – Under 46 Kg weight category at the 5th National Open Kyorugi & Poomsae Taekwondo Championship 2024.

The championship was held on December 28 and 29, 2024, at Shree Vishudhanand Saraswati Vidyalaya in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Fatima's remarkable achievement not only brings

immense pride to Ladakh but also serves as a source of inspiration for young athletes, particularly women, in the region to strive for excellence in sports.

The Executive Councillors commended her performance, stating “Her victory is a testament to the potential of Ladakhi athletes and will motivate many to follow in her footsteps. The LAHDC remains committed to supporting and encouraging young talent from the region, fostering a culture of excellence and promoting physical education.”

### Ladakh's Mohd Abbass Nordakh appointed National Coach for 9th Asian Winter Games



Mohd Abbass Nordakh with Deputy Chairman of LAHDC Leh, Tsering Angchuk.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Mohd Abbass Nordakh has been appointed as the National Coach for the Indian ice short track speed skating team ahead of the 9th Asian Winter Games, set to take place in Harbin, China, from February 7-14, 2025.

As the newly appointed coach, Nordakh will lead a team of eight skilled skaters—four men and four women—to represent India in the highly competitive short track speed skating event. The team will undergo inten-

sive training with a Korean coach in Daejeon, South Korea, to fine-tune their skills before the Games.

Nordakh's appointment is a recognition of his tireless dedication to the sport and his significant contributions to its growth. The announcement was made by the President of the Ice Skating Association of India (ISAI), who also serves as the Vice President of the Asian Skating Union (ASU) and an executive member of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Deputy Chairman of LAHDC Leh, Tsering Angchuk, congratulated Nordakh on this prestigious achievement, praising him for bringing honor to Ladakh and for his crucial role in promoting ice skating in the region.

Nordakh will depart from Leh on January 6 for Delhi, before traveling to South Korea for the team's training camp. Afterward, he will lead the team to China for the Games. This milestone marks a significant moment in the sporting journey of Ladakh.



## Fortnightly News

### EC Punchok Tashi visits 2 MW Hydel project in Raru, Zanskar



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**ZANSKAR:** Executive Councillor (EC), LAHDC, Kargil, Er. Punchok Tashi visited the 2 MW Hydel Project at Raru Lungnak on January 13 to assess the project's current status and the efforts of the Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) staff.

EC Tashi acknowledged the dedication of the team in maintaining and operating the project despite challenging conditions, including freezing of the power channel, diversion, and forebay tank. These issues have made the project management particularly dif-

ficult during the peak winter months. The project is currently managed by eight employees, primarily from Drass, who continue to operate it under these harsh conditions. EC Tashi also recognized the successful extension of power supply to the villages of Ichar and Surley in the Cha Block.

As a gesture of appreciation, EC Tashi presented the staff with a cash reward of ₹15,000. Additionally, he assured them that their concerns, including the construction of a local toilet and the blacktopping of the approach road, would be addressed in consultation with PD KREDA.

### Veterinary camp-cum-awareness program held at Hunderman Mal village



Veterinary camp-cum-awareness program on January 12 at Hunderman Mal village.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** The Department of Animal Husbandry, Kargil, in collaboration with the Indian Army's Kargil Sentinels, organized a veterinary camp-cum-awareness program on January 12 at Hunderman Mal village and the nearby Broq area, one of Kargil district's last border settlements.

The team included Dr. Mansoor Hussain, Dr. Bilquees Fatima, Sajjad Hussain (SVP), other department officials, and representatives from the Indian Army. Despite harsh conditions with temperatures dropping to -10°C, the camp provided essential veterinary services to the local farming community, which depends heavily on livestock for its livelihood.

During the camp, 33 large animals, including four donkeys, and numerous small ruminants received on-the-spot treatment. Free feed supplements and vital medicines were distributed to enhance livestock health and productivity. Vaccination and deworming drives were conducted to protect animals from common diseases prevalent in Ladakh's severe winter climate.

The veterinarians also conducted an awareness session for livestock owners, covering critical topics such as winter care, disease prevention, balanced nutrition, and modern animal husbandry practices. These sessions aimed to boost livestock productivity and en-

sure long-term sustainability for local farmers.

The collaboration with the Indian Army's Kargil Sentinels played a vital role in the camp's success, facilitating seamless operations in challenging conditions.

Dr. Gulzar Hussain, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Kargil, expressed his gratitude to the Indian Army, stating, "In extreme conditions like these, livestock health is essential for the survival and livelihood of local communities. We are committed to providing the necessary support and knowledge to ensure sustainable livestock development. We sincerely thank the Kargil Sentinels for their invaluable assistance in making this camp a success."

The event was well-received by the local community, who appreciated the collaborative efforts of the Animal Husbandry Department and the Indian Army. They requested that more such camps be organized regularly to address their livestock-related concerns.

This joint initiative highlights the dedication of both the Department of Animal Husbandry, UT Ladakh, and the Indian Army to the welfare of border communities, fostering resilience and sustainability in the high-altitude regions of Kargil.

### Secretary Education Bhanu Prabha meets CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoun to discuss Kargil's education system



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Secretary of Higher Education, School Education, and Skill Development, UT Ladakh, Bhanu Prabha, met with the Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, at the Council Secretariat in Kargil on January 6.

The meeting was attended by

Executive Councillors Kacho Mohd Feroz and Zakir Hussain, Councillors, the Director of School Education, the Chief Education Officer of Kargil, and other officials.

Dr. Akhoun welcomed Bhanu Prabha with a traditional khatkhat and extended his best wishes as she assumed her new role as Secretary of Higher Education and School Education for

UT Ladakh.

During the meeting, Dr. Akhoun reiterated LAHDC Kargil's commitment to supporting and strengthening the education system in the district. Discussions focused on addressing challenges and devising strategies to improve school education in Kargil.

Later, a delegation of contractual staff working under the SAMAGRA scheme met with both the CEC and the Secretary. The delegation raised key concerns, including a request for increments in honorariums, provision of maternity leave, and other related issues.

Dr. Akhoun assured the delegation that the administration would take necessary steps to address these issues in a phased manner.

### Advisor Dr. Pawan Kotwal chairs meeting on Apricot Dryer Processing Unit DPR



Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, chairing a meeting on Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Apricot Dryer Processing Unit.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, chaired a meeting to discuss the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Apricot Dryer Processing Unit at the Conference Hall, UT Secretariat, Leh, on January 9.

The meeting was attended both virtually and physically by Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Ghulam Mehdi; Principal Secretary, Sanjeev Khirwar; Secretary of Horticulture, Bhupesh

Choudhary; Director of Industries & Commerce, Mohammad Nazir; Director of Horticulture, Tsewang Punchook; Councillor Kaltsi; and various stakeholders and entrepreneurs from Leh and Kargil.

The Director of Industries & Commerce briefed the Advisor on the meeting's agenda. Nishit Ranjan, a consultant with the Industries Department, presented a detailed overview of the DPR for the Apricot Processing Unit,

highlighting the various functional aspects. He informed that four units had already been installed on a pilot project basis in Ladakh.

The discussions covered all aspects of the apricot processing unit in detail. Dr. Kotwal instructed the Director of Industries & Commerce to install the processing units in consultation with local entrepreneurs and stakeholders to ensure benefits for local apricot producers. He also directed both the Director of Industries and the Director of Horticulture to oversee the operation of the unit once constructed.

Additionally, Dr. Kotwal instructed the Director of Industries & Commerce to initiate four pilot projects and asked the Director of Horticulture to establish apricot nurseries in Ladakh. He directed the Secretary of Horticulture to form a committee to facilitate the introduction of the apricot processing unit in the region. The Advisor also emphasized the importance of establishing the units in compliance with regulations, consulting local beneficiaries, and constructing cold storage facilities alongside the units if required.

### 8-day Skiing course concludes with grand ceremony at Beuru Khar Namsuru



During the 8-day skiing course at Beuru Khar Namsuru.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** The 8-day skiing course, which began on January 4, concluded with a grand closing ceremony on January 11 at Beuru Khar Namsuru. The event marked the successful training of 24 participants, including 11 girls and 13 boys, under the expert guidance of instructors from the Ladakh Ski and Snowboard Association (LSSA).

Participants were trained in basic skiing techniques, laying a strong foundation for their journey in winter sports.

The closing ceremony was graced by Tahir Hussain Zubdavi as the chief guest, with Tehsildar Taisuru serving as the guest of honor. Other distinguished attendees included the BDO Taisuru, SHO Panikhar, ZPEO, and an enthusiastic audience comprising locals and youth from

Namsuru.

A highlight of the event was a skiing demonstration by the participants, who showcased their newly acquired skills, including snowplough turns, parallel turns, and ski mountaineering techniques. Their performance drew admiration and applause from the audience.

Awards were presented to the top three performers in both the boys' and girls' categories. Additionally, Councillors from Parkachik and Team LSSA presented mementos to the esteemed guests as a gesture of appreciation.

Speaking at the event, the chief guest, Tahir Hussain Zubdavi, commended the efforts of the LSSA team for their dedi-

cation and successful execution of the course. He also expressed gratitude to Councillor Parkachik for his vision and contributions in promoting Suru as a premier adventure destination for both summer and winter activities.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Sadiq Ali, Ski Instructor, who acknowledged the invaluable support of the guests, Councillor Aga Ainul Huda, the youth, volunteers from Namsuru, and the dedicated LSSA team, whose combined efforts ensured the program's success.

This initiative highlights the growing potential of winter sports in Ladakh, fostering local talent and promoting the region as a hub for adventure tourism.

### EC Stanzin Chosphele inaugurates public library at Matho



Executive Councillor of LAHDC Leh, Stanzin Chosphele interacting during the inauguration of the Public Library in Matho.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Executive Councillor of LAHDC Leh, Stanzin Chosphele, inaugurated the newly constructed Public Library in Matho on January 9.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several notable figures, including AG Zargar, ACD Leh; Ghulam Mohd. Mir, BDO Chuchot; Sonam Stanzin,

Chairman of the Village Education Committee (VEC) Matho; Khanpo Thinles Chosal, Ven Sangha; Executive Engineer Abbas Ali; Tsering Angdu, Nambardar Matho; Goba, President of Ama Tsogpa; along with students and community members.

The new Public Library boasts a wide array of books, including textbooks,

reference materials, and other educational resources. Designed with modern infrastructure, the library offers ample seating and a tranquil environment conducive to focused study and leisurely reading.

In his address, EC Stanzin Chosphele emphasized the vision behind the library's establishment, noting its role in enhancing educational facilities in the region. "This library is not just a place for reading; it is a space designed to foster learning, creativity, and intellectual growth for the youth of Matho and beyond. We have ensured modern amenities, from comfortable seating arrangements to surveillance cameras, ensuring safety and convenience for all users," he said.

He also shared plans to operate the library 24/7 in the future, providing uninterrupted access to students and community members at all hours.

This library is part of a larger effort to continually improve educational infrastructure and resources for the people of Matho and surrounding areas.

### 3-day training program on "POSHAN BHI PADHAI BHI" commences



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** A three-day training program on "POSHAN BHI PADHAI BHI," organized by ICDS Project Shargole, be-

gan on January 13 at the CDPO Office, Shargole.

The training was led by Master Trainers Sadiq Ali and Twahira Banoo, who brought extensive expertise and engaging presentation skills to the session. Their interactive approach kept the participants actively involved throughout the day.

The program, supervised by the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), saw participation from a diverse group of stakeholders, including the Supervisor, clerical staff, Block Coordinator, and Anganwadi Workers (AWWs). This diverse representation created a dynamic

and collaborative learning environment. During the session, participants gained insights into the core principles and objectives of the "POSHAN BHI PADHAI BHI" initiative. The trainers explained the program's key concepts, and participants actively engaged by taking notes and asking insightful questions.

The first day concluded on a positive note, with participants expressing enthusiasm about applying their learnings at the grassroots level. The training promises to effectively implement this significant initiative aimed at integrating nutrition and education.

#### NOTICE



Whereas, Tariq Aman S/o Aman Ullah Bhat R/o Saboo, Leh has claimed that his name has been wrongly recorded as Tariq Aman Bhat instead of the correct name which is Tariq Aman in his Ladakh Resident Certificate bearing certificate No. T-Leh/12075-76(R)24 duly issued by Tehsil Office, Leh-Ladakh. Now, I am applying for the correction in my Ladakh Resident Certificate. Objection, if any may be conveyed to Tehsil Office, Leh within 07 days from the date of publication.

#### NOTICE

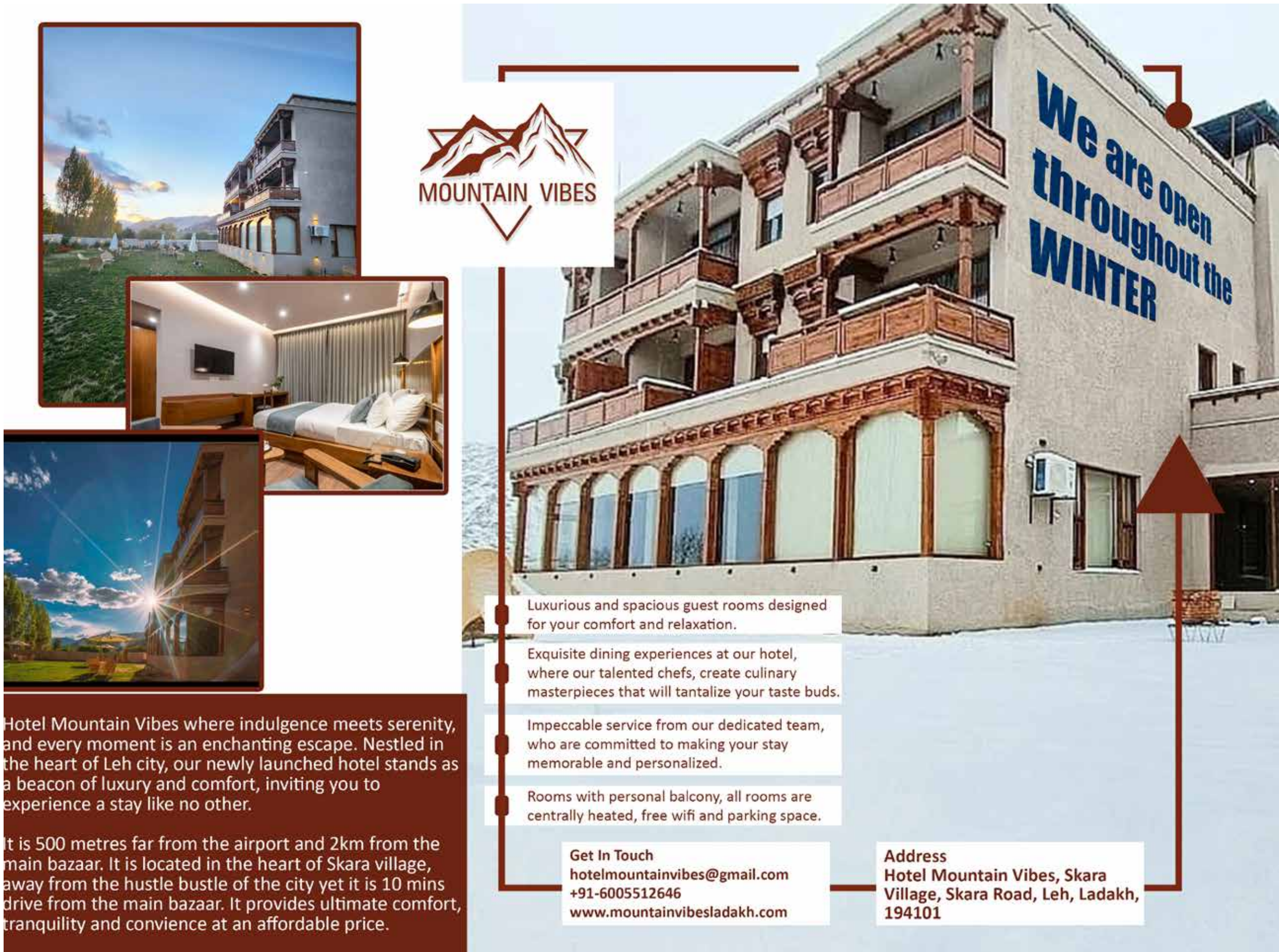
No. 9923665M Ex Nk Skander Ali S/o Ghulam Mehdi R/o Phyang, Leh has claimed that his wife name namely Masuma Bano has been wrongly entered as Masuma Banoo instead of Masuma Bano and also her Date of Birth 20-06-1975 has been wrongly entered as 18-06-1976 instead of 20-06-1975 in the Army record office, Ladakh Scouts and produced an affidavit duly verified by Notary public Leh with Certificate No. IN-LA080958050226022608X to this office for making necessary correction. Hence the notice is hereby served through press to file objection if any in this office, Zila Sainik Welfare Office, Leh UT Ladakh within 7 days from date of publication failing which necessary correction will be made.


#### NOTICE

I, Muddasir Ahmed S/o Mohd Ibrahim R/o Bogdang, Nubra UT Ladakh do hereby notify that my name has been wrongly recorded as Muddasir Ali instead of correct and actual name Muddasir Ahmed in my ST Certificate duly issued by Disket-Nubra Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh with Registration No. TDN-6-9(D)/STC 2019 and Dated on 22-01-2019. Now, I'm applying for changes in my ST Certificate and objection, if any may be conveyed to Disket-Nubra Tehsil Office, Leh UT Ladakh within 07 days from the date of publication.



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