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FEBRUARY 01-15, 2026

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



In Conversation with

Sonam Yangchan: A Journey of Courage, Resilience and Independence

In Focus:

From frozen ponds to International Ice: Skarma Tsultim's inspiring rise



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LG Kavinder Gupta unfurls tricolour, leads Republic Day celebrations in Leh

Urges citizens to uphold constitutional values, work collectively for Viksit Bharat 2047



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta during the 77th Republic Day celebration in Leh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour at the historic Polo Ground on January 26, where the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, unfurled the National Tricolour, inspected the parade and took the salute at an against the backdrop of snow-clad mountains.

Extending Republic Day greetings to the people of Ladakh, the Lt Governor said the Tricolour today flies proudly over Ladakh's peaks and the Siachen Glacier, symbolising the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution. He said Republic Day carries two enduring messages — "The Mantra of Freedom – Vande Mataram," marking its 150th year, and "The Mantra of Prosperity – Aatmanirbhar Bharat," reflecting India's journey towards self-reliance, cultural diversity and national strength.

Kavinder Gupta said Republic Day is not merely a celebration of past achievements but a reaffirmation of citizens' constitutional duties. Recalling that India became the world's largest democracy on January 26,

1950, he said the nation has overcome challenges through unity in diversity and collective responsibility. He noted that India's achievements in economic growth, science, education, healthcare, democratic institutions, culture and social development have earned global admiration.

Highlighting the transformative initiatives undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor referred to milestones such as India emerging as the fifth-largest economy, the digital revolution through UPI and JAM trinity, GST reforms, integration following abrogation of Article 370, flagship schemes including Swachh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat, PM Awas Yojana, Ujjwala, Jal Jeevan Mission, and achievements in space missions such as Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1. He also cited infrastructure expansion, successful COVID-19 vaccination, Production Linked Incentive schemes, NEP-2020, women empowerment legislation, International Solar Alliance leadership and the successful hosting of the G20. He reiterated the Government of India's special focus on border regions through the Vibrant Villages Pro-

gramme to improve infrastructure, livelihoods and quality of life with community participation.

Describing Ladakh's strategic and cultural importance, Kavinder Gupta praised the patriotism of its people. Since assuming office on July 18, 2025, he said he has travelled over 8,000 km by road to remote areas including Dras, Zaskar, Nubra, Changthang, Aryan Valley and border villages to directly engage with citizens. He said this outreach has helped identify local needs, resolve issues, strengthen trust and ensure equitable development, with Administrative Secretaries directed to take governance to the grassroots. He added that youth employment aspirations rooted in Ladakh's tribal identity are being addressed in a sensitive and balanced manner.

The Lt Governor said the UT Administration has accorded high priority to public health, allocating 8.76 per cent of the budget — higher than the national average. He highlighted upgrades at Kargil District Hospital and SNM Hospital Leh, including a 3-Tesla MRI, expansion of emergency services, blood banks, staff housing and sanitation facilities. He said 322 Health and Wellness Centres, mobile medical units and e-Sanjeevani have strengthened healthcare delivery, achieving 100 per cent vaccination, near-universal institutional deliveries and single-digit infant mortality. Preservation of traditional Sowa-Rigpa medicine through the National Institute and progress towards operationalising Leh Medical College were also highlighted.

On education and youth development, Shri Kavinder Gupta spoke about the expansion of Sindhu Central University at Khalsi and introduction of skill-based courses under NEP-2020. He said schools have been strengthened with Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, ICT labs, smart classrooms, tablets for students, Atal Tinkering Labs and

astronomy facilities. Initiatives like REWA 2.0, NCC camps and sports programmes are nurturing talent and competitive spirit.

Calling tourism the backbone of Ladakh's economy, the Lt Governor emphasised sustainable tourism focused on cultural preservation and local livelihoods. He noted the growth of eco-tourism, employment through festivals, youth-designed branding initiatives, and Hanle's recognition as India's first Dark Sky Sanctuary. He highlighted major infrastructure projects including the Zoji La and Shinkun La tunnels, road and bridge construction, helipads, 4G connectivity and digital governance enabling telemedicine and public services.

He also referred to progress in sanitation, renewable energy, winter sports promotion, agriculture, horticulture, dairy, fisheries and entrepreneurship. Digital governance initiatives, women self-help groups, rural employment generation and the launch of the Land Records Web GIS Portal were cited as key reforms.

Outlining his vision for Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta said the UT aims to become a model of inclusive and sustainable development, balancing tradition with modernity and ensuring opportunities for youth, women and border communities.

In his concluding remarks, the Lt Governor paid tribute to the Armed Forces, CAPFs, Ladakh Scouts, police personnel, healthcare workers, teachers and citizens for their service. He urged all to uphold constitutional values and work collectively towards a self-reliant Ladakh contributing to Viksit Bharat 2047.

Kavinder also felicitated the winners of the marching contingents, in which Jaffaria Academy of Modern Education, Kargil stood first, followed by Government Girls Higher Secondary School Leh and Sindh

Public School Leh at second and third places, respectively. Similarly, Mahabodhi Residential School Choglamsar stood first in cultural performance while Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School Leh and Ladakh Public School Leh came second and third, respectively.

The names of the winners of LG Gold Medal, State Award and District Award winners, who have contributed for the development of Ladakh in various fields, were also announced on the occasion.

Earlier, the Lt Governor took salute of the marching contingents, namely Ladakh Police (Men and Women), Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Ex-Servicemen, National Cadet Corps boys and girls from Leh and NCC boys from Kargil, Imamia Model High School Leh, Sindh Public School Leh, Islamia Public School Leh, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Leh, Jaffaria Academy of Modern Education Kargil, Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre band, Ladakh Police pipe band and Government High School Bodh Kharbu band.

Students from various schools and artists from Ladakh Academy of Art Culture and Languages Leh and Kargil also performed on the occasion.

Among those present during the event were Member of parliament from Ladakh Mohamad Haneefa Jan, Chief Secretary Shri Ashish Kundra, DGP Ladakh Shri Mukesh Singh, Administrative Secretaries, senior officials from Army, ITBP, Air Force, Ladakh Police; head of religious and political organisations, heads of Civil Society Organisations, prominent citizens, award winners, Head of Departments/Directors and senior officials from Ladakh along with a large number of crowd.

Kargil celebrates 77th Republic Day at Biamathang with enthusiasm



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The 77th Republic Day of India was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at Biamathang, Kargil, in the presence of public representatives, religious leaders, senior government officials, Army officers, students, and a large number of citizens.

The National Flag was unfurled by the Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun. Among the prominent dignitaries present were Executive Councillors Aga Syed Mujtaba and Kacho Feroz, Deputy Commissioner and CEO, LAHDC Kargil Rakesh Kumar (IAS), SSP Kargil Nitin Yadav, ADC Inteeaz Kacho, Commanding Officer, 121 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Ashish Joshi, along with other Army officers, heads of departments, and

elected representatives.

Addressing the gathering, the CEC extended warm Republic Day greetings and recalled that on January 26, 1950, India adopted its Constitution, laying the foundation of a sovereign, secular, and democratic nation based on the principles of Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. He emphasized that Republic Day is not merely a ceremonial occasion but a reminder of the collective responsibility to uphold constitutional values.

Dr. Akhoun stated that Kargil has always played a vital role in safeguarding national unity and integrity, and its people have consistently demonstrated patriotism, harmony, and resilience. He paid rich tributes to freedom fighters and national

leaders, adding that true homage to them lies in selfless service and dedication towards nation-building.

Highlighting key developmental initiatives under his leadership, the CEC said that LAHDC Kargil is prioritising infrastructure development across sectors such as education, healthcare, roads, drinking water, renewable energy, tourism, and employment. He informed that the construction of 56 school buildings has been completed to strengthen educational infrastructure. Tablets are being provided to over 1,000 students, while winter coaching is being conducted in 73 schools for Classes 10 and 12. The admission capacity of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Khumbathang, has been enhanced from 40 to 80 seats. For the first time, more than 400 students from PM SHRI schools were sent on exposure tours outside the district.

On employment generation, Dr. Akhoun stated that 343 educated youths were provided permanent jobs during the year, and recruitment for graduate-level posts will follow soon. For this achievement, he appreciated the Chairman, KSSRB, and DC Kargil Rakesh Kumar (IAS) for ensuring a fair and transparent recruitment process. He also lauded Secretary, KSSRB Kargil, Jahan-geer Akhoun, for the smooth conduct of examinations at the ground level. Additionally, 553 youths were engaged as teachers under the Academic Arrangement in Hindi, Urdu, and Bhoti.

In the livestock and allied sectors,

the CEC informed that 308 beneficiaries received assistance under animal husbandry schemes, while 11,000 poultry units were distributed to promote poultry farming. In the fisheries sector, 20,000 trout fish seeds and 150 quintals of feed were distributed. Further, ice boxes and insurance coverage were provided to 60 units, along with 10 scooters. The Industries Department sanctioned loans for 47 units under food processing schemes.

Under various schemes of the Rural Development Department (RDD), out of 1,088 works taken up, 867 have been completed. Residential houses are being constructed for 413 BPL families under housing schemes. Under MGNREGA, over 13.28 lakh man-days were generated, with ₹35.98 crore paid as wages. The Labour Department provided ₹9.65 lakh as assistance under welfare schemes.

Dr. Akhoun informed that the Kargil Wing at Ladakh Bhawan, New Delhi, is nearing completion to facilitate accommodation for patients and travellers. Significant progress has also been achieved in Sankoo, Shakar Chiktan, and Zaskar sub-divisions under various construction works.

Tourism has been identified as a priority sector, and efforts are underway to strengthen infrastructure at major tourist destinations. The Cable Car and Chair Lift projects at Zaskar and Drass are expected to commence soon.

In the health sector, a 3-Tesla MRI

machine has been installed at District Hospital Kargil, along with the establishment of a blood bank, while construction of Block 'B' is underway. Additionally, nine ambulances will be inducted shortly. A 128-slice CT scan has also been installed at CHC Sankoo.

The CEC further informed that 531 km of insulated power cable wiring has been laid in Kargil town, with further strengthening of transmission and distribution networks planned. He said the Council has made concerted efforts to keep the Srinagar-Kargil National Highway operational for the maximum possible duration and has requested the Ministry of Civil Aviation to initiate civil air services from Kargil. He added that only about 800 metres of tunnelling work remains to be completed under the Zojila Tunnel project.

Dr. Akhoun congratulated meritorious students and outstanding sportspersons and expressed gratitude to the UT Administration, particularly the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, and district officers for their continued cooperation and support.

A colourful cultural programme featuring patriotic songs, skits, and traditional dances showcased the rich cultural heritage of Ladakh. The celebrations concluded with an award ceremony honouring officers, educators, NGOs, media persons, and frontline workers for their exemplary services.

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Fortnightly News

KIWG 2026: Army retain Ice Hockey Gold, Chandigarh win hearts; Haryana crowned overall champions, hosts Ladakh finish second
 Ladakh skater Skarma Tsultim wins highest four medals (2 gold); Ishaan Darvekar (Maharashtra), Nayana Sri Talluri (Telangana) and Sachin Singh (Haryana) bag two golds each



Photo Caption: Players of the Indian Army after winning men's ice hockey gold medal at the NDS Stadium on Republic Day.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The experienced Indian Army team had to dig deep to edge out a spirited Chandigarh side 3-2 and retain their men's ice hockey gold medal at the NDS Stadium on Republic Day, providing a thrilling finale to the Ladakh leg of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2026.

The decisive goal came just three minutes from the final whistle, ensuring a dramatic ending that matched the festive occasion.

Haryana emerged champions of the Ladakh phase of KIWG 2026, riding on four gold medals secured by their figure skating and ice skating contingent. Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Telangana won two gold medals each but were separated on the medal table by silver counts. Ladakh finished second overall with five silvers, followed by Maharashtra (three silvers) and Telangana (two silvers).

The Chandigarh men's ice hockey team became the surprise package of the tournament after stunning hosts Ladakh 3-2 in the semifinals on Saturday. Having taken up ice hockey only in KIWG 2025, Chandigarh's march to the final was remarkable. Their performance against Army confirmed that their semifinal win was no fluke. After trailing by two

goals, Chandigarh mounted a stunning comeback and nearly forced extra time—an impressive feat, especially considering they had lost 10-1 to Army in the league stage.

The NDS Stadium witnessed unprecedented Republic Day celebrations, with the 5,000-capacity, newly upgraded covered stadium filling up more than an hour before the final.

Army opened the scoring in the sixth minute when Padma Namgail's long-range flick found the net. Tsewang Dorjay doubled the lead in the 10th minute of the first period with a powerful push into the far corner.

The second period remained goalless as Chandigarh played disciplined, clean hockey. Unlike many high-intensity matches, the final was notable for its skill-based, attractive play rather than physicality.

Chandigarh launched a stunning comeback in the final quarter, scoring twice within three minutes. Gurtej Singh Bhatti broke through the Army defence with eight minutes remaining, before Birschahaanjit Singh equalised with a deft flick from behind the Army goal. The goal was awarded after a lengthy video review lasting over 10 minutes.

Shaken by the fightback, Army stepped up their attack. A rare lapse in Chandigarh's defence allowed Padma Norboo to score the match-winner with another long-range effort.

"I think that we are the winners. It was truly an exceptional experience, and everything happened by the grace of God. This journey has meant a lot to us. We promise to work even harder next time, train with more dedication, and fight for trophies at the state level and beyond," said Chandigarh head coach Gaurav Raheja.

Goal-scorer Birschahaanjit said his background in inline hockey helped him adapt quickly to ice hockey. "I have been playing inline hockey for the past eight years, which has given me confidence in skating, dribbling and puck control. This is only my second year on ice. Last year we finished fifth, and the progress we have made is significant. I am confident we will be playing for gold next year," he said.

Army's Padma Namgail admitted his team felt the pressure after Chandigarh's late surge. "Frankly, we didn't expect them to be this good. They played very well, though we were also not at our best today. It happens sometimes against less experienced teams. Against ITBP, we took no chances. Full credit to Chandigarh," he told SAI Media.

Republic Day action at the NDS Stadium began with the 2000m short-track mixed relay heats, featuring the best speed skaters from six teams divided into two groups. The top three qualified for the final.

Nayana Sri Talluri (Telangana), Skarma Tsultim (Ladakh) and Sachin Singh (Haryana) were all in contention for a third gold

medal, but Telangana and Tamil Nadu were disqualified in Heat 1, while Haryana finished last in Heat 2.

The final featured Maharashtra, Ladakh and Karnataka. Maharashtra fielded the strongest combination and lived up to expectations as Ishaan Darvekar, Anvayee Deshpande, Sohan Tarkar and Schaleen Fernandes clinched gold with a timing of 3:22.47. Ladakh, led by Skarma Tsultim, settled for silver (3:29.34), while Karnataka claimed bronze.

At the conclusion of the ice skating events, Ladakh's Skarma Tsultim emerged as the most decorated skater with four medals—gold in the 1000m long track and women's relay, and silver in the 500m long track and mixed relay.

Maharashtra's Ishaan Darvekar (two golds) and Anvayee Deshpande (one gold) finished with three medals each. Nayana Sri Talluri, who had won three golds in KIWG 2025, secured two individual golds this year, while Sachin Singh of Haryana also bagged two gold medals.

"Compared to the previous five editions, the overall standard of ice skating has improved noticeably," observed national coach Mohammad Abbas Nordak.

"Skaters showed better timing, technique and consistency. In men's events, Muthakani Vishnu Vardhan and Sachin Singh stood out, while among women, Nayana and Skarma delivered consistently competitive performances."

"The next step is to nurture these talents through exposure and international competition. Overseas participation will help them understand higher competition levels and prepare for global events," Abbas added.

District Administration Leh honors local heroes on 77th Republic Day



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: On the occasion of the 77th Republic Day, the District Administration of Leh announced the recipients of the District Awards for 2026 during a celebratory event held at the historic Polo Ground, Leh. The administration honoured individuals and organizations for their exemplary contributions to the district's development, heritage preservation, and public welfare.

The awards recognized a diverse group of achievers, ranging from healthcare professionals and mountaineers to grassroots farmers and social organizations, reflecting the multifaceted spirit of service in the region.

List of 2026 district awardees

1.A.G. Zargar, Assistant Commissioner (Development), for achieving 100 per cent expenditure under District Capex.

2.Tsewang Norboo, GQ, Revenue Department, for excellence in electoral roll revision.

3.Tsering Tundup, Orderly, DC Office Leh, for uninterrupted and devoted service.

4.Himmothan Society for sustainable development initiatives in agro-climatic value chains and clean energy.

5.Chherring Mutup, Farmer and Retired Army Personnel, for pioneering sustainable nursery farming.

6.Khyrun Nissa, Senior Pharmacist, SNM Hospital, for providing lifesaving care in over 500 critical cases.

7.Skalzang Rigzin, Mountaineer, for leading over 100 expeditions and mentoring Ladakhi youth.

8.Rigzen Namgail, Pottery Maker, for preserving the age-old pottery craft of Likir.

9.Skarma Chospel, Teacher, PM SHRI Government High School, Thiksey, for academic excellence and leadership.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, stated that the awardees embody the "spirit of resilience and innovation" that defines Ladakh. "Their contributions are not merely personal achievements but serve as the building blocks of a more prosperous and sustainable district," the DC remarked.

The ceremony concluded with a vibrant cultural programme and the distribution of citations and medals to the awardees in the presence of government officials, community leaders, and members of the general public.

Rozgar Mela empowers youth, drives India towards Viksit Bharat: LG Ladakh



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta with the newly recruited youths during the Appointment Letter Distribution Ceremony under the 18th phase of the Rozgar Mela.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on January 24 handed over appointment letters to newly recruited youths during the Appointment Letter Distribution Ceremony under the 18th phase of the Rozgar Mela, held at the 16th Battalion of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) here.

Director General of Police Mukesh Singh, Administrative Secretary Bhanu Prabha and senior ITBP officials were present on the occasion.

Describing the event as a proud and inspiring moment, the Lt Governor said the Rozgar Mela was a landmark initiative under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi aimed at empowering youth and ensuring their active participation in nation-building. He informed that the Prime Minister, through video conferencing, distributed appointment letters to over 61,000 youths across the country, calling it not merely a recruitment drive but a significant step towards fulfilling the aspirations of young Indians and strengthening their confidence.

The Lt Governor said the 18th Rozgar Mela was being organised simultaneously at 45 locations across the country, with selected candidates joining various central ministries and departments, including Home Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Financial Services and Higher Education.

Emphasising that the newly appointed youths represented the nation's energy, dedication and confidence, Kavinder Gupta said aligning these qualities with public service would directly contribute to national progress. He urged the recruits to discharge their duties with honesty, integrity and a strong sense of responsibility, while embracing a "Citizen First" approach.

Referring to the vision of Viksit Bharat, the Lt Governor said youth have played a pivotal role in India's development over the past 11 years. He noted that more than 11 lakh appointment letters have been issued so far under the Rozgar Mela, making it a powerful platform for employment generation.

Highlighting broader employment initiatives, he said the government's efforts extend beyond government jobs. Under the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, the target is to provide employment to 3.5 crore youths, while initiatives such as the Skill India Mission and the National Career Service Platform are equipping young people with skills and access to millions of job opportunities.

The Lt Governor underscored the importance of holding a national programme like the Rozgar Mela in a remote and strategic region such as Ladakh, stating that it reflected the government's commitment to ensuring that development and opportunities reach every corner of the country. He described the newly appointed youths as the hope of their families, society and the nation.

Congratulating all the appointees, Kavinder Gupta expressed confidence that they would serve the nation with dedication and sincerity. He also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in empowering India's youth.

The Lt Governor lauded the role of the ITBP in supporting the Rozgar Mela initiative, noting that several newly appointed candidates had been inducted into the force. He said providing employment opportunities in disciplined forces like the ITBP not only strengthens national security but also offers meaningful career paths to youths, particularly in strategic and remote regions.

The Lt Governor handed appointment letters to candidates inducted into the CRPF, ITBP and BSF, including Mohammad Hussain (CRPF); Tashi Namgyal, Stanzin, Stanzin Tamphel, Mohd Latif, Nawang Gyatso, Tsering Dolker, Rigzin Angmo, Deachen Dolker and Ishay Dolker (ITBP); and Jigmet Palmo, Fayaz Ahmad, Stanzin, Iftikhar Hussain and Anayat Ali (BSF).

New recruits Anayat Ali and Tsering Dolker shared their experiences on the occasion. DIG Rishab Kumar welcomed the gathering, while Commandant Chandra Mishra proposed the vote of thanks.

ITBP reclaim women's ice-hockey gold at KIWG 2026
 Ladakh men take bronze; Telangana's Nayana Sri Talluri wins second skating gold



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Ladakh's dream run at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 suffered a cruel twist on January 25 as ITBP reclaimed the women's ice-hockey gold with a dramatic extra-time win at the Nawang Dorjay Stobdan (NDS) Stadium.

In a gripping final that ended 1-1 in regulation time, ITBP struck within nine seconds of extra time to clinch a 2-1 victory. It was a repeat of last year's final, and once again Ladakh were left heartbroken.

Ladakh had looked on course to defend their title after Shamina Khatoon opened the scoring in the 17th minute. However, ITBP's India international Stanzin Dolkar—popularly known as Tani—produced a sensational equaliser in the third period to force extra time. Dolkar then struck again almost immediately, converting from a goalmouth melee to seal the golden goal.

The win ensured ITBP would not leave the Games empty-handed.

Earlier in the day, Ladakh's men redeemed themselves by securing the ice-hockey bronze medal with a fighting 3-2 win over ITBP. The hosts bounced back strongly after an eventful Saturday in which underdogs

Chandigarh stunned Ladakh 3-2 in the semifinals. Ladakh had earlier beaten ITBP 3-1 in the league stage.

With one day remaining in KIWG 2026, Haryana continue to lead the medal tally with four gold medals. Ladakh are second with two golds, while Telangana also have two golds but trail the hosts on silver medals.

On Sunday morning, Telangana's Nayana Sri Talluri claimed her second consecutive gold medal at the short-course skating rink at NDS Stadium. The Calgary-based teenager produced a tactically astute performance in the women's 1000m short track, shifting gears midway through the race to finish strongly in 1:43.32 seconds.

Ladakh's Skarma Tsultim, one of Nayana's chief rivals, crashed while attempting to accelerate, while Maharashtra's Anvayee Deshpande pushed Nayana close before settling for silver in 1:43.43. Schaleen Fernandes of Maharashtra won bronze with a time of 1:46.41.

Nayana became the third skater at KIWG 2026 to win two individual gold medals. Haryana's Sachin Singh and Ladakh's Skarma Tsultim have also won two golds each (individual and

relay).

Late on Saturday, Ladakh were awarded the women's 1000m long track gold after the event at Gupukh's Pond was disrupted by a snowstorm. Skarma Tsultim had led a Ladakh clean sweep in that race.

Maharashtra celebrated their first gold of the Games on Sunday when Ishaan Darvekar won the men's 1000m short track in 1:35.57 seconds. It was Ishaan's second medal of KIWG 2026, following a silver in the 500m short track. Telangana took both silver and bronze in the event.

In clearer afternoon conditions at Gupukh's Pond, Karnataka's 18-year-old Srivatsa S Rao stunned the field to win the men's 1000m long track gold in 1:36.64.

The junior champion from the 2024 Khelo India Winter Games finished ahead of Tamil Nadu's Avikshith Vijay (1:37.73) and Selva Kumar M (1:39.41).

"I am very happy to win this gold medal. Some of my idols were participating in the race, and to finish ahead of them is a special moment for me. I hope one day to win an Olympic medal for my country—that is my ultimate aim," Srivatsa told SAI Media.

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
ICE SKATING – FINALS

Men's 1000m short track:
1.Ishaan Darvekar (Maharashtra) – 1:35.57

2.Muthakani Vishnu Vardhan (Telangana) – 1:40.72

3.D. Shiva Manikan Prabha (Telangana) – 1:44.19

Women's 1000m short track:
1.Nayana Sri Talluri (Telangana) – 1:43.32

2.Anvayee Deshpande (Maharashtra) – 1:43.43

3.Schaleen Fernandes (Maharashtra) – 1:46.41

Men's 1000m long track:
1.Srivatsa S Rao (Karnataka) – 1:36.64

2.Avikshith Vijay Viswanat (Tamil Nadu) – 1:37.73

3.Selva Kumar M (Tamil Nadu) – 1:39.41

ICE HOCKEY
Men's bronze medal match:
Ladakh beat ITBP 3-2

Women's final:
ITBP beat Ladakh 2-1 (1-1 at full time)

Fortnightly News

LG Ladakh holds comprehensive review meeting with departmental secretaries

Directs fast-tracking of pending projects, speedy file clearances



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: A comprehensive departmental review meeting was chaired by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, at the LG Secretariat, on January 27 where progress across key sectors was thoroughly assessed and future priorities were clearly outlined.

Among those present were Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, DGP Ladakh Mukesh Singh, Administrative Secretaries- Dr L Franklin, Sanjit Rodrigues, PT Rudra Goud, Bhupesh Chaudhary, Shashanka Ala, Bhanu Prabha, Michael D'Souza, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Rakesh Kumar, Directors, Heads of Departments, and other senior officials.

Following discussion on the outcomes and deliverables of the last review meeting, the Administrative Secretaries apprised about budget allocation and utilisation, alongside status updates on Prime Minister Development Package (PMDP), Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) of Power Development Department, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Central Road Infrastructure Funds (CRIF) projects, BSNL's 4G saturation drive, renewable power initiatives, Health and Medical Education infrastructure progress, Vibrant Villages Programme implementation, Leh-Kargil Master Plans, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) adoption by Ladakh Police, Ease of Doing Business initiatives, tourism development efforts, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and cooperatives empowerment, extension of PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PM-FBY) and PM Krishi Sin-

chayee Yojana (PMKSY), prison reforms, manpower optimisation, CSR utilisation, departmental event sponsorships, and renovation works at monasteries and heritage sites across Ladakh.

There was deliberation on extension of PMFBY and PMKSY to provide crop insurance to farmers against disasters, with corpus funds proposed for horticulture crop protection from untimely snowfall or rainfall. There were also discussions on recruitment drives for gazetted, UT, and district cadre posts, including feasibility of examination centres outside Ladakh for candidates' convenience; awareness outreach for disability reservations, supported by organisations like PAGIR, alongside counselling for drug-affected youth through Health Department psychiatrists and activation of Drug Deaddiction Centres in Leh and Kargil by Social Welfare Department. Early notification of Development Authorities to enforce municipal laws against haphazard urban growth in Leh and Kargil, reservations for persons with disabilities, ex-servicemen, ex-Agniveer, and ex-SPOs in government jobs and prioritisation of renovation of heritage sites and monasteries by Tourism and Culture Department were also discussed in the meeting.

Other key matters discussed during the meeting included inter-departmental collaboration for border villages' development under Vibrant Villages Programme, incorporating small infrastructure like quarters and boundary walls for holistic progress under the pro-

gramme, with scheme convergence through Rural Development Department; compilation of mobile tower data and identification of dark spots for 4G saturation, identification of emergency mitigation projects like flood embankments for timely relief of villagers, expected power demand surge post-Zoji La tunnel completion, optimum manpower utilisation and CSR effectiveness.

Following presentations, the Lt Governor directed completion of all pending projects and prompt file clearances to prevent any disruption to development or public welfare initiatives. Administrative Secretaries were instructed to tour rural areas for direct grievance redressal and expedite Bhawan developments in Delhi, Chandigarh, and other locations.

Kavinder Gupta tasked the Health and Medical Education Department with mapping specialists—cardiologists, oncologists, urologists—for Leh and Kargil District Hospitals under NHM to ensure superior healthcare access to the people of Ladakh.

All Administrative Secretaries were directed by the Lt Governor to ensure timely and effective implementation of the meeting's decisions. Judicious utilisation of budgetary resources was emphasised, along with priority disposal of pending matters and mission-mode execution of major schemes and projects for tangible ground-level outcomes. Proposals to the Government of India were mandated to be prepared and submitted within stipulated timelines, maintaining zero tolerance for delays in public service delivery, security, and grievance redressal.

He also asked the Chief Secretary for regular review of decisions taken in the meeting, asking all departments to present clear, outcome-oriented, and measurable progress reports at the next review meeting.

bound implementation of the proposed reforms.

Earlier, Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra also held a meeting with various stakeholders to review the ongoing exercise. During the interaction, detailed discussions were held on issues such as strengthening the online portal for tourism-related services, simplifying hotel registration procedures, streamlining certification renewal processes, and addressing other regulatory requirements impacting stakeholders.

The stakeholder meeting provided a platform for sharing concerns and suggestions, enabling the administration to identify practical measures for reducing procedural bottlenecks, enhancing transparency, and improving ease of doing business in the tourism and allied sectors.

Underscoring the importance of proactive engagement, the Chief Secretary directed all departments to adhere strictly to timelines, ensure transparency in implementation, and continuously review regulatory provisions to align them with the evolving needs of governance and development in the Union Territory.

tory reforms to improve efficiency and streamline departmental processes, while also addressing sector-specific challenges, proposed simplifications, and a clear roadmap for implementation.

The roadmap included defined timelines, inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, and monitoring frameworks to ensure timely execution of the proposed reforms. Emphasis was laid on leveraging digital solutions, eliminating redundant approvals, and adopting citizen-centric approaches in regulatory practices.

The Chief Secretary reviewed department-wise roles and responsibilities, progress achieved under the compliance reduction and deregulation exercise, and key regulatory issues requiring intervention. He stressed the need for coordinated efforts among departments to ensure effective and time-

Secretary, School Education reviews winter coaching classes at High School Likir



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LIKIR: Bhanu Phabha, Secretary, School Education, UT Ladakh, visited High School Likir on January 22 to review the ongoing winter coaching classes conducted by the Village Education Committee (VEC).

During the visit, she inspected the arrangements and advised school authorities and VEC members to ensure proper heating and adequate lighting facilities for students. The winter coaching classes, held for all grades including Classes X and XII, aim to compensate for lost instructional days due to the long winter break. Teachers conduct extra

classes with special attention to weaker students to strengthen their conceptual understanding.

The VEC of High School Likir, along with the local community, is also conducting outreach programs to encourage parents to send their wards to these classes. The initiative is expected to improve learning outcomes while enabling students to make effective use of their vacation period.

Later, Phabha visited the residential coaching classes at Government Middle School, Skara, designed for Class X students from High School

Likir, High School Basgo, High School Nimoo, and High School Phyang. She interacted with teachers and students, motivating them to prepare diligently for the upcoming board examinations. She also directed the headmasters of the concerned schools to ensure smooth conduct and all necessary arrangements for the residential classes.

The winter residential classes, especially for Classes X and XII, are considered crucial for enhancing board examination performance. The School Education Department (SED) appreciated the efforts of teachers, lecturers, headmasters, and principals who have been instrumental in conducting these residential coaching classes for the past three years.

The Secretary emphasised that the SED is committed not only to improving overall learning outcomes but also to providing every student with the best opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

LG Kavinder reviews functioning of NHPC Nimoo Bazgo Power Project at Alchi Stresses integration of renewable energy for Ladakh's long-term development



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta with First Lady Bindu Gupta at the NHPC Nimoo Bazgo Power Project at Alchi to review its overall functioning and operational status.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, accompanied by First Lady Bindu Gupta, on January 22 visited the NHPC Nimoo Bazgo Power Project at Alchi to review its overall functioning and operational status.

Sanjay Kumar Rai, General Manager (Mechanical), NHPC Ltd, along with his team, welcomed the Lieutenant Governor and the First Lady.

During the visit, Rai briefed the Lt Governor on various aspects of the project's operations, highlighting peak power generation during May to September, electricity distribution through substations across Ladakh, and factors influencing seasonal variations in generation. At the Control & Command Centre and Early Warning Centre, he explained the real-time data collection system monitoring the flow and discharge of the Indus and Zaskar rivers, as well as the spillway gate system that ensures dam operations during extreme winter conditions.

Through a detailed pre-

sentation, Rai outlined the project's journey, noting that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) was submitted in 2003 and the project became operational in 2013 at a total cost of ₹985.15 crore. He also highlighted the commissioning of the 220 kV Phyang-Alusteng Northern Grid connection in 2019. NHPC's contributions to local communities were also shared, including the supply of pollution-free electricity, employment opportunities, and a range of CSR initiatives such as construction of toilets and classrooms, repair of local infrastructure, internship programs, installation of streetlights in Alchi and adjoining areas, and distribution of ice hockey kits to local players.

The Lieutenant Governor commended NHPC for ensuring uninterrupted and reliable power supply in Ladakh despite harsh sub-zero climatic conditions. He praised the technical expertise, professionalism, and dedication of the project team, noting their consistent efforts, innovation, and commitment have been key to maintaining safe

and efficient operations even during peak winter months, supporting essential services and regional development.

He highlighted that such landmark infrastructure projects strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on external power sources, and lay a strong foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth in Ladakh. He also underscored the importance of resilient engineering and long-term planning in geographically and climatically challenging areas.

The Lt Governor stressed the need to further strengthen CSR initiatives in education, healthcare, and sports, assuring full support from the UT Administration for projects that positively impact local communities.

Kavinder Gupta also expressed keen interest in integrating renewable energy solutions tailored to local requirements, emphasising that sustainable power generation is vital for Ladakh's long-term development.

Informed, active citizens key to strengthening democracy: LG Ladakh



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta addressing during the 16th National Voters' Day celebrations.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on January 25 emphasised the role of informed and active citizens in strengthening India's democratic framework, calling for greater civic awareness and responsible participation in the electoral process.

He was addressing the 16th National Voters' Day celebrations at the APJ Abdul Kalam Extension Centre Auditorium here. This year's theme was "My India, My Vote", with the tagline "Citizen at the Heart of Indian Democracy".

Highlighting the significance of the theme, the Lt Governor said democracy begins not merely in institutions but with the conscious participation of every voter. He underlined that each vote plays a decisive role in shaping the nation's development priorities and future direction.

Commending the people of Ladakh for their unwavering faith in democracy despite the region's challenging geographical conditions, he said the Union Territory stood as a strong example of democratic commitment, proving that difficult terrain could never weaken democratic spirit.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, the Lt Governor said the true strength of democracy lay in public participation, particularly through voting. He urged youth to engage actively in the democratic process, describing young voters as not just participants of the present but architects of India's future.

Addressing first-time voters, Kavinder Gupta expressed confidence in the younger generation's ability to shoulder nation-building responsibilities. He said the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 would largely depend on today's youth, especially in Ladakh, which acquired a distinct administrative identity in 2019.

The Lt Governor stressed that development in Ladakh must go hand in hand with preservation of its unique culture, traditions and fragile environment. He called upon youth to work towards making Ladakh modern, prosperous and self-reliant while safeguarding its ecological and cultural heritage.

Appealing to all eligible citizens, he urged active participation in the electoral roll purification pro-

cess and encouraged new voters who had attained the age of 18 to register themselves through the concerned Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

He expressed gratitude to the Election Commission of India, district administration, BLOs, volunteers and security forces for ensuring free, fair and smooth electoral processes in the region. Concluding his address, the Lt Governor called for a collective pledge to vote, inspire others to do so, uphold democratic values, and work towards an inclusive and empowered Viksit Bharat.

Earlier, the Lt Governor virtually inaugurated the 16th National Voters' Day special camp stall at Main Market, Leh, distributed EPIC cards to 10 first-time voters, and announced a grant of ₹10 lakh to PAGIR for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra described National Voters' Day as a special occasion celebrating democracy. Recalling India's choice of democracy after Independence, he commended the Election Commission for conducting impartial elections and acknowledged the crucial role played by election officials in strengthening the electoral system.

Stressing that every vote counts, he highlighted the importance of voter enrolment, particularly among first-time voters. He directed the School and Higher Education Departments to conduct voter registration campaigns in schools and colleges and urged citizens to exercise their franchise.

State election icons—renowned singer and actor Phonsok Ladakhi, filmmaker Stanzin Dorjey Gya, and Tsewang Dorjey from PAGIR—also shared their experiences and efforts in encouraging voter participation during the Lok Sabha elections.

Deputy Commissioner Leh, who is also the District Election Officer, delivered the welcome address. The voters' pledge was administered on the occasion, and cultural performances by the Shawa Musical Band added colour to the event.

Administrative Secretary Bhanu Prabha, ADC Leh Ghulam Mohd, DIHAR scientist Nilesh Sharma, Booth Level Officers, first-time voters and senior officials were among those present.

Chief Secretary chairs review meeting on compliance reduction and deregulation



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on January 27 chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Compliance Reduction and Deregulation exercise being undertaken across various departments of the UT.

The meeting aimed to review existing regulatory frameworks and identify opportunities to simplify procedures, reduce unnecessary compliance, and enhance ease of governance for citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. Senior officers from concerned departments participated in the deliberations.

During the meeting, a detailed PowerPoint presentation was made highlighting key sub-priority areas identified under the deregulation initiative, along with a proposed action plan. The presentation outlined priority sectors requiring regula-

tion reforms to improve efficiency and streamline departmental processes, while also addressing sector-specific challenges, proposed simplifications, and a clear roadmap for implementation.

The roadmap included defined timelines, inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, and monitoring frameworks to ensure timely execution of the proposed reforms. Emphasis was laid on leveraging digital solutions, eliminating redundant approvals, and adopting citizen-centric approaches in regulatory practices.

The Chief Secretary reviewed department-wise roles and responsibilities, progress achieved under the compliance reduction and deregulation exercise, and key regulatory issues requiring intervention. He stressed the need for coordinated efforts among departments to ensure effective and time-

DHEW, Mission Shakti Leh organises two-day SEE Learning workshop for Igoo village students



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW), Mission Shakti, Leh, organised a two-day workshop on January 22 and 23 on Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) Learning for students of Igoo Village, aimed at promoting holistic well-being, emotional values among children.

The workshop was conducted as part of a community-based educational initiative and focused on enhancing students' self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, communica-

tion skills, leadership qualities, and ethical decision-making.

The sessions were designed to be interactive and participatory, encouraging active engagement through discussions and experiential learning activities.

The programme was facilitated by Tsering Angmo, Resource Person from DIET Leh, who conducted various activity-based sessions, group discussions, and reflective exercises to help students understand the importance of SEE Learning and its practical ap-

plication in daily life.

The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and was well received by the local community, which acknowledged the relevance of SEE Learning in nurturing emotionally resilient, confident, and socially responsible individuals.

Such initiatives undertaken by DHEW, Mission Shakti Leh, play a vital role in strengthening value-based education and contributing to the overall development of children, particularly in rural areas.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with
Sonam Yangchan: A Journey of Courage, Resilience and Independence

Q. Can you share your journey of living with a disability and how you overcame the challenges to reach where you are today?

Jullay, and thank you for having me. I am from Hemis Shukpachan and presently work as an Account Assistant in the Handicraft Department.

Talking about my disability, my mother told me that I was born with spinal defects. At that time, there was very little awareness about such conditions. Since there were no immediate complications, it went unnoticed. I had a small swelling on my spine, and when my mother consulted a doctor, he examined me thoroughly and found everything normal. He reassured my mother that I was fine and just needed to keep warm.

The years passed like this. When I was in class 3, I went out with friends in winter for ice skating. I slipped, and one of my legs got deformed. I was still able to walk, but my legs gradually worsened over time. I started feeling tired, unable to walk properly, and slowly began losing sensations in my legs. Seeking guidance, we consulted local oracles who advised against any treatment, saying everything would be fine.

One day, I met Rewa Society, and they informed me that therapy was crucial for my condition. I underwent therapy diligently until class 5. Later, they told me that I would need surgery. Along with me, 10 to 11 children with different conditions also went to Delhi for surgery.

In October 2008, I reached Delhi for surgery, but the appointment at AIIMS was scheduled for February—a long wait. We went to St. Stephen’s Hospital, where they agreed to operate the next day after reviewing my history and completing formalities. The surgery lasted 10 hours—I went in at 8 a.m. and came out at 6 p.m. When I woke up from heavy anesthesia, I saw my mother, worried and by my side the whole day. She asked me to eat, but I told her I was fine.

When I tried to move my body, I realized there was no sensation below my legs. I got scared and asked my mother, who was also frightened. The doctor reassured us that with therapy and time, I would recover.

One year passed with continuous therapy, but there was no improvement. When we consulted the doctor again, they told us it would take time. Coming from a middle-class family with little awareness or support, we lived with hope and continued therapy. I had to stop attending school, but the teachers allowed me to study at home and appear for exams. From class 6 to 8, I studied

Interviewed by Morup Stanzin



Photo Caption: Sonam Yangchan with her parents.

“Courage, acceptance, and education can turn life’s greatest challenges into strength. I feel it is important to have empathy, inclusion, and the creation of a society where everyone can live with dignity and independence.”

at home with the help of my tutor, Sir Tsewang Dorjay.

A physiotherapist from Germany, working with Rewa Society, studied my case and invited me to Germany for treatment. I initially hesitated, saying I was dependent and could not travel without my mother. In June 2011, I went to Germany with my mother. There, my deformed left leg was treated. I stayed in the hospital for one month and continued therapy for three months after discharge.

In 2012, I returned to Germany to receive prosthetic legs and crutches. In 9th standard, I rejoined school. I completed class 10 at Mahabodhi School and classes 11 and 12 at Lamdon School. I was fortunate to have supportive friends and am deeply grateful to my parents, who sacrificed so much and gave me unwavering care, time, and patience.

I studied agriculture for four years in Jammu and pursued a master’s degree in Delhi. Today, I am independent—financially and personally—and nothing would have been possible without the love, support, and sacrifices of my parents.

Q. In one of your videos, you mentioned that disability can happen to anyone, and the support of family and people around you is crucial. What would you like to share about this?

My mother has been with me through all the ups and downs of my life. When my health challenges began, she even left her job at ICDS to take care of me. From class 6 until now, she has been by my side constantly. My father managed all the household and societal responsibilities so that my mother could devote her time to me.

Even when I was studying in Jammu and Delhi, my mother stayed with me. The schools and hostels I attended were very supportive—they provided all necessary facilities and allowed my mother to stay with me. My siblings, friends, and everyone around me also gave immense support, which truly kept me going.

A person with a disability needs continuous support, encouragement, and patience to excel in life. Without my parents’ time, care, and dedication, I would not have reached where I am today.

Q. You are working with the Handicraft Department. Can you tell us about the importance of having disability-friendly infrastructure and the challenges faced in its absence?

I have always been concerned about accessibility, and I have emphasized its importance since my childhood on various occasions.

...continues on page 6

Fortnight Highlights



Chief Secretary of the UT-Ladakh, Ashish Kundra visited Nubra Sub-Division on a two-day tour to review ongoing developmental works and assess issues related to local governance and public welfare in the region.



Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk, unfurled the national tricolour at the DC Office, Leh, marking the 77th Republic Day celebrations. Officials and staff of the DC Office, Leh, were present on the occasion.



Kunthus Tsogspa Nimoo (KTN) inaugurated the Astro Turf Futsal Ground at Chumdo, Nimoo, in a function held with active participation of the local community. The project has been supported by Royal Enfield Social Mission and LAHDC Leh and has been constructed using FIFA-certified turf, aimed at promoting sports culture and youth development in the region.



Students of the Department of Mass Communication & Journalism completed a 60-hour internship programme in Delhi from 9 January to 17 January under the PMUSHA scheme.



Maharashtra’s short-track ice skater Sohan Tarkar became a victim of depression in 2020 after making India proud. Tarkar, returning to game in 2024, took part in 2025 Asian Winter Games (Harbin, China) and are currently competing in Play India Winter Games 2026.



Lok Niwas Ladakh, hosted its customary “At Home” function in connection with the 77th Republic Day of India. The event was hosted by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, in the presence of First Lady Bindu Gupta. Representatives of religious institutions, students, entrepreneurs, elected representatives, prominent citizens, sportspersons, academicians, senior civil and police officers, and officers of the Armed Forces and CAPFs attended the reception.



For the first time in history, double-humped Bactrian camels from Ladakh, named Gabwan and Nubra, strutted down Kartavya Path during the Republic Day Parade.



Chandigarh scripted history at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 with a stunning 3-2 come-from-behind victory over hosts Ladakh in the men’s ice-hockey semifinals on the night of January 23, booking their first-ever entry into the final and becoming the surprise package of the tournament.

Fortnightly News

In Focus:

From frozen ponds to International Ice: Skarma Tsultim’s inspiring rise ...Continuity of page 4

without charging fees and has often borne expenses himself,” she says. “Whenever we felt like quitting, sir worked harder than us.”

Financial constraints still limit participation in many international competitions. However, platforms like the Khelo India Winter Games have given athletes like Skarma identity, confidence, and exposure—helping them transition from the basic to the elite level.

Now, as she competes in the 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, Skarma Tsultim will participate in relay events as well as the 500m and 1000m short-track races. Her journey was not driven by ambition alone but shaped by consistent training, institutional support, and a community that stood by her at crucial moments.

The Olympic dream she first glimpsed seven years ago—when she laced up skating shoes for the first time—is no longer just hers. It belongs to her family, her coach, and all of Ladakh. True to the meaning of her name—Skarma, meaning star in Ladakhi—she may one day shine not only at Khelo India but on the Olympic stage itself.

77th Republic Day celebrated at Khaltse sub-division



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KHALTSE: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at the SDM Stadium, Khaltse, on January 26, reflecting the true spirit of the nation.

salute of the marching contingents.

Addressing the gathering, Incharge SDM Asgar Ali extended heartfelt gratitude to all participants and highlighted the significance of Republic Day by recalling the sacrifices of freedom fighters and underlining the importance of the Constitution. He also appreciated the achievements and dedicated efforts of various departments, particularly highlighting the successful implementation of the “Memangs-Si-Rjabstok” campaign conducted in the

Incharge Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Khaltse, Asgar Ali unfurled the National Flag, followed by the rendition of the National Anthem by students of Government Higher Secondary School, Khaltse. A Guard of Honour was presented by the Ladakh Police, Khaltse, after which the Incharge SDM took the

Sub-Division in November 2025.

Munsiff Judge, Khaltse, Deldan Angmo graced the occasion as the distinguished guest.

The parade was commanded by Sub-Inspector (SI) Skarma Anchuk. Marching contingents included students from Government Higher Secondary School, Khaltse; Government Higher Secondary School, Skurbuchan; Government High School, Wanla; along with the band party from Government Higher Secondary School, Khaltse.

The cultural programme featured vibrant performances by local artists from Khaltse village and students of Government Higher Secondary School, Khaltse; Government Higher Secondary School, Skurbuchan; and Government High School, Wanla.

The celebrations concluded with the distribution of prizes to the winners of the march-past and cultural performances.

The event was attended by Station House Officer (SHO), Khaltse, Jamyang Namgail, officers and officials from various departments of Sub-Division Khaltse, venerable monks, nambardars, and local villagers.

Similarly, the 77th Republic Day was also celebrated at Naibats Temisgam, Wanla, and Skurbuchan. The respective Naib Tehsildars unfurled the National Flag followed by the rendition of the National Anthem. Naib Tehsildar Mohd Iqbal unfurled the flag at Naibat Temisgam, Naib Tehsildar Phuntsog Namgail at Naibat Wanla, and Naib Tehsildar Abdul Samad at Naibat Skurbuchan.

In Conversation with

Sonam Yangchan: A Journey of Courage, Resilience and Independence ...Continuity of page 5

Accessibility is vital for every person with a disability, as it greatly eases daily life. When I first started coming to the office, I had to be carried up the stairs every day and needed help to use the washroom, which became very difficult for me. Although people were always willing to help, it was troublesome for everyone.

I am very grateful to the Assistant Director of the Handicraft Department, who understood my difficulties. I wrote a letter requesting accessibility improvements for moving around the office and using the washroom. The AD promptly forwarded it to the higher authorities, and within six months, a lift was installed. Within two months, a separate washroom was also constructed for me.

These facilities have greatly eased my life and given me independence. While I am fortunate to have my mother’s constant support, not everyone has such assistance. This is why disability-friendly infrastructure is essential—to allow people with disabilities to move, work, and live freely without constant dependence or worry.

Q. Despite facing physical challenges, you never gave up and prioritized your education, which is very important. What would you like to say about it?

When I think about it today, I feel proud of myself for never giving up and continuing my studies despite all the challenges I faced. Life could have been very difficult and limited if I had stopped studying. I have always been good at academics and used to participate in various co-curricular activities. Perhaps that is why the thought of giving up never even occurred to me.

The school’s support, allowing me to study at home and appear only for exams, also gave me no excuse to quit. With the help of a home tutor, I was able to study effectively and score well. My parents’ constant encouragement further motivated me to continue pursuing education.

Support from family, friends, teachers, and others at every level helped me keep moving forward and inspired me to achieve something meaningful. I had planned to pursue a PhD, but I got selected for a job in the meantime. I decided to work while keeping the dream alive for the future.

My message to everyone is: stay strong, no matter how much people may let you down. It’s all about living with your own strength. Never let anything stand in the way of your education—education is essential and can empower you to overcome all obstacles.

Q. Do you ever feel that if the disability issue had never existed, life could have been better with greater opportunities?

Life is uncertain; you never know what tomorrow holds. Disability is something that requires acceptance—you can’t just sit back, cry, or regret. It is a part of your life, and the focus should be on living in the present. I never dwell on “what could have been” or think that life would have been better otherwise. Instead, I focus on the present and make the best use of it.

ITBP Men’s and Women’s teams lift 5th LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship 2026

LG highlights Ice Hockey as integral to Ladakh’s identity and way of life



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: ITBP men’s and women’s teams lifted the 5th LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship 2026, which concluded with a grand closing ceremony on January 16 in Kargil.

Ladakh will host the 6th Khelo India Winter Games from January 20 at the international-standard Indoor Ice Hockey Rink in Leh. Constructed at a cost of around ₹51 crore, the facility is equipped with a fully automated chilling plant, modern spectator amenities, and provisions for year-round training and competitions, marking a historic milestone in Ladakh’s sports infrastructure.

thrilling, and inspiring, adding that the true spirit of sports lies not only in winning medals but in building character and team spirit.

The Lt Governor lauded the District Administration Kargil, Sports Department, organising committee, volunteers, security agencies, and local residents for the successful conduct of the championship and formally declared the 5th LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship 2026 closed. He later felicitated the winning ITBP men’s and women’s teams and presented the trophies.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAH-DC Kargil, Dr. Mohammad Jaffer Akhoun, appreciated the Department of Youth Services and Sports for organising the tournament in a professional manner and requested the Lt Governor to consider continuing the CEC Ice Hockey Cup with budgetary support. He also stressed the need for administrative approval for the proposed multi-car parking project to improve infrastructure for major sporting events.

Administrative Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Moses Kunzang, emphasised the growing importance of the LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship and appreciated the support of the Curling Federation of India (CFI) in promoting winter sports in Ladakh.

As part of the programme, friendly demonstration matches of ice skating and ice curling were also organised, highlighting the expanding scope of winter sports in the region.

Among those present were Executive Councillors and Councillors of LAH-DC Kargil; SSP Kargil Nitin Yadav; ADC Kargil Inteeaz Kacho; Director School Education Tsering Paldan; Joint Director YSS Tahir Hussain; and senior officials from the Sports Department and Curling Federation of India.

Nyoma sub-division celebrates 77th Republic Day



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NYOMA: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour across Nyoma Sub-Division, with the main function held at Government Middle School, Nyoma.

lighting the significance of Republic Day and the values enshrined in the Constitution of India. He also inspected the march-past contingents, accompanied by SHO Nyoma.

A total of five march-past contingents participated in the parade, representing Government Middle School, Nyoma; Government Middle School, Mudh; Higher Secondary

On the occasion, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Nyoma, Shri Kacho Asgar Ali, hoisted the National Flag and delivered an inspiring address, high-

School, Nyoma; Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Nyoma; and Ladakh Police.

The celebrations were further enriched by vibrant cultural performances presented by villagers from Mudh, Nyoma, Nidhar, and Teyar, along with students from KGBV Nyoma, Higher Secondary School Nyoma, Government Middle School Mudh, and Government Middle School Nyoma.

During the function, outstanding employees from various departments of Nyoma Sub-Division were felicitated with awards in recognition of their dedicated service.

Results of Competitions

March-Past

- 1st Place: Higher Secondary School, Nyoma
 - 2nd Place: Government Middle School, Mudh
 - 3rd Place: KGBV Nyoma
- Cultural Performances
- 1st Place: Government Middle School, Mudh
 - 2nd Place: Government Middle School, Nyoma
 - 3rd Place: Higher Secondary School, Nyoma
- Consolation prizes were also awarded in both categories. The celebrations concluded with the distribution of prizes to the winners of the march-past and cultural competitions.

Nubra celebrates 77th Republic Day at SDM Office Complex, Diskit



Photo Caption: Republic Day celebration in Nubira.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

NUBRA: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at the SDM Office Complex, Diskit, in Nubra Sub-Division.

The celebrations began with the unfurling of the National Flag by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Nubra, Mukul Beniwal, IAS, followed by the rendition of the National Anthem.

A colourful and well-disciplined

march-past was presented by contingents from Ladakh Police, Government Higher Secondary School Diskit, Government High School Partapur, Government Boys and Girls Middle School Diskit, and Lamdon Model School Diskit, adding grandeur to the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the SDM highlighted the significance of Republic Day and emphasized the importance of upholding the values enshrined in the Consti-

tution of India. He paid tribute to the great leaders who sacrificed their lives for the nation and expressed gratitude to frontline workers for their dedicated service under challenging conditions. He encouraged all to continue striving for excellence in their respective fields.

On the occasion, special trophies and certificates were awarded to a progressive farmer, students, and departmental staff in recognition of their exemplary service. The prize distribution ceremony also honoured students for their outstanding performances, with trophies awarded for excellence in the march-past and various cultural events.

The event was graced by Tehsildar Diskit, Tufail Iqbal, as the Guest of Honour, and Colonel Pradeep Singh, Commanding Officer, 110 Military Hospital, Hunder, as the Special Guest. Heads of various departments, officials, and a large number of members of the public were also present.

Advertisement for Guest faculty

National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) Extension Centre Leh invites applications for engagement of Guest Faculty on temporary basis for the trade Solar Technician (Electrical) – CTS.

Qualifications, remuneration, application form and other details may be downloaded from the RDSDE Jammu website: rdsdejammukashmir.dgt.gov.in

Principal
NSTI Extension Centre Leh

The Lt Governor informed that

Fortnightly News

UT Ladakh U-17 Karate team flagged off for 69th National School Games



Photo Caption: CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon flagging off the UT Ladakh Under-17 Karate Team (boys and girls) for 69th National School Games.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon on January 27 flagged off the UT Ladakh Under-17 Karate Team (boys and girls) for their participation in the 69th National School Games, scheduled to be held in Pune, Maharashtra.

The team has been deputised by the Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh through the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO), UT Ladakh. A total of 10 athletes—comprising four boys and six

girls—will represent UT Ladakh in the prestigious national-level championship.

Interacting with the players, the CEC encouraged the young athletes and expressed confidence that they would bring laurels to Ladakh. He emphasized that participation in national-level events provides valuable exposure over an 8–10 day period, helping students gain competitive experience, discipline, and self-confidence.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by officials from the Department of Youth Services and Sports, including Ghulam Mohammad, Activities In-Charge, YSS Kargil; Mohd Ibrahim Shogri, In-Charge ZPEO Kargil; and Mohd Hassan, Physical Education Master (PEM) and organiser, YSS Kargil.

Kargil hosts Ethnic Mamani Food Festival to promote traditional cuisine



Photo Caption: Ethnic Mamani Food Festival in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon attended the Ethnic Mamani Food Festival as Chief Guest on January 24. The festival was organised by the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, Kargil Campus.

The festival featured a wide array of traditional food items prepared from locally sourced ingredients and showcased through multiple stalls, reflecting the rich ethnic food heritage of the region. The CEC appreciated the efforts of the participants and encouraged them to further expand the scope of the festival. He lauded their dedication and contributions towards preserving and promoting Ladakh's diverse traditional food culture.

Dr. Jaffer Ali welcomed the dignitaries and highlighted the cultural significance of the Ethnic Mamani Food Festival of the Purig tribal community. He also outlined the objectives, developmental initiatives, and vision of the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, aimed at preserving and promoting Ladakh's tribal culture and traditions.

Dr. Akhoon specially appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa for initiating and consistently promoting such cultural food festivals. He expressed gratitude to the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation and extended special thanks to Vice Chancellor, Uni-

versity of Ladakh, Prof. Saket Kushwaha, for his significant contribution towards strengthening education and research in Ladakh. Addressing the gathering, the CEC traced the historical evolution of traditional food practices and stressed the importance of staying connected to local culture, language, and heritage. He stated that such initiatives provide an important platform to revive and preserve cultural identity, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Dr. Akhoon also drew attention to the increasing prevalence of lifestyle-related health issues, attributing them largely to changing food habits. He observed that earlier generations suffered fewer medical complications due to traditional diets, active lifestyles, and the medicinal value of indigenous foods, whereas modern diets are increasingly affected by chemical additives. He emphasised the need to promote the Mamani Food Festival on a larger, collective scale and to restore the relevance of traditional food practices in daily life.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Imteez Kacho appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa for his sustained efforts in preserving and promoting cultural and food festivals.

He highlighted the health benefits of local food and said such events encourage awareness, interaction, and renewed interest in traditional dietary practices. He also commended

the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, under the leadership of Dr. Jaffer Ali.

Brigadier 121, Ashish Joshi emphasised the importance of festivals that honour ancestors and respect elders, stating that such cultures remain resilient and alive. He expressed concern over deteriorating food habits among the younger generation and said initiatives like the Mamani Food Festival help sustain healthy traditional food practices.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Kargil, Kacho Ishtiyaz appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa and highlighted the cultural significance of the Mamani festival. Drawing parallels with festivals such as Lohri, celebrated during the same period in Jammu, he suggested that there is scope for research to identify cultural commonalities.

Anayat Ali Shotopa, while welcoming the dignitaries, thanked all participants and stall presenters and requested the CEC to include the Mamani Food Festival in the official tourism festival calendar. He also acknowledged the contributions of former Chief Executive Councillor Kacho Ahmed Khan in promoting local food festivals.

Mohd Ali Waziri highlighted the historical and cultural significance of the Mamani Food Festival, elaborating on individual traditional food items, their health benefits, and the regions where the festival is observed. Students from the Department of Anthropology, University of Ladakh, also presented insights into the cultural importance of the festival.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil Imteez Kacho, Brigadier 121 Ashish Joshi, Additional Superintendent of Police Kargil Kacho Ishtiyaz, Dy Commander Hari Chandra, Joint Director/Chief Controller of Finance Iftikhar Hussain, Dr. Mehboob Ali (In-charge Administrator, University of Ladakh), Dr. Jaffer Ali, DySP Syed Riyaz, along with scholars, officials, participants, and other dignitaries.

National Voters' Day marked in Kargil with ice-hockey match



Photo Caption: During the 16th National Voters' day celebration in Kargil at the Ice Hockey Rink, Bemathang.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The 16th National Voters' day was observed in Kargil on January 25 at the Ice Hockey Rink, Bemathang, with Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon attending the function as the chief guest.

The event was organised under the theme "My India, My Vote – Citizen at the Heart of Indian Democracy."

Addressing the gathering, the CEC said India, often described as the mother of democracy, derives its greatest strength from democratic values in which power truly rests with the people. He emphasised that democracy in the country is not limited to higher institutions but is deeply rooted at the grassroots, ensuring active public participation in governance.

He said the power to elect representatives lies with the people,

and equally important is their constitutional right to hold elected leaders accountable and remove them through democratic means. Reflecting the spirit of the Constitution, he remarked that governance in India is truly "of the people, by the people and for the people."

Highlighting the significance of elections, the CEC noted that the Indian Parliament is the largest democratic platform in the world and that the vote of every citizen, irrespective of constituency, carries equal value.

On the occasion, Dr. Akhoon thanked the District Election Officer and all stakeholders for the successful organisation of the event. Expressing satisfaction over the high level of political awareness in Kargil, he said people in the district actively participate in the electoral process. He urged new and eligible voters to enrol themselves

through the official voter registration portal to further strengthen democracy.

The CEC also lauded the efforts of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) for their dedicated work at the grassroots level in ensuring accurate electoral rolls and free, fair and transparent elections.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kargil urged first-time voters to register themselves in the electoral rolls, stating that voter participation forms the backbone of a strong democracy. He appreciated the efforts of BLOs, supervisors and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner also appealed to the public to cooperate with the Election Department during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, stressing that public participation is essential to maintain error-free electoral rolls.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil Imteez Kacho, Joint Director (Finance) Iftikhar Hussain and other district officers were present at the event.

The programme concluded with a friendly ice-hockey match between the DC and CEC teams, followed by a performance by Ranthak Theatre highlighting the importance of youth and first-time voters in strengthening Indian democracy.

EC Kacho Mohd Feroz unfurls tricolour at Council Secretariat on 77th Republic Day



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Kacho Mohd Feroz unfurled the National Tricolour at the Council Secretariat, Kargil, on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day. The event was attended by council staff, police officers, and other officials.

Addressing the gathering, EC Kacho Mohd Feroz paid rich tributes to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for his pivotal role in drafting the Constitution of India. He stated that the Constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all citizens, without discrimination based on colour, caste, or any other social identity. He described

the Indian Constitution as a unique and comprehensive document that safeguards the rights of every individual.

He further emphasized that the Constitution empowers citizens with the right to vote and elect their representatives, who are responsible for framing policies aimed at the welfare and development of the people. Reiterating the commitment of LAHDC Kargil, he assured that the Council remains dedicated to providing essential facilities across all sectors, including health, education, roads, and other key areas of development.

EC Kacho Mohd Feroz also highlighted the crucial role played by district officers in the overall development of Kargil, noting that their contributions often go unnoticed despite being vital to progress. He expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner Kargil, SSP Kargil, and the Indian Army jawans for safeguarding the borders and maintaining peace and security in the region.

He concluded by reaffirming that LAHDC Kargil is committed to the holistic development of the district and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure sustained progress and prosperity for the people of Kargil.

ADC Kargil calls for reduced private vehicle use at road safety programme



Photo Caption: Participants taking pledge during the road safety awareness programme in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Imteez Kacho on January 27 attended a road safety awareness programme organised by the Taxi Operators & Owners Cooperative and 207 Tata Mobile Cooperative Union, Kargil, at Jawadiah Project Care (JPC), Minji in collaboration with the Transport Department.

Among those present were Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Khadim Hussain, DTI Kargil Fazil Abbas, Sub Inspector Mehdi Khan, representatives of Traffic Police, JUIAK, Taxi Operators & Owners Cooperative, 207 Tata Mobile Cooperative, President Omni Vans Union, other transport associations, members of the general public and students of JPC.

ADC Imteez Kacho appreciated the creative expressions of JPC students displayed through paintings on the theme of road safety. He urged people to reduce the use of private vehicles, prefer public transport, consider making Saturdays free of private vehicles, strictly follow traffic rules and maintain civility while using roads.

He also lauded the driver fraternity of Kargil for their good conduct, cooperation with authorities and sense of social responsibility, and appreciated the transport unions for organising such a meaningful pro-

gramme to create awareness, especially among children. He appreciated the sincere efforts put in for organising the event and also the efforts of the students of the institution in using their imagination to express their thoughts towards the cause of road safety.

ARTO Khadim Hussain briefed participants about various new rules and regulations, advising drivers to avoid the use of mobile phones while driving, follow traffic rules and maintain discipline on roads. He stressed reducing private vehicle usage and giving preference to public transport to ease congestion, reduce pollution and conserve resources.

DTI Fazil Abbas delivered a detailed presentation on traffic rules, do's and don'ts, good road behaviour and essential safety values.

Inspector Mehdi Khan informed the audience about important road safety measures, including discouraging children from playing on roads and ensuring strict adherence to traffic rules.

Representatives of various transport unions also shared their views and highlighted challenges faced on roads.

The programme concluded with prize distribution to students for their performance in the painting competition.

National Voters' Day celebrated at Zanskar



Photo Caption: The 16th National Voters' Day celebration at Zanskar sub-division.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

ZANSKAR: The 16th National Voters' Day was observed at Zanskar sub-division through a meaningful programme organised by the Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO), Zanskar. Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Zanskar, Omkar Ranjinder Gundage (IAS), attended the event as the chief guest. The programme commenced with the National Anthem.

The event was attended by heads of departments of the sub-division, Booth Level Officers (BLOs), voters, and students from various schools. A quiz competition was organised for students, in which HSS Phey emerged as the winner. Prizes were awarded to all participating teams as well as first-time voters.

Addressing the gathering, the chief guest highlighted the importance of voting and encouraged citizens to actively participate in the democratic process.

The vote of thanks was delivered by AERO Zanskar, Mohd Hassan, who also emphasised the crucial role played by Booth Level Officers in strengthening the electoral system.

The programme concluded with prize distribution by the chief guest, recognising quiz winners, participants and BLOs.

DC Kargil reviews Aadhaar enrolment, directs measures for universal coverage

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Rakesh Kumar, IAS chaired a meeting of the District Level Aadhaar Monitoring Committee at the DC Office, Kargil on January 27 to review the progress of Aadhaar enrolment and related services in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed Aadhaar saturation levels across various age groups, including children below 5 years, those between 5–18 years, and adults above 18 years. He was briefed on ongoing initiatives aimed at achieving complete Aadhaar coverage, particularly for children and adolescents.

The functioning of Aadhaar enrolment centres was also reviewed. It was informed that 45 Aadhaar kits are currently operational in the district across various

departments, including block offices, the Education Department, ICDS, CSCs, banks, and Ladakh e-Governance Agency (LEGA). The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted functioning of Aadhaar centres.

Special emphasis was laid on completing Mandatory Biometric Updates (MBUs) for children who have attained the ages of 5 and 15 years. The Education Department was directed to organise school-based MBU camps, in coordination with the Department of IT. The Deputy Commissioner also stressed the need for district-wide awareness on MBUs through public announcements and transport vehicles.

Reviewing the Birth Registration Based Aadhaar Enrolment (BRBAE) initiative, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Health Department to ensure that BRBAE is implemented effectively in District Hospi-

tal and Community Health Centres. He emphasized that all newborns should be discharged with Aadhaar enrolment completed and instructed the department to increase the pool of trained operators wherever required.

The progress of the State Government Portal for Aadhaar verification was also assessed. Nodal Officers were directed to verify Aadhaar enrolments of residents aged 18 years and above within 45 days. Verification of Aadhaar holders aged 100 years and above was also emphasized to clear pending cases.

The Deputy Commissioner further stressed the importance of document updation for residents who have not updated their Aadhaar in the last 10 years, directing departments to conduct awareness programmes and intensive publicity.

To curb fraudulent practices, directions were issued to display rate lists for Aadhaar services at all enrolment centres and to sensitize citizens about reporting corruption through appropriate grievance mechanisms. The Deputy Commissioner instructed SDMs to conduct awareness programmes and organise Aadhaar enrolment and updation camps in their respective subdivisions in coordination with the Education Department and LEGA.

The meeting concluded with directions to all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure universal Aadhaar coverage and efficient service delivery in District Kargil.



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