

# REACH LADAKH BULLETIN



## In Conversation with

Sonam Yangchan: A Journey of Courage, Resilience and Independence



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

*Urge 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.

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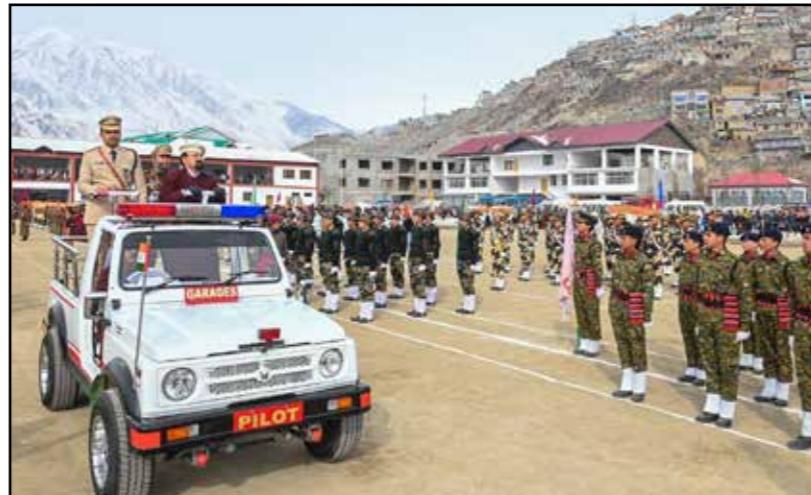
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## Kargil celebrates 77th Republic Day at Biamathang with enthusiasm



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 Akhoon. Among the prominent dignitaries present were Executive Councillors Aga Syed Mujtaba and Kacho Feroz, Deputy Commissioner and CEO, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon. The CEC said that the 77th Republic Day 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.

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. Akhoon 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. Akhoon 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, Jahanzeb Akhoon, 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. Akhoon 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, Shigar Chiktan, and Zanskar 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 Zanskar 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. Akhoon 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.

## 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 Dorjy 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. Gurjeet Singh Bhatti broke through the Army defence with eight minutes remaining, before Birshahaanji 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 Birshahaanji 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.

### 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 Dorjy 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

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 Viswanath (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)

### 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.

### 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 Tamphel, Mohd Latif, Nawang Gyatso, Tsering Dolker, Rizgir Angmo, Deachen Dolker and Ishey 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.

## 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 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 (PMFBY) 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.

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 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.

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.

### 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-

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 timely

### 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

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 Zanskar 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 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.

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.

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

### 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.

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 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.

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 Ladakh, filmmaker Stanzin Dorje Gya, and Tsewang Dorje 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 Nileshe Sharma, Booth Level Officers, first-time voters and senior officials were among those present.

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

### DHEW, Mission Shakti Leh organises two-day SEE Learning workshop for Igoor 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 Igoor Village, aimed at promoting holistic development, emotional well-being, and ethical 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.

## In Focus:

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

When Skarma Tsultim first put on ice-skating shoes during the winter of 2018, there were no big dreams or ambitions attached. She was just a school student participating like any other child in a 15-day Winter Sports Training Camp in Ladakh. The camp introduced her to basic skating techniques and helped her feel comfortable on ice. What began as a casual winter activity would soon become the foundation of an extraordinary sporting journey—one that would take her from frozen village ponds to international arenas.

In Ladakh, winter usually means schools close, routine life slows down, and sports activities come to a halt. But ice hockey and skating continue uninterrupted. Frozen natural ponds across Leh turn into open playgrounds, and Skarma often skated there with her brother, unaware that she was being observed.

National coach Mohammad Abbas Nordak was scouting for raw talent. He noticed Skarma's potential and selected her—quietly changing the course of her life. Soon, she began attending regular winter training camps and, within a year, competed under Coach Abbas's guidance at the 17th National Speed Skating Championship held at ISKATE, Gurugram.

Skarma recalls her first national competition as overwhelming. It was her first experience on artificial ice and her first exposure to high-level competition. The atmosphere, elite athletes, and technical demands shook her confidence. But training continued relentlessly—focusing on muscle conditioning, roller skating, and fitness throughout the summer months.

Her father often travelled 20–40 kilometres with her for roller-skating practice, while her mother reminded her to stay grounded and value the sport beyond medals. Skarma went on to compete in the 18th National Speed Skating Championship as well, though recognition still eluded her. The real breakthrough came at the 3rd Khelo India Winter



Games, held in Gulmarg in 2023. For the first time, seven athletes from Ladakh participated in the Games. Skarma won a silver medal in the Junior Girls (15–19 years) 1000m short-track event.

That medal was more than just a podium finish—it was a moment of self-belief. It led to her selection for the Indian Speed Skating Team, and she went on to represent India at the 2023 Southeast Asian Speed Skating Championships in Singapore, with training held in the Philippines.

"My international journey began there," Skarma says. "It was my first international competition, and I was the only Ladakhi in the team. It wasn't easy. I felt isolated."

Language barriers and her naturally reserved personality made com-

munication difficult. She was intimidated by competitors from Japan, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, and China—their professional equipment, custom-made skates, and confidence were on another level. Her performance, by her own admission, was not strong, and she finished 11th in the 1000m event. Yet, the experience itself was transformative.

After returning home, doubts crept in. She questioned whether she truly belonged at that level. But what awaited her at the airport changed everything.

Her family, friends, villagers, and the village goba had gathered—not to celebrate medals, but to honour her for representing India. The LAHDC councillor from her area felicitated her, and the Chief Chamberlain (Geshe-La) of Thiksey Monastery invited her for tea and presented her with a gift. That collective support anchored her resolve and became her strongest motivation to continue.

At the 4th Khelo India Winter Games in Ladakh, Skarma found her rhythm. She won gold in the women's team relay—Ladakh's first-ever top podium finish—along with silver in the 500m long track, silver in the mixed relay, and bronze in the long track event.

The following year, at the 5th edition of the Games, she clinched her first individual gold medal in the 1000m short track, a moment she describes as unforgettable. At the time, Coach Abbas Nordak was serving as head coach of the Indian ice skating team in Harbin, China. "When he heard the news, sir was happy—that meant everything," she recalls.

That year also marked a historic achievement as UT Ladakh topped the overall medal table for the first time. Skarma later represented India at the Asian Open Short Track Speed Skating Trophy in Jakarta in 2024.

Skarma credits Coach Abbas Nordak as her mentor, guide, and pillar of support. "He has trained Ladakhi players for years

...continues on page 6

## SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

## You and your habits, and 2026

In life, and in death, good habits are all that matter! That is because your habits shape your destination and thereafter. All the good qualities of life without good habits go wasted. Therefore, it is of great importance that one gets aware of some of the habits that one needs to cultivate to live life well, and die quietly and calmly.

The first good habit is not to wait for any kind of motivation for carrying out a work. Motivation as such is not a bad thing but you may or may not get it when you need it. In such a scenario, your work or the process of work that is of great importance for your career development gets stunted. Therefore, motivation or no motivation, you need to develop a 'get-going' attitude.

# Never ever wait for tomorrow or another day to have better times. This is somewhat akin to the motivation 'paradox'. Who knows you will have a better tomorrow with better and suitable conditions? You, therefore, need to go for 'now and here'.

# Take hard times as if they were to test you. Never lose your courage and determination. In fact, you need to get stronger. The realities of life are such that you need to encounter more of difficult times than easier ones. Once you tackle the difficult issues, you will find your way getting smoother.

# Mere hard work means nothing of any great value. You need to acquire skills to go with the requirements of the times. You don't need a degree from any college or university. Most of the great men in history were 'failures' in their colleges. The world's richest man, Elon Musk, with assets surging over 700 billion dollars, says that he was ridiculed in college and had to drop out. Today, he says, those with PhDs and MBAs work under him in his companies.

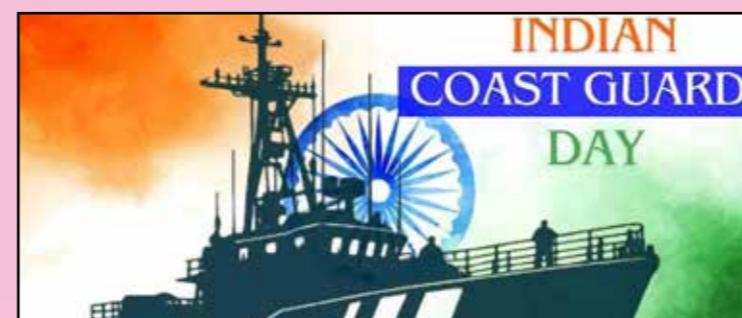
# Face the reality and tell yourself the truth every morning. That will help you become a practical person and deeply grounded with the realities of any situation.

# Never ever get into bad company. As far as possible, toxic people with negative attitude should be avoided. They will invariably try to stunt your progressive ways of life because they just can't stand your progress.

And, finally, the punchline: Never ever, entertain any kind of negative thoughts. A good life and death have a crucial bearing on your thoughts.

Courtesy: WongWorld

## Indian Coast Guard Day



## The World of Juniors

Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated annually on February 1st to mark the establishment of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The Indian Coast Guard was formally established on August 18, 1978, under the Indian Coast Guard Act, 1978, as a paramilitary force under the Ministry of Defence. The ICG plays a crucial role in coastal security, search and rescue operations, environmental protection, and maritime law enforcement. It collaborates with the Indian Navy, Customs, and other agencies to safeguard India's vast coastline and maritime borders.

In 1971, the Nagchaudhuri Committee recommended creating a coastal security force, and by 1974, the Rustamji Committee introduced this idea. As a result, the Indian Coast Guard was officially established on February 1, 1977, under the Ministry of Defence, initially operating with vessels transferred from the

formed to address growing concerns about maritime security, particularly sea-borne smuggling that posed economic risks in the 1960s. The Indian Navy and the Customs Department worked together on anti-smuggling efforts, but the need for a dedicated maritime force became evident.

Over the years, the ICG has expanded its role beyond security to law enforcement, environmental protection, and disaster response. One of its most known operations was the recapture of MV Alondra Rainbow in 1999, showcasing its growing efficiency. After the

Indian Navy. Its duties were formally defined in the Coast Guard Act of 1978.

2008 Mumbai attacks, the ICG strengthened its surveillance capabilities, showcased India's maritime defense.

Indian Coast Guard has been focusing on coastal defense, search and rescue operations, environmental protection, and law enforcement since the establishment.

## DID YOU KNOW



## Facts about Penguins

Bananas are berries. But strawberries aren't. Botanically speaking, berries are fruits that develop from a single ovary and have seeds embedded inside. So, bananas qualify... but strawberries don't.

Octopuses have three hearts.

And here I am, struggling to manage just one. Two hearts pump blood to the gills, and the third to the rest of the body. Bonus weirdness: when they swim, the heart that pumps to the body stops beating. No wonder they prefer crawling!

Wombat poop is cube-shaped.

Yes, cube. Like dice. This helps the poop not roll away, marking territory more effectively. Nature's geometry is weirdly precise.

You can't hum while holding your nose. Try it. You just did, didn't you? Welcome to the club.

A day on Venus is longer than a year on Venus.

It takes Venus longer to rotate once on its axis than to complete a full orbit around the Sun. Basically, its day drags on forever – relatable.

Your taste buds have a lifespan of about 10 – 14 days. So technically, you get a whole new set of taste buds every two weeks. That might explain your sudden obsession with pickles or hot sauce.

Cows have best friends.

And they get stressed when separated. That fact alone made me rethink burgers for a moment (just a moment though, if I'm being honest).

Courtesy: vermagracy475.medium.com

## In Conversation with

## Sonam Yangchan: A Journey of Courage, Resilience and Independence

Interviewed by Morup Stanzin

**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



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.



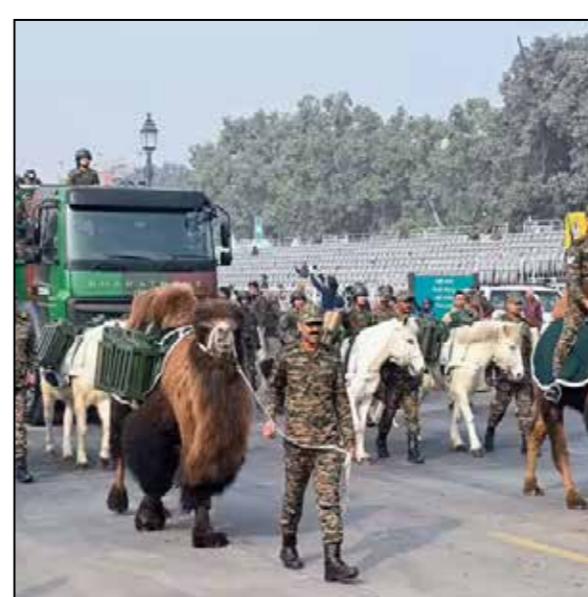
Students of the Department of Mass Communication & Journalism completed a 60-hour internship programme in Delhi from 9 January to 17 January under the PMUSHA scheme.



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 Galwan 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.

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 Angchuk. 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.

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

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 Naibats Temisgam, Naib Tehsildar Phuntsog Namgail at Naibats Wanla, and Naib Tehsildar Abdul Samad at Naibats Skurbuchan.

### 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.

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.

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

#### 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 Nubra.

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.

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: [rdsdejammu.kashmir.dgt.gov.in](http://rdsdejammu.kashmir.dgt.gov.in)

Principal  
NSTI Extension Centre Leh

### 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.

The championship witnessed enthusiastic participation from 10 men's teams and five women's teams, making it a major celebration of winter sports in the region.

In the men's final, ITBP defeated

Ladakh Scouts 2-1 in a closely

contested match, while in the

women's final, the ITBP Women's Team defeated LWIHF 7-3

with a commanding performance.

Addressing the gathering, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, highlighted the immense potential of ice hockey and other winter sports in Ladakh.

He said the region's unique climate, geography, and resilient youth provide a natural advantage for Ladakh to emerge as a premier winter sports hub in the country.

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.

He encouraged all to continue striving for excellence in their respective fields.

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The prize distribution ceremony also honoured students for their outstanding performances, with trophies awarded for excellence in the march-past and various cultural events.

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## 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 deputed by the Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh through the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSO), 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 Shoaqi, 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, Imteeaz 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

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-

### 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 Imteeaz 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.

### 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, Imteeaz 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.

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.

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-

### 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 Phay 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.

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 sub-divisions 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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