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## Chief Secretary reviews FY 2026–27 budget expenditure, calls for better



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, chaired a comprehensive review meeting on July 28 to assess the budget expenditure and financial performance of various departments for the financial year 2026–27. The meeting focused on improving expenditure efficiency, ensuring timely utilisation of allocated funds, and accelerating the implementation of developmental projects across the Union Territory.

At the outset, Secretary, Finance Department, Tsewang Tharchin, IA&AS, delivered a detailed presentation on the overall budget performance. The presentation covered the breakup of budget estimates under the Demands for Grants for FY 2026–27, budget composition, overall expenditure dashboard, UT and LAH-DC-wise allocations, quarterly expenditure trends, up-to-date spending, the Monthly Expenditure Plan (MEP), capital expenditure under Major Head 4575, department-wise allocations and expenditure, utilisation rankings, and object head-wise analysis of spending on motor vehicles, machinery and equipment, ICT equipment, buildings and structures, infrastructure assets, furniture and fixtures, heritage asset upgradation, other fixed assets, and land.

Reviewing the presentation, the Chief Secretary undertook a department-wise assessment of expenditure patterns and utilisation levels. He directed all departments to expedite the implementation of approved projects and improve the pace

of expenditure, particularly under capital works, to ensure that developmental objectives are achieved within the stipulated timelines.

Expressing concern over the low utilisation of funds in certain departments and sectors, Kundra instructed the Finance and Planning Departments to closely monitor expenditure and identify departments with unsatisfactory spending. He directed such departments to explain the delays and submit concrete action plans to improve both financial and physical progress.

The Chief Secretary further instructed that funds remaining unutilised for prolonged periods be identified early so they can be reallocated to departments and projects capable of effectively utilising them within the current financial year. He emphasised that optimal utilisation of public funds is essential for achieving development outcomes.

While reviewing sector-wise allocations, he examined expenditure under infrastructure, urban and rural development, education, municipal services, and other key sectors. He stressed the need for continuous monitoring of both revenue and capital expenditure to maintain balanced financial performance throughout the year.

Kundra also reviewed expenditure under various object heads, including procure

...continues on page 2

## L-G launches 70 public libraries across Leh and Kargil

*Urges students to embrace reading beyond textbooks and prepare for national opportunities*



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 27 dedicated 70 modern public libraries to the people of Ladakh, with 35 libraries each established in Leh and Kargil districts.

The inauguration ceremony, held at Trespone in the TSG Block, marked a significant step towards strengthening educational infrastructure and fostering a culture of reading and lifelong learning across the Union Territory.

Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, Executive Councillors and senior government officials were present on the occasion.

The newly established libraries are equipped with modern facilities, including heating systems designed for Ladakh's harsh climatic conditions, computers, well-stocked bookshelves and dedicated reading spaces.

The facilities aim to provide students with a peaceful and resource-rich environment to prepare for competitive examinations, pursue higher education and build successful careers without leaving their communities.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said the inauguration of the li

...continues on page 2

## MHA approves Ad-hoc promotions to Group 'B' gazetted posts in UT Ladakh



Photo Caption: Logo of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) from google

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** In a significant move to address the shortage of Gazetted officers in the Union Territory of Ladakh, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved the filling of vacant Group 'B' Gazetted Administrative Service posts through ad-hoc promotions as an interim measure.

In a communication dated July 27, 2026, the MHA stated that while efforts are underway to establish a long-term solution to the shortage of officers, the UT Administration may fill vacancies under the promotion quota through ad-hoc promotions until a regular promotion mechanism is put in place.

The decision follows the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, who raised the issue with the Ministry, highlighting the acute shortage of officers in the Group 'B' Gazetted Administrative Service. He pointed out that regular promotions have remained pending as the relevant Recruitment Rules are yet to be notified, resulting in a shortage of Gazetted officers and affecting the functioning of various government departments.

The approval is expected to provide immediate re-

lief to eligible officials awaiting promotion while helping departments overcome the shortage of Gazetted officers. It is also expected to strengthen governance by ensuring continuity in administration, faster decision-making, and improved public service delivery across the Union Territory.

Welcoming the decision, Lt Governor Saxena said the MHA's approval would strengthen governance in Ladakh while addressing the legitimate aspirations of officials awaiting promotion.

"This decision will help overcome the shortage of Gazetted officers, improve administrative efficiency, and ensure uninterrupted delivery of public services. I have directed the Chief Secretary to initiate the promotion process immediately," he said.

The Ministry has directed that all ad-hoc promotions be made strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Personnel and Training's Office Memorandum dated April 3, 2013, along with subsequent amendments and other instructions issued from time to time, subject to the fulfilment of all prescribed conditions.

## Leh pays tribute to Kargil war heroes on 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** The 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas was observed with patriotic fervour at the War Memorial, Singhay Namgyal Chowk, Leh, on July 26, as people from all walks of life came together to honour the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1999 Kargil War.

The commemorative programme was attended by Veer Naris, war veterans, ex-servicemen, serving defence personnel, civil officers and members of the public, who paid heartfelt tributes to the nation's heroes.

Divisional Commissioner, Ladakh, Shurbir Singh, IAS, attended the event as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, Shurbir Singh recalled the courage and sacrifice of the soldiers who fought to safeguard the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity during the Kargil War. He noted that while thousands of soldiers displayed exceptional bravery during the conflict, 32 brave sons of Ladakh laid down their lives in the line of duty. Their sacrifice, he said, remains a lasting inspiration and a proud chapter in the nation's history.

The President of the Ex-Servicemen Association, Leh, delivered the vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, dignitaries, Veer Na-

ris, war veterans, ex-servicemen, serving personnel and all participants for joining the commemoration and paying homage to the martyrs.

A one-minute silence was observed in memory of Late Colonel Sonam Wangchuk (Retd.), MVC, fondly remembered as the Lion of Ladakh and a decorated Kargil War hero, in recognition of his exemplary service and sacrifice for the nation.

The programme concluded with a felicitation ceremony in which Veer Naris, war veterans and ex-servicemen were honoured for their invaluable service to the nation, particularly their contributions during the Kargil War.

Among those present were Administrative Secretary, Tourism Department, Sanjit Rodrigues, IAS; Deputy Inspector General, Ladakh Range, Dr. Koushal Kumar Sharma, IPS; Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Romil Singh Donk, IAS; former Member of Parliament Thupstan Chhewang; Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena; Additional Superintendent of Police, Leh; Director, Rajya Sainik Board, Ladakh; representatives of various religious organisations; political leaders; officers of the Civil Administration and Ladakh Police; ex-servicemen; and members of the public.

Fortnightly News

L-G launches heritage conservation and beautification project in Leh old town

Initiative aims to preserve cultural identity while improving urban infrastructure



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena during the laying of foundation stone for the Comprehensive Infrastructure Upgradation and Beautification Project of Leh Old Town.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 23 laid the foundation stone for the Comprehensive Infrastructure Upgradation and Beautification Project of Leh Old Town, marking the beginning of a major initiative to transform the historic settlement while preserving its rich cultural and architectural heritage.

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of “Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi,” the project aims to integrate modern civic infrastructure with heritage conservation, ensuring that Leh Old Town retains its unique architectural character, cultural identity and historical significance while meeting the needs of a modern urban centre.

The project includes the construction of a Multipurpose Trench and Common Utility Duct for the underground shifting of water supply, sewerage, electricity, telecommunication and other essential public utilities through a common corridor. It also envisages pedestrian-friendly pathways, heritage-sensitive street-scaping, improved drainage, ornamental lighting, heritage-style wayfinding signage, adequate parking, landscaping, public seating, upgraded amenities and

enhanced urban aesthetics to create a cleaner, safer and more visually appealing heritage precinct.

Recalling his visit shortly after assuming office, the Lieutenant Governor said that just two days after taking charge, on March 15, he walked through the historic lanes of Leh Old Town and the Main Market to assess the ground situation firsthand. During the visit, he observed several challenges, including unregulated construction, overhead utility cables, drainage channels running through roads, repeated road cutting, inadequate public amenities and deteriorating urban spaces, all of which were affecting the heritage character of the centuries-old town.

Following the visit, the Lieutenant Governor directed the concerned departments to prepare a comprehensive plan for the heritage-led transformation of Leh Old Town, ensuring that every intervention respects and preserves its historical and cultural essence while introducing modern civic infrastructure.

Saxena said the project, which he described as being close to his heart, is the result of nearly four months of detailed planning, consultations and design. He expressed confidence that the work would be completed by the end of September.

Describing the initiative as a practical manifestation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of “Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi,” the Lieutenant Governor said Ladakh has witnessed unprecedented infrastructure development since becoming a Union Territory, alongside sustained efforts to preserve its unique cultural identity and fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

He said the project would not only improve the quality of life for residents of Leh Old Town but also enhance the experience of visitors by creating an organised, attractive and pedestrian-friendly heritage precinct. The initiative, he added, is expected to boost heritage tourism while generating new livelihood opportunities for local artisans, shopkeepers, homestay owners, tourist guides and others associated with the tourism sector.

Chief Secretary reviews FY 2026–27 budget expenditure, calls for better fund utilisation

...Continuity of page 1

ment of motor vehicles, garbage collection vehicles, ambulances, machinery, ICT equipment, buildings, furniture, and other infrastructure assets. He directed the concerned departments to ensure that procurement and execution are carried out in a timely and transparent manner in accordance with approved plans.

Emphasising uninterrupted execution of development works, the Chief Secretary instructed the Planning Department to issue necessary directions to ensure that contractors continue work during the permissible working season. He observed that, except during periods of severe winter, construction activities should continue wherever practicable to ensure timely completion of projects.

He further directed that future project proposals should comprehensively include all essential components, including furniture, fixtures, and allied infrastructure, wherever required, to facilitate the timely operationalisation of completed assets.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed issues related to land compensation, municipal infrastructure, solid waste management assets, and other ongoing capital projects.

He instructed the concerned departments to strengthen planning, improve coordination, and ensure the timely completion of all sanctioned works.

Highlighting the importance of evidence-based financial management, Kundra directed the Finance and Planning Departments to prepare periodic sector-wise analytical snapshots covering major sectors such as education, infrastructure, Special Development Package (SDP) projects, and other capital works. He said these assessments would support better monitoring, informed decision-making, and timely corrective interventions.

Reiterating the importance of financial discipline, the Chief Secretary said that regular expenditure reviews and close inter-departmental coordination are essential for achieving the Union Territory’s developmental priorities and ensuring effective utilisation of public resources.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Planning Department, Himanshu Gupta; Secretary, Finance Department, Tsewang Tharchin, IA&AS; Joint Directors of the Finance and Planning Departments; and other senior officers.

L-G launches 70 public libraries across Leh and Kargil

...Continuity of page 1

baries represents not just the opening of buildings but the beginning of a movement towards a more enlightened, educated and empowered Ladakh. He observed that while roads, bridges and other physical infrastructure are essential for development, institutions that nurture intellect, creativity and character are equally important in building a progressive society.

Describing the initiative as a model of inter-departmental convergence, L-G Saxena said it reflects an investment in Ladakh’s greatest asset its human capital. He expressed confidence that the libraries would evolve into vibrant centres of learning through active community participation.

“These public libraries are an investment in the future of Ladakh. They will provide our youth with access to knowledge, modern learning facilities and opportunities

to prepare for competitive examinations and higher education. I am confident these libraries will become vibrant centres of innovation, research, community engagement and lifelong learning, empowering every young mind to realise its full potential,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Calling for community ownership of the initiative, L-G Saxena urged parents, teachers, Village Education Committees, civil society organisations and citizens to treat the libraries as their own institutions by protecting and enriching them and keeping them active throughout the year through reading circles, career guidance sessions, literary events and community learning programmes.

He also encouraged students to make the libraries their second home, read beyond textbooks and develop critical thinking, creativity and confidence to compete at the national level.

India’s deepest geothermal wells commissioned in Ladakh

Puga project marks major breakthrough in clean energy and renewable power generation



Photo Caption: Geothermal wells at Puga valley in Ladakh.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** In a landmark achievement for India’s clean energy mission, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 17 commissioned the country’s first and deepest geothermal wells at Puga Valley in Ladakh, developed by the ONGC Energy Centre. The milestone marks a major step towards establishing India’s first geothermal power plant and advancing the vision of a carbon-neutral Ladakh.

The commissioning of the two 1,000-metre-deep geothermal wells, drilled at an altitude of over 14,000 feet, is expected to significantly strengthen Ladakh’s transition into a renewable energy hub, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of promoting clean and sustainable energy.

The wells are crucial for the implementation of the 1 MW pilot geothermal power project at Puga, which will be India’s first demonstration-scale geothermal power project.

The project had earlier faced significant delays following the expiry of the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among the Ladakh Administration, LAHDC Leh and the ONGC Energy Centre. Recognising the strategic importance of geothermal energy, Lt. Governor Saxena facilitated the renewal of the MoU for another five years in June this year, enabling work on the project to resume.

The successful completion of the wells will facilitate reservoir evaluation, power plant planning, and the eventual commercial development of geothermal resources in Ladakh. According to project engineers, a temperature of 135°C has already been recorded at a depth of 400 metres, with further testing underway to

assess the reservoir’s full potential for power generation.

The project has been executed in one of the world’s most challenging environments, marked by extreme weather, rugged terrain, and a short annual working season.

Despite difficult subsurface conditions and geothermal activity, the first well reached its target depth of 1,000 metres on May 22, 2026. The second well, spudded on June 3, was completed to the same depth on July 8, in just over a month.

Addressing the gathering, Lt. Governor Saxena described the commissioning as a historic milestone in India’s clean energy journey and a defining moment in Ladakh’s transition towards a carbon-neutral future.

“This geothermal power project will act as a catalyst for Ladakh’s holistic development. Beyond its scientific significance, it will strengthen energy security, promote environmental sustainability, and contribute to the region’s socio-economic development. The achievement at Puga Valley will serve as a blueprint for India’s net-zero journey and help make Ladakh a carbon-neutral and environmentally sustainable region,” he said.

The Lt. Governor also praised the ONGC engineers and workers for successfully executing the technically challenging project under extreme conditions. He said the accomplishment reflects the expertise of Indian engineers and stands as a testament to the determination, resilience, and perseverance of everyone associated with the project.

Farmers’ hostel inaugurated in Kargil to boost agricultural support



Photo Caption: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena during the inauguration of the Farmers' Hostel of the Agriculture Department at Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurated the Farmers’ Hostel of the Agriculture Department at Lower Kurbathang, Kargil, on July 26, marking a significant step towards strengthening agricultural support infrastructure for the farming community in the district.

Following the inauguration, the Lieutenant Governor interacted with farmers and listened to their grievances and suggestions regarding agricultural development and related issues. He assured them of the Administration’s continued support to promote sustainable farming practices and improve farmers’ livelihoods.

L-G Saxena also visited the Hi-Tech Greenhouses established by the Agriculture Department, where he appreciated

ated the efforts of the department and progressive farmers in adopting modern agricultural techniques.

During the visit, he reviewed crop production, cultivation practices and the overall performance of the greenhouse units. He encouraged farmers to make full use of advanced technologies to enhance productivity and increase their income.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun; Member of Parliament (Ladakh), Mohmad Haneefa Jan; Executive Councillors of LAHDC Kargil; and senior officers of the district administration and the Agriculture Department.

Chief Secretary stresses efficient waste management during solid waste management centres inspection



Photo Caption: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, inspecting the Solid Resource Management Centres.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on July 28 inspected the Solid Resource Management Centres (SRMCs) at Solar Colony, Thiksay, Kharu and Chuchot Yokma to review their functioning and assess ongoing solid waste management operations.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary examined waste segregation, processing and disposal mechanisms at each centre and assessed the overall efficiency of the waste management system. He also interacted with sanitation and waste management workers, appreciating their dedication and sustained efforts in maintaining cleanliness and ensuring the scientific management of solid waste.

Kundra emphasised the importance of efficient waste collection, segregation,

processing and disposal to promote environmental sustainability and improve public sanitation. He directed the concerned officers to ensure the smooth functioning of all SRMCs, enhance operational efficiency and effectively manage the workload at each facility.

He instructed officials to clear waste lying within and around the centres promptly and maintain the premises in a clean and hygienic condition. Stressing the need for regular monitoring and timely disposal of accumulated waste, the Chief Secretary also called for better coordination among the concerned departments to ensure effective implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules. Highlighting the importance of community involvement, Kundra urged the concerned agencies to continue

creating awareness among citizens about waste segregation at source and responsible waste management practices.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by Member Secretary, Ladakh Pollution Control Committee (LPCC), Mandeep Mittal; Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Romil Singh Donk; Special OSD to the Chief Secretary, Moses Kunzang; District Panchayat Officer, Leh; Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Leh, Stanzin Rabgaia; Block Development Officer, Chuchot, Ghulam Mohd; and officials from the Ladakh Renewable Energy Development Agency (LREDA), Rural Development Department and Municipal Committee Leh.

Fortnightly News

Chief Secretary reviews preparations for UT-wide drug-free Ladakh campaign  
Calls for coordinated, evidence-based action under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, chaired a high-level review meeting on July 24 to finalise preparations for the UT-wide Drug-Free Ladakh Campaign under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, stressing the need for a coordinated, evidence-based and community-driven approach to tackle substance abuse across the region.

The meeting brought together senior officers from various departments to formulate a comprehensive strategy focusing on prevention, awareness, early identification, treatment, rehabilitation and enforcement, with special emphasis on protecting the youth from the growing menace of drug abuse.

Secretary, Social and Tribal Welfare, Nidhi Malik, presented the roadmap for the month-long campaign, which will be implemented in mission mode with active participation from all departments. She informed that nodal officers have been designated to ensure effective coordination and successful implementation.

The campaign will feature awareness rallies, competitions, community outreach programmes, educational camps, video campaigns, IEC activities and public engagement initiatives across the Union Territory. She also stated that financial assistance received from the concerned Ministry would be utilised in a phased and result-oriented manner to maximise the campaign's outreach and impact.

Reviewing the proposed strategy, the Chief Secretary emphasised that the campaign must extend beyond conven-

tional awareness programmes and actively involve religious leaders, community organisations, student associations, transport unions, educational institutions and civil society groups to build a sustained social movement against drug abuse. He stressed that visibility, measurable outcomes and effective implementation should remain the guiding principles of the campaign.

Highlighting the importance of early intervention, Ashish Kundra directed departments to strengthen awareness programmes in schools, colleges and among other vulnerable sections of society. He called for a coordinated strategy involving the Police, Education, Health and Social Welfare Departments to ensure a comprehensive response combining prevention, education, enforcement and rehabilitation.

During the meeting, a Consultant Psychiatrist from the Health Department identified school dropouts, unemployed youth and individuals living away from their families in rented accommodation as among the most vulnerable groups. She recommended training Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) to identify early signs of substance abuse and facilitate timely intervention. She also suggested village-level orientation programmes for frontline workers and emphasised engaging children and recovering patients in skill-based and recreational activities to support long-term rehabilitation.

Appreciating the suggestions, the Chief Secretary directed departments to incor-

porate them into the campaign strategy. He proposed conducting random assessments in villages, hostels and educational institutions to identify emerging trends and vulnerable areas. He also called for targeted interventions among labourers, truck drivers, project workers and other high-risk occupational groups.

The Chief Secretary further instructed departments to develop specialised awareness modules for ASHA workers, ANMs, teachers and parents to strengthen early detection and community support systems. He also stressed the involvement of village representatives, including Nambardars, in spreading awareness and reporting concerns.

Reviewing the functioning of the drug helpline, he directed that its number be widely publicised through digital platforms, WhatsApp groups and social media to improve accessibility.

Emphasising the importance of data-driven policymaking, Ashish Kundra directed the concerned departments to analyse recent drug abuse cases based on geographical distribution, age profile, occupation and social background. He instructed the Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre (DDAC) and the Health Department to maintain a comprehensive digital database of patients undergoing treatment, follow-up care and rehabilitation to facilitate targeted interventions and long-term monitoring. The meeting was informed that the Drug De-addiction Centre is currently managing 126 opioid-related cases, including follow-up patients, while 71 patients are undergoing treatment for Hepatitis linked to substance abuse.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed proposals for outreach teams and mobile intervention services to reach vulnerable individuals at their homes and directed departments to strengthen outreach mechanisms.

The Police Department presented its enforcement strategy, highlighting NDPS enforcement measures undertaken in 2026, comparative seizure statistics, preventive initiatives, awareness campaigns conducted during 2025-26, de-addiction support measures and the implementation of decisions taken during NCORD meetings.

Reviewing the enforcement measures,

the Chief Secretary sought detailed information on the profile of drug peddlers, repeat offenders and organised supply networks. He directed the Police Department to intensify surveillance in vulnerable areas, strengthen night patrolling in market areas and make greater use of intelligence-led policing. He also called for a review of the effectiveness of existing enforcement measures, including the deployment of sniffer dogs and enhanced inter-agency coordination. Recognising the influence of digital media on young people, Ashish Kundra directed departments to engage social media experts and local influencers to create impactful videos promoting a drug-free lifestyle. He also stressed expanding youth engagement through sports, cultural activities and rural games in collaboration with organisations such as the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) under civic action programmes.

The Chief Secretary further suggested introducing recognition and incentive mechanisms for ASHA workers, ANMs, teachers and villages demonstrating exemplary efforts in preventing drug abuse. He emphasised sustained engagement with transport associations, labour unions and community organisations, noting that most narcotic substances enter the region from outside and require stronger coordination among enforcement agencies and local stakeholders.

Calling for an integrated response, Ashish Kundra directed the Social and Tribal Welfare Department to consolidate recommendations from all departments and present a comprehensive action plan at the next NCORD meeting, scheduled within the next ten days. He instructed all departments to bridge existing gaps, strengthen inter-departmental coordination and implement actionable interventions within defined timelines.

The meeting was attended by the Director General of Police, Divisional Commissioner, Secretaries of Social and Tribal Welfare, School Education, Public Works and Law Departments, Deputy Commissioner Leh, Senior Superintendent of Police, Director Health Services, Special Secretary (Home), Chief Planning Officer and senior officers from various departments. Deputy Commissioners of other districts and several officers also participated virtually.

L-G Saxena inaugurates ₹27.18-crore Udmaroo bridge in Nubra

Bridge over Shayok River cuts travel distance by 35 km, improving connectivity, pilgrimage and local development



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NUBRA:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 21 inaugurated the ₹27.18-crore Udmaroo Bridge over the Shayok River in Nubra district, marking another significant milestone in strengthening road infrastructure and connectivity in the region.

The strategically important bridge will reduce the travel distance between Udmaroo and Hundri villages, as well as Terchey and Skuru villages, by nearly 35 kilometres, significantly cutting travel time and ensuring seamless all-weather connectivity. It will also improve access to Sham Gombo (Yarma Gonbo), a revered Buddhist pilgrimage site, thereby promoting religious tourism and supporting socio-economic development in Nubra.

Constructed under the Special Development Package (SDP) of the UT Administration, the bridge is a modern three-span (3×80-metre) truss system bridge with a 70R loading capacity and around 230 metres of approach roads. The project is expected to directly benefit nearly 1,000 residents of the surrounding villages by making travel safer, faster and more reliable throughout the year, particularly during adverse weather conditions.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor described the inauguration of the Udmaroo Bridge as another landmark in Nubra's development journey. He said that in Ladakh, infrastructure is measured not merely in terms of concrete and steel but by the opportunities

it creates and the ease it brings to people's daily lives.

"Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, roads, bridges and other public infrastructure are transforming connectivity across even the remotest border areas. Our objective is not merely to build infrastructure, but to ensure that every citizen has access to better opportunities, quality public services and a brighter future," L-G Saxena said.

He noted that the bridge would provide uninterrupted year-round access to Sham Gombo, making travel easier for pilgrims, tourists and local residents. The improved connectivity is expected to boost religious tourism and generate livelihood opportunities for local youth through homestays, transport services, handicrafts and other tourism-related activities.

The Lieutenant Governor said that projects such as the Udmaroo Bridge not only enhance accessibility but also contribute to inclusive development by strengthening agriculture, promoting tourism and improving the overall quality of life.

Describing the bridge as a symbol of development, resilience and progress, L-G Saxena congratulated all those associated with the successful completion of the project and reaffirmed the Administration's commitment to accelerating infrastructure development across Ladakh's border areas in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena lays foundation stones for two motorable bridges in Nubra  
Burma–Sumoor Bridge to slash 70-km journey to 500 metres; Tongsted Bridge to provide all-weather connectivity to remote border villages



Photo Caption: : Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena laying the foundation stones for the Burma–Sumoor Motorable Bridge and the Tongsted Motorable Bridge in Nubra.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NUBRA:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 20 laid the foundation stones for the Burma–Sumoor Motorable Bridge and the Tongsted Motorable Bridge over the Siachen River during his maiden visit to Nubra district on July 20.

Once completed, the Burma–Sumoor Bridge will reduce the travel distance between Sumoor and the villages of Burma, Charasa, Kuri and Murgi from nearly 70 kilometres to just 500 metres, significantly cutting travel time and im-

proving access to healthcare, education, markets, government services and the district headquarters at Diskit. The Tongsted Bridge will similarly provide reliable all-weather connectivity to several remote villages, improving access to essential services.

The projects are being executed under the Special Development Package (SDP) of the UT Administration and are expected to transform connectivity in Ladakh's border region.

The Burma–Sumoor Bridge Project, sanctioned at ₹64.10 crore, includes the construction of 470 metres of bridges at three locations, a 2.5-kilometre approach road, and six RCC culverts. The project will directly benefit around 848 residents while improving transportation of agricultural produce and promoting tourism, trade and local livelihoods.

The Tongsted Bridge Project, sanctioned at ₹19.29 crore, involves the construction of a 160-metre Steel Plate Girder Bridge over the Siachen River. Designed for the harsh high-altitude environment, it will provide year-round connectivity to the villages of Tongsted, Yarma Gonbo, Dongsu, Nungsted, Henachy, Changlung and Sasoma, benefiting more than 500 residents. The bridge will also improve access to Yarma Gonbo, an important religious and cultural centre in the region.

Addressing the gathering, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said it was a privilege to visit the scenic Nubra Valley for the first time and dedicate two transformative infrastructure projects to its people. Congratulating the residents, he said the projects reflected the Administration's commitment to strengthening infrastructure and ensuring balanced development in Ladakh's border areas.

The Lieutenant Governor said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ladakh has witnessed unprecedented infrastructure development since becoming a Union Territory.

He noted that continuous investments in roads, bridges and strategic connectivity have significantly improved access to remote border villages and enhanced the quality of life for residents.

Describing the bridges as more than engineering structures, Saxena said they would serve as lifelines by reducing travel distances, connecting communities with opportunities, strengthening border infrastructure and creating new avenues for agriculture, tourism and economic growth across Nubra Valley.

He observed that while the rivers of Nubra sustain agriculture, horticulture and local livelihoods, they often become barriers during floods and adverse weather. The construction of these all-weather bridges, he said, will ensure safe and uninterrupted connectivity throughout the year, making travel easier for residents of remote villages.

Highlighting Nubra's immense tourism potential, the Lieutenant Governor said improved road and bridge infrastructure would attract more visitors, generate employment for local youth through homestays, transport, handicrafts and adventure tourism, and stimulate the region's economy.

Describing the projects as investments in the future of Nubra, Saxena said they would strengthen connectivity, promote economic growth, support social development and improve the overall well-being of the people living in the valley.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Administrative Secretary, Social & Tribal Welfare Department, UT Ladakh, Nidhi Malik visited the District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC), Kargil, on July 27 to review its functioning and assess the facilities and services being provided for the prevention, treatment, counselling, and rehabilitation of individuals affected by substance abuse.

During the visit, she inspected the Centre's infrastructure and reviewed the medical and rehabilitation facilities available. She examined the bedding arrangements, medical assessment facilities, counselling services, and other support systems provided to beneficiaries undergoing treatment and rehabilitation.

Nidhi Malik emphasized the impor-

tance of ensuring a safe, supportive, dignified, and conducive environment for individuals receiving treatment. She appreciated the efforts of the DDAC team in addressing the growing challenge of substance abuse and strengthening drug demand reduction and rehabilitation services in the district.

She also reviewed the Centre's ongoing awareness and outreach initiatives, including counselling and awareness sessions in educational institutions, community outreach programmes, hotspot visits, door-to-door awareness campaigns, public pledge programmes, rallies, workshops, seminars, and IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities. She highlighted the need for coordinated efforts among the DDAC, Police Department, religious organisations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to effectively

tackle substance abuse.

The Administrative Secretary stressed the importance of proper documentation of awareness activities and rehabilitation outcomes. She directed the Centre to maintain accurate and measurable records of programmes, beneficiaries, follow-up activities, and the success stories of recovered individuals to assess the impact of counselling, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

The visit concluded with directions to further strengthen institutional mechanisms, counselling services, rehabilitation support, community outreach, and preventive interventions against substance abuse. The DDAC team reaffirmed its commitment to providing quality treatment and rehabilitation services while working towards the goal of a drug-free Ladakh.

Nidhi Malik reviews de-addiction centre stresses stronger rehabilitation services



Photo Caption: Administrative Secretary, Social & Tribal Welfare Department, UT Ladakh, Nidhi Malik during her visit to the District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC), Kargil.

Fortnightly News

People’s Voice: Rethinking tourism in Ladakh: Local voices demand sustainable development

By Stanzin Angmo and Stanzin Rinchen

Interviews with stakeholders from different sectors of Ladakh’s tourism industry highlight a shared concern about the region’s future. While tourism has boosted livelihoods, promoted Ladakhi culture and attracted visitors from across the world, its rapid and unregulated growth has also raised concerns over mass tourism, environmental degradation and the erosion of local culture. The stakeholders unanimously advocate a more sustainable, community-based tourism model that protects Ladakh’s unique heritage while ensuring greater benefits for local communities.



**Riyaz Ahmed, Fabric Vendor:** Tourism in Ladakh has undergone remarkable changes over the past five decades, bringing both opportunities and challenges. Tourism began on a modest scale in the 1970s, when foreign visitors were primarily attracted by Ladakh’s monasteries, trekking routes, culture and traditional way of life. Over the years, it has created employment opportunities for trekking guides, horse owners, hotel and homestay operators, and local vendors, while significantly improving the livelihoods of many Ladakhi families.

Beyond its economic contribution, tourism has also supported social and educational development. Researchers, students and international visitors have contributed to our communities by promoting education, sharing knowledge and introducing technologies such as solar panels and greenhouses.

However, as tourism continues to grow, preserving Ladakh’s cultural heritage must remain a priority. We need to promote authentic Ladakhi products, traditions and spiritual heritage while ensuring that local people receive priority in tourism-related businesses so that the economic benefits remain within the community.

There is also a need to provide better opportunities for local vendors by allowing them to sell traditional Ladakhi products at prominent tourist locations such as Leh Main Market and Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Airport. Tourism should continue to grow in a sustainable and



**Tsewang Dolma, Local Vegetable Vendor:** Locally grown vegetables and fruits are an integral part of Ladakh’s culture and identity. Selling fresh produce is not only our

source of livelihood but also a way of preserving our traditional agricultural practices.

However, after we were shifted away from Leh’s Main Market, it has become difficult to reach both tourists and local customers. Limited visibility, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient selling space have adversely affected our livelihoods.

Many tourists are interested in experiencing authentic Ladakhi culture, and our locally grown produce is an important part of that experience. If we are provided with a well-organised marketplace in a prominent location, tourists will be able to discover and support local products more easily.

What we need is better market access and greater institutional support for small local vendors. This will not only improve our incomes but also help preserve Ladakh’s agricultural heritage. Supporting local vendors means supporting the people, traditions and culture that make Ladakh unique.

**Stanzin Yangskit, Homestay Owner:** Tourism in Ladakh should focus on quality rather than quantity. While tourism has created economic opportunities over the past decade, its largely unregulated growth has also fuelled mass tourism, placing increasing pressure on our fragile environment, culture and local communities.

Through my experience in experiential and community-based tourism, I have realised that many travellers are genuinely interested in understanding the authentic lifestyle of Ladakh. We should encourage visitors to explore our villages, learn about local traditions and interact with local communities instead of limiting their experience to popular tourist destinations.

I am concerned about the growing issues of overcrowding, poor waste management and the increasing influence of social media on tourist behaviour. Ladakh’s fragile ecosystem cannot sustain uncontrolled tourism indefinitely. We need better planning and stronger

policies that promote sustainable and responsible tourism.

Ladakh’s greatest strength lies in its people, culture and unique way of life. Tourism should help preserve these qualities rather than compromise them. By actively involving local communities in tourism development, we can ensure that its benefits are shared by both visitors and the people of Ladakh for generations to come.



**Stanzin Chemet, Monk:** Tourism in Ladakh should be rooted in respect, understanding and responsibility. Our monasteries are not merely tourist attractions; they are sacred institutions that preserve Ladakh’s spiritual, cultural and historical heritage.

Tourism has played an important role in introducing Buddhism and Ladakhi culture to people from around the world and has also contributed to the preservation of many monasteries. However, the increasing number of visitors has brought challenges such as overcrowding, noise, environmental pollution and a lack of awareness about monastery etiquette.

I encourage visitors to understand the spiritual significance of monasteries rather than viewing them only as scenic places for photography. Monasteries offer valuable opportunities to learn about Buddhist teachings, meditation, traditional practices and Ladakh’s unique cultural identity.

For tourism to remain beneficial, it must be responsible and sustainable. Visitors should respect local customs, dress appropriately, maintain silence during prayers and help protect the environment. Tourism should become a bridge for cultural exchange rather than a source of cultural erosion. My hope is that every visitor leaves Ladakh not only with beautiful memories but also with a deeper appreciation and respect for our living spiritual and cultural heritage.

NHRC highlights child welfare, prison health and disaster preparedness in Leh



Photo Caption: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Special Rapporteur Shomita Biswas. Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Special Rapporteur Shomita Biswas chaired a debriefing meeting on July 22 with senior officials to review key human rights issues and discuss measures to strengthen the protection and welfare of vulnerable sections of society in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The meeting was attended by DIG Ladakh Kaushal Kumar Sharma, Director of the Social & Tribal Welfare Department Dr. Zahida Bano, Director of Health Services Dr. Tashi Thinles, and officers from various departments.

During the meeting, Biswas shared her observations following interactions with district authorities and her two-day visit to Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in Leh district. She appreciated the efforts being made to ensure the care and protection of children while identifying areas that require further attention to ensure institutional care meets human rights standards.

Emphasising the need for the holistic development of children living in CCIs, she recommended expanding vocational training and skill development opportunities to improve their

future prospects and support their social and economic rehabilitation. She also stressed the need to strengthen screening and monitoring mechanisms for women and children in government-run institutions to ensure their safety, well-being, and timely access to essential support services.

Addressing healthcare concerns, the NHRC Special Rapporteur highlighted the importance of regular mental health assessments for prison inmates. She called for closer coordination between prison authorities and the Health Department to facilitate periodic health screenings and diagnostic check-ups, particularly for inmates aged 40 years and above, enabling timely medical intervention whenever required.

Biswas also underscored the importance of integrating disaster preparedness and climate resilience into institutional planning, noting that changing climatic conditions require proactive measures to safeguard vulnerable populations during emergencies.

The meeting concluded with a detailed discussion on strengthening inter-departmental coordination for the effective implementation of the recommendations. Officials reaffirmed their commitment to improving institutional care, healthcare access, and disaster preparedness while upholding the rights, dignity, and well-being of children, women, prison inmates, and other vulnerable groups across Ladakh.

Drass administration steps up drive against drug abuse



Photo Caption: Deputy Commissioner Drass, Imteez Kacho (JKAS) chairing a meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD).

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**DRASS:** Deputy Commissioner Drass, Imteez Kacho (JKAS), on July 22 chaired a meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to review the district’s preparedness and strengthen coordinated efforts to curb drug trafficking and substance abuse.

The meeting was attended by Superintendent of Police, Drass, Ishtyaq Kacho (JKPS); Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Drass, Vishal Atri (JKAS); Block Medical Officer, Drass, Dr. Sajjad Hussain; Principal, Government Degree College, Drass, Nasir Shabani; Principal, Government Higher Secondary

School, Drass, Safoora Bano; Principal, Government Higher Secondary School, Bhimbat, Tashi Ghylsan; Zonal Education Officer, Drass, Mohammad Ibrahim; Forest Range Officer, Drass, Mohammad Ilyaz; ITBP Check Post Officer, Sanjay Arya; and a representative from the Agriculture Department.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for close inter-departmental coordination, regular random inspections by the District Police, strict enforcement of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, prevention of illegal cultivation of narcotic plants, and intensified awareness programmes in educational institutions to protect youth from drug abuse. He directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination to ensure a drug-free Drass.

He also emphasized involving civil society, religious leaders, youth ambassadors, students, and local celebrities in a sustained campaign against drug abuse. He directed the principals of the Government Degree College and schools, along with the Zonal Education Officer, to prepare and stage skits on the dangers of drug abuse in markets and other public places to spread awareness. He further suggested that one such skit be performed during this year’s Independence Day celebrations. Superintendent of Police Ishtyaq Kacho highlighted the initiatives being undertaken by the Police Department and urged all departments to complement the efforts through coordinated action.

The meeting also emphasized the need to develop playgrounds in all villages of Drass, provide youth with opportunities to showcase their talents through sports and extracurricular activities, and maintain close vigilance on youngsters showing signs of depression or social isolation, enabling timely support and intervention.

SoulSpeak

Dr. P.P. Wangchuk

Be responsible to matter in life



That we need to act responsibly is a statement of universal acceptance. Only those who are responsible can be called good human beings! Even animals play their role with responsibility to the extent they understand as their understanding, unlike ours, is quite limited.

If I were to define responsibility, I would say, it is an individual’s rightful act or performance as per the values, tradition, and the rules and the laws. In other words, responsibility can be defined in terms of accountability to your duties and

obligations.

When we talk of responsibility, duty and rights do creep in invariably because they are all intertwined. You can say that responsibility is an umbrella word for rights and duty. If you disregard your duty, you are shirking away from your responsibility. As a result, you become what we call irresponsible, a negative and bad characteristic in an individual.

Taking responsibility is an act of great kindness that attracts ‘Wow’ moments. Once you take up a task with utmost responsibility, you are on ‘Cloud Nine’. You are happy and in a state of positivity. You see the whole world as if it were a part of your life system.

In a way, responsibility creates freedom unlimited. You get the freedom to do great things because your superiors would be too happy to let you do so. They will trust you because of your complete responsibility that you have taken in the past.

You can, therefore, say that responsibility gets you ownership. That is because once you take up a task with responsibility, you are in action until a solution comes up. It is in that sense that you get ownership over an unfinished task that you had taken up.

That is why they say that responsibility has three levels: To your own self, to society at large, and to others. Responsibility has to be woven together in these three circles in order to make it produce good results.

Lastly, one can say that responsibility strengthens a person’s attitude and his belief in the goodness of mankind. It brings honour and respect to one who is out there to be responsible and beneficial to the people around.

The punchline: A responsible person alone can fit in the cloak of a great person to be a great leader.

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

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Chemet Rafael: Inspiring specially abled entrepreneurs

Q. Can you introduce yourself? Where are you from, and where did you complete your studies?

First of all, I would like to thank Reach Ladakh for reaching out to me. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to share my journey.

I am Chemet Rafael from Alchi village in Ladakh. I completed my schooling up to Class 12 in Leh. After finishing school, I decided to take a gap year to focus on building my own startup and exploring entrepreneurship. That period allowed me to develop my ideas, gain practical experience, and work towards creating something meaningful.

Q. Have you ever faced any challenges in your personal or professional journey?

Like everyone else, I have faced challenges in both my personal and professional journey. I believe that difficulties are a natural part of life and should never discourage us from pursuing our goals.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said that every day is a new life, and I strongly believe in that philosophy. No matter what challenges we encounter, we should move forward with a positive mindset, treating each day as a fresh opportunity to learn, grow, and become stronger.

Q. What inspired you to become an entrepreneur and start your startup, Snowland?

In the beginning, I had mixed feelings about starting Snowland because of financial constraints. I had only around ₹10,000, while I needed nearly ₹1–2 lakh to launch the venture. Despite these challenges, I decided to take the first step rather than give up on my dream.

I was fortunate to receive financial support of ₹65,000 from the Deputy Commissioner of Ladakh. That assistance proved to be a turning point, enabling me to purchase essential equipment such as a grinding machine, glass jars, and raw materials.

Although I am still at the beginning of my entrepreneurial journey, I remain committed to providing my community with pure, high-quality products. For me, the foundation of any successful business is trust. If customers are satisfied with the quality of a product, they will continue to support the brand. Building long-term relationships through honesty and consistency is my highest priority.

I also consider myself a lifelong learner. Alongside managing my startup, I continue my studies and learn from mentors, friends,

Interviewed by Dechen Dolker



MESSAGE TO THE READERS  
“ I don’t consider myself a perfect person, as I am still learning and growing every day. However, one message I would like to share is this: never limit yourself to what you think you can achieve. Believe in your potential and always strive to do more in practical life.  
Keep challenging yourself, continue improving your skills, and never stop learning. Growth comes from consistent effort, curiosity, and the willingness to embrace new opportunities. If you remain committed to learning and self-improvement, success will follow.”

and my own experiences. I believe many young people today focus only on securing government jobs and spend years waiting for opportunities. While government jobs are valuable, I feel it is equally important to apply the knowledge and skills we acquire in practical ways. True learning is reflected in our ability to create value, solve problems, and contribute positively to society.

Q. What products are currently available under your brand, Snowland? What ingredients and raw materials do you use?

Under the Snowland brand, I currently offer a range of products made from locally sourced natural ingredients. These include sea buckthorn products, Multani Mitti (Fuller’s Earth), peanut butter sweetened with jaggery, berry products, and pure wheat flour.

Our peanut butter is made without any added chemicals or preservatives, making it a completely natural product. We have also developed two varieties of Fuller’s Earth products, one of which is enriched with 10 percent sea buckthorn. In addition, I am working on launching another new product, which is currently in the design and development stage.

Ladakh is blessed with abundant natural resources, and I believe they offer tremendous opportunities for entrepreneurship. By utilising locally available resources and adding value to them, young people can build sustainable businesses, become self-reliant, and create employment instead of relying solely on government jobs.

Q. After becoming an entrepreneur, have you noticed any change in people’s mindset? Many people believe that specially abled individuals cannot achieve such success. What would you like to say about this?

I feel sorry for people who think that way because they underestimate the abilities and potential of especially abled individuals. A disability does not define a person’s capabilities or limit their dreams.

As I mentioned earlier, every individual faces challenges in life. For example, someone with poor eyesight needs glasses to see clearly. In a way, that too is a limitation. The difference lies in how we overcome our challenges and move forward.

I have been fortunate to have a very supportive family, and I believe family support plays a vital role in helping every individual succeed, whether they are specially abled or not.

From a psychological perspective, children with disabilities should be encouraged from an early age to develop good values, communication skills, self-confidence, and the ability to interact respect-

...continues on page 6

Fortnight Highlights



Officials inspecting the flash flood-affected areas from Ganglas Phu to Skarzangling Tokpo (Nala) on July 22 to review the ongoing rescue and restoration works. The dignitaries visited the affected areas of Horzay, Gonpa, Changspa Bridge, and Skara Village, where manpower and heavy machinery from the concerned departments continued debris clearance and restoration work.



A three-day HPC (Holistic Progress Card) Training Programme organised by the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh in collaboration with Nanritam West Bengal on July 21, with enthusiastic participation by 480 teachers representing all six educational zones of Leh district along with teachers from various private schools.



Cleanliness drive was conducted at Diskit and its surrounding areas, covering government offices, government quarters, markets, streets, drains, and other public places. The cleanliness campaign was successfully carried out with the cooperation of all government departments, Lambardars and the general public.



The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh, successfully concluded five-day Bhoti Teacher-Training Programmes for teachers from all six educational zones of Ladakh, namely Nyoma, Durbuk, Kharu, Leh, Khaltsi, and Nubra.



On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Kargil and under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), the Block Development Office, TSG, conducted a plastic ban enforcement drive in TSG Market to ensure compliance with the ban on single-use plastic and promote environmental protection.



Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 15 flagged off the first export consignment of 5 metric tonnes (MT) of Ladakh’s premium fresh apricots to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marking the beginning of the region’s largest-ever fresh apricot export programme.



Director General of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Krushna Chandra Panigrahy, on July 14 inaugurated the Pilot Heat Pump Project in Leh, an initiative aimed at promoting energy-efficient and sustainable heating solutions in the Union Territory of Ladakh.



Government Degree College (GDC), Drass, on July 16 held the valedictory function of a five-day PM-USHA Workshop on Women Leadership, Life Skills, Menstrual Health and Hygiene, and Stop Motion Animation.

Fortnightly News

In Conversation with Chemet Rafael: Inspiring specially abled entrepreneurs

...Continuity of page 5

fully with people of all ages. These life skills are just as important as academic education and help them become independent and confident members of society.

I have also observed that many young people today focus only on securing jobs. I would like to urge the UT Administration to introduce entrepreneurship education in colleges and provide greater funding, mentorship, and support for aspiring entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship should be encouraged as a career option so that students understand its potential and have the confidence to create opportunities rather than wait for them.

Q. What message would you like to share with people who aspire to start their own businesses, especially those who are especially abled?

My message to all aspiring entrepreneurs, especially especially abled individuals, is that education is important, but practical skills are equally essential. Knowledge becomes truly valuable when it can be applied to solve real-life problems.

There is a story that perfectly illustrates this. Once, an aeroplane developed a technical fault, and even a team of highly qualified mechanics could not identify the problem. Eventually, a technician with practical experience examined the aircraft and fixed it by simply tightening one particular nut. He charged ₹1 lakh for the job. When people questioned why he charged so much for such a small task, he replied, “I am not charging for tightening the nut; I am charging for knowing which nut to tighten.”

This story reminds us that knowledge, practical skills, and experience are invaluable. I encourage especially abled individuals not to limit themselves to formal education alone. Focus on developing practical skills, keep learning, and believe in your abilities. The right skills can help you become independent, build confidence, and achieve your goals.

Kargil gets automated driving testing centre

L-G Saxena says technology-driven licensing will improve road safety and transparency



Photo Caption: Inauguration of the Automated Driving Testing Centre (ADTC) at Kurbathang, Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 26 inaugurated the Automated Driving Testing Centre (ADTC) at Kurbathang, Kargil, marking a major step towards enhancing road safety and ensuring a transparent, technology-driven driving licence testing system in Ladakh.

The inauguration was attended by Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, and Member of Parliament (Ladakh), Mohmad Hanceefa Jan.

Developed under the guidance of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, the centre has been constructed at a cost of approximately ₹2.48 crore. Equipped with advanced sensor-based and fully automated technologies, the facility will enable objective, scientific and transparent assessment of driving skills for the issuance of driving licences.

The centre features RFID-enabled applicant identification, laser and infrared sensors, an electronic sensor-based driving track, high-resolution CCTV surveillance, automated scoring software, a computerised test monitoring system, real-time data processing, digital

result generation, an automated pass/fail evaluation system, and seamless integration with the VAHAN and SARATHI platforms. These technologies eliminate human bias and ensure that only qualified drivers are granted licences.

Developed in accordance with the Ministry’s guidelines, the facility includes a computerised testing and control room, an automated driving test track, a CCTV surveillance system and other essential infrastructure.

Addressing the gathering, L-G Saxena stressed that safe roads begin with responsible drivers. He said a driving licence is not merely a legal document but a certification of a person’s ability to drive responsibly while ensuring the safety of all road users. He emphasised that driving tests must be conducted in a fair, scientific and completely transparent manner.

“The Automated Driving Testing Centre reflects our commitment to Digital India, e-Governance and Good Governance. By ensuring a transparent and technology-driven licensing system, we are not only improving public service delivery but also strengthening road safety across Ladakh. I am confident that this Centre will emerge as a model for transport reforms in the Union Territory,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that the new system would make the driving licence process faster, more transparent and efficient, thereby enhancing public trust in the Transport Department. He added that higher driving standards would play a significant role in reducing road accidents and promoting safer roads across the region.

Appealing to the people of Ladakh, L-G Saxena urged citizens to treat obtaining a driving licence as a responsibility towards society rather than merely a legal requirement. He called on motorists to strictly follow traffic rules, observe speed limits, wear seat belts and helmets, and always drive responsibly, noting that even a small act of caution can save precious lives.

DC Kargil reviews fuel supply network, stresses 24×7 fuel availability and modernisation of petrol pumps



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: The Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, on July 24 chaired a review meeting with petrol pump owners, officials from SIDCO and the Cooperative Department, representatives of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), and other concerned officers to assess the status of fuel stations across the district and discuss measures to strengthen fuel accessibility and improve public convenience.

Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need to ensure an uninterrupted fuel supply across the district. He directed that at least one petrol pump in every populated area should remain operational round the clock to cater to residents, tourists and emergency services, particularly during odd hours.

A detailed review of the district’s fuel infrastructure was conducted during the meeting. Officials in-

formed that BPCL operates petrol pumps at Taisuru and Ringmospang, while another outlet is under construction at Shargole. HPCL operates fuel stations at Shilikchey and Baroo, while IOCL has outlets at Drass, Kharboo, Shilikchey, Titichumik (Sankoo), Taisuru, Wakha, and two petrol pumps in Zanskar.

The Deputy Commissioner proposed establishing a petrol pump at Humbutingla to improve fuel accessibility in the area. He also highlighted the need for a fuel station along the Khangral–Sanjak route in view of increasing vehicular movement and growing public demand.

During the meeting, SIDCO officials informed that the corporation is in the process of establishing petrol pumps in Drass and Zanskar. It was also noted that the Cooperative Department is currently not operating any petrol pump in the district.

Highlighting the shift towards sustainable transportation, the Deputy Commissioner directed Oil Marketing Companies to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at all fuel outlets wherever feasible. He noted that the Government is providing subsidies for EV infrastructure and instructed the companies to expedite the installation of all pending charging stations.

The Deputy Commissioner also stressed the need to modernise petrol pumps by improving public amenities. He suggested setting up cafés at suitable locations, maintaining clean and tourist-friendly premises, and providing ATM facilities wherever possible. Reviewing the status of washroom facilities, he directed petrol pump operators to ensure hygienic, clean and well-maintained toilets for the convenience of commuters and tourists.

Concluding the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments, oil companies and petrol pump operators to submit detailed status and action-taken reports on the issues discussed within two days to facilitate timely follow-up and implementation of the decisions.

Ladakh Scouts wins 6th LG Horse Polo Cup in Drass

L-G announces enhanced cash awards to promote horse polo and youth participation



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

DRASS: The Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC) emerged champions of the 6th LG Horse Polo Cup 2026, defeating the Animal Husbandry Department, Leh, in the final played at Goshan Polo Ground, Drass, on July 25.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena attended the closing ceremony and announced a substantial increase in prize money for the winning and runner-up teams to encourage greater youth participation in sports and motivate athletes across Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor announced that the winners of this year’s tournament would receive ₹1 lakh, while the runners-up would receive ₹50,000, doubling the earlier prize amounts of ₹50,000 and

₹25,000, respectively. He further announced that from next year’s edition, the champions will receive ₹2 lakh and the runners-up ₹1 lakh. The prestigious Union Territory-level championship, organised from July 21 to 25, witnessed the participation of 18 men’s teams and four women’s teams from across Ladakh, showcasing the region’s rich sporting heritage and enduring tradition of horse polo.

The event was attended by Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd. Jaffer Akhoo, and Member of Parliament (Ladakh), Mohmad Hanceefa Jan, along with senior officials and sports enthusiasts.

Now in its sixth edition, the LG Horse Polo Cup has emerged as a

flagship sporting event promoting indigenous sports, preserving Ladakh’s unique cultural heritage and providing a competitive platform for talented riders and horses under the challenging high-altitude conditions of the region. The tournament also reinforced Drass’s growing stature as a hub for traditional equestrian sports and cultural tourism.

Addressing the gathering, L-G Saxena said it was a privilege to be part of the grand finale of the tournament. Describing horse polo as more than just a sport, he called it a living heritage that reflects Ladakh’s warrior spirit, horsemanship and cultural identity. He noted that the game has been played across Ladakhi and Balti villages for generations, with Drass continuing to preserve and promote this rich legacy.

Congratulating all the participating men’s and women’s teams, the Lieutenant Governor praised their skill, endurance and sportsmanship. He also appreciated the growing participation of women’s teams, saying it reflects the increasing empowerment of women in sports and society across Ladakh.

Reaffirming the Union Territory Administration’s commitment to promoting horse polo alongside modern sports infrastructure, L-G Saxena highlighted the potential of integrating the sport with adventure tourism and cultural festivals to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities while promoting Ladakh as a unique cultural and tourism destination.

The tournament concluded with the presentation of trophies and awards to the winning teams and outstanding performers.

Kargil Vijay Diwas: Hundreds pay tribute to war heroes in MY Bharat Padyatra



Photo Caption: Participants of the Kargil Vijay Diwas Padyatra organised by MY Bharat Ladakh in Kargil.

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

KARGIL: Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), Ladakh, organised a grand Kargil Vijay Diwas Padyatra in Kargil on July 26 to commemorate the courage, sacrifice and patriotism of the Indian Armed Forces during the 1999 Kargil War.

The padyatra was flagged off by Waseem Ramzan Dar, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Sankoo, in the presence of Raj Kumar, Principal of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Khumbathang. Hundreds of MY Bharat volunteers, civil society members, defence personnel, ex-servicemen, government officials and local residents participated in the march, reflecting a strong spirit of patriotism and national unity.

Addressing the gathering, Jitendra Sahare, District Youth Officer, Kargil, highlighted the significance of Kargil Vijay Diwas and urged young people to draw inspiration from the courage, discipline and selfless ser-

vice of the armed forces. He said such programmes help instil the spirit of nationalism while keeping alive the memories of the nation’s heroes.

Raj Kumar, Principal of JNV Khumbathang, emphasised the importance of nurturing values of patriotism, discipline and national service among students. He encouraged youth to honour the sacrifices of the brave soldiers by contributing positively to nation-building and becoming responsible citizens.

In his address, Waseem Ramzan Dar paid rich tributes to the soldiers who laid down their lives during the Kargil War. He appreciated MY Bharat for organising the commemorative event and said Kargil Vijay Diwas serves as a reminder of the courage, determination and unwavering commitment of the Indian Armed Forces in safeguarding the nation’s sovereignty. He also called upon the

youth to remain united and actively contribute to the country’s development with the same spirit of dedication and service.

Khushal Gupta, Deputy Director, MY Bharat Anantnag, expressed gratitude to the district administration, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, defence personnel, ex-servicemen, volunteers and all stakeholders for their support in making the event a success. He reaffirmed MY Bharat’s commitment to engaging youth in activities that promote patriotism, civic responsibility and national integration.

As a mark of respect, ex-servicemen and defence personnel were felicitated for their invaluable service to the nation.

The programme began with a soulful rendition of “Vande Mataram”, followed by the National Anthem, creating an atmosphere of pride and reverence. The patriotic march commenced from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Khumbathang, proceeded along the scenic Suru River, and concluded at Saliskot. Throughout the route, participants sang patriotic songs, raised slogans in honour of the nation and the armed forces, and paid homage to the brave soldiers whose valour secured India’s victory in the Kargil War.

The event concluded with participants taking a pledge to uphold the ideals of unity, patriotism and selfless service while remembering the supreme sacrifices made by the nation’s brave soldiers.

for advanced orthopaedic treatment.

The surgery was successfully performed by Dr. Altaf Husain, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, CHC Sankoo, along with Dr. Ahmad Ali, Senior Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, QAAM District Hospital, Kargil, with the support of a dedicated surgical and operation theatre team.

Anaesthesia was administered by Dr. Asif, Senior Consultant Anaesthetist, QAAM District Hospital, Kargil, assisted by the anaesthesia team, ensuring the procedure was carried out safely and smoothly.

The coordinated efforts of the medical team led to the suc-

First total knee replacement successfully conducted at CHC Sankoo



Mansoor Hosan Beigh

SANKOO: The Department of Orthopaedics at Community Health Centre (CHC) Sankoo, Kargil, successfully performed its first-ever bilateral cemented Total Knee Replacement (TKR) surgery for a patient suffering from Grade IV severe osteoarthritis on July 25.

The landmark procedure, conducted in a single sitting, marks the first time such an advanced orthopaedic surgery has been performed at CHC Sankoo, bringing specialised joint replacement services closer to the people of Sankoo and the Suru Valley.

The achievement is expected to significantly reduce the need for patients to travel to tertiary hospitals outside the region

cessful completion of the surgery, restoring mobility, relieving pain and offering the patient an improved quality of life. The successful completion of the first Total Knee Replacement surgery at CHC Sankoo marks a significant milestone in the region’s healthcare journey. Besides providing advanced treatment closer to home, it establishes a new benchmark in delivering specialised orthopaedic care in the remote areas of Ladakh.

The achievement also reflects the commitment of the Health Department, Union Territory of Ladakh, to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and ensuring that quality, affordable and advanced medical services are accessible to people at the grassroots level.

## Fortnightly News

### WWF-India distributes solar flashlights to Doxa families to promote human–brown bear coexistence



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** WWF-India has distributed solar flashlights to 41 Doxa families from the villages of Aksho, Abran and Himilig in two phases under its Himalayan Brown Bear Conservation Project.

The initiative aims to strengthen community-based conservation efforts and reduce human–brown bear conflict by enhancing the safety of pastoral families at night, enabling them to better guard their livestock during periods when brown bears are most active.

The distribution programme was attended by Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Er. Phunchok Tashi, who handed over the solar flashlights to the beneficiary families. Representatives of WWF-India, village Lambardars, Doxa families and local community members were also present.

The WWF-India team, comprising Mohd Kazim (Project Officer), Preet Sharma (Senior Project Officer) and Manu Mohn (Senior Project Officer), highlighted the ecological importance of the Himalayan Brown Bear and underscored the need for community-led conservation. The team also discussed practical measures to mitigate human–wildlife conflict and encouraged active participation from Doxa families to strengthen coexistence between people and wildlife.

Er. Phunchok Tashi appreciated WWF-India's conservation initiatives and acknowledged the vital role played by Doxa families in maintaining the health of Ladakh's rangelands. He stressed the ecological significance of the Himalayan Brown Bear and called for continued collaboration among government agencies, conservation organisations and local communities to protect the region's rich biodiversity while ensuring sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists.

The programme concluded with an interactive discussion between WWF-India and the beneficiary families on further strengthening conflict mitigation measures and promoting community-based conservation. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the Himalayan Brown Bear while fostering peaceful coexistence between wildlife and local communities.

Through such initiatives, WWF-India continues to promote community-driven conservation efforts that support harmony between humans and wildlife across the Himalayan landscape.

### Justice Sindhu Sharma inspects new District Court complex in Leh, flags off legal aid vehicles



*Photo Caption: Justice Sindhu Sharma, Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh during her visit to the newly constructed District Court Complex at Melongthang, Leh.*

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**LEH:** Justice Sindhu Sharma, Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of the Ladakh Legal Services Authority (LLSA), visited the newly constructed District Court Complex at Melongthang, Leh, on July 18 to review its functioning and assess judicial infrastructure.

Justice Sharma was received by Principal District and Sessions Judge, Leh, Spalzes Angmo, along with judicial officers, Director Prosecution Nawang Nurboo and prosecuting officers, President of the Bar Association Leh, Advocate Gonbo Stobgyal, members of the District Bar Association, and staff of the District Court, Leh.

During the visit, Justice Sharma inspected all courtrooms and reviewed the day-to-day functioning of the courts. She issued necessary directions aimed at improving court functioning and reducing hardships faced by litigants.

The Executive Chairman also held separate interactions with judicial officers, prosecuting officers, advocates and court staff, during which she heard their grievances and discussed measures to enhance the efficiency of the justice delivery system.

Following the inspection, Justice Sharma flagged off two multi-utility vehicles sanctioned for the District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) of Leh and Kargil. The vehicles will strengthen the outreach of legal services institutions and facilitate the delivery of legal aid to needy and marginalised sections of society.

Justice Sharma also inspected the newly constructed Advocates' Chamber at the court complex and symbolically handed over its key to the representative of the Bar Association, Leh. The new facility is expected to improve access to legal services by providing advocates with dedicated workspace and enabling litigants to consult legal representatives more conveniently within the court premises.

### Tower installation dispute resolved in Zaskar, power project gets fresh push



*Photo Caption: Officials during their visit to the disputed sites at Shagar Yokma and Markim Zaskar concerning the installation of tower under the 220 kV Drass–Padum Transmission Line.*

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**ZANSKAR:** Executive Councillor for RDD, Forest and Information, LAHDC Kargil, Er. Punchok Tashi, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Zaskar Omkar Rajendra Gund-

age (IAS), Councillor Stanzin Jigmath, Superintendent of Police Rigzin Sangdub (JKPAS), Tehsildar Zaskar Mohd Hassan, and officials of REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), visited the disputed sites at Shagar Yokma and Markim concerning the installation of Tower Nos. 2196 to 2199 and 2204 to 2205 under the 220 kV Drass–Padum Transmission Line.

During the visit, the team held discussions with the affected villagers and successfully resolved the long-pending dispute. The Deputy Commissioner addressed the concerns and apprehensions raised by the local residents, paving the way for the resumption of work.

The executing agencies were directed to immediately begin the pending work and expedite the erection of the transmission towers to ensure the timely completion of the strategically important power transmission project.

The delegation also inspected the ongoing renovation work at the Haftal Power Project. Engineers informed the visiting officials that the remaining work is expected to be completed within ten days. The authorities directed the executing agency to ensure the early restoration of a reliable electricity supply to the people of Zaskar.

### District Police Changthang launches Drugs and Cyber Crime helpline



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**NYOMA:** In a significant step towards protecting youth and strengthening community support systems, the District Police Changthang has launched a Drugs and Cyber Crime Counselling Helpline for residents of the district.

Superintendent of Police, Changthang, Z.A. Jafari (JKPS), announced the initiative, which aims to provide guidance, counselling, and assistance to individuals affected by drug abuse, substance addiction, and cyber-related crimes.

Members of the public can seek confidential counselling, support, or share information by contacting the helpline at 9541927085.

The initiative is intended to strengthen de-addiction efforts, promote cyber awareness, and encourage the timely reporting of cyber fraud and other online offences. It forms part of the District Police Changthang's ongoing efforts to build a Drug-Free Changthang while ensuring a safe and secure digital environment for all citizens.

The police noted that recent awareness and de-addiction campaigns across the Changthang region have highlighted the importance of community participation in preventing substance abuse and addressing cyber threats.

Superintendent of Police Z.A. Jafari appealed to the public—particularly parents, teachers, youth, and community leaders—to actively support the initiative and make use of the helpline whenever needed.

Drugs and Cyber Crime Counselling Helpline: **9541927085**

### First special school for children with special needs opens in Kargil

*Administration aims to ensure every child learns with dignity, equality and confidence*



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**KARGIL:** Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on July 26 inaugurated the Union Territory's first Special School for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in Kargil, marking a significant milestone in the Administration's commitment to providing equitable, inclusive and quality education for every child.

The inauguration was attended by Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, and Member of Parliament (Ladakh), Mohamad Haneefa Jan. Established to meet the educational, developmental and therapeutic needs of children with special needs, the school aims to provide a dedicated learning environment where every child has the opportunity to learn, grow and lead a life of dignity and independence.

The school features barrier-free infrastructure, including ramps, accessible classrooms and child-friendly facilities. It is equipped with assistive technologies, dedicated resource rooms, therapy and rehabilitation services, specialised learning aids, and trained special educators and support staff to ensure the holistic development of students.

Addressing the gathering, L-G Saxena described the inauguration as the beginning of a new chapter in Kargil's journey towards inclusive education. He said the institution reflects

the Administration's unwavering commitment to ensuring that no child is left behind, regardless of physical, intellectual, sensory or developmental challenges.

Referring to the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Lieutenant Governor said every child deserves equal opportunities to learn and succeed. He noted that the establishment of the Special School is a significant step towards making education more inclusive, accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of every learner. He also reiterated the Administration's commitment to making every government school in Ladakh inclusive so that Children with Special Needs can access quality education closer to their homes.

Emphasising that inclusive education requires collective effort, L-G Saxena called upon parents, local communities, School Management Committees, civil society organisations, healthcare professionals and volunteers to work together in creating a compassionate environment where children with special needs are respected, included and empowered to realise their full potential.

The Lieutenant Governor said the Administration is continuously upgrading educational infrastructure in line with CBSE norms and national standards by investing in modern classrooms, science laboratories, ICT facilities, libraries, sports infrastructure and safe learning environments. He added that special emphasis would continue to be placed on strengthening barrier-free infrastructure, assistive technologies, accessible classrooms, therapeutic support, resource rooms and trained special educators to ensure that every learner can participate in education with dignity and confidence.

Expressing confidence that the institution would emerge as a centre of excellence for inclusive education, L-G Saxena said the school would serve as a model for empowering Children with Special Needs in Ladakh. He urged all stakeholders to work together towards building a Ladakh where every child matters, every learner is valued and every dream is given the opportunity to flourish.

### Drugs and climate awareness campaign held in Zaskar

Reach Ladakh Correspondent

**ZANSKAR:** A Drugs and Climate awareness campaign was organised by the Young Drukpa Association in collaboration with the District Administration Zaskar, Choskal Tsogspa, and the UT Administration of Ladakh on July 27.

The campaign was led by His Eminence Thuksay Rinpochey, who undertook a five-day Pad Yatra across various parts of Zaskar with nearly 300 followers to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of environmental conservation.

On behalf of the District Administration, Superintendent of Police Zaskar Rigzin

Sungdub, Zonal Education Officer Tsewang Yangdol, and Administrative Officer to the Deputy Commissioner, Stanzin Khewang, extended a warm welcome to His Eminence.

A major awareness programme was held at the Tourist Dak Bungalow in Padum, drawing a large gathering of local residents, students, and followers of Rinpochey.

Addressing the gathering, His Eminence Thuksay Rinpochey urged the youth to stay away from drugs and stressed the importance of protecting the environment to ensure a healthy and secure future. He called upon the community to work collectively towards building a drug-free and environmentally conscious society.

लद्दाखसंघराज्यक्षेत्रप्रशासनस्कूल  
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No: DSEL/LEGAL/2026/2673

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Date: 24.07.2026

The Ministry of Education (Department of School Education & Literacy) has formulated Draft (Amendment) Rules prescribing the method and manner for admissions in schools under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The Draft (Amendment) Rules can be accessed online at [dse.ladakh.gov.in](http://dse.ladakh.gov.in)

Suggestions and feedbacks from all stakeholders, including school headmasters, School Management Committee members, teachers, parents of children admitted under Section 12(1)(c), civil society organizations, and other relevant individuals are hereby invited. The same may be submitted through email at [dseladakh@gmail.com](mailto:dseladakh@gmail.com) within 15 days of the publication of this notice.

Saif Ali Khan  
Associate Law Officer.

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