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India, Germany deepen ties with 19 new Pacts

Gen Z fueling India's rise, Modi tells Young Leaders

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India's Gen Z is full of creativity and with innovative ideas, energy and purpose, the country's youth is at the forefront of nation-building.

Addressing the concluding session of Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) here in which he interacted with youngsters from across India and abroad, Modi said this initiative, in a short span of time, has grown into a significant platform where young people actively engage in shaping the nation's direction.

"Every year on January 12, we celebrate the National Youth Day in honour of Swami Vivekananda, whose life and teachings continue to inspire us. Drawing inspiration from him, the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue was established," he said. Modi said the central government rolled out successive schemes with a clear focus on the youth and the startup revolution truly gathered momentum in India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) presents a memento to a young leader (center) during the concluding session of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) in New Delhi. Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Anurag Thakur (right) is also present.

markable growth in the Orange Economy, rooted in culture, content and creativity.

"Over the past decade, the series of reforms we began has now turned into a Reform Express. At the heart of these reforms is our Yuva Shakti," he said.

The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is a national platform designed to facilitate structured engagement between India's youth and national leadership.

The dialogue, being held from January 9 to 12, has witnessed participation from over 50 lakh youth across the country at various levels.

The young leaders converging at the national-level championship have been selected through a rigorous, merit-based three-stage selection process, comprising a nationwide digital quiz, an essay challenge and

'Kargil Airport under review; practical and early resolution soon'

Ladakh has spirit to become a 'Model UT' for the nation: Chief Secy Kundra

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARGIL: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, shared a powerful message of unity, youth empowerment and accelerated development, expressing strong confidence that Ladakh has the potential to emerge as a model region for the entire country.

Kundra said this while responding to media questions after witnessing the inaugural match of 5th LG Ice Hockey Championship here this morning.

Reflecting on his first few weeks in office, Kundra said that since assuming charge on January 1, he had been deeply encouraged by the warmth, sincerity and patriotic spirit of the people of Ladakh. He noted that the youth of the region carry strong aspirations for education, employment and progress, and described their determination as a driving force for Ladakh's future growth.

Highlighting the transformation witnessed since



Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra (right) addresses the media during the inauguration of the 5th LG Ice Hockey Championship in Kargil. He expressed confidence in Ladakh's potential to become a model region for the nation.

their performance.

Assuring full support from the UT Administration, Kundra said that every possible effort would be made to ensure that the people of frontier regions like Kargil receive the best governance, opportunities and infrastructure. He added that discussions are underway with the Government of India to introduce new initiatives aimed at boosting development in Ladakh.

On the long-pending issue of Kargil airport, Kundra said that consultations have already begun with senior authorities and that he will personally inspect the site. He indicated that a positive and practical solution is being explored, on the lines of the Leh and Srinagar models, where airports are jointly used for defence and civilian operations.

Reaffirming his commitment, the Chief Secretary said that the UT Administration will work as one team for the welfare and progress of the people, adding that

China reasserts claim over Shaksgam Valley

BELJING: China on Monday reaffirmed its territorial claims over the Shaksgam Valley in the backdrop of India's objections, stressing that the Chinese infrastructure projects in the area are "beyond reproach".

India last Friday criticised China's infrastructure development projects in the Shaksgam Valley, saying it reserves the right to take necessary measures to safeguard its interests as it is an Indian territory.

Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in the Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963 from areas illegally occupied by it.

"Shaksgam Valley is Indian territory. We have never recognised the so-called

China-Pakistan 'boundary agreement' signed in 1963. We have consistently maintained that the agreement is illegal and invalid," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"We also do not recognise the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through Indian territory that is under forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan," he said.

Reacting to Jaiswal's comments, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here that "first of all, the territory you mentioned is part of China's territory".

"China's infrastructure activities in its own territory are beyond reproach,"

LG Gupta opens Int'l Painting Symposium at IIM Jammu; backs IIM expansion in Leh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on Monday inaugurated the International Painting Symposium 2026 at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, calling upon the country's young citizens to shape the future of Viksit Bharat 2047 with creativity, responsibility and confidence.

The week-long gathering, scheduled from January 12 to 17, has opened the IIM Jammu campus to artists from across India and overseas, turning the institute into a lively space for creative dialogue, visual storytelling and cultural exchange. The sym-



Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta (center) inaugurates the International Painting Symposium 2026 at IIM Jammu. He emphasized the importance of art in nation-building and encouraged young citizens to contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Detention flawed, built on wrong inputs: Wangchuk's wife to SC

NEW DELHI: Jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, told the Supreme Court on Monday that the detaining authority had not applied his mind and relied on irrelevant material while detaining her husband.

She told the court that four videos relied upon by the detaining authority have not been furnished to Wangchuk, which is a violation of his right to effective representation.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing in the court for Angmo, told a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Prasanna B Varale that not supplying the videos violated Wangchuk's right to effective

representation before the Advisory Board as well as the government.

Sibal further argued that the district magistrate did not apply his mind while recommending Wangchuk's detention and only "copy-pasted" the recommendations made by the senior superintendent of police (SSP), Ladakh.

"Grounds of detention are simply a copy-paste of the recommendation. The material relied upon should have a proximate link to the detention order. Irrelevant things were relied upon for detention," Sibal said.

The hearing in the matter remained inconclusive and will continue on January 13. Angmo had earlier

Chadar Trek suspended till January 20

LEH: The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Leh has ordered a temporary halt to the Chadar Trek-2026 after field reports confirmed that the Zaskar River has begun to thaw, making the famous winter route unsafe for travellers.

According to public notice issued by the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh, recent field reports submitted by reeve and monitoring teams confirmed that the Zaskar River has begun to defreeze. This change in river conditions has significantly increased the risk

Piprahwa relics a sacred pilgrimage centre for Buddhists worldwide

■ SANT KUMAR SHARMA

Scholars believe that modern-day Piprahwa was the site of the ancient city of Kapilvastu. Incidentally, Kapilvastu was capital of the Shakya kingdom, where Siddhartha Gautam had spent 29 years of his life. It was here that he grew up as a Prince, born to Queen Mayadevi and King Suddhodan.

There is agreement that Piprahwa is same as ancient Kapilvastu, Buddha's early home, before he became an ascetic and left home in search of enlightenment. As such, the inauguration of the exhibition of Piprahwa relics by Prime Minister Narendra



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) inaugurates the exhibition of Piprahwa relics in New Delhi. He highlighted the historical significance of the site and its importance to the Buddhist community worldwide.

LAHDC Kargil extends warm welcomes to Chief Secy CEC Akhoun urges CS Kundra to address delays in Snow clearance, Air connectivity & Health services

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARGIL: The Chairman and Chief Executive Councilor (CEC) of LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, on Monday extended a warm welcome to the newly appointed Chief Secretary of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, during his maiden visit to the Council Secretariat in Kargil.

The formal interaction took place in the Conference Hall with Executive Councilors, senior district officers and LAHDC members in attendance. The Chief Secretary was greeted with khataks, reflecting the region's traditional hospitality.

During the meeting, the CEC placed before the Chief Secretary a broad charter of developmental and public welfare demands.



Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra (right) meets with the Chairman and Chief Executive Councilor of LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun (left), to discuss developmental and public welfare demands.

Nyoma coldest with temp plummets to -19.5°C Cold wave, sub-zero nights grip Ladakh; snow likely on Jan 16-17

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Ladakh remained gripped in a deep winter chill on Monday as freezing temperatures swept across the Union Territory, with Nyoma emerging as the coldest location at -19.5°C, the latest readings showed.

The icy spell stretched across both districts as several localities stayed far below freezing. Drass, often called the Gateway to Ladakh's winter, registered -15.5°C, closely followed by Padum at -15.0°C. Leh city itself shivered at -10.8°C, while Kargil recorded -9.3°C.

In Nubra Valley, Hunder dipped to -8.4°C, and Tangste dropped to -13.8°C. Even mid-altitude pockets such as Khatse (-7.1°C) and Garkone (-4.9°C) remained locked in frost, pointing to the broad reach of the cold wave gripping the trans-Himalayan region.

The weather office noted that much of Ladakh stayed under a blanket of clouds through the day, with similar patterns likely over the next few days. From January 13 to 14, skies are expected to clear partly, offering brief sunlight and limited relief from the cold. However, the forecast suggests shifting

Captain Jigmet Chunzen makes senior India debut at SAFF Women's Futsal C'ship; LG congratulates

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: In a moment of immense pride for Ladakh and the nation, Captain Jigmet Chunzen, a young footballer hailing from the Union Territory of Ladakh, has made her senior international debut for the Indian Women's Football Team at the inaugural SAFF Women's Futsal Championship.

Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, has congratulated Captain Jigmet Chunzen on this significant milestone, lauding her achievement as a shining example of Ladakh's growing contribution to national sports. Extending his warm



Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta (left) congratulates Captain Jigmet Chunzen (right) on her senior international debut for the Indian Women's Football Team.

Ladakh Admn invites local artists to design official logo for SMPB

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Strengthening the visual and cultural identity of Ladakh's unique Himalayan topography, its centuries-old cultural heritage and its rich repository of medicinal flora. As per the notification, the logo must mandatorily incorporate the name of the Board in both English and Bhoti languages and should graphically represent key medicinal plant species found in the region—Hippophae rhamnoides (Sea Buckthorn), Juniperus semiglobosa (Juniper), and Meconopsis aculeata (Blue Poppy). Designers may also creatively include a traditional Lungzed (bowl) containing selected medicinal plants.

Indus University, MIMC explore Academic collab for Mahakaruna-Centred institution

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH/AHMEDABAD: The proposed Mahakaruna Vishwa Vidyapeetham emerged at the centre of discussions on Monday as Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena called on Indus University, Ahmedabad, to advance collaboration on a compassion-focused model of higher learning.

Ven. Sanghasena held a detailed interaction with Dr. Nagesh Bhandari, Founder of Indus University, accompanied by senior academic representatives. The dialogue revolved around shaping a university built on the twin pillars of scholarly pursuit and humane values—aimed at nurturing learners who

Indus University, MIMC explore Academic collab for Mahakaruna-Centred institution

balance intellect with responsibility toward society.

Among the main themes was the potential roll-out of online programmes rooted in the teachings of Mahakaruna, designed to make courses ac-



Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena (left) and Dr. Nagesh Bhandari (right) discuss the potential for academic collaboration between Indus University and Mahakaruna Vishwa Vidyapeetham.