

**"Keep a little fire
burning; however
small, however
hidden."**

—Cormac McCarthy

Making the Truth

CS reviews progress of projects under VVP in Ladakh Focus on Infra, Essential services in Vibrant Villages: Kundra stresses timely execution

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, on Wednesday underscored the need for close coordination among government departments to ensure the timely execution of development works under the Vibrant Village Programme, directing officials to prioritise critical infrastructure and essential services in the selected villages.

Kundra made these observations while chairing a review meeting to assess the progress and implementation of the programme in Ladakh. The meeting focused on evaluating ongoing development works, reviewing the planning framework, and outlining the future course of action under the initiative.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner/Secretary Dr L. Franklin, Administrative Secretaries, Deputy Commis-



sioner Leh, Directors, Joint Directors and other Heads of Departments.

During the session, Administrative Secretary Shashanka Ala delivered a detailed presentation on the Vibrant Village Programme, outlining its objectives, coverage, financial outlay and the progress achieved in Ladakh so far. The presentation also

explained the planning framework adopted in the Union Territory, under which district infrastructure planning and development plans have been aligned with district-level priorities to ensure balanced and need-based development.

Officials were also briefed on the comparative progress between Phase-I and Phase-II of the programme. ▶P11

UT Ladakh holds sufficient fuel stocks: CS

LEH: Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra on Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting in Leh with representatives of major oil marketing companies to assess the availability and supply of essential petroleum products across the Union Territory.

The meeting examined the stock position of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), petrol and diesel in Ladakh amid disruptions in global fuel supply chains triggered by recent international developments.

Officials representing the oil marketing companies informed the ▶P11

UT Ladakh hopeful of rise in inbound tourism after ITB Berlin participation

■ YASH KHAJURIA

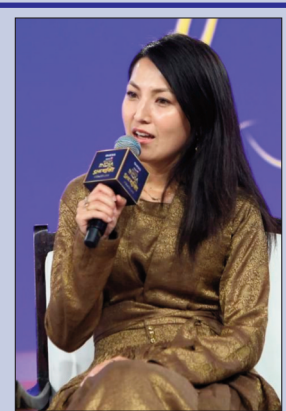
LEH: After witnessing a sharp downturn in tourist arrivals last year, Ladakh is seeking to re-establish itself on the global travel map by tapping international markets through its first large-scale participation at ITB Berlin 2026, the world's leading travel trade fair.

The Union Territory made a prominent debut at the three-day global tourism event held from March 3 to 5 at Messe Berlin, using the platform to pitch its dramatic landscapes, Buddhist heritage, and high-altitude adventure experiences to international tour operators and investors.

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated the Leh-Ladakh Pavilion during the event and described Germany as one of India's most important tourism partners. The minister said India's participation in the global fair reflects the country's broader strategy to posi-

“Global exposure for Ladakh is positive, brings hope for revival, but multiple challenges continue to impact Ladakh's tourism industry. Need to promote Ladakh independently as a peaceful destination on the global tourism map”

- Rigzin Wangmo Lachic
President ALGHA



tion itself as a year-round international destination while strengthening partnerships with key tourism markets.

Within India's 709-square-metre pavilion, Ladakh secured a dedicated 60-square-metre space where officials and tourism stakeholders presented the region's landscapes, culture, and adventure tourism potential to the global travel trade fraternity. The pavilion was designed to immerse

visitors in Ladakh's dramatic terrain and heritage while projecting the region as a distinctive destination for experience-driven mountain travel.

Visitors to the pavilion were introduced to the deep blue waters of Pangong Lake and the pristine high-altitude wetlands of Tso Moriri, along with the stark beauty of Nubra Valley, where double-humped Bactrian camels traverse sand dunes framed by snow-covered

mountains. Visual narratives of Hemis Monastery and Thiksey Monastery highlighted the region's centuries-old Buddhist spiritual traditions.

Adventure tourism circuits, including trekking routes, rafting on the Indus River, and winter sports activities, were also promoted to international buyers seeking distinctive high-altitude travel experiences.

For Ladakh's tourism industry, participation ▶P11

Secy Bhupesh advocates expanded outreach and skill-based enterprise growth in Ladakh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Administrative Secretary, Industries and Commerce, UT Ladakh, Bhupesh Chaudhary on Wednesday said the administration is focusing on expanding awareness of government schemes and encouraging wider participation of local entrepreneurs to strengthen Ladakh's emerging enterprise ecosystem.

Chaudhary was speaking while chairing an interaction with entrepreneurs and stakeholders at the Conference Hall of the District Industries Centre (DIC), Leh. The meeting brought together entrepreneurs, stakeholders and officials of the Industries and



Commerce Department from both Leh and Kargil districts.

The session commenced with introductions from participating entrepreneurs and departmental officers, setting the stage for a discussion aimed at understanding business concerns while highlighting opportunities available through departmental

initiatives.

During the meeting, Zahira, Functional Manager at the District Industries Centre, Leh, presented an overview of various schemes offered by the Industries and Commerce Department and outlined their benefits. Queries raised by entrepreneurs regarding the schemes and their ▶P11

Lok Sabha rejects Oppn-sponsored motion to remove Birla as Speaker

NEW DELHI: An opposition move to remove Om Birla as speaker was defeated on Wednesday in the Lok Sabha after a heated debate, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah trashing Rahul Gandhi's contention that he was not allowed to speak in the House, saying the Congress leader was frequently abroad during sessions and skipped discussions willfully as he "does not want to speak".

The opposition members rushed into the Well of the House, protesting and raising slogans as the home minister was concluding his speech at the end of the two-day-long debate on the resolution. They demanded an

apology for his certain remarks, which they said were "offensive".

Jagdambika Pal, who was in the chair, urged the opposition to take their seats so that he could put the motion to a vote. Amid the din, the resolution was rejected by a voice vote, following which he adjourned the House for the day.

Speaker Birla was not present in the House during the entire period of the debate.

Earlier, interjecting in the debate, Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition (LoP), said he was stopped from speaking in the Lok Sabha on multiple occasions and asserted that the ▶P11

MP Haneefa calls on LG Saxena in Delhi, discusses devp priorities of Ladakh UT

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Mohamad Haneefa Jan, called on the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, and extended his heartfelt congratulations to him on his appointment as the new Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

During the meeting, MP Haneefa Jan conveyed his best wishes to the Lt Governor and expressed confidence that Ladakh would witness accelerated development under his leadership and administrative experience.

The interaction also focused on several key issues concerning the development



and welfare of the people of Ladakh. The Member of Parliament highlighted the aspirations and concerns of the region's residents, stressing the importance of balanced regional development across the Union Territory.

He particularly empha-

sized the need to strengthen infrastructure in remote areas, improve healthcare facilities, enhance the quality of education, and create greater employment and skill development opportunities for the youth of Ladakh. Haneefa Jan noted that ▶P11

EAM Jaishankar, Lavrov discuss W-Asia situation

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a telephonic conversation on Wednesday during which they discussed the situation in West Asia.

"The two ministers exchanged views on the situation surrounding Iran, calling for its rapid normalisation," the Russian foreign ministry said on its web portal.

"They emphasised their support for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS contribution to efforts to de-escalate the situation and ▶P11

CS assesses MGNREGA, PMAY-G and Rural Livelihood schemes in Ladakh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Chairing a high-level review of rural development initiatives in Ladakh, Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra on Wednesday assessed the progress of infrastructure projects and flagship programmes across Leh and Kargil districts, with particular attention to the construction of public libraries and the rollout of livelihood and employment schemes in rural areas.

The meeting focused on the functioning of the Rural Development Department

and the proposed Annual Plans for the financial year 2026-27. During the review, officials informed the Chief Secretary that 98 public libraries have already been constructed across Leh and Kargil, while work on 50 additional libraries is currently underway.

Administrative Secretary of the Rural Development Department, Shashanka Ala presented a detailed overview of the department's administrative framework, including the strength of Group A and Group B officers and the sta-

tus of Group C posts. The presentation also outlined the operational structure of different wings of the department and highlighted the progress of ongoing development initiatives.

The Chief Secretary also examined works undertaken through State Sector projects and Special Development Packages. Officials reported that 184 facilities have been completed across rural areas, including community facilitation centres, panchayat ghars, Block Development Offices and Block Development ▶P11

Special prayer ceremony for HH Dalai Lama's long life held at McLeod Ganj

MCLEOD GANJ: A special prayer ceremony seeking the long life of Tibetan spiritual leader the 14th Dalai Lama was held at McLeod Ganj in Dharamshala on Wednesday, drawing supporters and followers from different parts of India.

The ceremony took place at Theekchen Choeling Temple, located within the headquarters of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and was attended by the Dalai Lama.

According to CTA officials, the gathering holds added importance as 2026 is being observed as the 90th year of the Tibetan spiritual



leader, Tenzin Gyatso.

The event featured a long-life prayer offering known as "Tenshuk", organised by a collective of 24 Tibet Support Groups made up of

Indian supporters of the Tibetan cause. Prayer offerings were presented in Tibetan and another Indian language.

Rinchen Khandu Khrimy, former minister of

Arunachal Pradesh and national convener of the Core Group for Tibetan Cause-India, said the ceremony reflected a pledge by Tibet Support Groups to pray for the long life of the Dalai Lama.

"The long-life prayer offering called 'Tenshuk' was undertaken by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause, which is a national family of Tibet Support Groups. This is a humble offering for the long life of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and for a future where truth, compassion and justice may prevail for Tibet and its people," Khrimy said.

He added that Tibet Support Groups ▶P11

Tsering Dorje and Zakir Ali felicitated at Jal Mahotsav for Service in Rural Water Supply



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: In a proud moment for the Union Territory of Ladakh, two dedicated Rural Drinking Water Supply Operators — Tsering Dorje and Zakir Ali — were honoured for their outstanding service in en-



suring safe drinking water in rural areas. The recognition was conferred during the Jal Mahotsav held in New Delhi, where the two Nal Jal Mitras received appreciation for their exemplary contribution to rural water supply management. They were felicitated by the President of

India, Droupadi Murmu, and the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, C. R. Patil.

Tsering Dorje from Matho and Zakir Ali from Youkma Kharboo have been serving as Rural Drinking Water Supply Operators, popularly known as Nal Jal Mitras, under the Government of India's flagship initiative Jal Jeevan Mission. The programme aims to provide functional household tap connections and ensure safe and sustainable drinking water supply to every rural household in the country.

Their work involves operating and maintaining village water supply systems, ensuring regular distribution of potable water, monitoring infrastructure, and assisting communities in managing local water resources effectively. Their dedication and commitment have significantly contributed to improving the ▶P11

India shifting to proactive deterrence posture: COAS

HYDERABAD: Citing key lessons from Operation Sindoor, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi has said India is shifting from a reactive approach to a proactive deterrence posture.

Addressing the participants of the 21st Higher Defence Management Course at the College of Defence Management (CDM) here on Tuesday, also said the Indian Army stands at the cusp of a new era defined by ▶P11

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