

Union Min unveils statue of Bakula Rinpoche; LG, CEC attend event

Comprehensive personality left indelible impression on generations to come: Rijiju

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) and Chairman, CEC, Advocate Tashi Gyalson, unveiled the statue of 19th Gyalsras Bakula Rinpoche-often referred to as the Architect of Modern Ladakh- on his 108th Birth Anniversary at Bakula Rinpoche Memorial Park.

Calling Bakula Rinpoche a comprehensive personality, Union Minister said that Bakula Rinpoche left an indelible impression on the geography, history, religion, people, generations and culture of Ladakh for years to come.

108 apple saplings, signifying the 108th birth anniversary of Kushok



Bakula Rinpoche, were planted on the occasion.

A book titled 'Kushok Bakula Rinpoche-Architect of Modern Ladakh: Life and Times', authored by Sonam Wangchuk Shakspo, was

launched on the occasion by the esteemed guests.

Stating that a landmark in the form of Kushok Bakula Rinpochee Airport at Leh has been dedicated to Kushok Bakula Rinpoche,

the LG highlighted the lasting impression left by a great personality like Bakula Rinpoche on Ladakh and its people.

Recalling Bakula Rinpoche's contribution

to the upliftment of the underprivileged and promotion of education, along with bringing Ladakh into the mainstream, the LG also highlighted the pivotal role played by Bakula Rinpoche in securing Ladakh from enemy forces during the First Kashmir War.

He also highlighted Kushok Bakula Rinpoche's role in the welfare of the people of Ladakh, especially to eradicate poverty and illiteracy, through various roles assumed by him as the Member of Parliament from Ladakh and a Minister in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir government. He also stated that Kushok Bakula's contribution was recognised by the Government of India, resulting in his appointment as India's Ambassador to Mongolia and the conferment of Padma Bhushan in ▶ P11

CS calls for timely, efficient fund transfers to avoid project delays

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Dr Pawan Kotwal, chaired a review meeting at Civil Secretariat, Leh to assess the status of fund transfers by various departments of UT Ladakh to the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) for the execution of infrastructure and development projects across the region.

During the meeting, Dr Kotwal emphasized the importance of timely and efficient fund transfers to the CPWD to avoid delays in project implementation and ensure the optimal utilization of budgetary allocations.

The CS stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and accountability in the management of public finances.

He directed all concerned departments to streamline coordination with the CPWD and expedite the release of sanctioned funds for approved projects.

He also instructed the Heads of Departments (HoDs) to monitor project progress closely and ensure the effective utilization of allocated budgets.

The Chief Secretary reviewed department-wise fund transfer status, projects progress, and pending approvals. He also addressed issues related to account reconciliation, project timelines, and compliance with financial rules and



regulations.

Highlighting the need for inter-departmental coordination, Dr Kotwal urged departments to maintain regular communication with the CPWD to track work progress, resolve bottlenecks, and ensure the timely completion of key development projects across Ladakh.

He further instructed the Finance and Planning Departments to facilitate any procedural requirements necessary for the smooth disbursement of funds.

The Chief Secretary directed Administrative Secretaries to submit proposals for urgent new works for project approval. He also called for timely approvals for any required modifications within existing schemes and departmental projects.

He emphasized the proper utilization of centrally sponsored ▶ P11

New OCI portal major step forward, says Modi HM Shah: India strives to provide world-class immigration facilities



NEW DELHI: The new OCI portal with improved functionality marks a "major step forward" in boosting citizen-friendly digital governance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday.

The revamped portal

of the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) with an up-to-date user interface to make registration of Indian-origin people seamless was launched earlier in the day by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. "With enhanced features and

improved functionality, the new OCI Portal marks a major step forward in boosting citizen friendly digital governance," Modi said on X, sharing a post by Shah.

The OCI scheme was introduced ▶ P11

Operation Sindoor 7 out of 9 strikes carried out from areas south of Pir Panjal, says top Army official

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: India carried out seven out of nine strikes under Operation Sindoor from areas south of the Pir Panjal range in Jammu and Kashmir, effectively destroying terror infrastructure across the border, a top Army official said on Monday.

The morale of Pakistani troops is low following Operation Sindoor, the official said.

"We are in a high state of readiness. We are fully prepared along the Line of Control to respond to any eventuality from across the border," he said.



He warned that any misadventure by the adversary would be responded to decisively and "on their own soil".

"Our troops are in high morale. They are maintaining a high degree of vigilance along the

border," he said.

The officer said the Army carried out seven out of nine operations under Operation Sindoor from areas south of the Pir Panjal range in Jammu and Kashmir, targeting and destroying ▶ P11

Parl panel condemns trolling of foreign secy



NEW DELHI: Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs on Monday unanimously condemned the trolling of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and praised him for his professional conduct.

Misri was briefing the parliamentary panel, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, on the India-Pakistan military conflict in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack. Tharoor ▶ P11

Santosh for mental health awareness

LEH: Deputy Commissioner Leh, Santosh Sukhdev stressed on mental health awareness among all age groups, and put forward suggestions for yoga and meditation wellness.

The DC who also serves as the Chairperson of the NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) Leh, chaired a district-level NCORD committee meeting at the DC Office.

The meeting held on May 17 was attended by committee members to address ▶ P11

LAHDC committed to balanced, Sustainable development: CEC

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Reiterating Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil's commitment to sustainable and balanced development, Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, Monday inaugurated an Orchard Nursery at Hundurman Plot, located at TV Station area of Kargil.

Dr Akhoun was present as the Chief Guest on the occasion, which marked a significant milestone in promoting sustainable horticulture and community-driven development in the



district.

In his address, Dr Akhoun congratulated the Councillor of Poyen-Akchamal Constituency, the villagers of Hundurman, and the Department of

Horticulture for their collaborative efforts in establishing the nursery.

He appreciated the plantation of over 1,700 fruit saplings, including apple, pear, ▶ P11

Depts to identify, prioritize key services for integration under Ladakh Portal: Ala

Reviews two 1G NKN, NICNET P2P ILL to SDC

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Administrative Secretary of the Information Technology Department, Union Territory of Ladakh, Shashanka Ala on Monday instructed the Departments to identify and prioritize key services for integration under the Ladakh Portal.

She advised them to ensure compliance with standard security protocols, accessibility norms, and user experience best practices across all government websites.

The Administrative Secretary issued these instructions while



chairing a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and

updates related to the Ladakh Portal (ladakh.gov.in).

The meeting also focused on evaluating department-hosted and developed websites, digital applications, and online services across all departments, with an aim to integrate them into a unified digital platform.

The review meeting was convened to ensure efficient delivery of government services to the public through a seamless, secure, and user-friendly interface. Emphasis was placed on enhancing transparency, accessibility, and ▶ P11

'Little Big Dreams' from Ladakh touches hearts at Cannes

India's First Film by Children with Special Needs premieres at Global Stage



■ YASH KHAJURIA

LEH/CANNES: In a deeply moving and historic moment for Indian cinema, the India Pavilion at the Cannes Film Festival 2025 unveiled Little Big Dreams, the country's first-ever film created entirely by children with special needs. Set in the high-altitude valleys of Ladakh, this powerful and heartwarming film is not just a cinematic work — it is a testament to resilience, inclusion, and



the boundless potential of young minds - has now taken center stage at one of the world's most prestigious film festivals.

Little Big Dreams follows the journey of

Sona, a 13-year-old specially-abled girl, and her donkey Sonam, as they navigate life's challenges and dreams in the high-altitude villages of Ladakh.

Sona's quiet resilience and charm unfold in a story that blends humor, heartbreak, and hope. When her first two efforts to change her life falter, an unexpected opportunity arises—leading her toward an unimaginable future at the Paralympics. The film stands out not just for its compelling storyline but also for its authentic portrayal of a girl's dream to be seen, not pitied.

The concept of this cinematic endeavor was

envisioned by Advocate Tashi Gyalson, Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh. The project has been brought to life by Mumbai-based producers Shweta Parakh of Purple People Labs and Yash Nagarkoti of Hooray Films. Acclaimed international producer Jitendra Mishra, who also serves as President of the International Centre of Films ▶ P11

J&K Bank CISO Muneer honoured at ESCON'25



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In a moment of pride for J&K Bank, its Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Muneer Hassan Kongawani, has been conferred with the

prestigious 'CISO of the Year' award at Enterprise Security Connect (ESCON) 2025 — South Asia's premier cybersecurity summit. Bestowed during the conference held in Goa organised by ▶ P11