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Kavinder Gupta sworn ...

commitment to work for the development of Ladakh. Venerable Rinpoches, Chairman, CEC, LAHDC Leh, Advocate Tashi Gyalson; Chairman, CEC LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoon; Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Haneefa Jan; Chief Secretary, Dr Pawan Kotwal, IAS; Deputy Chairman, Executive Councillors and Councillors from both Leh and Kargil Hill Councils; GOC 14 Corps, Lt Gen Hitesh Bhalla; DGP Ladakh Police, Dr SD Singh Jamwal, IPS; former Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal; environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk; administrative secretaries, heads and members of religious and political institutions, DC Leh, Romil Singh Donk; SSP Leh, Shruti Arora, IPS and various other officials were present in the event.

Meanwhile after taking oath of office, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Kavinder Gupta on Friday expressed his commitment to rebuilding the Union Territory with people's support, and said they want to take Ladakh to a level where its name will be recognised globally as a top tourism destination.

"I have been appointed here to the post of lieutenant governor. I want to assure the people of Ladakh that rising above religion, caste, and party politics, we will all work together to rebuild a new Ladakh," Gupta told reporters soon after taking over as lieutenant governor.

Gupta pointed towards discrimination with the region in the past and said, "There is still a lot to be done. There's no doubt that Ladakh has faced a lot of discrimination in the past."

Spelling out his agenda for the development of the region, he said, "We want to take Ladakh to a level where its name will be recognised globally as a top tourism destination—just like those places in the world known for tourism, Ladakh's name will also be counted among them."

MLA Vikram Randhawa, who took part in the oath ceremony, said it is fortunate for Ladakh and unfortunate for Jammu and Kashmir that such a person, "a true son of the soil of Jammu", has been appointed as the LG of Ladakh.

"He has taken charge as LG today. He is a leader with administrative skills, having served successfully as a three-time MLA from Jammu City, as deputy chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and as Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly," he added.

Gupta lays...

quick to shift the conversation toward the region's untapped potential, particularly in tourism.

Gupta outlined a forward-looking vision aimed at transforming Ladakh into a globally recognised travel destination. Drawing comparisons with renowned international tourist hubs, he emphasised the need to elevate Ladakh's profile through strategic development and collaborative governance. His address carried a clear message: inclusive development would be the cornerstone of his tenure.

"There's no room for divisions based on caste, religion, or politics. We will rise together and rebuild a new Ladakh," Gupta declared, calling on residents to become stakeholders in shaping the region's future.

The newly appointed Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the importance of stability and experience in leadership. His previous roles — including Deputy Chief Minister and Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly — lend him considerable administrative weight, which supporters believe will help address the unique challenges of the Himalayan territory.

BJP leader and former MLA Vikram Randhawa, who attended the oath ceremony, described Gupta's appointment as both a boon for Ladakh and a loss for Jammu. He praised Gupta as a "son of the soil" whose legislative and executive experience would bring depth to the governance of Ladakh.

While Gupta's tenure begins amid high expectations, it also comes at a sensitive time for the region. Ladakh has witnessed growing demands for statehood and constitutional safeguards. How he navigates these challenges — while working to boost tourism, infrastructure, and administrative capacity — will be closely watched in the months ahead.

As the dust settles on the ceremonial start of his tenure, all eyes now turn to whether Gupta's promises of transformation can take root in the rugged terrain of Ladakh.

LGsetto..

to which Kavinder Gupta positively responded and confirmed his first official visit to Kargil on July 25, 2025. On this occasion, CEC Dr Akhoon met with Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Arun Palli, and reiterated the long-standing public demand for establishing a Circuit Bench of the High Court in Kargil.

He emphasized that such a facility is crucial to ensure timely, affordable, and accessible justice for the people of Kargil and surrounding areas.

In a separate meeting, Dr. Akhoon held discussions with Digvijay Singh, Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, where he strongly advocated for the sanctioning of an Agricultural University in Kargil. Highlighting the region's unique Agro-climatic potential, he stressed that a dedicated institution for agricultural research and education would significantly benefit local youth and farming communities.

Dr Akhoon also requested the restoration of non-lapsable funds, following the financial pattern in place prior to 2019, to ensure sustained development in the region.

These high-level engagements underscore LAHDC Kargil's unwavering commitment to advancing the district's judicial, educational, and socio-economic priorities.

Dr Akhoon expressed gratitude for the encouraging responses received and looked forward to continued support and cooperation from all relevant authorities.

Digvijay Singh ...

staffing gaps in educational institutions to ways of improving coordination among universities and colleges across the region. Barriers that students face while accessing education in remote Himalayan areas also formed a core part of the conversation.

A major highlight of the visit was the inauguration of a new computer laboratory developed under the PM-USHA scheme. Equipped with modern technology, the lab is expected to support digital learning and skill-building among students from Ladakh. The delegation also released the university's publications Radiance and the LAMA Newsletter, celebrating local academic voices and ongoing research efforts.

The tour of the university's facilities offered the delegation a closer look at advanced research labs and student-led projects. The committee expressed appreciation for the range of studies underway and the university's commitment to science and technology.

An exhibition followed, featuring contributions from the Leh and Kargil campuses of the University of Ladakh, government colleges, the School of Agriculture Science and Technology, the Department of Science and Technology, and the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies. A local women's collective, SAMZANG Group from Taru village, also displayed their work, drawing attention to the mix of traditional culture and emerging skills within Ladakh's educational framework.

The visit concluded with a cultural program where students from the university and its affiliated colleges performed folk dances and songs, reflecting the deep-rooted heritage of the region. Supported by local Army units, the performances added a vibrant and personal touch to the delegation's experience.

As the sun set over the mountains, the day marked not just a formal visit, but a shared vision for nurturing education, innovation, and opportunity in one of India's most remote but promising regions.

Earlier the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports convened a meeting in Leh to assess and support the progress of school education in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The meeting was chaired by Digvijaya Singh, Chairman of the Committee and Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

In his opening remarks, Shri Singh welcomed all representatives and outlined the agenda focused on strengthening school education in Ladakh through enhanced infrastructure, promotion of local languages and culture in education, and improved connectivity in remote areas.

A detailed presentation was made by Ms. A. Sirja, Economic Advisor, Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education, Government of India.

She presented the current status of school education in the UT, drawing on data from UDISE+ 2023–24. This included enrolment figures, status of schools, teachers and infrastructure, performance grading index, and findings from the PARAKH RASHTRA survey.

Updates were also shared on elementary schools, residential school facilities, hostels, vocational education under SAM-AGRA Shiksha, and budgetary details such as year-wise approved budgets, actual releases, and expenditures. Progress on flagship schemes like PM POSHAN, implementation of Vidya Samiksha Kendra and DIKSHA, and challenges in execution were also highlighted.

The second presentation was delivered by Ms. Bhanu Prabha, Secretary, School Education, UT Ladakh. She provided insights into Ladakh's educational ecosystem, including trends in enrolment, government school status, financial aspects of SAMAGRA Shiksha, and initiatives like the Ladakh Education Conclave and PM SHRI Schools.

She also discussed progress in winter residential coaching, STEM education, digital transformation, improved resource management, and the newly introduced teacher award policy. Special attention was given to special education, co-location of Anganwadi centres, and integration of early childhood care into the school system.

Following the presentations, members of the PSC engaged in an interactive session with officials from the UT administration. They raised key concerns related to vacancies in schools, the enrolment process, gender disparity in sanitation facilities (especially toilets for girls), limited access to skill-based education, delays in fund allocation, and internet connectivity issues in remote areas. Additional queries were made regarding the teacher recruitment process, required qualifications, coordination among authorities, and the comparison between government and private schools in terms of fee structures and infrastructure. The impact of harsh weather and the status of implementation of the New Education Policy in the UT were also discussed.

Addressing these concerns, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Chief Secretary of UT Ladakh, provided detailed responses and shared updates on upcoming recruitment drives, infrastructure improvements, and new projects aimed at strengthening the region's education system. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to educational reform and assured the Committee that necessary steps are being taken to ensure equitable access to quality education throughout the UT.

The meeting was attended by members of the PSC on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, chaired by Digvijaya Singh. Also present were senior officials from the Ministry of Education and the UT administration, including Vimal Kumar, Joint Secretary; Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh; Sanjeev Khirwar, IAS, Principal Secretary; A. Sirja, Economic Advisor, DoSE&L, Ministry of Education; Vikram Singh Malik, IAS, Administrative Secretary; Sanjit Rodrigues, IAS, Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Rudra Gound P.T., IAS, Secretary, Housing & Urban Development; S. Venugopal, Ministry of Education; Bhanu Prabha, IAS, Secretary, School Education; and the Chief Education Officers of Leh and Kargil districts along with other senior officials from the education department.

CEC Kargil ...

it raises serious questions about the larger administrative mindset toward Kargil," he told The Earth News.

Dr. Akhoon formally registered his protest with the Secretary to the LG and Chief Secretary of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, emphasizing that such treatment of invited guests cannot be dismissed as a logistical lapse. However, he was careful not to assign blame to the newly appointed LG himself. "The Lieutenant Governor took charge today. Holding him responsible for an oversight by the bureaucracy would be unfair. But going forward, the administration must ensure equal regard for all regions and communities," he added.

He further urged the LG to adopt an inclusive approach. "Whether from Leh, Kargil, Zaskar, Nubra, Drass, or Nyouma, every citizen deserves equal respect. We look forward to welcoming the LG warmly in Kargil on July 25 and will use that opportunity to appeal for a governance model that treats all Ladakhis with dignity."

Student leader Mohd. Hassanain Rocky also expressed strong disapproval, characterizing the incident as more than a matter of seating. "This is not just about a few elders being placed in the back. It's an insult to Kargil—a region that forms the majority of Ladakh's population. The administration's actions expose an unsettling disregard for our presence and contribution."

Rocky called on the Lieutenant Governor's office to conduct a thorough inquiry and hold those responsible accountable. "Whether this was a deliberate act or negligence, it must be addressed. Moving forward, Ladakh's governance must reflect balance and fairness. No community should feel alienated or secondary."

The incident has deepened existing concerns in Kargil about political and administrative marginalization, a sentiment that has grown in the years since Ladakh was carved out as a separate Union Territory. Critics argue that symbolic acts of exclusion reinforce longstanding fears that Kargil's interests are being sidelined.

In the aftermath of the controversy, Dr. Akhoon reiterated the importance of turning this moment into a course correction. "This cannot be brushed aside as ceremonial oversight. It must be taken as a reminder of the sensitivities in our diverse region. Unity cannot be built on unequal treatment."

As the newly appointed LG prepares for his first visit to Kargil later this month, the people of the region are watching closely, hoping the administration will move toward a more balanced and respectful governance framework. For many in Kargil, this is not just about protocol—it is about visibility, respect, and an equal place in the evolving narrative of Ladakh.

Rocky summed up the public mood with a pointed appeal: "Let this serve as a moment of introspection. Ladakh's unity depends on mutual respect and equal representation. We urge the administration to move forward with empathy and fairness."

Gyalson for...

Chief Planning Officer Tsewang Gyalson, ADC Leh Ghulam Mohammad, Assistant Director Tourism Padma Angmo and representatives from Firgun Social Initiative Foundation including Vivek Saxena and Sharmila Ronanki.

The CEC, DC, and CPO put forward a number of suggestions to make the programme more effective on the ground and ensure that benefits directly reach rural households involved in tourism. They emphasised the need for practical training, strong digital presence, and coordination with local stakeholders.

It was informed that a dedicated website to support and promote Ladakhi homestays will be officially launched on August 5. As part of the broader plan, exposure visits was also discussed for 15 shortlisted candidates in states like Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. These trips aim to provide first-hand learning experiences, helping local participants understand best practices and replicate them in Ladakh.

The CEC assured full support from LAHDC Leh to promote responsible, community-based tourism that not only preserves Ladakh's culture and environment but also boosts the local economy.

Later in the day, the CEC in the presence of Executive Councillor for Art & Culture Stanzin Choshpel chaired a meeting to discuss the preparations for the upcoming visit of His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trichen Rinpochey to Ladakh.

During the meeting, the CEC held detailed discussions with all concerned officials and instructed every department to take timely and coordinated action to ensure smooth arrangements for the revered visit.

He directed the Health Department to keep medical staff and emergency services ready; the PHE Department was asked to ensure proper sanitation and drinking water supply; the PDD was directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply with necessary backups; and the PWD and RDD were tasked with carrying out necessary road maintenance and infrastructure improvements in the area.

Emphasising the spiritual and cultural importance of the visit, the Hon'ble CEC stated that all arrangements should be made with utmost respect, ensuring that everything is carried out in a well-organised and dignified manner.

The meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer PWD Circle Leh Dorjey Gyatso; Assistant Commissioner Development Leh Ghulam Mohd.; Chief Medical Officer Dolma Chuskit; Addl.SP Leh Rigzin Sangdup; DPO Leh Akheel Sajjad; Jamyang Tsering Namgyal Former MP; Executive Engineer Construction Division Imran Khan; Executive Engineer Power Development Department Leh Anwar Hussain; Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Kacho Mumtaz; Goba Matho Tsering Angdus; Matho Gonpa Khenpo Thinles Chossal and Ishey Tsering.

HH's Zaskar...

Zaskar, Deputy Commissioner and CEO of LAHDC Kargil, Rakesh Kumar, along with SSP Kargil Sri Ram R, conducted a comprehensive review of the logistical and security arrangements on Thursday.

The officials inspected key locations including the helipad, Duzin Photang, and New Photang at Karsha.

Departmental responsibilities related to the visit were discussed in detail to ensure a smooth and dignified experience for His Holiness.

Parking arrangements for VVIPs, VIPs, and the general public were also reviewed at all three sites. The team examined arrival and exit routes to ensure seamless movement and security.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete any remaining work by Friday to ensure timely readiness.

Hanifa assesses..

he remarked, "but I will do my best to meet your expectations with honesty and commitment."

A major focus of the visit was on promoting tourism as a pillar of economic development. The MP emphasized that Suru Valley holds immense potential for tourism, citing oppor-

tunities for trekking, paragliding, film shooting, and high-altitude adventure in areas surrounding the Nun Kun peaks. He announced that a tourism festival is being planned to highlight the valley's natural beauty and cultural richness. The MP also proposed the development of the Maitha waterfall as a tourist attraction and suggested that talks be initiated to open the Panikhar—Pahalgam route to improve regional connectivity.

During the visit, local residents and public representatives highlighted several key issues. They stressed the need for improved road connectivity and blacktopping of internal roads across multiple villages. Educational concerns included the urgent renovation of the Higher Secondary School in Biama and upgrading of the Middle School at Damsna, along with resolving staff shortages.

Communication and infrastructure demands included installation of a grid tower at Purtikchay, proper pipeline connectivity under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Youljud, and the establishment of a Medical Aid Centre (MAC) in Maitha.

People also requested fencing and lift irrigation support in Damsna, a public library in Panikhar, and construction of protection bund and footbridges in flood-prone areas like Thulus, Pursa, and Youljud. Concerns were raised about the dismantled tourist centre at Panikhar and the poor state of the local disposal shed.

The public demanded banking facilities such as ATMs or bank branches, riverbank protection, and proper maintenance of bridges, especially in Panikhar. Additional concerns included lift irrigation in Choskore, national highway-related grievances including land compensation, and assessment of second-phase funding for infrastructure and displaced households.

In the second constituency, Councillor Aga Ayanul Huda highlighted several important issues. Residents of Khause demanded canal construction and protection walls. In Nam-suru, one of the most populated areas, people called for upgradation of hospitals and subcentres, installation of solar pumps, an animal centre, and a marriage hall. There were also requests to complete the Parkachik canal and provide lift irrigation. Other demands included a community library and a mobile tower in Achambur, an irrigation pool and upgraded middle schools, as well as rescue equipment and a footbridge in Tangel to support safety during avalanches and Nun Kun expeditions.

The MP concluded the visit by assuring the people of both constituencies that their genuine concerns would be taken up with the appropriate authorities and followed through.

The MP was accompanied by Taisuru Area Councillor Abdul Hadi and former Councillor Syed Abass. The tour of the second constituency was conducted in coordination with Area Councillor Aga Ainul Huda.

US designates..

national security interests, countering terrorism, and enforcing President Trump's call for justice for the Pahalgam attack," he added.

In New Delhi, India welcomed the decision by the US with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar describing it as a "strong affirmation" of India-US counter-terror cooperation.

India said the designation of TRF is a "timely and important" step and that it has consistently emphasised the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India remains committed to a "policy of zero tolerance" towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organisations and their proxies are held accountable.

"The government of India welcomes the decision of the United States Department of State to designate TRF as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). We acknowledge and appreciate the leadership of Secretary of State Marco Rubio in this regard," it said.

In a social media post, Jaishankar specially complimented US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for designating the LeT proxy.

"Appreciate @SecRubio and @StateDept for designating TRF—a Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) proxy—as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). It claimed responsibility for the April 22 Pahalgam attack," he said.

The MEA said India welcomes the decision of the US State Department to designate TRF as an FTO and SDGT.

The TRF, a "proxy" of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation LeT, has been involved in numerous terror-related activities, including the heinous attack on civilians in Pahalgam for which it twice claimed responsibility, the MEA said in its statement.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

"India has consistently emphasised the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the dismantling of terror infrastructure," the MEA said in a statement.

It said the designation of TRF is a "timely and important step reflecting the deep cooperation between India and the United States on counter-terrorism."

"India remains committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organisations and their proxies are held accountable," it added.

The TRF claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack, but later backtracked as tensions soared between India and Pakistan.

India's National Investigation Agency has identified TRF head Sheikh Sajjad Gul as the mastermind of the attack.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Washington also underlined New Delhi's firm stance against terrorism.

"Another demonstration of strong India-USA counter-terrorism cooperation. Appreciate the Department of State for listing The Resistance Front (TRF) as a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist. TRF is a proxy of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and claimed responsibility for the April 22 terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam," it said.