

LG Saxena calls on Nitin Gadkari, highlights road connectivity, infrastructure projects in Ladakh

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
LEH, APR 21

The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today called on the Hon'ble Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Shri Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi to discuss key infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening road connectivity and boosting overall development in the Ladakh region.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor apprised the Union Minister of several critical projects that require intervention and early sanction from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Shri Saxena discussed the progress of the Zoji-La Tunnel with the Hon'ble Minister, wherein Shri Nitin Gadkari informed that the final breakthrough of the tunnel is expected by the end of May. Once completed, the tunnel will connect Ladakh with the rest of the country, marking a significant milestone towards ensuring all-weather connectivity to the region.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the need for avalanche protection works along the Zoji-La



Top stretch. Despite the completion of the tunnel, Shri Saxena noted, this route will continue to be used for the movement of traffic, and hence, there was an urgent need for avalanche protection, as seven people lost their lives to an avalanche in the region in a recent incident.

The Lieutenant Governor raised the issue of pending projects under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), informing that road and bridge works amounting to Rs 1465.88 crore are awaiting approval. He emphasised that these projects are critical for improving connectivity, enhancing safety, and driving economic growth, particularly in remote and strategically important areas of Ladakh.

Another key issue discussed was the upgradation of the NH-03 stretch from Leh to Sindhu Ghat. Shri Saxena informed that while 5.20 km out of the total 10.08 km has already been upgraded to a four-lane road, the remaining 4.88 km continues as a double-lane stretch, resulting in traffic congestion. He requested early approval for the upgradation of the remaining stretch to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow.

The Lieutenant Governor also sought early sanction for the construction of the Leh Bypass. He informed that the DPR for the southern alignment of 48.10 km, estimated at Rs 1011 crore, has already been submitted, while the DPR for the northern alignment is un-

der preparation. He noted that the project is expected to significantly ease congestion within Leh town and improve urban mobility.

Shri Nitin Gadkari, underscoring the strategic importance of Ladakh, instantly directed the concerned officials to prioritise all infrastructure projects in the region without delay and in a time-bound manner. He assured that sanctions for the pending CRIF projects would be accorded by the month of May, and instructed the concerned officials that all necessary approvals be expedited on priority.

Highlighting the broader impact of these initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor stated that the timely execution of these projects would significantly transform connectivity and infrastructure in Ladakh. He emphasised that the development of robust road infrastructure is essential for the region's growth, given its strategic location and challenging terrain, and added that these projects would not only ensure seamless connectivity but also boost tourism, facilitate economic activities, and generate employment opportunities for the local population.

IGNOU Jammu organises painting competition at Kendriya Vidyalaya Bantalab

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 21

To honour the legacy, vision, and contributions of Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, IGNOU Regional Centre Jammu today organized a special painting competition at Kendriya Vidyalaya Bantalab. The event aimed to educate students about the life of Babasaheb and promote the values of equality, social justice, and fraternity among the youth. The competition was conducted in accordance with the nationwide 135th Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations.

The themes focused on "Baba Saheb Ambedkar," "Life Events of Dr. Ambedkar," and "Viksit Bharat: Vision of Dr. Ambedkar". The competition was divided into age-appropriate categories, allowing students of Kendriya Vidyalaya Bantalab to showcase their creativity from different perspectives.



The Junior Group focused on portraits of Baba Saheb Ambedkar and the Senior Group focused on depicting significant life events and his contributions to the nation. Students participated with great zeal and enthusiasm. The competition witnessed a high turnout, with vibrant artistic interpretations ranging from portraits of Dr. Ambedkar to depictions of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.

The paintings were judged based on relevance to the theme, creativity, artistic composition, and overall impact. The judges were impressed by the in-depth knowledge displayed by the students regarding the life of Dr. Ambedkar.

The jury consisted of Regional Director, Dr. Sandeep Gupta, Deputy Director, Dr. Asha Upadhyay, Assistant Directors, Dr. Vikram Singh and Dr. Jasleen, and Principal of KV Bantalab, Shri Sunil Yadav.

Sugandhi of class 6th secured the first position, Kanak of class 7th secured second position, and Anamika Pandey of class 9th secured the third position.

The event successfully fostered a sense of respect for Dr. Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive India.

Dr. Sandeep Gupta congratulated the students referring to them as young artists and said that their use of colours has captured the strength, wisdom, and vision of Dr. Ambedkar and every stroke reflected respect and admiration for the values of equality and justice.

The 135th Ambedkar Jayanti painting competition was successfully concluded with a closing ceremony where students were reminded of Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to social reform and education. The event successfully fostered a sense of respect for Dr. Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive India.

Ladakh's public transport set to get major boost with sanctioning of 33 e-buses by MoHUA

LEH, APRIL 21: In a significant boost to public transport and sustainable mobility in the Union Territory of Ladakh, 33 electric buses have been sanctioned by the Government of India under the PM-eBus Sewa scheme.

The fleet will comprise 7-metre electric buses, specifically suited to Ladakh's difficult terrain and road conditions. The initiative is expected to play a key role in transforming public transport in Ladakh by promoting clean energy, reducing pollution, and enhancing the overall travel experience. The delivery of e-buses is expected in a month's time, officials informed.

The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, thanked the Centre for fulfilling this long-pending demand and said this will boost sustainable development in the region, which is also a key focus of the UT Administration. "The sanctioning of electric buses marks a major step towards building a sustainable and environmentally friendly public transport system in Ladakh. It reflects our commitment to preserving the



fragile ecosystem of this region while improving connectivity and accessibility. These buses will not only reduce carbon emissions but also provide an affordable and efficient transport option, benefiting the residents," Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, said.

The introduction of electric buses is expected to bring multiple benefits to the region. The initiative aligns with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, to make Ladakh a carbon-

neutral region by promoting sustainable development. The deployment of e-buses will significantly reduce carbon emissions, contributing to environmental conservation in the ecologically fragile Trans-Himalayan region.

The compact size of the buses (7 metres) has been designed to suit Ladakh's geography and challenging terrain, ensuring smooth and efficient movement. Additionally, the new fleet will provide an affordable and reliable mode of transport for local residents,

particularly those living in far-flung areas, thereby strengthening the public transport system in the region.

Notably, since assuming office, the Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, has been actively promoting eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives to preserve Ladakh's pristine environment. The UT Administration has prioritised measures to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, including promoting electric mobility and solar energy solutions.

NC pays tributes to Bodhraj Bali on his death anniversary

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 21

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Tuesday paid glowing tributes to former minister and senior party leader Mr Bodh Raj Bali on his 24th death anniversary, describing him as a leader par excellence who devoted all his life in service of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Leading the party cadre in paying floral tributes to Mr Bali, at a function held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan Jammu here this morning, Provincial President Jammu Mr Rattan Lal Gupta highlighted the immense contribution of the veteran leader in the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

Paying tributes to Mr Bali, Provincial President Jammu Province Mr Rattan Lal Gupta said that the departed leader worked with a sense of commitment. Mr Gupta said that Mr Bali worked tirelessly for the upliftment of poor and down-trodden in different capacities. His contribution in strengthening National Conference at the gross root level in the Jammu Province remains a high point of his political career, he said, adding that



the veteran leader made a distinct mark by serving the people, which will serve as a source of inspiration for the coming generations. Mr Gupta further said that Mr Bali worked for strengthening the fabric of secularism and brotherhood in the state of J&K. He said the best tribute would be to strengthen the party at gross root level and make it a vibrant force to satiate the urges and aspirations of the people. He said that the late leader will be remembered for his high political caliber and having passion for serving the people, especially poor and down-trodden.

While paying tributes to late Mr Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu Sheikh Bashir Ahmed described the late leader as a person

of immense qualities who remained at the forefront in solving problems of the people.

He said that the veteran leader worked tirelessly in various capacities as a party functionary and senior cabinet minister for people belonging to all walks of life. His services shall be remembered for the years to come.

Among others who were present including: Abdul Gani Malik former minister and Zonal President Udhampur Reasi Zone, Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC, Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu, S. Tejinder Pal Singh Aman Provincial President YNC, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Rajni Devi Working President Women

Wing, Laxami Datta Senior leader, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, Dr. Shamshad Shan former DDC Chairperson, Chander Mohan Sharma District President Jammu Urban, Subash Chander Bhagat District President Jammu Rural "A", Rita Gupta, Dilshad Malik Vice Presidents Central Zone, Nar Singh President Labour Wing, Ch. Rehmat Ali former BDC Chairman, Deep Mehra, S. Gurnam Singh District Secretary Jammu Urban, Waris Gill, Bahadur Lal Block President Bahu, Dharminder Sharma Block President Jammu West, Sahil Chib, Rahul Attri, Prabhat Kapai, Prabha Slathia, Surinder Singh Jamwal, Karan Singh and other party functionaries

SANJY-2026: DC Anantnag chairs Rate Fixation Meeting

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 21

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag (Yatra Officer, Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, today chaired a meeting at Dak Bungalow Khanabal to finalize the rates for various services for the Pahalgam axis during the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Pahalgam, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pahalgam Development Authority, Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC), Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO), along with other concerned officers. Representatives of tent service providers, pony walas, palki walas, and labourers



were also present on the occasion. During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on the fixation and regulation of rates for services such as tented accommodation, hiring of ponies (pack and riding), palkiwallas, porters, dandies, and labourers at various camp sites along

the Pahalgam axis enroute to the Holy Cave. Representatives of different service providers also put forth their suggestions and concerns before the DC.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to ensure fair, reasonable and uniform rates for all services, keeping in

view the convenience of pilgrims as well as the interests of local service providers. He stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and strict adherence to the approved rates during the Yatra period so the pilgrims are provided convenience and seamless experience during the journey.

It was decided that the concerned departments shall ensure wide publicity of the finalized rates and closely monitor their implementation on the ground to prevent any instances of violation or overcharging.

Appreciating the role of service providers, civil society and other stakeholders during previous Yatras, the DC impressed upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure smooth, safe and hassle-free conduct of the annual pilgrimage along the Pahalgam axis.

DLSA Kulgam organize Awareness Program on Transgender Rights

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District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kulgam, in collaboration with The Noble Helping Hands, successfully organized a comprehensive awareness program today at the ADR Centre Kulgam.

The initiative focused on the legal rights, dignity, and socio-economic empowerment of the transgender community.

The event was graced by Aijaz Ahmad Khan, District Principal and Sessions Judge, who attended as the Chief Guest.

Syed Qayoom, Secretary DLSA Kulgam, was also present, alongside Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs), the Legal Aid Defense Counsel team, and representatives from The Noble Helping Hands.

During the session, Muttahir Khanday, Chairman, The Noble Helping Hands, addressed the gathering and engaged in a direct interaction with the participants to understand the grassroots challenges faced by the community.

To further support the attendees, the NGO distributed health and nutrition



kits and provided meals to all transgender participants.

Key speakers emphasized the necessity of social inclusion and the legal

frameworks available to protect the rights of marginalized genders.

The program concluded with a shared commitment from both DLSA Kulgam

and The Noble Helping Hands to continue fostering inclusive support systems and advocating for the welfare of all community members.

DLMC reviews Nutrition Procurement, calls for strengthened monitoring of AWCs in Ganderbal

GANDERBAL, APRIL 21: In order to review the procurement of nutrition items for Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and assess the overall implementation of services under the Poshan initiative in the district, a meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) was today convened under the chairmanship of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Fahem Bihagi.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on improving monitoring mechanisms, en-

sureing quality control, and enhancing inter-departmental coordination for effective service delivery at the grassroots level.

During the meeting, the chair directed all concerned departments to strengthen monitoring of AWCs across the district to ensure better outcomes. The Food Safety Officer was instructed to increase the collection and analysis of supplementary nutrition samples on a quarterly basis, particularly at the time of procurement, to maintain quality standards.