

India's strength lies in integration of border regions: LG Ladakh

'Ladakh, Border areas witnessed historic transformation under PM Modi's leadership'

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PUNE: The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on Saturday emphasised that India's true strength lies not only in its formidable military power but also in the emotional integration of its border regions with the national mainstream. Addressing the Ladakh Festival and Kargil Gaurav National Awards-2025 ceremony held in Pune, he stated that national security must be viewed beyond the prism of armed might and should include emotional and psychological unity.

During the programme, the Lt Governor, accompanied by First Lady Bindu Gupta and Sanjay Nahar, Founder and President of Sarhad, conferred the Kargil Gaurav National Awards-2025 on distinguished individuals for their outstanding contributions.

The awardees included Tarun Uppal of Nirbhay Bharat Foundation; Adv. Pralhad Kokre, Chairman of Cosmos Co-operative Bank Ltd.; AVM Nitin Vaidya (Retd.); Maj. Gen. Shashikant Pitre (Retd.); senior journalist Rajeev Sabade; Zelan Chahal, Director of



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta honouring Tarun Uppal of NBF with Kargil Gaurav National Award-2025.

Kesari Tours Pvt. Ltd.; social worker Raj Deshmukh; and architect Dilip Kale. Tarun Uppal has been a committed social reformer focused on youth and community development in Jammu and Kashmir. As the leader of the Nirbhay Bharat Foundation, he has tackled pressing issues such as drug abuse, women's empowerment, and youth engagement. His initiatives promote active participation in sports, culture, education, and nation-building, fostering resilience and hope across communities in the Union Territory.

In his address, Kavinder Gupta highlighted that while

pline and professionalism as a timeless source of inspiration for the nation. He also acknowledged the invaluable support extended by local residents of Kargil-villagers, shepherds and porters-who assisted the armed forces at great personal risk, reflecting the strong bond of trust between the Army and border communities. Highlighting the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor said India has witnessed a historic transformation in its approach to national security and border area development. He noted that under the guiding principle of "Nation First," the armed forces have seen enhanced operational preparedness, modernisation and morale. Focused development of border regions, improved infrastructure, better connectivity and enhanced facilities for soldiers reflect India's comprehensive and dignified approach to border security, he added. Gupta also praised civil society organisations like Sarhad for their significant role in fostering emotional integration through education and cultural outreach. He appealed to citizens to contribute actively to nation-build-

ing, stating that the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 can be realised only through collective responsibility and participation. Earlier, Sanjay Nahar spoke about Sarhad's journey and its work in remote and sensitive regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, aimed at bridging emotional and cultural gaps. The event also featured vibrant cultural performances by students and was attended by several eminent personalities, reinforcing the message of unity, patriotism and inclusive nation-building.



Nicotine in all its forms is harmful to cardiovascular health: Dr Sushil



HoD Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr Sushil Sharma with his team examining patients at a camp.

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JAMMU: In view of the ever increasing incidence of cardiac ailments and lifestyle diseases due to nicotine like substances Head Department of Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr Sushil Sharma held a day long cardiac awareness cum health Check up Camp at Village Bhera Panchayat Lower Gharota Block Bhalwal Jammu for educating masses regarding the importance of primary prevention in decreasing mortality and morbidity associated with cardiovascular diseases. While interacting with the people Dr Sushil stated that in recent years, the global tobacco landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation. Traditional cigarettes, long recognized as a major cause of cardiovascular disease, are increasingly being replaced or supplemented by newer nicotine delivery systems such as electronic cigarettes (vapes), heated tobacco products, nicotine pouches, and shisha. Aggressive marketing, sleek designs, appealing flavours, and the

widespread belief that these alternatives are "safer than smoking" have driven their rapid adoption, particularly among adolescents and young adults. However, emerging scientific evidence, reinforced by expert consensus from leading cardiovascular bodies, clearly demonstrates that nicotine itself irrespective of the mode of delivery is a potent cardiovascular toxin. The absence of smoke does not equate to the absence of harm.

He elaborated that Nicotine exerts powerful effects on the cardiovascular system through multiple mechanisms. It stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, leading to acute increases in heart rate, blood pressure, and myocardial oxygen demand. Chronic exposure promotes endothelial dysfunction, impairs nitric oxide mediated vasodilation, and accelerates arterial stiffness, all of which are key early steps in atherosclerosis. Nicotine also increases platelet activation and aggregation, creating a pro thrombotic state that raises the risk of acute coronary syndromes and stroke. These effects are not theoretical they have been demonstrated across experimental, clinical, and population-based studies, and they occur regardless of whether nicotine is inhaled, absorbed through oral mucosa, or delivered via aerosols. He maintained that second-hand exposure also deserves attention.

Aerosols from vapes and smoke from shisha are not benign; they impair endothelial function in bystanders and contribute to indoor air pollution. This challenges the notion that these products are socially harmless and reinforces the need for comprehensive smoke- and aerosol-free public spaces. From a public health perspective, the economic burden associated with nicotine addiction including healthcare costs, lost productivity, and long-term disability from cardiovascular disease is immense and largely preventable. The evolving evidence delivers a clear and unequivocal message: nicotine in all its forms is harmful to cardiovascular health. While modern nicotine products differ in appearance and delivery from traditional cigarettes, they share a common denominator nicotine-driven cardiovascular toxicity, compounded by additional harmful chemicals in many products. The narrative that vaping, heated tobacco, or oral nicotine are safe or acceptable long-term alternatives is scientifically unsound and potentially dangerous, particularly for young and otherwise healthy populations.

He added that Clinicians, policymakers, and the public must move beyond the narrow focus on smoke alone and recognize nicotine as a central cardiovascular risk factor. Strong regulatory measures, including flavour bans, strict marketing controls,

age enforcement, taxation based on nicotine content, and inclusion of all nicotine products in smoke-free laws, are essential to curb initiation and promote cessation. Equally important is patient education, he said.

Dr Sushil in his concluding remarks told that ultimately, protecting cardiovascular health requires a unified and honest approach one that prioritizes prevention, dismantles myths, and treats all nicotine-containing products with the seriousness they deserve. The goal should not be to find new ways to consume nicotine, but to reduce and eliminate nicotine exposure altogether, safeguarding both current and future generations from its silent yet profound cardiovascular harm.

Prominent members of the area Santosh Kumari (Former Sarpanch), Nittu Verma, Raman Chalotra, Pandit Ravi Sharma, Ankush Khajuria and Rahul Khajuria appreciated the efforts of Dr Sushil and his team for accepting their request and conducted cardiac awareness cum Health check up camp in their village and expressed their heartfelt gratitude. Others who were part of this camp include Dr Venkatesh Yellupu and Dr Adarsh Sharma. Paramedics and volunteers includes Rajkumar, Ranjeet Singh, Mohd Altaf, Gourav Sharma, Vikas kumar, Rajinder Singh, Gokul Jamwal, Mukesh Kumar and Nirvair Singh Bali.

Dr Jitendra hosts J&K, Ladakh students participating in 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue'



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh during an interaction with J&K and Ladakh students participating in 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026' at New Delhi.

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DELHI: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Department of Space and Department of Atomic Energy, Dr. Jitendra Singh, met and interacted with the student contingent from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh participating in 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026', at his residence here.

The interaction was held in a warm and informal atmosphere, with a special dinner hosted by the Minister for the visiting youth participants.

The contingent comprises 52

youth from Jammu and Kashmir and 31 from Ladakh, who are in the national capital to participate in the National Youth Festival- Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2026, being organised by MY Bharat, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

During the interaction, Dr Jitendra Singh met each participant individually and took keen interest in understanding their backgrounds, aspirations, and the activities they will be undertaking at the national-level event. He discussed their participation in the Viksit Bharat Challenge Track as well as the Cultural and Innovation Track, and encouraged them to make the most of this national platform.

The national event is currently being held at Bharat

Mandapam, New Delhi, from January 10 to 12, 2026, culminating on January 12, when the youth contingent will also have an opportunity to interact with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. The National Youth Festival is organised annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on January 12, observed as National Youth Day. Addressing the youth, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the future of a developed India rests on the energy, innovation and leadership of its young citizens. He highlighted that the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue is not merely a festival, but a nation-building platform where ideas, creativity and leadership converge. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, the

Minister said that today's youth are not just beneficiaries of development but active stakeholders and co-creators in India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047. The Minister further emphasised the importance of national integration and unity, stating that youth from regions like Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh play a crucial role in strengthening the country's social and cultural fabric. Dr Jitendra Singh encouraged the participants to use the festival to engage with peers from across India, appreciate the country's diversity, and present youth-led solutions in areas ranging from innovation and governance to culture and social development.

Dr Jitendra Singh concluded by expressing confidence that the youth from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh would represent their regions with distinction at the national level platform, and return as ambassadors of positive change, carrying forward the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat and the transformative vision of Viksit Bharat.

CSIR Floriculture Mission boosting farmers' income: Dir IIM



CSIR-IIM officials with floriculture and apiculture based bio-enterprises at a workshop.

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JAMMU: In a significant step towards advancing science led agrarian transformation and enhancing farmers income through high value agri-enterprises, the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu, through the CSIR Floriculture Mission being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, has been providing end to end support and handholding to the floriculture farmers.

For the enhancement of the capacity and scientific skill set of the farmers and stakeholders, the CSIR-IIM organised a workshop on technology dissemination in floriculture and apiculture based bio-enterprises. The workshop brought together 230 farmers from rainfed and irrigated agricultural zones of Jammu who were also provided with the quality planting material of high yielding varieties of marigold, reflecting the Mission's inclusive outreach and region-specific approach.

The initiative aimed at enabling farmers for transition from traditional cropping systems to high value, market ori-

ented and employment intensive agri-bio enterprises, supported by science, innovation and institutional handholding.

A spokesperson of the Institute, informed that the farmer centric initiatives through CSIR Floriculture Mission are shaping the landscape of the floriculture in the UT under the constant mentorship and strategic direction of Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Science and Technology and Vice President CSIR. His strong emphasis for taking the laboratory innovations to fields has enabled the Institute to emerge as catalyst for technology enabled rural entrepreneurship in the region. The technical deliberations comprehensively covered the entire production to market continuum, including scientific nursery raising, planting techniques, nutrient and water management, integrated pest and disease management, storage and post-harvest handling, value addition, grading and quality assessment, market intelligence and value chain management in commercial floriculture. Special emphasis was laid on commercially

important floricultural crops such as Lilium, Marigold, Gladiolus, Gerbera, Carnation and other ornamental varieties, which offer strong market demand and high profitability potential in the region owing to diverse agro-climatic conditions in the region. In parallel, the workshop focused extensively on integrated apiculture models, highlighting scientific beekeeping practices including colony management, seasonal management, disease and pest control, migratory beekeeping and the role of honeybees in enhancing pollination efficiency and crop productivity. Farmers were also trained in the production, processing and value addition of honey, beeswax and honey based value added products, enabling diversification of income streams and improved economic resilience.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director CSIR-IIM Jammu, welcomed and appreciated the enthusiastic participation of the farmers and underscored the income generation potential, employment intensity and sustainability of floriculture and apiculture based agri-enterprises. He stat-

ed that under the CSIR Floriculture Mission, access to quality planting material, scientific crop management practices and efficient market linkages has led to significant enhancement of the farm productivity and profitability in the region. The Institute under the Mission has been effectively translating scientific knowledge in commercial floriculture into field level impact. The success stories emerging from the Mission clearly demonstrate that science based interventions can transform farmers into agri-entrepreneurs, Dr Ahmed said. In his interaction with the participants, Er Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Head RMD&IST, highlighted the importance of infrastructure development and post-harvest interventions in strengthening floriculture and apiculture value chains. He emphasised scientific nursery infrastructure, protected cultivation, efficient irrigation systems, primary processing, grading, packaging and cold chain integration as critical components for reducing post-harvest losses and improving market competitiveness.

Udhampur Team meets NATF Chairman Vishal Chopra, seeks program on national unity



Udhampur Team members with NATF Chairman Vishal Chopra at a meeting.

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UDHAMPUR: In a significant step towards strengthening national unity and public awareness against terrorism, a team from Udhampur led by Sachin met Vishal Chopra, Chairman of the National Anti-Terrorism Front (NATF), and invited him to organise an awareness programme in the district.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the need to sensitise citizens,

especially the youth, about the values of unity, integrity and national solidarity. They urged Chopra to personally address the people of Udhampur and convey the message that the nation must always come before all other considerations. The Udhampur team also proposed the formation of a district-level unit of the National Anti-Terrorism Front to involve local residents in constructive activities aimed at coun-

tering extremist tendencies and promoting a sense of collective responsibility towards national security.

Chopra appreciated the initiative taken by the Udhampur team and acknowledged the importance of community participation in the fight against terrorism. The meeting reflected the growing resolve among local citizens to work together for peace, harmony and the security of the country.